

LONDON TERRACE

Towers News

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interior design

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What You Should Expect And Not Expect... From Your Designer

Design services may be more affordable and rewarding than you think.

How to Choose a Designer Ready to hire a pro? Here's where to look, what to ask.

The photographs shown here are of actual London Terrace Towers apartments from the 1930's.



Dear Fellow Shareholders:

At the end of March, the Board of Directors completed its plan to refinance the Cooperative's underlying mortgage. We hired representatives from Douglas Elliman Property Management to find us the best deal in the marketplace. They found NY Community Bank. NYCB signed a commitment letter with us a year ago, locking in a \$26 Million mortgage for ten years at 5.5%.

The 1994 mortgage with M&T Bank was due on June 1, 2004. We owed \$21,061,495.26 to them. After repaying this amount and the associated costs, we received a check for \$4,496,278.11. M&T also released \$1,002,000.00 to us, representing the amount we were obligated to keep in their bank these past ten years.

Our previous payments to M&T Bank were \$161,429 per month, \$1,937,148 annually. Our payments to NYCB are \$147,625.14 per month, \$1,771,501.68 per annum. We realize a savings of \$165,646.32 per year.

The Board decided to use some of the equity we have built up in the Corporation to help fund a portion of the future capital improvements rather than rely solely on maintenance increases and assessments. Since we were able to borrow against that equity while lowering the annual debt service cost to our Corporation, we felt it was the prudent thing to do.

At the same time, we retired the mortgage on the Superintendent's apartment. Because this apartment is owned by the Cooperative, the mortgage on it was considered a business loan as opposed to the typical homeowner's mortgage. We owed \$232,888.52. With six years left on the loan, the prepayment penalty was \$69,335.64. We consulted with our auditors and financial analysts who, while leaving the decision to us, offered good reasons to pay off this mortgage:

- We had the cash on hand to do so.
- The interest payments over the next six years would have been \$115,000.
- The mortgage cost the cooperative \$34,600 per year. Retiring the loan eliminates this payment; and
- The prepayment penalty payment will be added to our interest expense in this tax year, increasing the shareholder tax deduction by approximately \$.15 per share.

Yours very truly,



Nancy Frawley
President

Published quarterly for LONDON TERRACE TOWERS, INC. under the direction of the Board of Directors. Comments, suggestions and news for publication are welcome. To submit material, contact Edward Maichin or bring it to the Management Office. We reserve the right to edit, accept or reject submissions.

Contact Edward Maichin at: d1maichin@aol.com

This and That

at London Terrace Towers

Effective May 1, 2004, all damage security deposits will be deposited in a noninterest-bearing escrow account. In addition, the following fees will be assessed:

- All moves (both in and out) require a \$500 refundable damage security deposit and a \$250 non-refundable fee payable to the cooperative.
- The alteration agreement was amended to include a nonrefundable \$250 fee payable to the cooperative.
- Refinancing agreements will require a \$50 fee payable to the cooperative.

Our website, londonterracetowers.com can save you a lot of time. We have posted most of the information and forms you will need for any occasion. We have added the ability to send work orders directly to the management office.

Don't forget to schedule your yearly air condition service with the office if you intend for our staff to do it. George Duckworth, our air conditioning expert, is already starting to get booked up.

Residents and their guests are NOT allowed on the roof at the 405, 410 or 465 buildings at any time, for any reason. The doors are alarmed and this is considered to be a security breach. In addition, it is most disturbing - and worrisome - to the residents on the floors who hear the alarms.

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What You Should Expect And Not Expect... From Your Designer

(from The Franklin Report)

What you should expect:

- The sense that your interests and opinions matter.
- An accessible effort, taking the initiative to complete the job.
- That some of your existing furnishings will be integrated into the new design, if you wish.
- Assurance that the designer will stick to the budget.
- A full understanding of your lifestyle.
- Being shown a full range of options and products.
- The ability to see the net cost of every item, if you wish.
- As hassle-free a process for you as possible.
- Open communication with you to avoid surprises.
- That you love your new "look" after the job is complete.

What you should NOT expect:

- That the designer will maintain an interest in the project if you cannot make decisions.
- That you attend each shopping trip or be shown every possible fabric in the D&D Building!
- That the designer can read your mind.
- That there will be no misunderstandings or mistakes along the way.
- That the designer will bid out every subcontractor. There is a reason that the designer has been working with the same upholster and painter for years. On the other hand, if you have a favorite supplier, the designer should be accommodating.
- That the designer will supervise other's work without an oversight fee. The designer should be there, however, to oversee the installation of their products at no additional fee.

