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Designing with Intention

By Amy Fischer
Images provided by Spectrum Interior Design

Here in the Silicon Valley, we all want our homes to serve us well. We need them to be as functional as they are welcoming. Entertaining spaces, both formal and informal, typically get first priority; however, the secondary, more utilitarian rooms are coming up in early design development for more serious attention.

Two such rooms, Mud Rooms and enlarged Laundry Rooms, which can be integrated or adjacent, are quickly growing in popularity for the practicality and home organization they offer. After all, wouldn't it be nice to have a dedicated place to unload and store the items you will need the next time you walk out the door? Gone would be the days of forgetting keys, backpacks, or anything else important when you know that they are all collected at your point of exit.

The traditional Mud Room served as the gateway between out and in, a place to leave muddy boots and wet coats. As Californians, we may be less concerned with mud tracks but we do like to keep interiors as clean as possible. Current Mud Rooms incorporate a bench and adjustable storage options for shoes, encouraging family members to sit down and remove their outside shoes before entering the rest of the house.

In addition, the modern Mud Room can be a place for busy Silicon Valley families to organize their children's ever-growing necessities. Backpacks, lunch boxes, sporting gear and daily jackets need a drop-zone to keep them from being spread about the home. Trending requests are "locker" style cubbies with personalized name tags for each child. These cubbies may include hanging hooks for backpacks and jackets, shelving for school paperwork, and, as some parents prefer, integrated outlets for phone docking stations to keep electronics out of bedrooms.

This sort of centralized organization isn't just for kids. The heads of household benefit too. Additional amenities we have been incorporating into these spaces include dry erase white boards for family information and grocery lists, cork-boards for hanging notes and artwork, and divided storage to organize incoming mail, as well as labeled key racks.



Laundry room.

Just as the Mud Room has evolved, Laundry Rooms have become much more than a place to wash and fold. There are a host of creative storage opportunities that can be incorporated into a Laundry Room that can broaden the overall use.

For the crafty types, we can create a place to organize their artistic pursuits. Dropped counters to scrapbook or sew can be useful or even a dedicated gift-wrapping station with variety of drawer sizes to hold long rolls of wrapping paper and organize scissors, tape and ribbons.

For pet owners, we can incorporate a full pet area. Niches under counter can house a kennel or pet bed, and a Dutch door can keep them from underfoot but still in contact with you. Pet stations may include shelves for treat canisters, hooks for leashes, and cabinets or drawers for special products. An oversized basin sink with a pull-out faucet makes for quick and easy pet grooming. Some specialty pet storage requests have included integrated sealed food dispensaries, low flip-down drawers with pet food bowls and integrated cabinet niches for litter boxes.

If your needs are general purpose in the Laundry Room, there are still many ideas to consider incorporating at the early blueprint stage. For those that delegate laundering, a secondary laundry location can be assigned in a Master Closet or Master Bath for small basic use. Dumbwaiters, laundry chutes or room pass-throughs are architectural considerations to help streamline the process. Stackable front-loading washer and dryers conserve space, and two sets allow multiple loads to run simultaneously. If you prefer side by side front-loading appliances, a slightly raised countertop above makes the perfect folding counter. Hand washed and drip-dry items can hang in a designated space open to a tile floor. A wall-mounted drop down ironing board can be concealed inconspicuously behind paneling and be aesthetically pleasing as well as save space. Under counter pull-out bins can house either clothes to be washed or folded clean clothes ready to be put away.

Custom building a home that will serve your lifestyle best begins with intentional design. To learn more or be further inspired, visit: www.spectruminteriordesign.com

Amy Fischer is the founder and principal interior designer of Spectrum Interior Design, and the mother to two active teenage children. The Silicon Valley based firm specializes in full-service luxury design for newly constructed homes and speculative estates.



Mud room.