

Now Is the Time to Buy, Build or Remodel

Is Dining Room In Small Homes Waste of Space?

No definite solution has yet been reached by builders and architects on the important question of whether or not the inclusion of a dining room in the plans is for small homes a waste of space.

In general, it is agreed that a separate dining room which is used for no other purpose is hardly justifiable in the modern small home.

For most families, breakfast is hurried meal and not the ceremony it once was. Except in unusual cases, both the younger members of the family and the head of the family are away from the house at luncheon time. In other words, dinner is the only meal at which all members of the family sit down

at one time. This being so, the dining room is used for only approximately one hour a day.

Open to Luxury.
It is evident that a separate dining room which is used only for that purpose is a luxury rather than a necessity for the family of moderate means.

Many architects and builders believe, according to the FHA officials, that, because of its lack of utility, the dining room should be eliminated and that facilities for eating should be provided in the living room proper or in an alcove off the living room.

Complete Elimination.
To many people the complete elimination of the dining room seems too drastic. Dining and relaxation are two separate functions and, to their way of thinking, they should be kept separate.

FHA officials say that this may be accomplished by placing a separate dining room in the house and using it for various other purposes. It is also practical to have an L-shaped living room, one end of which can serve as a dining room when necessary.

In any case, the Federal Housing Administration urges that the individual requirements of the family should be given serious consideration in the planning of dining space for a new small home which is to be built under the FHA plan.

"Enlighten the people generally and tyrannical oppressions of both mind and body will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day."
—Thomas Jefferson.

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Building, Property Costs At Low Level Now Says Expert

"No one can say how long building costs will remain at their present level. That they will undergo any radical drops in the next few years seems almost impossible; that they will stay at the present level longer than six months seems uncertain; that they'll rise appreciably seems quite probable. SO IF you expect to buy, build or remodel in the next few years, act in the next six months."—Roy Wenzlick, Pres. Real Estate Analysts, Inc.

Predicts Building Gains This Year

Federal Housing Administrator Stewart McDonald, in submitting the FHA's Six Annual Report to Congress, pointing to striking achievements in the home building field in 1939, predicted even greater gains in 1940 on the basis of the FHA's current home-mortgage insuring activities.

"Home construction made notable advances in both quality and quantity during 1939," the Administrator said in his letter to Congress, transmitting the FHA's report.

At the present time, moreover, applications for mortgage insurance covering new homes are running from 50 to better than 50 per cent ahead of the corresponding weeks a year ago, he announced today, and the number of new homes being started under the FHA program is showing weekly gains of as much as 25 per cent. In the year ended May 1939, 4,437 new small homes were started under FHA inspections, the largest number on record.

Mr. McDonald in his report summarized developments in the residential building field last year. The year was featured by the largest number of non-farm dwelling units since 1929, with an estimated 465,000 units built, he said. The quality of home construction also was improved because a larger volume of it than ever before was financed with mortgages insured by the FHA, he said.

Landlord Asks Water Deposit

A deposit for water service was asked by J. N. Hadjisky, 714 South Bates, in a letter filed by the City Commission, Monday night. It was pointed out that persons who rent houses sometimes move without paying water bills, leaving the property owner liable for the debt. Hadjisky suggested a deposit with the city for protection. Loss to the city is very small on delinquencies, it was revealed, and bookkeeping expense on the deposits would entail more of the loss, it was said. No action was taken.

Instruction increases inborn worth, and right discipline strengthens the heart.—Horace.

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HOME OF NEW RESIDENTS



Maintaining a three-year record of producing more real estate sales than any other street in Birmingham, Fairfax Road is the scene of another transaction in the sale of No. 337 on that street to Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Hulsapple, who formerly resided in Pontiac. The house is a Michigan farmhouse design, Neil Rickson, of Snyder, Buck & Bennett, handled the negotiations.

Home Insulation Not New Idea

Contrary to widespread belief, home insulation is not new. Actually, mineral wool, the oldest form of modern home insulation, is still in perfect condition. A home in Selson, Va., was insulated with mineral wool 85 years ago, and today the original insulation is still in perfect condition. This type of insulation, as well as a number of others, may be applied to the home to increase the comfort of living conditions in both Summer and Winter with the FHA financing arranged under the Modernization Credit Plan of the Federal Housing Administration.