How to Choose a Designer

Ready to hire a pro? Here's where to look, what to ask.

Choosing the right professional to help you decorate your home is a bit like going to a matchmaker – except in this case, the perfect match is a shared design sense that can be hard to communicate when you're not sure what you want in the first place.

You don't circulate in a crowd where people coo, "Oh, I just love what your designer's done with the wallpaper?" Not to worry. Here are some steps for finding and hiring a designer perfect for you.

Finding Prospects

First, be sure you understand the distinction between "interior designer" and "decorator." Designers are trained to manage a project and supervise more elaborate remodels, such as kitchen and bath redesigns, that might involve subcontractors and complicated scheduling.

The American Society of Interior Designers maintains a database of thousands of professionals across the country. By calling its free referral service at (800) 775-ASID and describing your project and budget, you can get the names of three designers near you who might be the right fit, or use the online referral service. Membership in the ASID means a designer has achieved "the highest mark of the professional standard of design," according to the organization.

Furniture showrooms often have well-trained, in-house decorators on staff, or you can also ask salespeople in furniture showrooms to recommend a designer. When looking for decorating ideas in magazines, note the name of the designer of a room you especially admire. You can also use your favorite search engine to find a designer in your area. There are also books available, like The Franklin Report, an insider's guide to home services, first published in 2001 and updated each year.

Interviewing Your Candidates

Once you're armed with the names of designers, the real work begins. Before the initial meeting, think about how you'll explain your style. Snapshots of treasured belongings as well as pictures culled from magazines that show rooms you like - and don't like - can be helpful. Also ask such questions as:

Can I see your portfolio?

Look for variety, because you are looking for someone who can adapt to your style.

What kind of work have you done and for how long have you done it? Ask for examples of high-end and low-end work to see how imaginative they can be on a budget. Also ask for names of references and former clients you can call.

What is your favorite kind of project?

This should give you an idea if they are only after the glamorous jobs or if they know how to work within a budget.

How involved can I get?

You don't want to hire a dictator, so look for someone who's accepting of the things you love and is open to you doing some of the work on your own, like painting, if you want to. But many designers will reject the idea of letting you tag along on a shopping trip.

How are your fees structured?

It varies but will be based on either an hourly fee; a flat design fee; or "cost-plus" - or some combination of the three. If it's a big project, find out if the work can be done in stages, for example, one or two rooms at a time. Be sure you get a letter of agreement or contract that spells out the terms.

Would you be willing to do a consultation for a plan I can implement on my own?

Some designers say "no" because they say they don't make enough money for the few hours it may take to come up with a plan. But some may embrace consultations as a way to build future business.

Answering the Designer's Questions

The questions also should be coming fast and furious from the designer's side of the room. (After all, you're not the only one trying to figure out if the person across the table is right for you.)

Be prepared to answer a series of questions constructed to tell the designer how you use your residence. Some of the questions might seem esoteric, like being asked to respond to a list of words. But the answer to "Which best describes you – comfortable or stylish?" can help a designer get a handle on your perspective.

Some designers are well-prepared for a go at another seemingly unrelated field – psychology! Trying to dig in and learn what your needs are is necessary. Designers need to be able to build rapport, instant trust. You become friends with these people. If they do your whole place they will know where your underwear is. So you'd better jibe!

LLTinterior

Design Dollars

Design services may be more affordable and rewarding than you think.

For centuries, people have been enthralled with home decorating. In 67 BC, Cicero is known to have said, "What is more agreeable than one's home?" Professional designers have the creative energy and resources to manage projects in a cohesive manner from start to finish, realizing your dream more effectively and efficiently.

While mulling over the cost of hiring an interior designer, you also might want to ponder the industry's unofficial mantra: "We save you money in the long run." Here's are the ways designers can save you big bucks:



1. You get it right the first time. Instead of spending good money for the wrong piece, wrong color or wrong size, you benefit from the designer's ability to save time by knowing where to shop. What would take you 12 hours to find will take a good designer just two hours. What's your free time worth?

2. Designers have access to showrooms that are only open to the trade. This means you often get goods at less than retail. The difference between retail and your cost can end up paying for a designer's fee. But designers don't work for free. Here's what you should know when you're negotiating a price and contract with your designer.



