

## WALLS, WINDOWS AND TREATMENTS

**Windows, doors, walls and openings physically and visually relate and connect spaces, allowing the penetration of light, flow of ventilation and passage from one space to another enhancing our interior and exterior living spaces.**

Little regard is given to window selections in the early stages of home design selections. Aesthetically, window and door selections contribute to the overall health of the building and “make or break” its visual appeal.

The most expensive, “palatial” home designs can appear clumsy, ordinary and incoherent when incorrect window selections are applied. Similarly the most inexpensive, basic home designs can be greatly enhanced by the introduction of appropriately select beautiful doors and windows.

It is essential that each window and door be selected strictly in accordance with the function of the room in which it will be contained physically and environmentally enhancing both the interior and exterior.

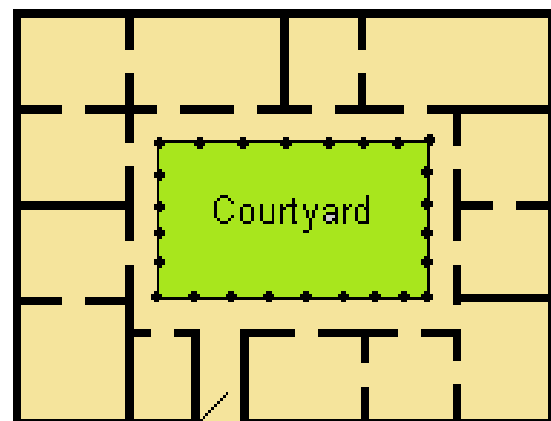
## DEVELOPMENT OF WINDOWS

In the Mediterranean tradition, early **Greek** and **Roman** domestic architecture was generally in the form of courtyard houses with external walls being solid and windowless to eliminate heat and cold and discourage intruders.

Light and ventilation of the interior was achieved by interior walls opening into uncovered central courtyards which became gardens for vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs and in many cases small domesticated animals took refuge from foxes and thieves. The courtyard was surrounded by cloisters (covered walkways) to allow passage to connecting living, service and sleeping areas.

These houses are called courtyard houses of which there are few examples in Australia. They are cool, private and secure compared to current mass produced Australian housing solutions

Openings were often covered with solid timber or woven grass louvres providing protection from the hot sun allowing ventilation and privacy.



Plan of Basic Courtyard House

**Medieval fortified** domestic architecture in colder climates incorporated small, vertical narrow lancet openings to allow minimal heat loss and protection from intruders and attackers. Medieval interiors were generally damp, cold, poorly ventilated and dark.

The advent of glazing, chimneys and peace changed the problems generally associated with earlier domestic buildings.

## GLAZING

Interior and exterior spaces should be evenly illuminated, without glare, dark spots and over heating and cooling.

The recommended minimum glazing required for optimum illumination is 10 - 20 percent minimum of the floor area of each room.

There are many glazing options available for domestic use.

Glazing types vary and are determined by the manufacturing process which may be float, drawn, toughened, laminated and wired.

**Float glass** being distortion free is the most commonly used in building today and the manufacturing process is as the name suggests.

The glass is floated along the surface of a molten tin bed and can be 2.5 mm to 25mm in thickness.

However, float glass being free from imperfection, may be obvious when placed next to sheet glazing having imperfections in older architecture.

To some traditionalists, the beauty of older glazing used in early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings was that it was handmade with imperfections.

**Sheet glass** may have imperfections and be regarded as aesthetically inferior. Sheet glass is used extensively for windows and walls where safety is not an issue.

**Toughened glass** is 5 to 7 times stronger than normal glazing and when broken will fracture into very small

fragments. Toughened glazing is generally used in areas which may have a safety consideration such as full length windows and glass panel doors in domestic and public buildings.

**Laminated glass** is two sheets bonded to a central membrane adding strength and sound absorption qualities.

Glass lamination is a built-in safety component for large windows installed in commercial, domestic and public spaces and used when size, safety, noise, privacy and environmental issues are a concern. Laminated glass may be used extensively in furniture design and home accessory applications such as shower screens, walls, floors, splash backs and glazed walls and partitions.

Excellent state of the art glazing options providing instantaneous opaque privacy using electrical currents and reflective glass containing body heat in the home interior are now available.

**Wired glass** was used extensively before the introduction of toughened safety glass.

Wire was placed into sheet glass during manufacture to add strength and minimize glass splinters developing when broken.

Wired glazing is still available and a relatively inexpensive option to more expensive toughened and laminated glazing.

## SELECTING GLAZING

Other types of glazing to those previously mentioned are manufactured to reflect and absorb heat and reduce glare and may be ceramic coated producing various

colour and patterns providing privacy and variety.

Glazing selections should be considered as follows:-

- Clear, tinted, coloured or translucent glazing for privacy with optimum illumination;
- Cost;
- Heat and glare resistance;
- Safety; and
- Decorative quality.

With the introduction of sophisticated machinery and technology, glass merchants are now able to manufacture large panels of glazing in various thickness and toughness to accommodate any situation.

The appealing reflective quality of glass can also enhance interior and exterior spaces throughout the home and garden providing illusionistic space and reflected light.

Glazing is a major component of contemporary architecture and interiors and used wisely will not only enhance your home, can reduce the need for unnecessary heating and cooling fixtures and ongoing maintenance other wall finishing materials may impose.

## SELECTING WINDOWS

Windows frames are available in timber, steel or aluminium in a variety of finishes to include pre-painted, varnished, oiled, powder coated, natural finishes or a combination of colours and faux timber finishes complimenting interior and exterior finishes of the home.

Windows are available in a variety of qualities from domestic budget to commercial quality.

Select style to correspond with building aesthetics, frames, glass, function, size, security and aesthetic quality should and not price alone.

The cost of windows may be determined by the quality of glass and frame, the number of accessories such as locking systems, locking components allowing easy cleaning and maintenance, wind and debris brushes, colour of glass, colour and finish of frame, degree of tinting and ultra violet protection.

Generally the more expensive windows have higher standard design criteria and built-in accessories as above.

Early research into the many types of windows and finishes available and costs can save money and long term discomfort ultimately.

Whether traditional or contemporary, well designed architecture can include large or small, well positioned numerous windows, doors and openings appropriate to the building style.

When designing to budget, we can dispense of expensive unnecessary over decorative windows treatments by selecting appropriate windows and doors.

Should your living environment necessitate drapes, keep them inexpensive, simple and easily maintainable.