Skidding Rugs
To keep rugs from slipping without driving tacks into the floor, specially made powder or rubbery material may be purchased at most department stores. Or pieces of olefin may be sewn to the under side of the rug with the shiny side next to the floor.

Education has for its object the formation of character.—Herbert Spencer.

Some Questions And Answers

Q. Is it good construction practice for wood joists or girders to rest on masonry walls below grade?

A. If possible, this should be avoided. However, in this condition is necessary, the wood members should be treated with an effective wood preservative before installation. Provide a one-inch air space for ventilation on each side of each structural member built into masonry walls above or below grade.

Q. What is the best method of repainting the wire cloth in my screen? What kind of paint should I use?

A. In repainting old wire cloth, it will be necessary to first scrub the screen with a brush, using soap and warm water. Rinse with clean water and allow the screen cloth to dry thoroughly. Then apply one coat of screen enamel, using only a little enamel on the brush at a time. Paint the screen from one side, using up-and-down brush strokes, from right to left, and diagonally. Go over the other side of the screen with a dry brush in the same manner.

Q. In residential construction, what are the basic principles involving protection against subterranean termites?

A. These principles deal with good practice in the use of wood, good practice in the construction of masonry and concrete, the provision of mechanical barriers to prevent the passage of termites from soil to wood, and the treating of wood to make it toxic or repellent and unpalatable to insects.

Replace Cracked Window Panes

Besides being unsightly, cracked window panes are a source of heat loss. Although bothersome to replace, they should not be tolerated.

Often window panes are cracked because of loss of putty. Moisture absorbed by the frames causes the wood to swell, and this cracks the glass through pressure. The Modernization Credit Plan of the Federal Housing Administration may be used to finance replacement of window panes as well as putting and glazing windows which are in a state of disrepair.

Eliminate Kitchen Odors

Installation of a kitchen ventilating fan to draw out cooking odors and grease-laden air and to prevent their settling on fabrics and curtains is eligible for financing under FHA Modernization Credit Plan.

Lincoln Court

Lincoln Court, a street off Lincoln Avenue between Floyd and Pierce, was formally accepted as a city street by the Commission Monday night. A real estate development is taking place, using the court.

Hearing Is Called For Tree Removal

A hearing will be held by the City Commission next Monday evening on the removal of a soft maple tree from the side of Harmon Avenue, at the projected entrance to Baldwin Court. The request was made in a letter signed by Whiting W. Raymond, of Walsh, James & Ward. The tree would be in the middle of the roadway, it was said.

New Repair Plastic Available

Home owners may find the solution to the problem of how to make petty repairs in a new, quick-hardening paste now being sold. It is recommended for many purposes, including filling of cracks and nail holes in floors, sealing cracks around bathtubs and other plumbing fixtures, filling cracks in walls and woodwork, as well as mending furniture.

One-Third of Heat Goes Through Roof

It has been estimated that in Winter about one-third of the home's heat escapes through the roof.

Ceiling insulation is less difficult than that for walls, as in practically all houses there is an attic large enough to permit workmen to apply one of the many types of roof insulation now being marketed.

Superblocks Save Money, Government Survey Reveals

Comparative costs in production of houses grouped in ordinary city blocks and the same houses housed in a so-called superblock have been studied recently by O. Kline Palmer of the Farm Security Administration, which operates the Greenbelt projects. Taking a superblock, including areas approximately four times as great as the average city block, he compared it—on paper—with four conventional blocks, using identical house sizes and an equal number of families. His figures would indicate that such superblocks can be improved with streets, sidewalks, sanitary facilities, etc. to house the same number of families as the four conventional, added advantages, notably a greater safety from traffic hazards, and added freedom in general layout.

The saving per family was a bit over \$200 under the superblock plan. Biggest saving was in street paving and grading work. It was estimated that about \$160 per family would be saved in respect to this item alone.

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