How Designers Bill

Only the client can assess what the worth of a designer. Designers charge for residential work three basic ways, or a combination of the three:

Cost-plus: The designer is the middleman. That is, the designer buys merchandise at wholesale, then sells it at or near retail to the client. A typical markup in a big city might be 30 percent to 50 percent. This approach also applies to management of subcontractors; if their cost is \$50,000, the designer's fee might be an additional 15 percent.

Fee for service: Also called a design fee, it is a flat rate. Based on

an estimate of what it will take to do the job, it includes an understanding that the fee will not exceed the budgeted figure.

Hourly: Common for smaller jobs, an hourly fee can be charged for consultations, shopping or drafting. Some interior designers will also charge for travel time. These hourly fees vary depending on who is doing the work - a design assistant or a well "Name-On-The-Door" designer.

What to Look for in a Contract

A contract should outline the designer's fees, what services will be provided and what the job encompasses. The bigger the job, the more elaborate the contract. The key points that a contract should include:

How the job will be paid for: Designers often require a retainer, to give them money to work with while they are doing the job. The retainer will be a percentage of the estimated cost of the job. How the client will be billed, such as the completion of certain phases, also should be included. It is not unreasonable to ask to see bills and receipts.

Design changes: How much will you have to pay if you change your mind once the designs have been drawn? You might want a flat fee, for instance, to cover up to two designs. What services are covered: The contract should clarify when the designer will be on site and if the designer, or someone else in the firm, will be overseeing the work.

A loose time line: The projected schedule and estimated completion date can be included, but don't make the designer swear by it. Some things are simply out of their control. If you have a specific timeline, your designer should be instructed to order only in-stock items.

How disputes will be resolved, should they arise. For example, the contract may have an arbitration clause.



or design

Air Filters

The first line of defense against airborne contaminants is to keep a house clean and well ventilated. But for some sensitive people that may not be enough. That's where air filters come in. Household air filters are available in two basic types: media filters, which create a physical barrier that traps minute particles, and electronic filters, which use a high-voltage charge to attract and capture contaminants. A few air filters are hybrids that combine both methods, and some include activated carbon elements to combat odor. In single-family homes air filters are typically built into the heating and cooling system. In apartments, freestanding units that can be placed in individual rooms.

Portable Room Air Filters

Most portables employ highly effective HEPA filters. Some portable units, called ion air cleaners, use electrostatic precipitator technology. Ion units, which don't require fans, are typically quieter than HEPA models and cost less to operate because there are no filters to replace. But these units may produce trace amounts of the lung irritant ozone as a byproduct of the ionization process.

Portable units range in price from \$150 to as much as \$1,500, and there are ongoing costs. HEPA filters, which must be replaced annually, cost from \$40 to more than \$100.

Portables can also be noisy, because it takes a lot of wind to push air through such a fine filter. Some manufacturers are addressing the noise issue with so-called smart filters that employ an optical sensor to judge when the air is relatively clean, then switch to a lower fan setting. Another strategy is to run a portable filter on high during the day, then turn it to low at night. Portables powered by fans are rated by "clean-air delivery rate" (CADR), which measures both air movement and gunk-trapping effectiveness. It's important to buy a filter that's big enough. Manufacturers recommend that the CADR be at least two-thirds the room's area in square feet — so a 15-by-20-foot room (300 square feet) would need a filter with a CADR rating of 200. (The calculation assumes 8-foot ceilings.)

Electrical News

Several months ago, the Board of Directors hired an electrical engineering firm, the IPGroup, to conduct a comprehensive electrical survey of the four buildings. Due to the age and complexity of the building, it was much needed. In fact, we discovered several electrical systems which needed updating. This work is currently out to bid and will be scheduled to begin in the next six weeks.

One of the things that came out of the survey was the realization that several of the larger apartments have less available electric amperage per square foot than some smaller apartments. While purchasers buy apartments as is and there is no obligation on behalf of the corporation to adjust these types of items post-purchase, the Board worked closely with the engineers and our corporate counsel to develop an agreement that would allow individual shareholders to acquire a new source of electrical power through the installation of a new riser.