It may be wise for occupants to reside within the home for twelve months with

basic treatments such as blinds prior to purchasing additional decorative window treatments.

Well resolved architecture, doors and windows should harmonize visually and physically with the environment excluding unnecessary heat and light, cold winds and intruders providing warmth, security, well-being and contentment.

To sit and contemplate the world outside on a winter's day within a warm, well designed naturally illuminated space gives us a sense of physical security and emotional well-being.

Windows are an essential component of architecture and care should be exercised not to negate their function.

Whether a seaside vista a beautiful garden or courtyard use appropriately located, well selected doors, windows and window treatments.



**Bird's eye view demonstrating ventilation**

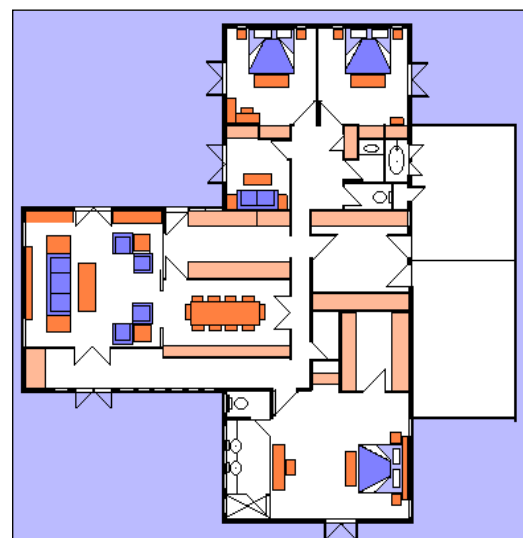
## WINDOW LOCATIONS

As previously discussed, the location of windows has a profound impact on the environmental quality of a room. In the past, home owners were quick to cover window treatments restricting light, ventilation and views beyond.

Many window treatments were "fixed" or "steamed" to avoid movement thus excluding any possibility of the window being opened for fresh air and sunlight.

Unfortunately, tight building budgets provide for one minimal sized window and door only within a room, or even worse, one sliding window/door externally and one door internally providing little ventilation if any at all.

For optimum ventilation, the positioning of windows and doors are best when directly opposite allowing cross air flow and balanced light.



**House plan showing location of Walls, Doors, Openings and Windows**

The previous house plan demonstrates that adjoining rooms provide little cross ventilation with the exception of the living room having the potential for cross ventilation through French doors located directly opposite.

Also, natural light from one direction only can be disturbing creating shadows and diminishes our sense of equilibrium causing irritation and fatigue.

Adjoining bedrooms in the demonstration plan negate balanced light and cross ventilation requiring the addition of artificial air flow and illumination.

Light reflective wall colours and mirrors opposite windows will assist in retaining existing illumination enhancing the interior but ventilation will always be problematic. In this case double hung or clerestory windows would be preferable allowing ventilation at ceiling height.

Size and location of windows is critical for optimum comfort, utilization of solar energy and energy conservation. Higher windows provide better illumination and heat dissipation than those at lower levels.

Windows allow the visual enjoyment of adjacent internal and external spaces in any weather condition. Visual disconnection from other spaces for a period of time can impose a feeling of segregation and confinement.

Windows allow the penetration of direct or indirect light, warm sun and fresh air into rooms in cold climates and allow the dissipation of hot stale air from overheated spaces.

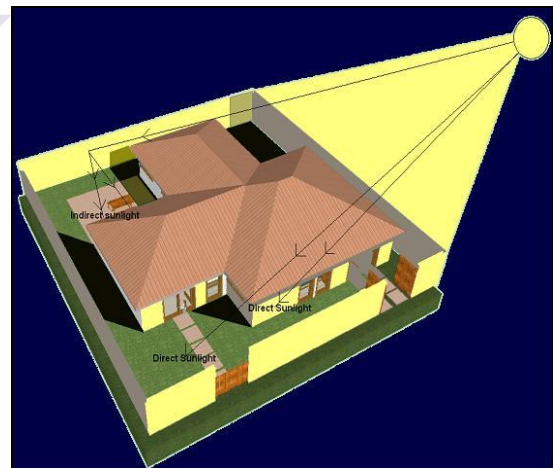
Windows may be fixed or opening, traditional or contemporary, large or small clear or opaque incorporating

additional benefits such as insect screens, locking systems to help combat security, tinting to control sun and heat and double glazing for noise reduction.

Prior to selecting windows, the above issues should be considered bearing in mind that the requirements for window selections will differ from room to room.

Incorrect window selections may result in expensive unnecessary additions later such as internal or external blinds, curtains, security, air-conditioning, heating, insect protection and window tinting.

If doubtful, consult a solar energy professional, architect or interior designer to help resolve window locations.



Direct and Indirect Sunlight

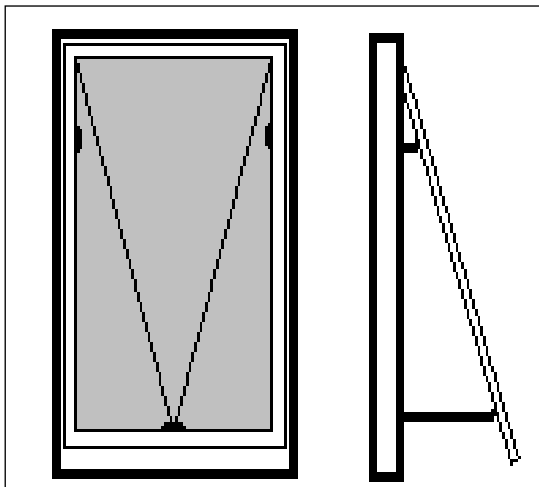
## WINDOW TYPES

**Awning** - are hinged at the top opening outward providing ventilation without rain penetration.

Awning windows can collect dust easily and the opening capacity can be limited without stay-supports.

Locking stays and safety glazing can provide resistance to burglar entry and protect children from falling if windows are fitted to upper floors.

Fly screens can be internally fixed but cleaning may be difficult above ground floor level.



Front and side elevation of awning window

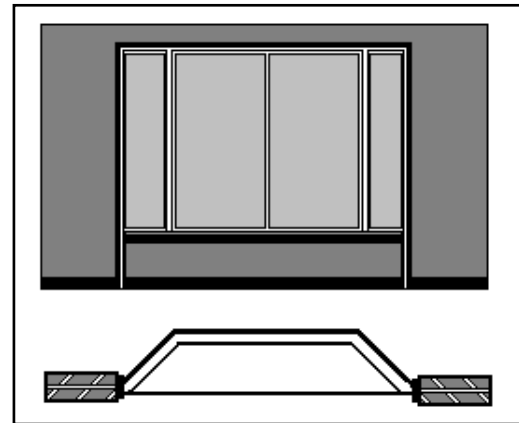
However, commercial and domestic quality awning windows are available with reversible hinges allowing easy cleaning. Awning windows may be hazardous when installed in traffic flow areas opening onto pathways and passageways.

