

RICHARD LIBRACH*Architect*

The owners of this “low-fat” floor plan will need to be minimalists or retrieve their weekend underwear from an off-site location! Indulge in relocating the tiny front closet under the stair to loosen the belt on the entry foyer.

While it’s refreshing to see a double-height volume for the main living space, swapping the bedrooms will put the second bedroom adjacent to the double

height room, so it could double as a guest room/study. Flexibility for this space would be created by using a sliding panel system on the interior overlook, with a sill height of at least 42” from the floor for safety, and would allow for various office/bedroom furniture arrangements.

You could even replace the corridor partition with a sliding panel to create a more open and expansive landing area. If a less open plan is preferred, however, place a closet beside the door to improve the proportions of the room.

In the new master, eliminate the closet obstructing the window, and reverse the other two closets into the new master. In the bathroom, move the fixtures around so the bathroom door can move to the end of the corridor (Just make sure the toilet isn’t the first thing you see as you climb the stairs!). Move the master entry closer to the corridor; all this creates a cozier “master suite effect” to complement this lofty open plan.

■ Richard Librach Architect is a full-service, Toronto-based architecture firm.

DEE DEE TAYLOR HANNAH*Architect, interior designer*

Good luck getting into this condo, what with the three doors in the front entrance playing Swat the Intruder. Clean it up by sliding the laundry and powder room under the stair and create a panelled wall to mask the doors to the laundry/ powder room. Now the closet can go on the opposite wall and leave room to expand the kitchen. I would forgo the breakfast counter and enlarge the base of the island

to have it function from both sides. The dining room becomes a dining room for all occasions; it might otherwise just get used to collect dust.

Now, how many people live here? If it’s one, the upstairs should be one room with an open-concept bathroom and closets lining the windowless wall. If it’s two people, the master bedroom needs full-height glass for privacy, and drapery treatment. This might feel like a fish bowl, but it’s how to give the master bedroom a feeling of intimacy when little Billy can wander, look in or hear all sorts of sounds from anywhere.

Regardless of the number of residents, the bathroom needs some help. The vanity can stay in its location but should be larger. Place the toilet adjacent and the opposite wall becomes tub/shower wall, leaving a rectangular space for circulation.

■ Dee Dee Taylor Hannah operates Taylor Hannah Architect and is a principal in Montclair Construction.

ARIEL MULLER*Interior designer*

The space opens up onto a nice-sized kitchen with a large island. The large window over the counter is nice but limits the amount of upper-cabinet storage. The dining area is substantial and still leaves enough space for a modest living room.

It would be great to build in some storage underneath the stairs.

The master bedroom overlooks the living room, which is great if you like the open-concept feel, or live alone. If you need the room to be dark when you sleep or if noise control is an issue, this is definitely not the plan for you. You could improve lighting control by installing blackout drapery in the window and behind the bed to close off the opening when desired. If you like the light, open feel, but like it quiet, you could build a half wall and install a wide horizontal window above it to seal off the overlook.

The bathroom vanity could easily be longer, making it more functional.

The second bedroom should have the closet door reversed for easier access. Between the closet and the window is a deep gap, which is an unfortunate waste of space.

■ Ariel Muller Designs has been designing interiors and custom furniture for almost two decades.