



Organized  
Rear Foyers:

**PROVIDING  
HASSLE-FREE**

# Take Offs

A drop zone provides a convenient spot for keys, mail, cell phones and laptops.

photo by Ken Guthrie

*Her Home* recently asked women what contributes stress to their daily lives at home. One of the most frequent replies was: “Getting my family out the door on time in the morning, with everything they need.” Another common response was simply: “Clutter.”

Thankfully, an organized rear foyer can de-stress take-offs *and* provide pleasant landings by eliminating clutter that may otherwise accumulate in the kitchen or family room. Because efficient, practical service entries are emphasized in all of Design Basics’ new home plans, *Her Home* asked two of the company’s designers, Carl Cuozzo and Marshall Wallman, to share their thoughts on these important areas.

“In smaller homes with limited space available, a simple bench with some cubbies above and a few coat hooks between is very popular,” Cuozzo begins. “We also include a drop zone somewhere near the garage entrance. Typically, a base cabinet that’s 36 inches wide, a drop zone provides a convenient spot to drop your car keys, sort mail, park your briefcase and recharge cell phones and digital cameras. It may include one or more locking cabinet doors or drawers for expensive items, such as a camcorder or notebook PC.”

“It’s a great place for emergency items, too – candles, flashlights, batteries and a battery-operated radio,” adds Wallman.

Extra space provides added options, such as including pet amenities. “I’ve designed several homes with dog centers in the rear entries,” notes Wallman. “They included a special space for a kennel under the cabinetry. In another home, I designed a built-in bench with an open space underneath for a kennel for a small Pekinese. It’s also nice to provide a hook for leashes, a drawer or tub for toys and a pullout in a cabinet for dog food.”

Marshall prefers not to include a pet shower in the rear foyer area. “If the shower is strictly for the pet, I like to put it in the garage where it doesn’t matter if the dog shakes off water, and a messy floor can be hosed down. A garage shower can be used as a boot wash as well. They now make sillcocks (outside water spigots) that mix hot and cold water. Of course, in colder climates, you may need to shut the water off in the winter.

“The rear foyer is also a good place for a message center of some kind,” Cuozzo adds. “Since everyone in the family



LEFT: The Wall Message Center from Diamond Cabinets provides a message board, hooks for keys and slots for mail or note paper – all neatly hidden behind a door on the side of the cabinet.

photo courtesy of Diamond® Cabinets

BELOW: Oak lockers provide a clean, finished look in this Craftsman-style home.

to leave an open space under a bench with a metal tray so the family can sit down to remove their shoes and then leave them under the bench.

“When the sky’s the limit, a pantry in the rear entry is a convenient spot for homeowners who like to stock up on paper goods, greeting cards and wrapping paper.”

Size restrictions aren’t the only things to consider while planning a rear entry. One important consideration is whether to make the storage closed or open. If the foyer is visible from the rest of the home or if guests will be using the entry, homeowners may prefer the formal look provided by a conventional closet or cabinet doors.

“I designed a home for a lady who wanted a dressy rear entry,” Wallman recalls. “She chose to have a coat closet for her and her husband’s wraps and, rather than a built-in drop zone and bench, she asked for enough open space for an antique bench and a chest of drawers with a mirror above it.”

“Families with children usually like to leave storage open because that’s more convenient,” Cuozzo observes.

“A row of open lockers or a bench and coat hooks are more popular with these folks than a single coat closet. Anything to make it easier for children to put their backpack where it belongs and hang up their coat. Opening a door and putting something on a hanger can seem like too much effort to a child. I’ve done several plans where I’ve designed a bench with a chalkboard above the bench and several lockers on each side.”

Whenever possible, it’s wise to keep the design flexible so that the area can change with the family and appeal to future homebuyers. “It’s probably a good idea not to customize cabinetry too much,” Cuozzo advises. “For instance, some people include spice drawers in their cabinets to keep smaller items sorted. But it may be more practical in the long run to choose regular drawers and then add dividers that can be removed or switched later. And, of course, it’s impor-

tant to remember that children grow – so allow space to raise coat hooks, or make sure cubbies are tall enough to accommodate longer coats.”

For those who want to maximize the efficiency of an existing space without built-in cabinetry, Chris Kroll, an interior designer in Omaha, Nebraska, who specializes in organizing and space planning, shares several options:

“ContainerStore.com has an amazing array of organizational products, including message boards, recycling bins and mail sorting wall units. HoldEverything.com offers a bench with a built-in shoe cabinet, a message center with coat hooks, and countless attractive baskets and boxes. Pottery Barn also has some very attractive benches and cubbies, which are available in black or white finishes.”

“Spending some extra time and money planning an efficient, well-organized rear foyer will save the entire family considerable stress for years to come,” concludes Cuozzo. ■

will probably use this entry, it’s the best place to leave notes so they aren’t missed. Families with young children enjoy blackboards. They’re easier to wipe clean than dry-erase boards and chalk doesn’t stain clothes. Bulletin boards with push pins work well with older kids, allowing parents to post soccer schedules or appointment reminder cards.”

“Including recycling bins in the rear foyer frees up space in the kitchen and saves steps when it’s time to put the recyclables out,” remarks Wallman. “One of my clients also put a paper shredder near the drop zone – so she could sort her mail, shred all of the credit card offers and toss them in the recycling bin, without ever bringing the junk mail into the rest of the home.

“Where extra space is available, a closet for the broom and vacuum, or even a central vacuum’s hoses, is a nice addition,” continues Wallman. “Some families request a shoe tower; others leave shoes in individual member’s cubbies or lockers. Another possibility is

“Spending some extra time and money planning an efficient, well-organized rear foyer now will save the entire family considerable stress for years to come.”



To view home plans with well-planned rear foyers, refer to pages 28-31.