**Bay** – project from the building with three to six panels incorporating various window types ensuring adequate illumination and ventilation.

Bay windows may incorporate awning, sliding, casement or double hung or a combination of all.

The most advantageous aspect of the bay windows is 180 degree views and additional interior space.

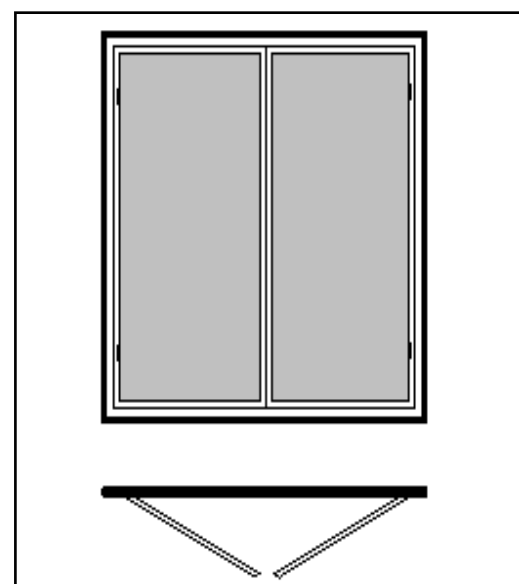
The inclusion of a box bay seat within the window provides an ideal position for reading or contemplation on a cold day and much needed additional storage.



Elevation and plan of bay window

**Casement** – are often in pairs hinged on the side to the window frame.

These windows are affectionately referred to as "picture windows" because of their vertical proportions and the ability to open fully, therefore framing the view without interference.



Elevation and plan of casement window

Windows can be opened by hand, wand or winder. An extended version of the casement is called the "French Door" or "French Window".

Breezes can be manipulated through interiors by opening either window light or panel according to the prevailing wind.

Windows can be cleaned easily from the interior and exterior and they are generally easier to open than the double-hung.

However, casement windows may intrude into adjacent spaces and can be dangerous if opening into passages.

Fly screens can be hinged, cavity concealed, magnetized or sliding onto the wall when not required.

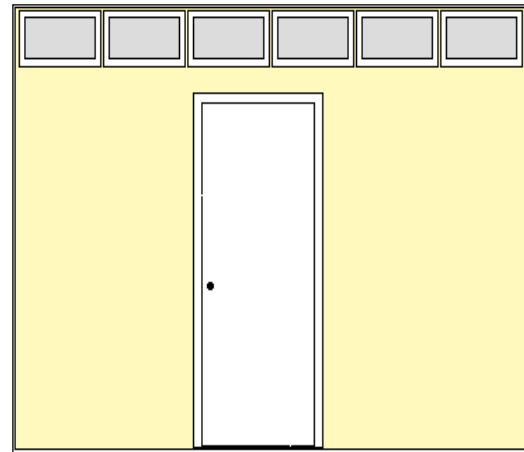
**Clerestory** – are generally awning and mounted well above floor level, usually at ceiling level, to allow light penetration and ventilation with privacy and weather protection.

Clerestory windows are unsuitable installed on hot aspects without the protection of eaves, solar reflective glazing or window treatments.

Windows and treatments may be adjusted by hand with extension rods, winders or mechanized systems accessible from floor level.

Windows are difficult to clean because of their location and when installed in wind vulnerable aspects can leak and whistle.

However, selecting good quality windows may overcome the aforementioned problems.

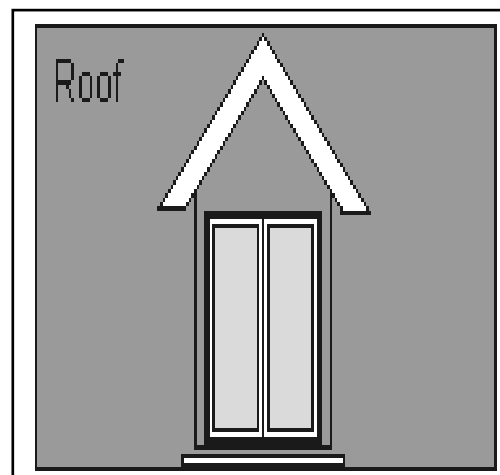


Elevation of clerestory window

**Dormer** – are integral to the roof and generally casement in style but may be sliding, double hung and awning.

Providing headroom within the roof space they are an excellent source of roof ventilation and natural light.

Dormer windows are used in attics and have gable roofs common to the "Cape Cod" or "Hampton's" architectural styles



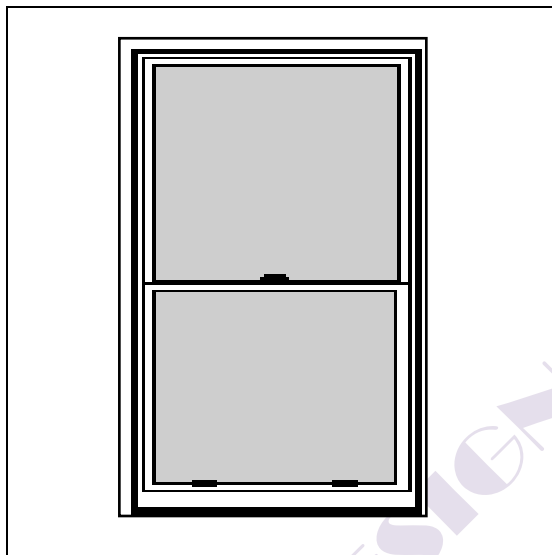
Elevation of dormer window

**Double hung** - slide vertically, opening top and bottom and have "sashes" with weights, springs or friction stays within a single frame.

Double hung windows are usually regarded as elegant because of their vertical proportions, especially when large and narrow.

Quality windows are generally manufactured from timber but are available also in aluminium and steel to minimize maintenance.

Timber double hung windows, like most timber windows, can stick or jam because of atmospheric moisture variation or surface contamination.



**Elevation of double hung window**

Avoid painting tracks as this may cause resistance when opening.

Double hung windows are excellent for ventilation generally, particularly in toilets and laundries providing fresh air through the lower opening and the dissipation of hot stale air through the top opening.

