

# THOUGHTS ABOUT DESIGN



*Well building hath three conditions —  
commodity, firmness, and delight.*

Sir Henry Wotton

*We shape our buildings, and after-  
wards our buildings shape us.*

Winston Churchill

An architectural designer is in the business of manifesting dreams. He must, therefore, try to develop a personal empathy with the people who will be living in this home if he hopes to do a design that is compatible with their feelings and way of life. It is important, then, that both designer and client work to communicate their ideas openly and clearly.

One of the best ways to communicate your ideas and feelings about what you want your home to be is to keep an IDEA NOTEBOOK. This can consist of a large blank scrapbook or loose leaf binder in which you keep notes, articles, and photos about things related to your new home. If you wish you can organize it into sections such as exterior appearance, kitchen, bath, landscape, etc. When you paste something into the book, like a magazine photo, make as many comments as you can about what you like and dislike about it — make that photo a personal expression of you. As your notebook builds you will find that you are getting a clearer picture of what you want your house to become. This picture, then, can be communicated to your designer.

Designing and building a home is about as big a project as most people will ever undertake. It is more than a little scary at times — know that and expect it.

Designing a house takes time. Building a house takes more time. It is best to start as early as possible and to be very generous with your patience. Time spent in disorganization and waiting around is wasted, but time spent in crafting the details and working out just what you want is time invested in years of satisfaction.

We live in an impatient instant world and it is easy to forget that the house we are building will probably outlive us — and our children.

Outside of natural and manmade disasters such as floods and freeways, the main reason that houses die is because of poor design. Even bad construction can be remedied if the house sits on its site with function and grace. But being condemned to years of waking up to a damp dark kitchen, cramped hallways, or an awkward entry is enough to make anyone want to start over.

All around the world there are homes that have sheltered, nurtured and excited their families for hundreds of years. Homes don't really wear out. What wears out is people's desire to live in them.

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