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CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Three design experts analyze this layout for a 584-sq.-ft. condominium



HEATHER DUBBELDAM
Architect



Planning a small space is often a challenge for traditional designers who are generally inclined to program too

much into a space. This is where a modernist wins out by taking a minimal approach. At 584 square feet, this condo unit is generally well-planned. The long wall of windows provides ample views and natural light. The generous balcony extends the living space in the warmer months, while offering a sense of privacy. The entrance door opens on an axis to a view outside, and storage space is maximized wherever possible. The kitchen is missing the work triangle that a larger space would afford, but incorporates an island counter for prep space. Moving the island away from the entrance would make it feel less crowded and improve first impressions. Lengthening the island and incorporating an overhang would make room for stool seating to enhance the sociability of the space. Bedroom wall space is in short supply, with two surface-mount sliding doors — a single pocket door would free up more wall space for furniture and art. The same principle applies to the washroom, where two pivoting doors tie up precious floor and wall space. Where space is at a premium, every inch counts.

Heather Dubbeldam is principal of Dubbeldam Design Architects in Toronto. Projects include modern residential, corporate and institutional architecture, interiors, landscape design and furniture design. dubbeldamarchitects.com

DEE DEE
TAYLOR HANNAH
Architect



Slip, sliding away ... no room for door swings, so let them slide. Very tough to enter into a kitchen island but having said

that, it is better than squeezing between a closet and a stacked washer/dryer machine as in most small apartments. We need to feel the full length of the unit, stopping three feet shy of the window wall. A fabulous sitting nook. Place closets and powder room in this three feet. On the opposite wall, create a kitchen wall two feet wide that completely closes itself off from the room. When the kitchen is in use, you see all the appliances; when not in use, linen resin bitold doors will close it off. Beside the kitchen is a wall-hung Murphy bed that flips down when you are sleeping and it makes the whole space an enchanted oasis versus a sleep cave of 10x11x9-feet-2-inches. The fun begins on the 6x22-ft. balcony, which faces south in South Beach Miami. After purchasing my fabulous food at Epicure Grocery and my shopping in Bal Harbour, I am lounging on my Kreiss chaise watching the waves.

Dee Dee Taylor Hannah operates Taylor Hannah Architect and is a partner in Montclair Construction. taylorhannaharchitect.com

JEFFREY DOUGLAS
Interior designer



All in all, this is an efficient plan, and when you are living in 584 square feet, you need every inch! One concern is that the

bathroom has no storage, and no opportunity for any. If, by moving the door forward, the bathroom incorporated the washer/dryer, and they were moved across to the other cupboard, the coat closet could be moved and open to the kitchen, incorporating the unused "niche" into a wider closet. This would free up some space for a linen closet in the washroom across from the toilet. I'd suggest the surface sliding doors would be better as full pocket doors that slide into the wall, so you have use of both sides of the wall. There is the cool look of exposed sliders, but I think that over-rides efficiency in many cases. It's a great wall for a wall-mounted TV in the living area. I wonder where these planners shop for furniture! In "cook/live/dine," there would be standing room only for dining. Instead of the island, I'd offer a longer counter-height dining table/island counter with stools that tucked fully under. What better way to get your guests dicing and chopping (and sampling)!

Jeffrey Douglas, head of Toronto's Douglas Design Studio, creates homes that make unique statements for the owners, tightly integrating architecture, interior design and decoration. douglasdesignstudio.com