Adjustable locking systems are available allowing ventilation and security when residents are absent from the home and protection at night.

When installed above ground floor level they can, however, be difficult to clean externally from the inside as only half the window can be opened at any time.

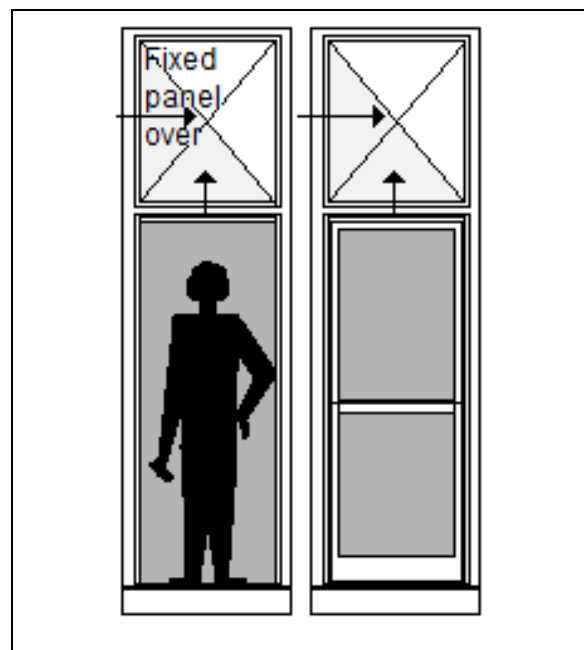
Should cleaning be an issue it is recommended that panels be removable.

Double hung windows are generally more expensive, area for area, compared to other window types.

Vision may be impeded by horizontal frames or mullions between the sashes especially when open.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Victorian architects installed large, magnificently proportioned double hung windows as doors, allowing egress to balconies and terraces.

Both lights were raised into a cavity recess above the window providing unimpaired access and egress as demonstrated below.



**Victorian double hung window/door**



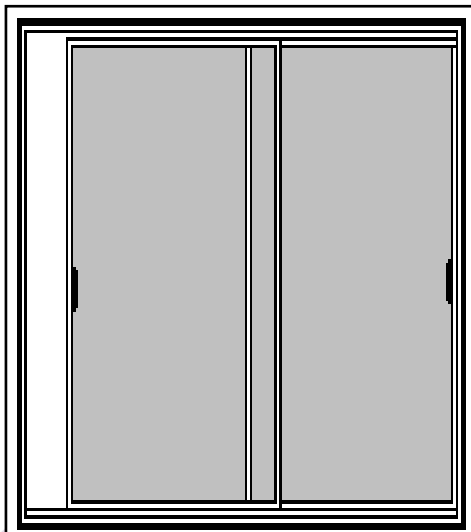
The inclusion of full height double hung windows today, although extremely beautiful, would be a challenge to any budget.

**Horizontal sliding** - aluminium or steel framed with two or three panels generally regarded as less elegant than double hung, but having the same advantages and disadvantages.

Opening and closing may be noisy as sashes slide in tracks on rollers.

Tracks may become obstructed with debris and salt if seaside, making operation difficult and irritating.

Horizontal sliding windows, when large, double as doors to minimize building costs by eliminating additional windows.



Elevation horizontal sliding window/door

When clean, it can be difficult to detect whether doors are opened or closed and may be dangerous. Injuries from such events can be horrendous and have been fatal.

Safety regulations stipulate that all glazed doors be manufactured from toughened safety glass and markings on glass are recommended to minimize accidents.

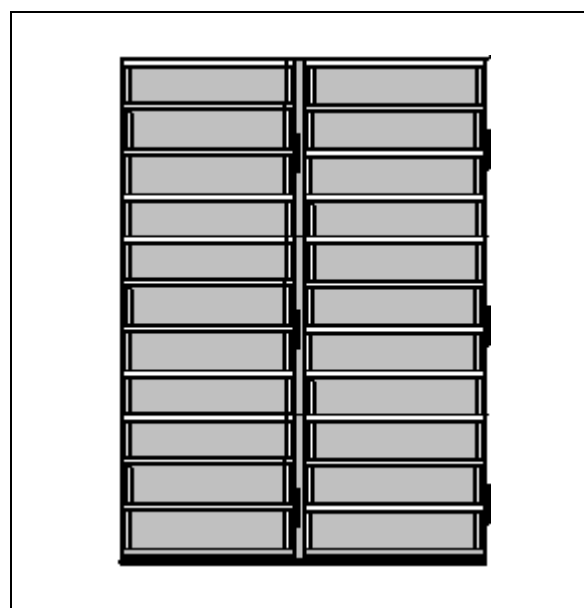
It may be difficult selecting appropriate window treatments as continuous passage of house dwellers, including animals, can soil and damage window treatments.

It is highly recommended that all window draperies fitted to sliding doors be kept well back from the window frame to eliminate the aforementioned problems.

Window panels should be removable for maintenance and general cleaning of tracks.

**Jalousie** are generally known as "Louvre" having numerous, horizontal, narrow slats.

They are arduous to clean, but allow excellent ventilation providing rain protection.



Elevation of a jalousie window

Louvres may be glazed, timber, aluminium or steel and an ideal alternative to traditional glazed windows in hot climates enclosing verandahs.

Powder coated louvres are available in many colours and provide when open, good vision, sun reflection and privacy simultaneously.

In hot climates, louvers are an excellent window and somewhat under estimated because of previous, but now non existent limitations

**Skylights** - are roof/ceiling mounted windows used mainly where illumination is limited and the installation of additional windows difficult.

If awning, skylights can allow heat dissipation but are difficult to weatherproof and clean.

Skylights are not recommended for use in hot climates and aspects without the inclusion of alternative sun protection.

There are many varieties available being vented and insect proof and provide convenient solutions for difficult lighting situations in habitable and non-habitable rooms.

**Picture** – are single light, non-adjustable, non ventilating windows entirely for viewing without obstruction.

The larger the window the thicker and tougher the glazing thus picture windows can, if oversized, be expensive.

## VENTILATION

Good ventilation is subtle and adequate allowing the dissipation of stale hot air and introduction of clean fresh air simultaneously.

Optimum ventilation is achieved when doors and/or windows are placed opposite, whether windows are vertical or horizontal in proportion.

Optimum ventilation of a room requires two or more openings within the room either in the form of the following:-

- 2 x 1 light windows;
- 1 light window and 1 light door;
- 1 x window or door with two adjustable openings such as a double hung window.

