

MAKING THE BEST USE OF YOUR PLOT



HOAP

HOME OWNERS' ADVICE PAMPHLETS





MAKING THE BEST USE OF YOUR PLOT

Planning how to get the best out of the position, orientation and design of your house has many advantages. Consider your needs - you might want space for future improvements, space for gardens, access to service connections (pipes, cables etc), safety and security, or comfortable shelter from heat, cold or wind.



POSITIONING YOUR HOUSE

- *Convenient and visible access from the street.*

Control access to your house and spaces with lockable doors and gates. Your front door and gate should be in full view from inside and by your neighbours. You should be able to see what is happening in your street and garden.

- *Convenient service connections to your site*

The position of your house should not obstruct access to municipal services. You need to ensure that your garbage can be easily collected. Make sure that electricity cables, sewerage and water pipes are easily accessible. Stormwater drainage channels need space to drain away the water from your house.



- *Space for future improvements*

Allow space for future rooms. Think about where the windows and doors will go to make sure that the rooms will be able to get sunlight and air.



- *A safe and healthy home*

Positioning your rooms and windows to take advantage of natural sunlight and ventilation, can prevent dampness and unhealthy conditions. Install and insulate ceilings to improve comfort in your house. Make sure your windows are far enough away from those of your neighbours' to prevent the risk of fire jumping from their house to yours.



- *Space for home-business activities*

If you work from home, allow safe, clean and healthy space for rentable rooms, spazas, home-offices and workshops etc. Allow for convenient access by the public and for municipal services.

- *Attractive and useful outdoor spaces*

Attractive yards and gardens with plants, trees, shade and vegetables provide good, useful outdoor spaces, and add to the quality of living.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE IS:



ORIENTATING YOUR HOUSE



You need to take into consideration the local climate and conditions such as sun, rain and wind as well as the general neighbourhood.

- *Orientate selected rooms to the north*

Rooms with windows on the north-facing side will let in winter sun, and will have most shade from the sun in summer. Position

larger windows to capture sunlight on the north and east, and position smaller windows to prevent escape of warmth from cold rooms. Suitable roof overhangs will control the amount of sun coming through the windows.

- *Avoid or protect large windows in the west and south walls*

Rooms with windows facing west will have very hot, uncomfortable sunlight in summer, whereas rooms with windows facing south get very little sunlight. Use smaller windows on the west and south walls, or protect them with thick curtains or outside trees.

- *Doors and windows should face away from winds and draughts*

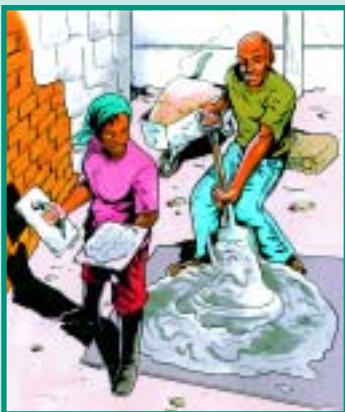
Orientate your house so that the rooms, windows and doors are protected from unwanted winds.



- *Increase the amount of sheltered space*
Trees and buildings can provide protection and create shade, as well as assist with good ventilation

Note: Making the best use of the plot and house is not always possible. On many small plots there is not much space, the neighbours are close and access to the street might not be easy. However, you should still try to take the best advantage of sunlight and winds, as this will make your house more comfortable and save you energy and improvement cost.

HOUSE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION



- *Good foundations*
Check the soil and damp conditions on your site and build suitable foundations using damp proof course (DPC). You need advice on how to strengthen your walls and foundations.

- *Steep plots*
If your site is on a slope, you might need to prepare a platform before you build your house. The foundations should reach down to firm ground, and stormwater should drain away to the street without washing away the soil on your plot.

- *Site drainage and rain protection*
Make sure that the water drains away from your house and protect your house from rising damp and water penetration. Your floor should be at least 150mm above the soil surrounding the house. Consider plastering and painting your house.



- *Roof overhangs and shared walls*
Good roof overhangs help shade windows and protect windows and doors from wind and rain. Shared walls save space and building materials, and also reduce the areas exposed to the weather. Try not to have shared walls facing the north.

- *Insulation and ventilation*
Install and insulate a ceiling to help your house keep warm. Airbricks help prevent condensation on walls and windows.



ALSO SEE OTHER PAMPHLETS ABOUT:

- Making your house warm
- Making home improvements



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

Published by the Development Action Group
101 Lower Main Road, Observatory, 7925
Tel: (021) 448-7886 • Fax: (021) 447-1987