

BEYOND AN OVERSTUFFED WORLD

SMALL REALLY IS BEAUTIFUL

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It's been a heavy load to carry, plundering the world's resources, having to consume all the "stuff" produced from it, and "supersizing" our lives to match that world.

We've paid a huge cost for overstuffed homes.

"The house in Fulton, Md., between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, is 11,000 square feet and sits three stories high on three-and-a-half acres. Its amenities include an English garden, a wine cellar, a master bedroom larger than many apartments, a spiral staircase, a music room, a gym, a sauna, a steam room, and business office. And then there's "the room:" a major entertainment center with a 10-foot-wide screen for movies, top-of-the-line projection equipment, a bar and huge leather lounge chairs."

(What, no "Bonus Room?")



*Mansions, mansions,
everywhere, and not a
dime to pay.*

What the fine print in the advertising avoids telling us:



What is the REAL cost of an overstuffed chair to fill an oversized living room?

Chair purchase \$600
Space cost: 20 sq.ft. x \$150 = \$3000
Finance cost: 30 years = 1.28 = \$3840
Energy for space: \$3000
Subtotal: \$10,440
Income tax on earnings to pay @25% = \$2610

Total cost: \$13,050



What is the REAL cost of an island to fill an oversized kitchen?

Cabinetry purchase \$1000
Space cost: 60 sq.ft. x \$150 = \$9000
Finance cost: 30 years = 1.28 = \$11,520
Energy for space: \$9,000
Subtotal: \$30,520
Income tax on earnings to pay @25% = \$7630

Total cost: \$38,150

More than a year's wages for many people - just for an island to fill an oversized kitchen.



What is the REAL cost of a guest bedroom to fill an oversized house?

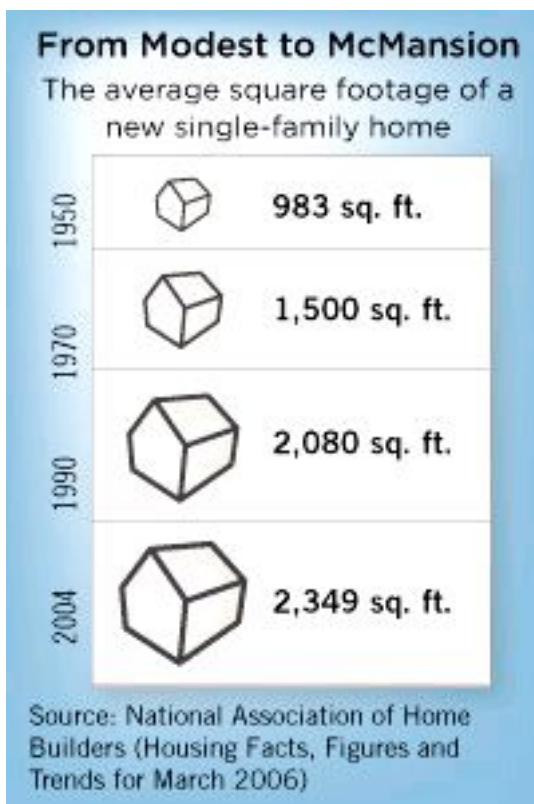
Furnishings: \$1000
Space cost: 150 sq.ft. x \$150 = \$22,500
Finance cost: 30 years = 1.28 = \$28,800
Energy for space: \$22,500
Subtotal: \$74,800
Income tax on earnings to pay @25% = \$18,700

Total cost: \$93,500

OR . . . about 1200 nights of motel rooms for guests, not counting the need for a ladder to climb into the oversized bed with oversized mattresses no more comfortable than before. How many years would you have to work to pay for this guest bedroom?

And what if we decided (shudder) to go back to the cave (1968) and purchase a house half the average size home people now buy?

Luxury living
in 1200 sq.ft.



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL HOME:

Space cost: 1200 sq.ft. x \$150 = \$180,000
 Lot, @30% = \$54,000
 Finance cost, with same payments as for 2400 sq.ft. house: 9 years = \$75,700
 Energy for space: \$180,000
 Subtotal: \$489,700
 Income tax on earnings to pay @25% = \$122,425

Total cost: \$612,125

SUPERSIZED HOME:

Space cost: 2400 sq.ft. x \$150 = \$360,000
 Lot, @30% = \$108,000
 Finance cost: 30 years = 1.28 = \$599,040
 Energy for space: \$360,000
 Subtotal: \$1,427,040
 Income tax on earnings to pay @25% = \$356,760

Total cost: \$1,783,800

A Supersized House costs 2.9 times as much.

The difference, over 30 years, is \$1,171,675.

That could pay for many years of vacation on a tropical island.
 That's also 40 years total income for a family earning \$30,000/year.

**Why kill ourselves to
over-consume?**



Savings with "Small Is Beautiful" homes are huge.

But cutting average house size in half is only a start.