Difficulties with ventilation may arise when air movement is restricted by the following:-

- Openings against continuous heavy winds. This problem may also effect evaporative air conditioning;
- Excessive air flow through the house;
- Obstacles such as walls, trees, shrubbery, partitions etc;
- Angle at which the air enters and leaves the room; and
- Three sided spaces such as outdoor eating areas.

**The emphasis placed on window and door selections cannot be underestimated.**

Unfortunately, because of contemporary Australian building by-laws and local council regulations and unqualified home designers, houses

have become stereotyped and formulated with an abundance of incorrectly selected windows.

Throughout Australia many beautiful homes are victims of poor window selections requiring expensive window treatments resulting in budget blowouts and ongoing maintenance.

During the home design concept stage, consider the function of the room, the aspect of the house, the aesthetics of the exterior and interior, and the overall aesthetic contribution of window and door selections.

Consult your architect, builder or interior designer for assistance with selections if in doubt or overwhelmed.

An hour with a specialist home or interior designer is an hour well spent and may save additional unnecessary costs in the long term.

When the budget is minimal, it may be advantageous to redistribute your budget elsewhere allowing a little more for window selections and less on expensive, unnecessary interior finishes.

## VENTILATION PROBLEMS

Poor home orientation, low ceilings, horizontal aluminium sliding windows, unsuitable windows treatments and foliage surrounding buildings and obstructing walls all contribute to inadequate ventilation.

Lack of circulating fresh air may contribute to fatigue, tiredness, respiratory problems, headaches and encourage bacterial and mould growth.

With adequate, healthy ventilation we live and sleep well feeling more alert and refreshed.

To ensure good ventilation, orientate the house to prevailing breezes excluding permanent draughts. Locate doors and windows directly opposite if possible picking up and manipulating breezes gently through the home.

## WALLS

Walls govern room shape, size and privacy.

They can be structural, shaped, decorative, thick or thin, transparent, insulating, movable or free-standing and may include windows, doors, and openings, built in furniture and storage components.

Walls help determine the atmosphere of a room or space as follows:-

- Rooms tend to be more formal when walls are symmetrical and regular, giving a sense of order and classicism;
- Diagonally shaped walls are dynamic and active and prompt movement and interaction; and
- Smooth plastered walls are passive if painted accordingly and tactile and interesting when textured.

Uniformity and continuity of material, form and colour internally and externally are critical design selection issues.

However, a multiplicity of wall finishes, colour and irregularity may threaten

spatial harmony creating oppression and confusion.

Variety of wall shapes, heights, finishes and colour can create dynamism when used intelligently and in moderation.

The degree of durability and maintenance depends entirely on the quality and structure of the wall and surface finish.

**Masonry, timber** and **tiles** are durable and show less dirt and, being tougher than other finishes, are less likely to deteriorate

**Masonry walls** retain their appearance reducing short term and long maintenance programs. Masonry walls are insulating, sound absorbing and fire resistant and can be natural stone and brick, plastered or painted.

**Timber** walls can be extremely appealing and durable but may be expensive depending on the selected timber.

If the preferred finish is painted timber, select an inexpensive hardwood to avoid movement and splitting thus losing the appeal of painted timber.

**Fine plastered, painted walls** chip and are prone to finger marks and polishing when cleaned or exposed to rubbing and scuffing.

**Painted walls** may be any of the above excluding tiles. Paints are available in water, oil and solvent base and can be flat, satin, low sheen or high-gloss finishes.

Ask your local paint supplier to recommend the paint type suitable for your particular situation.

If in doubt, paint specifications may be obtained from the Painters Registration Board, registered painters, architects and interior designers for reference and inclusion in your painting project.

Ensure that painters are registered with the Painter's Registration Board in your State.

**Glass walls** are dynamic, allowing excellent illumination and spectacular views to the garden and beyond. But when incorrectly orientated can be troublesome and may become excessively hot in summer and winter and dirty requiring constant cleaning.

## WALL FINISHES GENERALLY

Wall claddings are available in a variety of finishes namely timber, fabrics, paper, vinyl, hardboards, plasterboard and plastic sheeting.

It may be wise to consult an interior design specialist for assistance with selections as types and characteristics are many, varied and costly.

Application of wall claddings generally requires the services of a specialist tradesperson adding to the cost.

There are many beautiful wall papers available for all rooms of the home and in particular, children's bedrooms.

Wall papers may be difficult to find and purchase and often only available through boutique supply outlets ordered by quantity (*indent*) from overseas countries.

If your budget allows the inclusion of beautiful wall claddings, be careful to select the appropriate type for the

room function and suitability to the age of the occupier.

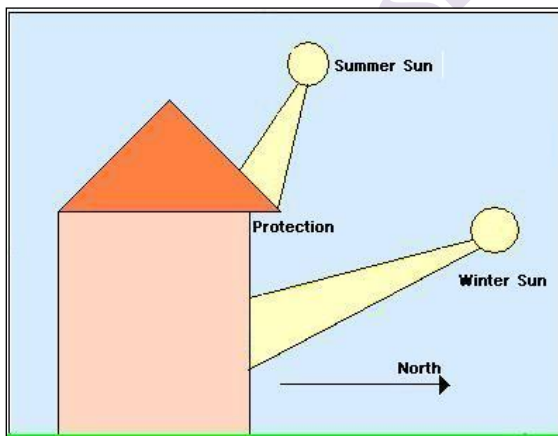
Consider easily cleaned vinyl for children's bedrooms and family rooms and leave the more delicate and precious wall coverings such as silks for formal rooms and master bedrooms.

## SOLAR ENERGY AND ORIENTATION

The earth rotates and tilts on its axis. In Australia, the days are longer in summer, radiating approximately fourteen hours of daylight with the sun appearing higher in the sky.

In winter the days are shorter radiating approximately eleven hours of daylight with the sun appearing lower in the sky.

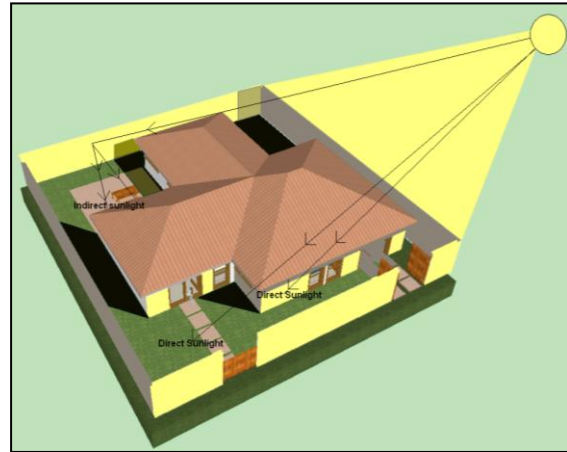
This natural occurrence results in dramatic environmental changes within our homes and gardens.



