

BUILDING PLANNING INFO:

Block Diagram Interior Layout Schematic Design

Block Diagram

In your opinion, is omitting a connector in the block diagram a fatal error?

NOT AS LONG AS IT WAS A FORGOTTEN ELEMENT, BUT IF SPACES WERE SEPARATED SUCH THAT A CONNECTOR COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN PLACED, THEN THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY.

Single vs. double lines. On the relationship diagram, are you penalized if you do not connect elements which are only connected by a single line.

NO 'CONNECTORS' REQUIRED BETWEEN ROOMS WITH SINGLE LINE RELATIONSHIPS, BUT THE TWO ROOMS ARE REQUIRED TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO EACH OTHER THROUGH ANOTHER 'PUBLIC' SPACE.

I have finished the Mock exam and noticed in the solution that the Apparatus bay is connected directly to the apron, and is the same width. I have my AB located in the same location but running the opposite direction so that the length is longer than the width of the apron. Is this a problem, or does that seem okay?

LESS THAN DESIRABLE, AS IN THIS ORIENTATION, LESS THAN 100% CAN BE USED FOR FIRE TRUCKS.

Block diagram

- In NCARB's tutorial, the program states, "the Dorm must not have direct access to the Living Rm, Kitchen and Community Rm". Does that simply mean no connectors, or does the Dorm have to be physically separated from these rooms? Prof. Dorf's solution has the Dorm and Community Rm. next to each other.
- What is the minimum over wrapping distance between the two rooms that need connectors? 5 feet? 6 feet?

ROOMS WITH NO CONNECTORS NEED NOT BE PHYSICALLY SEPARATED.
MINIMUM OVERLAP FOR CONNECTOR = 4'-0

4) block diagram- what is meant by a "leaf connector"?

READS "LEAF COLLECTOR" = AVOID DEEP RECESSES.

With regards to the Building Planning exam, when the exercise provides you with an adjacency bubble diagram, there are two types of connecting lines. some lines that connect the bubbles are double lines and some are single lines. the double lines indicate required direct access, can you please explain exactly what the single lines require us to do? thank you sincerely in advance.

SINGLE LINES MEAN THAT YOU MAY TRAVEL BETWEEN THE TWO SPACES THROUGH ONE OTHER SPACE.....MAXIMUM.

From the bubble diagram, the only way to get a single line connection between 2 rooms was to pass through the pantry (without adding another connector somewhere). Is a pantry considered a public space? Seems odd to me.

ODD, YES.....BUT IF THAT'S WHAT THE PROGRAM REQUIRES, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.

Interior Layout

Interior Layout

-Should the workstation face the door? If so, there isn't 3feet between the back of the chair and the wall behind if you butt the edge of the desk against the back wall. Can it face any direction, like facing the window?

FACE DOOR FOR VISUAL CONTROL. DON'T NEED 3' BEHIND CHAIR.

I developed a solution while using your "Solutions" for the Interior Layout vignette that seems to be a passing solution, but I did not place the side chairs at each of the secretary's desks. Instead I used them in the lounge chair/waiting area. It does not state that they are intended to be part of the secretary's setup. So my question is whether that would be a down-grade or not?

YOU WOULD BE OK, UNLESS THE PROGRAM WAS SPECIFIC ABOUT THEIR LOCATION.

In most of the sample solutions that I have seen the guest chairs may be less than 3' from the front of the desk (facing the desk). I am assuming that this is OK and is not defined as an aisle which must be 3'.

YOU ARE CORRECT ABOUT THE SIDE CHAIRS. MY ADVICE IS TO PUT AS MUCH FURNITURE ON THE WALLS AS POSSIBLE, EVEN THE SIDE CHAIRS. PROVIDE 3' IN FRONT OF ALL BOOKCASES, FILES ETC., 5' IN FRONT OF COPY MACHINE AND/OR WORKTABLE, DON'T FORGET DIRECT ACCESS DOOR BETWEEN ROOMS AS PROGRAMMED (MANY FORGET), DO NOT PUT BOOKCASES BEHIND DOOR SWINGS, PUT FURNITURE IN FRONT OF WINDOWS AS NEEDED, AND CROSS YOUR FINGERS. DOOR DIAGRAM IN CODE IS VERY IMPORTANT FIGURE.

Interior Layout: I noticed in 2 locations that the space behind the seat of the secretarial desk is only about 2'-6" on your answer to the NCARB tutorial. I am unsure whether the 3'-0" clearance is measured from the face of the desk or the back of the chair?

3' BEHIND CHAIR IF BOOKCASE OR FILE BEHIND, OTHERWISE 2'-06" OK FROM BACK OF CHAIR

1) interior layout- can door 2 door swings from separate rooms overlap?

AVOID, NOT GOOD.

