



West-Facing Heat: The Fix Before You Build

A west-facing lot catches strong afternoon sun. Planning for it before the drawings are final is much cheaper than fixing it with fans and aircon afterwards.

Orientation is one of several factors. This is a list of options to discuss with your designer, not a promise of results.

01 Know your sun

On a west-facing lot the afternoon sun hits the back or side of the house strongly, depending on the plan. Ask your architect to show you where the sun falls through the year.

Stand on the lot in the afternoon to see it yourself.

Take photos of the lot at 10 a.m., noon and 4 p.m. to compare the light and heat. Direction changes how a room feels at the hours you use it. Example: a bedroom that gets sun from 3 p.m. may be warm exactly when the family comes home. Why this works: photos at different hours show the heat before you finalize the plan.

02 Use the plan

Heat first: Decide how to handle the west sun before you draw the rooms.

Rooms used mostly at night, such as bedrooms, may suit other sides. Storage, stairs and service areas can act as a buffer on the hot side.

Ask which rooms your design puts where, and why.

Put the family's most used rooms where they feel best at the hours you actually use them. Placement is the cheapest way to cool a house, because it costs nothing to build. Example: putting the stair and storage on the west side can shield the living room from the afternoon sun. Why this works: the rooms you use most stay cooler without extra equipment.

03 Shade and openings

Deep overhangs, trees, screens and fewer or smaller openings on the west side can cut heat. Ask what your designer proposes for each wall.

Light-coloured finishes can help reflect heat.

Landscaping takes time to grow, so plan trees early. Shading works best as a combination of small measures. Example: a deep overhang plus a few trees on the west side can reduce the heat on the wall more than either alone. Why this works: you reduce the heat before it enters the house, which

is cheaper than removing it later.

04 Ventilation matters too

Heat that gets in needs a way out. Plan openings so air can pass through the house and carry heat away.

Ask your designer how the design works when the aircon is off.

Ask for a simple sketch showing the sun and wind directions on your plan. Cool air only helps if hot air can leave. Example: a window on the shaded side and a high opening on the opposite side can pull warm air through the room. Why this works: moving air carries heat out, so the house feels better even with the aircon off.

05 Think about the afternoon

Place outdoor spaces such as a porch or a garden on the shaded side, so the family can use them in the late afternoon.

Ask your designer to show the shaded and sunny areas on the plan. Outdoor space is part of how a home is lived in. Example: a porch on the east side stays shaded in the late afternoon when the family wants to sit outside. Why this works: the same floor area gives you more comfortable hours of use.

06 Questions for your designer

1. Where does the afternoon sun fall on this plan?
2. Which rooms sit on the hot side?
3. How does air move through the house?

Have a project in mind? Book a free 15-minute consultation.

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