This riser will allow for increased amounts of available electricity and also allow for upgrading to 220 power versus 110, the standard in our buildings. After all legal and engineering considerations, a plan was drawn whereby a shareholder may propose the placement of a riser within their building, with the shareholder initially paying for it in its entirety. The cooperative will retain the right to select the engineer and electrician of its choice and own the riser after installation. These risers may eventually serve up to twenty apartment in a single building.

Any additional shareholders that opt into usage of the riser would be required, through a predetermined formula, to split the initial costs with the initial user. It is expected that once all the shares in the riser are sold, no shareholder would pay more than \$10,000 for this additional service. The new riser would serve as their only source of electricity.

The Board believes that this is an excellent way to provide apartment specific electrical upgrades to those shareholders who are in need and willing to pay for it. Further information can be obtained through office.

Fan-tastic!

How to find a good energy-efficient ceiling fan

As the mercury starts to rise, so too does the urge to flip on the air conditioner. For those days when it's warm, but not quite hot enough to turn on the air conditioner, a ceiling fan is a great option -- if you buy a good one that is energy-efficient.

In the last 10 years ceiling fans have become more technologically advanced, providing cooling in the summer months and warming in the winter months...and will help trim energy bills.

Ceiling fans don't actually reduce the temperature, but during warm weather, they have a wind-chill effect. So if it's 85 degrees in your apartment room and you have a ceiling fan purring above, it will feel like 78 degrees. And in the winter, fans recirculate the heat to the living areas.

An efficient ceiling fan can reduce your energy consumption up to 40 percent in the summer and 10 percent in the winter, using only as much as energy as a 100-watt light bulb.

Fans can coordinate your individual home style, and most offer options in color, finish, blade design, size, accessories and lighting. Styles include polished brass, antique brass, iron, copper, nickel, pewter, chrome, black, vibrant colors, oak, rosewood and other real wood veneers.

And as with most other appliances, you can even find energy efficient models from Energy Star, a national symbol for energy efficiency developed by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Energy. Ceiling fans that have earned the Energy Star label are 10 percent more efficient than standard ceiling fans.

EPA officials say the proper way to operate a fan includes switching the fan and light off when you leave the room; reversing the fan motor in winter months; and hanging the fan so that its blades are at least one foot below the ceiling, seven feet above the floor, and two feet from the nearest wall.

Things to consider:

Motor: Poor motor design can create most of the problems that are associated with ceiling fans. If the fan has an annoying click, buzz, or hum during operation, the motor is the most likely culprit. A motor that works too hard will burn itself out. A motor that is too powerful will be inefficient, wasting energy. Ideally, a ceiling fan should be designed to strike a balance between power and efficiency, ensuring that the blades are the proper pitch to move large amounts of air. Different motors are designed for different operating conditions.

Blades: These can complete a room's décor, but they also need to perform effectively. Look for a blade pitch of at least 14 degrees, which is excellent for maximum air movement efficiency. Steer clear of blades constructed of particle board, printed paper or solid wood. Blades should weigh the same to avoid a wobbly fan.

Lighting: Either built-in or added on, lighting can enhance your room's décor while meeting your lighting needs. Energy Star offers fans with and without lighting.

Controls: These make the difference between a fan that is merely functional and a fan that offers a world of convenience, energy efficiency, and even home security advantages. The most basic fan controls are a pull chain on the fan that varies the fan speed, and a switch on the fan that controls the blade direction. You may also purchase a variety of optional controls to upgrade three-speed pull-chain models.

Price: The prices of ceiling fans can vary. Cheap ceiling fans will wobble, click, and hum over time. They will not move air in your home efficiently or effectively, and they are likely to fail within a few years.

You must have a qualified electrician install your fan...and check with the office for the appraisals necessary.



It Is Summer Again by Wing Kee Kwok

After the harsh winter months we have had, I am sure that everyone welcomes the summer!

For your working out convenience, we have new Health Club Hours:
Weekdays: 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Weekends: 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM
The hours for the Pool remain the same.

We have rearranged the free weight area part of the Health Club layout to give it more room. We are also making room for future equipment to be added in the club.

From time to time, I have seen some members in the Health Club using heavier weights than they can handle and compensating by using incorrect form. This will not only increase the chance for injury, it will not produce the desired result. It is always better to perform an exercise correctly and in smooth movements. Please also remember that the negative movement, which is the action to return to the starting position, is just as important.