Winter and summer sun angles

Habitable and adjoining non-habitable service rooms and exterior spaces, having different functions at various times of the day, should relate to sun

orientation according to household timetables and room occupation.



Bird's eye view showing illumination of house at various times of the day

For example, to waken to the morning sun in winter can ensure our wellbeing for the remainder of the day but, to waken to a cold, dark room in winter makes it almost impossible to arise from a warm bed without feeling grumpy and resentful for the rest of the morning, if not the day.

**Bedrooms** welcome early morning sun in winter but require morning sun protection in summer. Therefore, bedrooms are best located facing east or south east if morning sunlight is a priority.

As the angle of the sun in summer is greater, the addition of eaves can ensure protection from the heat. Without eaves, other forms of protection may be applied such as deciduous trees and vegetation covering pergolas, external shades or internal sun reflective blinds.

**Family rooms** are generally used throughout the day from mid morning to late afternoon and into the night.

Family rooms are best facing north/west to ensure penetration of warm sun in winter months but requiring protection from the hot sun in summer months.

Heat and direct sun protection would be in the form of wide eaves to a width of approximately 1.5 metres, covered pergolas, solar shades, window tinting or sun reflecting blinds or a combination of any.

**Formal living rooms** are seldom used except for entertaining visitors to the home on rare special occasions. If used regularly for casual living the above recommendations for family rooms would apply.

Formal living areas not requiring passive solar benefits may be best located on lesser appealing aspects of the home freeing up other aspects for more important family and private rooms.

Rooms most commonly used are best located on the north/west aspect (southern hemisphere) for winter sun penetration and heat, reducing the need for additional heating facilities.

In colder climates, south facing windows may be smaller with insulating windows treatments to limit heat loss however, the introduction of window treatments can also impair, and in some cases, completely obliterate views and ventilation

**Kitchens** more so than other service rooms require natural illumination and ventilation throughout the day and night and are best located having two or three aspects such as east/north or north/west or east/north/west providing good illumination early morning to late afternoon.

Food preparation areas need as much natural light and ventilation as possible to minimize unhealthy bacterial infestations on cutting and food serving surfaces.

Preparation surfaces such as cutting boards casually wiped with damp cloths stored overnight in dark storage spaces are havens for the spread of many types of bacteria.

Fresh air and sunshine are the main ingredients for healthy food preparation areas, so keep preparation areas and surfaces exposed and well ventilated.

**Service areas** such as laundries, bathrooms and storage facilities may not require as much illumination as the aforementioned but adequate ventilation is essential.

Without hesitation, we are quick to install additional artificial lighting, drying and ventilation appliances without thinking about the long term consequences such as the environmental impact and cost.

Almost every laundry in Australia will have a dryer and ceiling exhaust fan, an ongoing costly reaction to an initially easily resolvable problem. Had thought been applied to window selections and ventilation or lack of it, these problems would not have been an issue.

Undoubtedly, the most effective window for ventilation is the double hung allowing vertical air flow through top and bottom openings, ideal for bathrooms, toilets and laundries.

Integral locking systems allow double hung windows to be left open whilst residents are out for the day or evening.

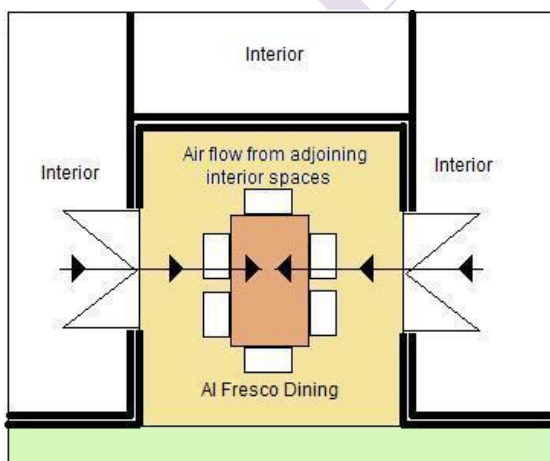
The addition of a second window enables the laundry to become a secure drying/airing room hopefully eliminating clothes dryers in the future.

**External recreational areas** can be subjected to heat and reflected glare over exposure rendering interior and exterior spaces such as pool, garden and entertaining areas uninhabitable in summer.

The inclusion of eaves, deciduous plant covered pergolas, trees with high, abundant, cascading tree canopies or external solar reflective temporary fixtures such as sails can help minimize unexpected solar problems.

If deprived of ventilation, al fresco dining areas become havens for insect infestations, flies and mosquitoes.

When enclosed on three sides, external areas can be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of ceiling fans or adjoining doors opening up to allow the passage of fresh air from and into adjacent interiors. (See following illustration).



**Plan of alfresco eating area with cross ventilation from adjoining spaces.**

The aforementioned passive solar conditions and solutions relate to the southern hemisphere.

In the northern hemisphere care should be taken when translating southern hemisphere home design texts and plans for northern hemisphere conditions and orientation.

## WINDOW TREATMENTS

Twenty four hour privacy, sun protection, ventilation, cost and light control are essential considerations for window treatment selections.

With careful, early planning, problems may be resolved with the addition of appropriate, simple, well designed windows and inexpensive window treatments selected to harmonize with the interior and exterior surroundings and architectural style.

Architects and interior designers discourage the use of expensive, unnecessary window draperies whenever possible.

Over application of decorative treatments can obscure light, restricting ventilation covering beautifully designed windows.

Before deciding on your window treatments there are two important questions to address:-

1. What is required, concluded from an analysis of your home either on plan or if existing an on-site appraisal, and
2. How much do we wish to spend?

Early consideration of window and window treatment requirements can avoid costly additions to your building budget, perhaps living with unsightly temporary sheets in the windows for the short term or selection of cheap disappointing options.

## WINDOW TREATMENT SELECTION CRITERIA

Determining a budget for window treatments can be difficult. The common rule of thumb is \$1,000 per window for every window in the house including service areas, bathrooms and toilets.

This may seem excessive, but larger windows can cost substantially more than \$1,000 with smaller windows costing less, thus balancing the cost estimate for inclusion in the budget.