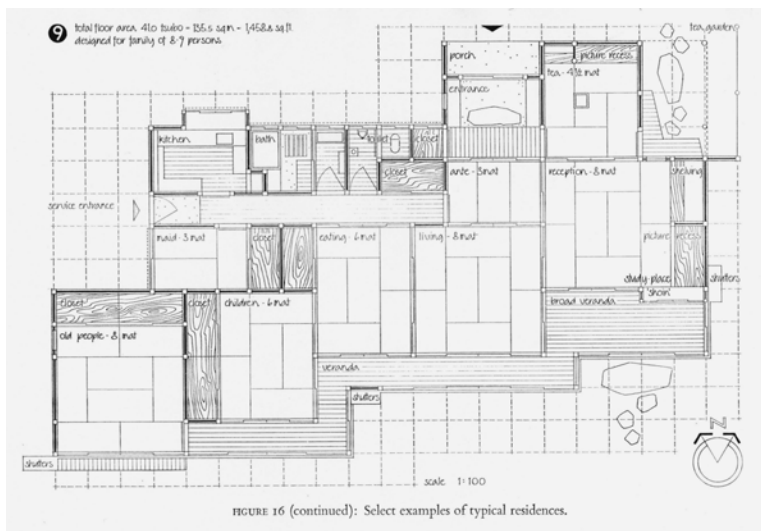
THINK EVEN SMALLER!

IKEA presents demonstration living spaces in their stores to show that we can live comfortably – not in 1200 square feet but in 590, or 375, or even 235 square feet!



And what happens when we not just downsize, but rethink our homes entirely?

Let's look at a Japanese house, in comparison:



This plan is of a rather large Japanese house, but it shows a number of common elements:

Each room has a storage space, and other storage and support spaces are grouped on the north side of the house.



The main rooms face to the south, for passive solar, and look into a garden.

The Japanese also heat people rather than the spaces - leaving the rooms open to the garden in the winter, wearing padded silk-insulated clothing, having heaters in the floor under their tables covered with quilts. We may not need to go to that extreme, but the example shows that small can be beautiful, inexpensive, and have wonderful soul.





Living spaces are on reed tatami mats, with floor sitting, removable tables, and beds that roll out on the floor.

This minimizes furnishing costs, and cuts number of rooms needed almost by two-thirds.



It also means that virtually every space can accommodate different uses. You can sit and talk, eat dinner, and go to bed in the same room.

Storage being accessed from the hall means it is accessible to any room being used.

This flexibility allows people to gather in a room facing a part of the garden that is particularly beautiful at the moment.

Or a west room can be used to capture the heat of the setting sun, or to be away from the morning sun.





Small doesn't need to mean SQUISHED!

Floor living can make a small space luxurious.



Small can be simple, but have heart!

Good storage and less "stuff" can eliminate costly square footage in a home.



Beds can go in low spaces, or be tucked into a window, or be a "bed-room" to comfortably curl up in to watch a movie.



SMALL CAN SAVE ENERGY, SAVE MONEY!



LOW-TECH RENEWABLE ENERGY HEATING SYSTEMS CAN WARM THE HEART AS WELL AS THE HOME.



COMPACT, HALF THE SQUARE FOOTAGE, 1-1/2 STORY, SUPER-INSULATED DESIGN REDUCES HEATING LOADS BY 80%



SOUTH WINDOWS, WITH TILE FLOORS, CAN BE AN INEXPENSIVE WAY TO HEAT A HOME.



ROOFTOP SOLAR WATER HEATERS AND SOLAR ELECTRIC PANELS CAN REPLACE REMAINING OUTSIDE POWER NEEDS.



A "COOL-BOX" RATHER THAN A REFRIGERATOR IS SILENT AND USES NO ENERGY.

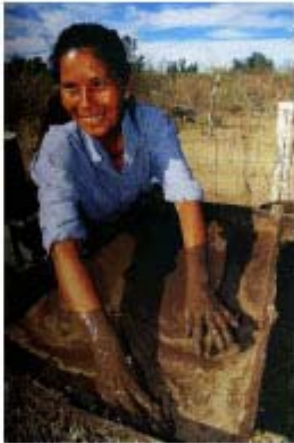
REPLACE A NORMAL REFRIGERATOR WITH A COOL BOX AND A COMPACT ENERGY-STAR UNDERCOUNTER FREEZER, (BELOW) AND REDUCE REFRIGERATION ENERGY USE BY 80%



WISE APPLIANCES SAVE IN MANY WAYS. HERE A CORNER TANK DUAL-FLUSH TOILET WITH HANDWASHING SINK IN THE LID.



And remember . . . HEART DOESN'T COST MONEY!



Bill and Athena Steen's "Houses that Sing" project showed the wonderful potential of owner-built clay plaster and ornament.



*We want homes, for our community,
that have hearts.*

*Putting love into a home doesn't
require money, only opportunity
and intention.*



Simple hand-painted designs can add a personal touch.



