



Dickson Development Corporation
A Tradition of Innovative Quality Construction

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Building Success 101

*Q: What is an
"insulated" window?*

A: Modern windows are often referred to as "insulated" because of technology that retards, blocks, or slows the transfer of air through the unit. Most people are familiar with fiberglass or other types of insulation material in a wall cavity. In a window, the "insulation" is a combination of several factors. Most common are windows with at least two panes of glass enclosing a 'dead' airspace between them. The airspace may also be sealed to contain a clear, odorless gas (commonly argon), which is heavier than air and thus an even more effective insulator. Better yet, one or both inside surfaces of the glass

Bring on the (Natural) Light

Dickson Development Corporation is asked quite frequently by homeowners to "open up" rooms in order to take advantage of a view or natural light. Walk into any new home and you'll immediately notice a big difference from many older homes: an abundance of natural light. Because of poor thermal performance, windows and glass doors in older homes were necessarily scaled down. Today's builders, however, are able to take advantage of advanced technologies, a wider range of sizes and styles, and a number of new products and creative applications to capture natural light.

While glass walls are certainly possible to maximize natural light, traditional housing design remains popular. On many occasions Dickson Development has been asked to increase interior natural light within historic housing forms. Window and door manufacturers have helped us in this effort by providing a wide variety of products to match traditional house styles and to help hide or lessen any discordant or extreme aesthetic impact.

For example, a roof window (or series of these units) over the center of the kitchen can bring in a tremendous amount of natural light without having an adverse impact on a traditional facade. This is especially true if that room is on the back or side of the house and thus out of view from the street. Unlike skylights, roof *windows* can open to vent stagnant or hot air and odors. They have a flat design, only slightly raised above the roof finish, which further reduces any intrusive appearance.

For smaller interior rooms, such as a water closet, walk-in shower, or storage area, traditional approaches to bringing in natural light are almost impossible, or at least impractical. Tubular skylights offer a solution. From a small, unobtrusive opening in the roof, light enters a tube lined with mirrors and reflective material that reflect light into the room below. These small devices pour large quantities of light into tight spaces, making them feel more spacious and comfortable.

Fixed or operable transom windows may also be used to bring natural light into interior rooms. Set above passage doors to bedrooms and bathrooms or even in interior walls, transom windows can carry natural light from rooms on the outside perimeter into otherwise dark, inner spaces.

A kitchen backsplash can be used creatively to increase natural light. Glass block or fixed panes of glass may be installed in the space between the countertop and the wall cabinets. Light is brought onto the work surface without sacrificing kitchen cabinets for a large window expanse.

can be permanently laminated with a clear coating that further retards thermal transfer and protects the home interior against solar heat gain and damaging ultraviolet rays. The increased cost will fall as the technology becomes more common.

When homeowners prefer traditional architectural styles, we may be challenged to bring in enough natural light to please modern tastes. As an experienced home builder we assist our clients with design and product solutions, made easier with the wide array of technologically advanced windows and doors now available. With new products to choose from and some creative design work, home owners are simultaneously able to enjoy traditional style and the aesthetic and cost-saving benefits of natural light.

If you would like to bring more natural light into your home call us for a design consultation.

Warm regards,

Richard

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