Until accurate quotations are provided, this system is used by manufacturers and retailers providing rough estimates for quality treatment supply contract estimates..

Unfortunately, unlike colder European countries, exterior treatments such as shutters are seldom used as permanent window treatment solutions as they provide excellent security and solar protection.

We have a multitude of window treatments from which to select such as blinds, louvres, awnings, roller security shutters, vertical or horizontal sliding panels and draperies.

A selection of one or several types combined can overcome many

problems associated with mass produced housing such as poor orientation, low ceilings, lack of eaves, over exposed internal and external areas to reflected sun and heat from adjacent surroundings and buildings.

Prior to selecting treatments, assess each room at various times of the day to ensure selection criteria accuracy.

## WINDOW TREATMENT TYPES

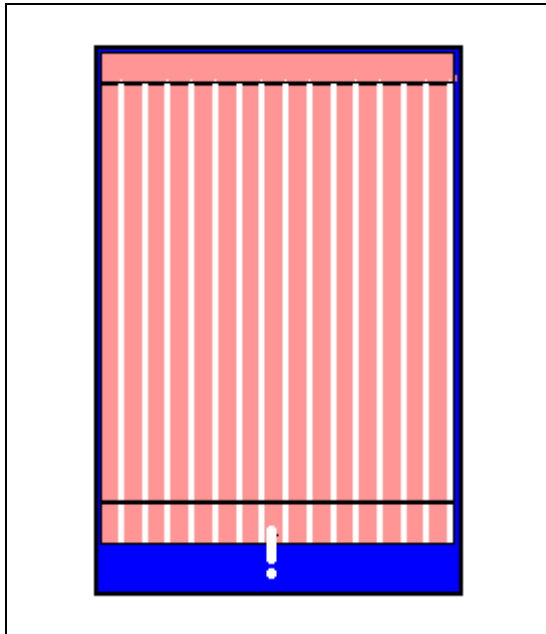
Criteria for window treatment selections may include the following:-

- **Function** of the room;
- **Size** of the room and windows;
- **Orientation**;
- **Age** of the occupier and their sleeping habits;
- **Natural illumination** during the day;
- **Privacy** required day and night;
- **External influences** creating glare;
- **Material** and quantity required;
- **Influencing décor** selections such as colours and materials;
- **Cost** of manufacture, supply and installation; and
- **Care** and maintenance.

Following are some advantages and disadvantages of various window treatments available:-

**Canvas awnings** are adjustable and provide protection from sun, rain and atmospheric dirt available in a variety of styles, patterns and colour.





**Elevation of External Canvas Awnings**

Selections are best when the style and colour compliment the architecture.

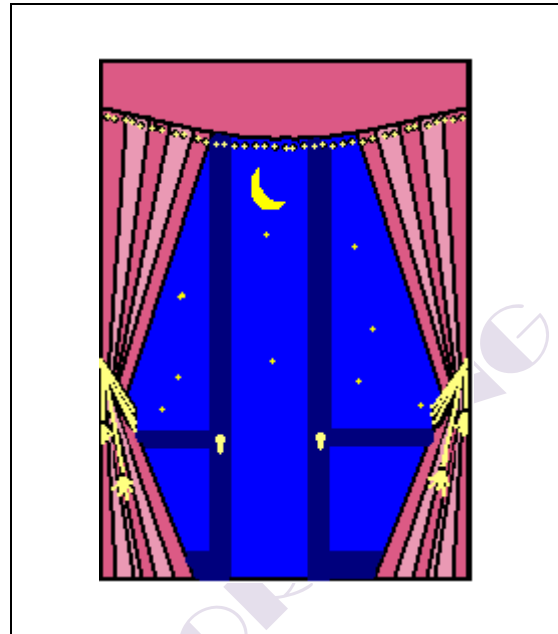
Light colour materials may be more suitable for dark areas providing reflected illumination. Dark materials absorb light and are less noticeable.

Canvas awnings may have a shorter life span than other external and internal window treatments as they are vulnerable to ultraviolet deterioration, soil and wind and physical damage.

However, metal awnings and new fabrics have overcome some of the disadvantages of canvas.

Their main advantage is that they are attractive, cooling and retractable for the cooler months.

**Drapes** are loosely gathered, top hung, panels of fabric fixed over windows and sometimes doorways and may be transparent, opaque providing complete block out of all light.



**Elevation of Drapes**

Draperies can be simple and elegant or ornate depending on the penchant of the purchaser. Their degree of ornamentation, quantity, weight and cost can far exceed the cost of other window treatments with little benefit.

Permanently fixed, dry-clean only fabrics, linings, decorative accessories such as swags, tassels, rosettes can make them impossible to clean and outrageously expensive.

Their degree of permanency and abundant and over zealous styling can often override the function of the window.

Although desired by some, popularity of the more ornate treatments has diminished somewhat over the last decade and decorative draperies are becoming less and less desirable for modern architecture.

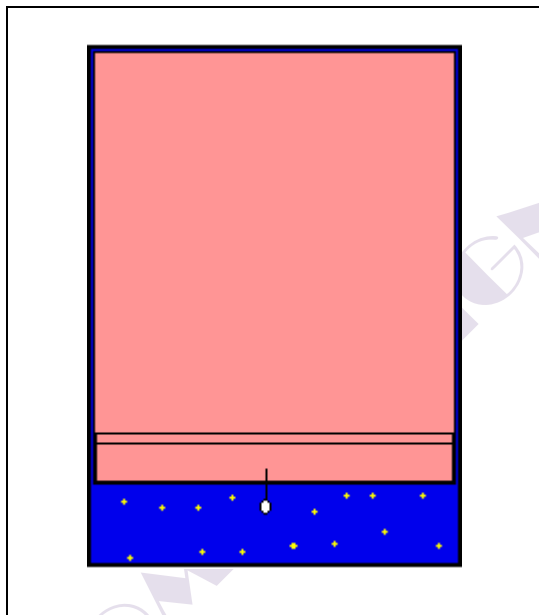
In the past, there was a tendency to install every window treatment available, such as window tinting for

sun and heat protection, external awnings for summer months, sheers for privacy during the day and heavy draperies for insulation and privacy at night.

The abovementioned are costly solutions to initially easily resolved problems had the correct window selections and appropriate treatments been considered in the beginning of the concept design process.

## BLINDS

Blinds are available for almost every window problem and include the following:-



Elevation of Holland Blind

**Holland blinds** are either sheer or opaque and may be fabric, vinyl, fibre glass, split timber, grass or fibre glass to name a few.