Native plant landscaping can grow a wonderful connection to the world around us and snuggle our homes into it.

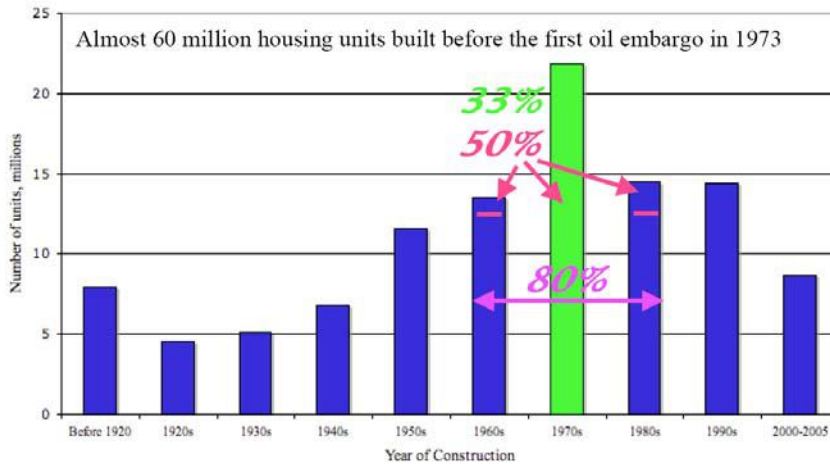


Humor in our homes? What a concept!

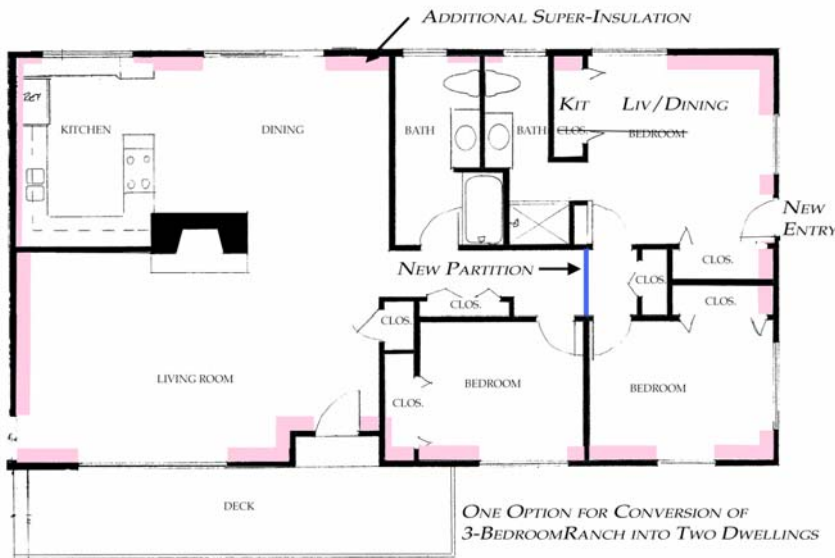


. . . and isn't tied to size.

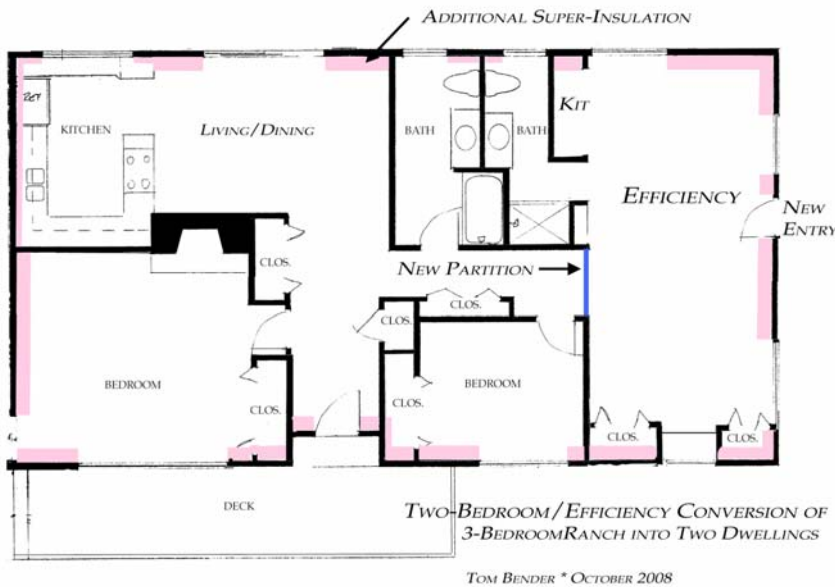
Creating smaller homes from our existing ones is easy!



Probably a third of our housing stock is 3-bedroom ranch houses. They are easy to retrofit for net-zero-energy, and can easily be partitioned into a duplex.



Here two one-bedroom units are created with just a hall partition.



Here a non-bearing partition is removed to make an efficiency, and the old living room partitioned into a bedroom for a two-bedroom unit.

And ALL can approach Net-Zero-Energy!