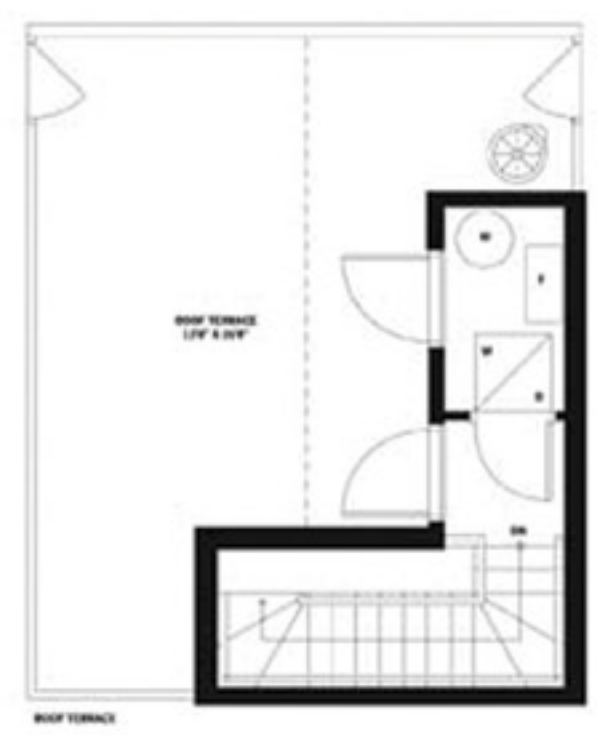


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Constructive Criticism: A 919-square-foot condo

Posted: September 12, 2009, 1:00 AM by Becky Guthrie
 Constructive Criticism, decor, design



Constructive Criticism is a regular feature in which three design experts analyze a home's layout.

Dee Dee Taylor Hannah operates Taylor Hannah Architect and is a partner in Montclair Construction:

The expansive porch is just begging for a swing to enjoy under the shade of the canopy. The only true problem is that you climbed a narrow stair after a wide porch and you must then squeeze into a tiny stair hall to enter your unit proper. Next, climb up this narrow stair and the arrival at the top is a half-accessible sliding closet and, seriously, a toilet. Someone needs to review these concepts prior to selling them. The powder room can slide over, nestled behind the kitchen so that the living/dining would be L-shaped and inviting. Keep on climbing, up to the true third floor, for two non-descript bedrooms and generic bathroom. Is the highlight supposed to be the crazy sliding closets? Wow, is this plan boring. Keep climbing and — to true delight — there is a roof terrace that's partially eaten up with a mechanical room housing a hot water heater, a furnace and a washer/dryer, which I would say is a rare combination. I hope the fresh laundry doesn't smell like gas at the end of the day, or that an innocent bystander doesn't get thrown down the stairs by the laundry door. Good luck to all.



Richard Librach is principal of his Toronto-based residential/commercial architectural firm:

The grandeur of exterior space at the expense of a lean interior layout! The generous covered entry porch — appropriate for our clime and answering to the often overlooked and much needed public/semi-public transition zone needs, might have wider stairs to “hang out” on, or an offset stair to provide undivided lounging space. The party-sized roof deck would look great with tons of planting and would be well-suited to an urban or rural lakeside setting. Wouldn't the laundry space be better located if some of the roof top were given over to a bedroom or a study? Eliminate bedroom two in favour of a slightly larger master, additional storage/linen space or even a look over to the living room below. Pull the entrance stair to the south so that the effort expended to get up to the unit is better rewarded with a more spacious landing that resolves coat-closet access. Tuck the powder room behind the kitchen, to create a larger and more open L-shaped space. Use the awkward leftover roof terrace nook to drop in a skylight, in order to brighten up the third-floor bath.



Yanic Simard is principal of Toronto Interior Design Group, specializing in residential and commercial projects:

With more than 65 stairs in this three-level townhome, there is no need to invest in a StairMaster. One of the challenges in this space is squeezing the living and dining experience into a 17x10-foot area. Eliminating the powder room and transforming this open space into a functional kitchenette would offer more room for entertaining. Knocking down the wall in front of the sink and building a sit-in peninsula will also create a better sense of flow throughout the entire main level. Use clear-glass pendant lights over the sit-in peninsula to create a focal point for gathering. In a small living space, the colours should work harmoniously to make the room appear larger. A tone-on-tone scheme in smoky grey and soft olive, with white ash wood accents would add character. In addition, the use of smaller furnishings with dual storage purposes, such as ottomans, a bed with built-in storage and wall shelves with decorative boxes and baskets will maximize the space. Use reflective materials like mirrors, chrome and glass to accessorize and create the illusion of more space. The rooftop terrace offers another great space for entertaining. Fill the space with comfortable and durable year-round patio furniture, trees and big potted plants positioned in the corners, as well as an infrared heater for cooler nights of the season.

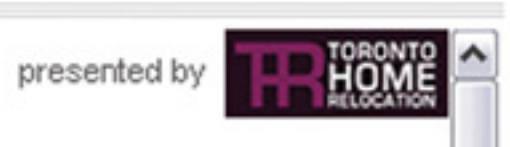


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