

THE ENTRANCE, IT'S NOT JUST A DOOR

The entrance to your home is not just a door. A properly designed entrance needs to be so much more. It's not only a place to enter your house or greet guests; the entrance needs to provide security and protection from bad weather. As one of the primary focal points, the entrance should also help establish the character and style of the entire building.

When planning a home there are many things to consider, but don't overlook the importance of this transition between inside and outside. Many homes today treat the entrance as a secondary element; an item that is tacked on after the floor plan is completed. Does the entrance of your home have the right stuff? Here is a list of criteria that all good entrances should have:

1. **Flow with the floor plan.** The placement of the entrance within the floor plan must allow for proper sequencing as the user enters the home and moves from one space to the next. A very formal entrance that is used mainly by guests should allow them to circulate into spaces such as sitting rooms or dining rooms without having sightlines to private areas such as bedrooms. A secondary entrance may work best if it has a direct access to work spaces like the kitchen.
2. **Easy to find.** Does it look like an entrance? If the entrance is to be used by guests it should be easily identified as they approach the house.
3. **Inviting scale.** The entrance is intended to welcome people not intimidate them. It should be spacious enough that the user does not feel confined, yet not so large they feel intimidated. Avoid tall two story entries, especially when the width and depth are not proportionate to the height. The entrance should also be a proportionate scale to the rest of the house.
4. **Fit the character of the house.** Although the entrance can be a focal point, it should be of a consistent style and character as the entire house.
5. **Weather protection.** Protection against rain, snow and wind can be as aesthetically inviting as it is practical.
6. **Safe.** Provide clear visibility from inside with no hidden corners. Doorways and windows should be easy to secure.
7. **Proper lighting.** There are numerous elements to consider when lighting an entrance:
 - Provide general lighting.
 - Light the approach.
 - Provide light for a person entering to find a key, keypad, latch, or mail slot.
 - Provide light for a person on the inside to identify callers before opening the door.
 - Light the house number.
8. **Accessible to users.** Can people get to the entrance on a relatively direct path? Keep in mind how they will be arriving. Will they typically be walking, driving, or maybe a combination?
9. **Waiting or meeting space.** A sufficient space is needed for waiting and meeting guests. The size of this space will be directly related to how the entrance is used.
10. **Maintainable.** The design of an entrance should take into consideration how much maintenance it will require, such as, painting, landscaping and snow removal. Will the entrance that requires a high level of maintenance receive the maintenance it needs? An entry with an integral planter, for example, can be aesthetically pleasing. However, if the planter is unused or has unhealthy plants it will have an adverse effect on the aesthetics of the entry.

The criteria above is a helpful checklist to analyze the effectiveness of an entrance, but there is no single recipe for designing one. Every entry will be as unique as the house it serves. The design of a good entry will be a function of those who use it, how it is used, budget and how it fits

Milwaukee Craftsman LLC

www.milwaukeecraftsman.com

into the overall scheme of the home. The best designed entry will be functional and esthetic, while fitting the size and scale of the home.

Non-profit, non-commercial publications and Web sites may reprint or link to articles if full credit is given. Others please contact us. We do not guarantee accuracy of articles. Caveat lector. Publication, product, and company names may be registered trademarks of their companies.