

# Criterion of Good Design

This is a brief summary of some of the guiding principles we employ when designing a new home.

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### **Incorporate Green Design Elements**

A few examples: passive solar (orientation to sun, roof overhangs, better daylighting, use of shade trees), eco-friendly siting considerations, higher density developments, specify green framing techniques and green products, etc.

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### **Tasteful Exteriors**

This is, perhaps, one of the most difficult things to achieve; something that you know when you see it, but have a hard time saying why. Need to avoid flat facades (vary depths), incorporate a porch, substantial trim, create an interesting focal point (nice door, bay window, etc.) use quality materials (no vinyl siding and trim), don't mix design styles in awkward ways, pay attention to proportionality, make the main entry something special, do substantial, but not crowded landscaping, reduce impact of garage door, etc.

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### **Efficient Use of Space**

Eliminate spaces that are rarely used (such as a separate formal dining and living room), use multi-purpose rooms, combine rooms, use as much space as is needed to be comfortable. In general, the smaller the house, the more functional, the more easily maintained/kept clean, and the more energy efficient. Although we will build any size home for a custom client, we believe the ideal size to be 1500 – 3500 square feet.

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### **Rooms that are open to each other, but are still distinct spaces**

Use of varied ceiling and floor heights, half walls, columns, "floating" fireplace, etc. to create division without closing off space; create long sight-lines, or the ability to see through to other rooms (french doors between rooms). Open-feeling, but not cavernous; free flowing, but still cozy.

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### **Connection to Outdoors**

Create outdoor alcoves or rooms, take advantage of views fully, lots of double door exits, windows that "frame-in" the view, back and front covered porches, courtyards, etc. Limits on this item must be considered, though, since windows and doors are the least energy efficient part of the building envelope.

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### **Careful Attention to Good Lighting**

Maximize use of natural light (use of skylights, larger windows, upper wall light transfer, tube lights, hallway/stairwell windows, open floorplan, etc.). Maximize use of indirect lighting (under cabinet, alcove, sconces, lit ceiling spaces). Avoid harsh lighting, and offer the ability to adjust light level.

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### **Use of Alcoves**

Most people are attracted to the smaller, cozy, safe spaces. Examples are a reading nook, a smaller hearth room, a window seat, etc.

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### **High End Finishes**

Take the savings from using less square footage and put it into using higher end flooring, plumbing fixtures, lighting fixtures, paints/wallpaper, kitchen cabinets/counters, appliances, doors/trim, closet systems, etc. These days, you do not necessarily need to spend a fortune to achieve an above average outcome. For custom and pre-sale clients, we offer assistance in choosing finishes.

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### **Character in Interior Design**

Avoid having all square spaces, avoid sliding closet doors, use: angled entry to rooms, wider trim, arched room transitions, barrel and cove ceilings, etc. Make each home unique by adding a few creative flourishes that are particular to that home.

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### **Be Aware of Context**

Blend with neighboring homes, in terms of size, style, colors, etc., without looking too much like the house next door.

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If you would like to know more, please feel free to call us with questions.

**For more information,  
call 314.576.5550 or visit [www.sagestl.com](http://www.sagestl.com)**