

# Building Scene

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BILL DRESLER/staff photographer

Wood frames help make this Gothic-style window appear even taller than it is. The panels alone weigh 700 pounds and carry an \$11,000 price tag.

## Little need for window cover-ups

By Louise Okrutsky  
staff writer

With longer windows and higher ceilings bringing more light and space into a house, it's an anomaly to hang heavy draperies.

Many people use sheers to offer some privacy while allowing in light, but some windows still need more cover than others.

"You have to take into consideration the view and privacy needs," said Margie Cockle, interior designer/owner of Interiors by Margie

Cockle in Birmingham. "People are leaving windows blank. That's totally acceptable in the proper situation."

For instance, subdivisions with more trees offer a certain amount of built-in privacy for homeowners.

SOMETIMES DESIGNS pose a challenge to combine practically and style. Many houses are designed with a bank of windows over the tub in the master bath.

"They look wonderful in a model home, but it's pretty impractical,"

said interior designer Linda Shears of Modern Studio of Interiors, Birmingham.

Impractical maybe, but architects evidently like them.

"I like spa tubs with windows around it to accent the tub. Usually I like to put windows there. You can see out and beyond," said Ron Myers, a Plymouth-based architect.

Fine, if the nearest neighbors are a comfortable distance away. Those with less elbow room might want to take a cue from Myers' own residence. He installed thin shades that can be left open to accent the woodwork and closed to provide privacy.

Shears solves the problem with soft shades draped from the top of the window or shutters.

SHUTTERS ARE Cockle's favorite way to cover a large window. Shutters come with vertical or horizontal wooden slats. Cockle favors a horizontal slat for a long window, but leaves a curved window uncovered. Vertical shutters would succeed in making the windows look even larger in a room.

For a contemporary look, vertical blinds are an easy, appealing solu-

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## Glass note

### Huge windows, tall ceilings combine for impressive results

By Louise Okrutsky  
staff writer

Dramatic entrances and lavish exits are being played out on life's most intimate stage, the home. Windows are bigger and ceilings are higher as owners and builders attempt to bring the outdoors inside.

Custom homes are becoming more dramatic," said Northville-based builder Frank A. Bauss.

The trend toward studio ceilings, some 15 to 20 feet high, opened the way for windows in exotic shapes.

"People want more glass and bigger windows," Bauss said.

LARGE WINDOWS aren't confined to the entryway. Custom builders are paying attention to the rear of the house, opening it to the back yard by using walls of glass.

"People want that 'out' feeling," said Rita Bennett, outside sales representative for Pella Windows in the Farmington-Farmington Hills-Northville- Novi area. "They don't want to be cooped up. People are spending more time at home."

Ten years ago, custom houses featured at least one patio door and a set of smaller windows. Clients in those recessionary days worried about energy efficiency and price.

"The cost has been prohibitive," said Livonia-based architect Walter Melonio. "In 1976, everything was economical. We did box rooms at \$30 a square foot. But it seems when we come out of a recession, then the emphasis on quality and the amount of glass increases."

MELONIA OFFERS as an example the house he designed for Cambridge Construction Corp. in Singh Development's Pleasant Hills subdivision, Northville.

The red brick house has 108 window units. Over the front door is a majestic, Gothic style window. Wood frames help make the window appear even taller than it truly is. The panels alone weigh 700 pounds and carry an \$11,000 price tag. Designed as one unit, the front entrance, wooden sidelights and glass cost \$75,000.

Approximately 25 years ago, it would have been tough to find such a window within the price range of that development, \$350,000-\$750,000.

"YEARS AGO a curved top was a specialty item," said Ron Myers, a Plymouth-based architect. "Now so

**'I've had houses with over \$60,000 in windows alone. You could buy a house for that money.'**

—Frank A. Bauss  
builder

many shapes are available. Your imagination can run wild."

Pella and Andersen manufacture a variety of shapes, according to Bauss. Pella will custom make windows to any shape a homeowner and architect can agree upon.

In addition to the popular curved top windows, architects are stacking casement windows to achieve a wall of glass. Mutton bars, those bars of wood dividing the glass and giving it a cory appearance, present another option.

"Many times windows are made to fit the pitch of the roof and suit the design of the house," Bauss said. "It's expensive."

CASINGS AND moldings are custom-made separately to fit the window. One piece of molding for a curved window can cost \$150, according to Bauss. In one house in Harbor Springs, built by Bauss, the custom grills and casing for a window cost \$1,700. His custom houses are in the \$350,000-\$900,000 range.

"I've had houses with over \$60,000 in windows alone," he said. "You could buy a house for that money."

They're spending more money on windows, but buyers still want energy efficiency. The air infiltration rate and the R-factor remain as the two variables most buyers study before choosing windows, according to Bennett.

Air infiltration factor, the amount of air seeping into the house, shouldn't be as high or higher than the R-factor, which measures the window's capacity to retain heat.

Windows that are designed to be opened, and thus aren't sealed, allow more air into the house, according to Melonio. He estimates monthly heating bills for the 4,000-square-foot house that features the expansive use of glass at the entrance at \$200-\$250.

SKYLIGHTS AREN'T as popular as they once were.

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## Let there be (the right blend of) light

(AP)—Lighting can do more than keep darkness away.

Judiciously chosen and placed, it can enhance your home's appearance by altering shape and color, dramatizing its advantages and minimizing its disadvantages. Lighting can also increase working efficiency and create a healthier environment for you and your family. Here are some tips:

An average-size room usually needs four or five light sources. In a room where dark-colored walls and upholstery absorb light, you may need more lamps or higher wattage bulbs.

Choose lampshades according to the effect you want to create. An opaque shade, which produces a strong pattern of up and down light, is more decorative than practical. If you want cheerful, soft even light that you can read by, select a shade made of light-diffusing fabric, plastic or paper.

Avoid narrow-topped shades as the heat from the confined bulbs deteriorates the shades.

To achieve harmony in a room, keep the tops of table and floor lamps at the same level and use shades that are similar in style and fabric.

To reduce eye strain:

- If you use a floor lamp for reading, place it slightly behind you either to the left or the right of your shoulder. With a table lamp, line up the base with your shoulder about 20 inches to the left or right of the center of your reading matter. Make sure the bottom of the lampshade is above eye level; a lower one restricts the light that falls on your book or newspaper.

- Install dimmers for flexible mood lighting. Bright lights stimulate activity while dim lights are more conducive to relaxation.

- To create a warm, intimate atmosphere, substitute small pools of light for general lighting.

In addition to lamps and ceiling fixtures, consider:

- Accent lighting to emphasize specific details in a room such as paintings or decorative objects.

- Cornice lighting that casts light downward over a wall.

- Track lighting that provides flexibility in directing beams of light. The track can be mounted on a ceiling or a wall.

- Uplights that accent objects above them. The soft, diffuse light comes from canister-type lighting fixtures placed on the floor.

- Valance lighting to provide a wash of light downward over draperies and upward over a ceiling from a special window valance.

- Wall sconces to bounce light off the ceiling or walls or to light an object.

- Wall washers to direct beams of light at the wall, expanding the feeling of space in a room. They can be recessed, surface-mounted, or on a track.

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