Please read the article on "Gym Etiquette." With your help, the Health Club will be a more pleasant place for everyone. **Enjoy the summer!**

Gym Etiquette

Annoying socializers, grunters, and excessive sweaters can bum out your workout. Following gym etiquette not only is polite, it's safe -- for you and your fellow gym goers.

We all have different reasons for working out, whether it's to lose weight, to obtain rock-hard abs, or to stay healthy. Whatever the motivation, for some of us, getting to the gym is an achievement unto itself. So when people there are rude, gross, or downright annoying, it can be frustrating because they can distract us from our fitness goals, or worse, can hurt us. Or sometimes, we might not know it, but we may be the offending club member.

Unfortunately we have seen our share of careless and inconsiderate acts resulting in injury. For example, members (or their guests) who fail to wipe sweat from exercise equipment have reportedly been known to pass on things such as rashes to other people. Cellphone yakkers or excessively loud grunters have caused serious trainers to lose concentration and strain muscles. Weightlifters who neglect to secure barbells properly have had loose plates drop and crush toes -- theirs and others'.

These mishaps are easily avoidable. With good manners and common sense, gym-going can become a pleasant, safe, and healthy experience for everyone.

The Lazy ... and Dangerous

One of the most common gaffes people make at the gym is failing to put equipment back in its proper place. Some people just leave dumbbells on the floor. It is inconvenient for someone who may need that particular weight afterwards, but it could hurt other members who, while looking at themselves in the mirror, back up and don't see it on the floor.

The rule also applies to members using free weights. Besides leaving them on the floor, some lifters don't return them to their proper number slots (i.e., the 10-pound weight in the "10" spot, the 20-pounder in the "20" spot, etc.) Some people carry weights to different

parts of the gym and leave them there. This obviously inconveniences others who may have to do some searching to complete their exercise.

It is also important to secure the collars on barbells. Loose plates can slide off, bounce on the ground, and hurt someone. Such commonsense rules fall under the heading of "Use equipment properly" and "Follow instructions," which should be a no-brainer.

The Grunters

Then there are people who scream or grunt loudly during their set. Some even drop their weights on the ground, making a big thump. These noisemakers peeve those who take their workout routine seriously.

Some feel the need to release energy lifting but do what's called a "muted grunt" to be considerate of other members. For people who think they need the extra boost while lifting, how about a loud breath instead? A forceful exhalation should provide the same benefits as a noisy grunt.

Heavy-lifters may want to ask people to spot them while doing a set. While this may seem like an inconvenience, most lifters won't have a problem looking out for you, knowing that they might also need the help one day. If you can't handle a certain weight, it's best not to use it, for your safety and for others around you.

The Yakkers

Talking to others while performing a weight set could be hazardous to your health because it distracts from following proper technique. Even if you've been going to the gym for a long time, it's still important to focus on your muscle contractions, or you could really hurt yourself. Plus, people who stand idle and simply hang out with one another on the workout floor can ruin a positive, serious workout atmosphere.

Another disturbing behavior at the gym has to do with something that seems to irk people everywhere -- hearing people talk on their cell phones. Nobody needs to hear your conversation. It's one thing to receive quick calls to get information, but it's another matter to babble away. If you must talk, take it outside the workout area.

The Intruders

Have you ever been disturbed during a set by others asking questions like "Are you going to be finished with the machine soon"? It's better etiquette to let others use equipment while you're resting between sets. It may not be ideal, but the same courtesy could come in handy next time you're in a hurry. If you're really in a rush and can't wait for someone to finish, look for alternatives. More than one machine can work out a particular muscle. If all else fails, use free weights. If you need a guide, ask one of the trainers.

The Soakers

Some people may feel good about sweating up a storm at the gym, but remember to clean up after yourself. People can catch colds and get rashes from peers who don't bother to wipe perspiration from equipment.

We have also seen people leave their stinky clothes in the locker room. YUCK. Remember that the locker room is not your personal private space. This means other people may not appreciate it if you spread your stuff all over the benches, leave your shaven hair in the sink, put towels on the floor, and forget to flush the toilet.

The bottom line is that proper fitness etiquette may not differ so much from practicing good manners in the outside world. The only difference is that at the gym, you may be able to get away with wearing skimpy clothing without even a second glance.



Gym Hours: Monday through Friday: 6:00am - 10pm, Saturday & Sunday: 8am - 8pm. Pool Hours: (closed Wednesdays) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 6:30am - 10 pm, Saturday & Sunday: 9am - 6:45pm.