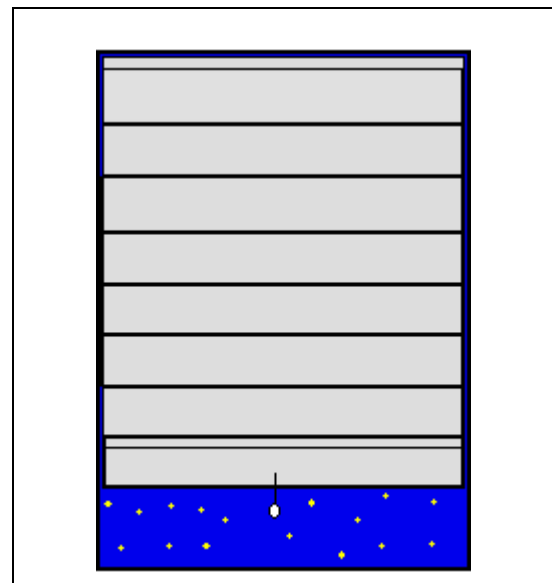
Holland blinds are top hung, vertically opening on rollers and provide excellent privacy, heat and light control.

Although easily maintained and inexpensive, holland blinds are difficult to operate when used on extremely high windows without long, hanging cords or expensive motorized rollers, and hooks on poles.

Holland blinds are visually less obtrusive and relate to the architecture when fabric colour matches wall colour.

Being loose and adjustable, they can correspond with the angle of the sun thus eliminating total deprivation of views and light.

When fabrics are colourful and decorative, holland blinds can contribute to the overall atmosphere and liveliness of the room providing a more cheerful environment especially in dreary rooms contributing to the enjoyment of the space for children, or rooms without a focus or redeeming feature.



Elevation of Roman Blind

**Roman blinds** – are similar to Holland blinds in that they are top hung, open vertically, gathering rather than rolling. Roman blinds are available with timber horizontal inserts (beach blinds) and festoons (Austrian blinds).

Although generally regarded as being more attractive than holland blinds the back of the blind may be unsightly because of working mechanisms.

**Venetian blinds** are assemblies of numerous, horizontal, narrow, timber, foam or aluminium slats and are top hung with vertically opening tilting blades.

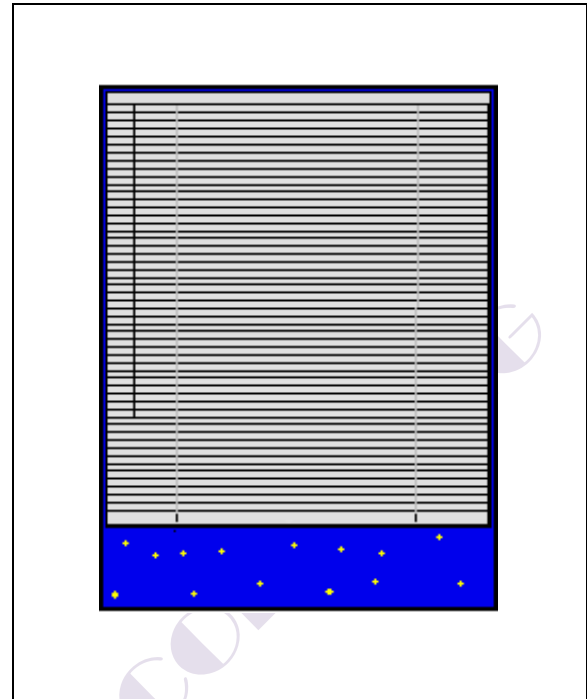
Timber venetians, depending on the timber selected and finish applied, may be substantially more expensive than aluminium, although, in some cases, substantially less expensive than ornate expensive draperies.

Venetians are generally unobtrusive, easily opened and provide excellent privacy, ventilation and sun penetration control without the elimination of views.

Venetian blinds are an attractive alternative overcoming most problems associated with windows in hot situations

The cost of venetians varies greatly depending on the material and quality of components.

Disadvantages are loose cords, blades rattling and stacking at the head of the window or door when blinds are in the open position.



**Elevation of Timber Venetian**

**Timber venetians** are attractive and resilient but if oiled instead of varnished may be difficult to clean.

Paying a little extra for varnished venetians may ensure against problems associated with inadequately seasoned timbers resulting in blades warping and splitting.

It is highly recommended that suitable warranties be obtained prior to purchasing venetians (or any blind for that matter) to guard against inferior materials being used such as plastic heading components, cotton cords and tapes and under seasoned oiled timber blades.

Ensure that components are manufactured from long lasting durable materials such as nylon and aluminium.

Comparisons of blind components, costs and warranties will hopefully

influence your decision rather than price considerations alone

**Aluminium venetians** are available with micro, slim and wide blades and extremely cost effective.

In the past, venetians were used as solar reflective blinds under terylene sheers resulting in thick layers of dust embedded in blade surfaces being difficult to remove and clean.

I have memories removing venetians blinds at my mother's house on Saturday mornings, plunging them and myself into the bath and with great difficulty, separating each sharp blade for cleaning and once cleaned, relocating them to the Hill's Hoist for drying. Windy days were the most difficult!!

Fortunately, aluminium blades are now anti-static resisting dust, aiding cleaning and are a practical inexpensive, virtually maintenance free treatment for workrooms, wet areas and general areas.

Good quality aluminium venetians do not warp or split and come in a multitude of pre-finished attractive blade colours. A treatment not to be discarded because of criticisms made long ago.

**Vertical louvres** are generally the most inexpensive window treatment available depending on the fabric used having the advantages and disadvantages of venetian blinds.

Vertical louvres can have some functional traps as well as being regarded by most as unattractive because of their ability to disengage

themselves from guiding chains resulting in an uneven tardy appearance.

In heavy traffic areas and well used family rooms, sudden wind gusts may cause the louvres to become entangled around feet becoming dangerous and/or irritating.

However, every window treatment has an application and vertical louvres are ideal in non-habitable rooms and rental situations where budget is minimal.

## CONCLUSION

Is it not extraordinary that more than 15%- 20% of interior finishing costs can be spent on windows treatments?

Amazingly, some home designers still design oversized windows facing the hottest aspect without adequate protection ignoring the consequences.

It is advisable to discuss with your home designer window selections and their treatments before the final design stage **and** prior to signing any contract so that firm budgets may be concluded for each stage of the building including interior design.

Seek the advice of a window manufacturer or curtain retailer regarding design issues and cost estimates for inclusion in the interior decorating budget.

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