

House Size And Layout

The median size house in 2020 is +/- 25% of 2,422 square feet. Without going outside the confines of a middle income, the current market value per square foot places the average house size between 1,816 – 3,027 square feet. Keep in mind these values are largely calculated in urban areas. This range should take into account each owner's lifestyle which ultimately will be determined by one in which you feel comfortable and incorporate a high utilization of space. If you build/buy a house too big, you'll have excess maintenance headaches, higher maintenance bills, more cleaning to do, higher heating bills, and likely higher property taxes. These considerations will be augmented according to the design and type of materials and finishes used in construction.

In terms of square feet per person, will you feel comfortable having 400 square feet, 500 square feet, or 800 square feet of space to yourself? For example, a family of three with about 600 – 700 square feet of space per person translates to approximately 1,800 – 2,100 sq ft of floor space. If you live in an urban area or due to high housing costs such as those we are currently experiencing here, you may be forced to adapt to living within a smaller floor area.

Number Of Floors

Having one floor with no stairs is better for young children and elders due to the safety hazard or simply their inconvenience. This consideration becomes more important if a person is buying a retirement home because our health and mobility may not be the same 5-10 years after we purchase the property. Also factor the ability to maintain the home when older. Are the gutters out of reach? Will cleaning windows require the use of ladders? Will you be able to afford to hire help? That being said, the cost of land, the implications of siting and view corridors, can factor in the decision whether to have two floors.

House Design

The exterior design of the house should be equally important as the interior layout but in many cases it becomes the major feature as an expression of wealth and/or aesthetics. In rural areas, exterior design tends to be more functional. It is based more on the impact natural forces may have on the living area. Windows are placed to allow more light and overhangs extended to create shade depending on the season. Entrances are faced away from prevailing winds and weather. The exterior design should consider the rural character of the land by using natural materials of neutral or natural colours and textures to blend into the surroundings rather than stand out. Designs, as much as siting, should take the topography of the land into account and conform to the landscape rather than protrude or stick out unnaturally.

House Siting

The ground surrounding the home will affect rural character as much as the home/buildings. The larger the buffer or setback between your house and the road or neighbouring homes, the better for noise and privacy and discourages the appearance of an urban, or suburban, neighbourhood. It's not surprising how some houses feel warm and cozy, while others feel somewhat uncomfortable. The siting/location/direction and layout, all have a lot to do with how a house "feels". The siting of the

building should consider wind and rain patterns, sunrise and sunset. In an area where much of our lifestyle is outside the home, these factors become more important.

Building Design and Siting Guidelines can have as much to do with living comfortably and sustainably by reducing negative impacts to the environment as they do to protecting and preserving our rural character. Trustees from North and South Pender will be holding Community Information Meetings to discuss means to implement these ideas and would like to hear your opinions. Covid 19 protocols and safety measures make it more difficult to reach out to all residents and property owners so we ask that you **subscribe to the mailing list on the Trust website (islandstrust.bc.ca), to receive notifications and read updates on the “Trustees Corner”, of each Island’s website.** You can also let us know your thoughts by contacting us directly. We will continue to do all we can to broaden community engagement.