Is Your House Size Killing You?

I have an odd notion of how big a house should be and how it should be structured. The reason for mentioning this is that the “class envy”, “save the universe” crowd are often killing people and destroying people's productivity without knowing it. But in addition, wouldn't it be nice to avoid mistakes. My wife noticed it several years ago when she was a CSI. Many homicides were occurring in a particular shape and size houses. And when we were designing our home (which we botched royally), I modeled many of the rooms out on the floor of our school where the tiles were on one foot spacings, thinking, not erroneously, that the patterns of activity could be described thereby allowing design of the perquisite structures needed for project support.

==========The Idea==========

Each person and each major activity requires a certain amount of space. A motel room, for example, can be small. There is no need for private space and generally there are no activities. This collapses 600 to 1000 square feet down to as little as 200 square feet.

==========The Warnings==========

Most attacks in a home are what you might call single Indian attacks. A raging warrior moves through the structure killing everyone, a simple example of this can be fire! Therefore, no part of the house should be on a single exit route and these exits should be as far from each other as possible. Upstairs areas should always have at least two exits or stairways.

Moreover, conflicts and animosities often arise from high density and inability to avoid an argument. This means that in addition to exits, you also need multiple paths through the house, preferably where visual contact is limited. Cut throughs between these paths then are also helpful. These paths should generally be 7' or more wide so that 2 people can pass comfortably and the paths do not impinge on workspace or personal living space, otherwise, further conflict is invited. Running a main path through a bathroom or bedroom, as an example, would really be a bad idea, yet this often occurs in many inner city high conflict areas,!

========== Adding Up the Spaces ==========

Workstations

A typical workstation consists of a table, a storage cabinet, and some sort of machine or device. Examples of workstations would include a sewing machine, stoves, sinks, refrigerators, pianos, study tables, radial arm saws, garden tables. Each of these takes about 50 square feet.

Outside Activities Storage

Activities, canoeing, jogging, soccer, home repair, dogs and cats, eating, entertaining, each of these require space, typically between 10 and 50 square feet.

Major Workspaces, Hobbies, and Avocations

Adding a major hobby or avocation creates a serious space problem, typically between 100 and 700 square feet. These can entail 4 to 10 workstations and a central workgroup or area. For example, an artist, quilting, or scrap booking studio typically is about 200-400 square feet. A small wood shop might be 625 square feet, enough for a table saw and half a dozen small workstations. A Kitchen can fall into this category at 150 to 400 square feet.

People Spaces: Personal Space and bedroom space

People need about 300 square feet of personal and bedroom space. This is enough for a small bedroom, 10x15 and a small room for personal or private space.

Bathrooms

A small bathroom is roughly 30 square feet. A master bathroom might be 100 square feet. Ideally you should have 1 per 2 or 3 people.

Power and water

Furnace, phone, electrical, etc. needs a specialized space, typically 64 square feet, enough room to turn around and to work on and replace water heaters, pumps, furnace filters, power panels, etc.

Adding it up:

A couple living alone with 1 activity and 2 workstation per person		
2 bathrooms, one master bath		100
		40
4 workstations		200
2 people spaces		600
Laundry room		50
Power Plant		64
Activities		100
Paths	7x30x2	420
Total		1574

Family of 2 with 1 activity and workstation per person, and an office. Warning, this design is probably short on workstations.		
2 bathrooms, one master bath		100
		40
4 workstations		200
4 people spaces		1200
Office		225
Laundry room		50
Kitchen		150
Power Plant		64
Activities		200
Paths	7x40x2	560
Total		2789 (Note 3200 would provide appropriate workspace)

Simple questions can then be asked. What is the effect of living in a housetrailer with 600 square feet of floor space. No workstations, one path (possible conflict) personal space for one, maybe 2 people, this leaves 1 to 3 people disenfranchised or without privacy, power plant dangerous and unworkable, bathroom conflicts. No gear storage, forget that soccer mom thing. Aisles too narrow inviting problems of multiple kinds.

How big should a garage be?
Typical car size is about 20x8 (padding for walk space) 25x15
This means the entrance way for a car, minimal is about 10 feet Add in 4 or 5 workstations and the size is about 1000 square feet.

2 cars	750 sq.ft.	
5 workstations	250	
	1000	Final size roughly 40x25 with no storage space!!