2) interior layout- on the passing solution in the "Solutions" book, i measured a clearance from a portion of the copy machine to the secretary's desk as 2'-6". is this allowed during the exam?

NOT REALLY.....YOU CAUGHT ME.....TRY TO HAVE 5' IN FRONT OF COPY MACHINE OR WORKTABLE, AS WHEELCHAIR MUST USUALLY TURN TO USE THOSE ELEMENTS.

3) interior layout- is it safe to assume that no clearance is needed in front of a desk of any kind? what about with this newly revised desk (arc in the front) that is on the exam now?

I WOULD SHOW 2' CLEAR IN FRONT OF ANY DESK.

In the offices:

1. do we need a 3' clearance between the back of the side chairs and other furniture, like credenza etc.?

YES, MUST BE ABLE TO GAIN ACCESS TO FRONT OF CREDENZA AND BOOKCASES, FILES, ETC.

2. The 3' clear is needed between the wall and the exec. desk itself OR the back of the exec. Chair??

3' TO WALL FROM DESK, UNLESS YOU PUT THAT CREDENZA BEHIND CHAIR.

Professor or anyone: In the offices, if I put 2 side chairs in front of the exec. desk (one side of the exec. desk against the wall), and behind the side chairs is a wall, what distance should I need between the front of the exec. desk and that wall?

ALLOW 2' BETWEEN CHAIRS AND EXEC. DESK. DISTANCE BEHIND CHAIRS DEPENDS ON IF YOU HAVE BOOK CASE OR OTHER ACCESSIBLE ELEMENT.....THEN PROVIDE 3'.

If I don't have any furniture behind the side chairs, does that mean I could place the back of the chairs against the wall, as long as I have that 2' in front of them?

SOUNDS REASONABLE, BUT UNLIKELY THAT DESK WOULD BE LOCATED THAT CLOSE TO THE FRONT WALL.

In the Interior Layout exam, is it OK to swing doors against, say, bookcases, or is it a violation of clearance (in real life planning it isn't)?

NCARB DOES NOT LIKE BOOKS OR FILES BEHIND DOOR SWINGS.

There were two worktables required in the support room. I had not seen this furniture in any practice test. If I provided clearance around all 4 sides of each table, the room would have taken up too much of the limited area. So, I put them up against a wall...is this correct?

I think Prof. Dorf says you can back them against a wall. - Leave 5' in front. I do not think side clearance is needed.

1. Chair clearance-If I have two guest chairs in front of a desk, do I need 3' clear between the front of those chairs and the desk AND 3' behind them?

2' IN FRONT, 3' BEHIND

2. Can I place bookcases/files in front of secretarial desks?

PROBABLY OK

3. If the secretarial desk needs a view of the entry door, does it need to face the door, or can the desk return face the door instead? (Person can see the door if they turn to the side).

FACE DOOR

4. With the credenza/desk layout, do I need 3' to the back of the chair or to the edge of the desk? I believe this question was asked recently so sorry for the duplication (last minute panic mode)..

3' TO BACK OF CHAIR

In interior layout, I only have little bit more than 3' passage from entrance door to the reception area since too many furniture I needed to place in. It is visually tight but I provided 3' passage clearance. I placed 4 lounge chairs and a coffee table along the 3' passage.

SHOULD BE OK

-Is it okay to place a bookcase behind an executive desk, and if so what are the minimum clearances? 3 feet from the back of the chair?

CORRECT.

1. On your computer mock exam, Interior Layout. I noticed that in the SO office the side chairs have been placed very close to the desk front. Should I interpret this as meaning there is more flexibility with side chairs since they can be easily moved by occupants?

YES, ALTHOUGH SETTING CHAIRS BACK 2' WOULD BE MORE PRUDENT.

2. In your RA area are those bookcases that you have drawn instead of lateral files and if so how serious would that type of error be?

GOOD QUESTION, PROBABLY NOT TOO SERIOUS AS THEY ARE BOTH SMALL ELEMENTS, AND A MISTAKE ON 1OR 2 ITEMS OUT OF 33 CAN BE FORGIVEN.

3. In the NCARB practice software(not yours) IL vig. if I placed the workroom on the window wall in between OO and SO(tight fit) and then punched a 4x4'pocket corrider into the right side of the workroom to access OO would this space be considered to tight? Door opens in and I achieve door clearance requirements but I would not have a 5' pivot circle in the pocket. HC person would have to turn left and enter through a tight 4x4 space.Using L shape to draw the workroom.

I FEEL THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE, BUT A MATTER OF JUDGEMENT.....IF 4X4 BECOMES MORE LIKE 4X8, THEN A 5' TURN-AROUND WOULD BE APPROPRIATE, AND THEREFORE 5X8 WOULD BE BETTER.

Interior Layout:

In a work room, I have all clearances required except that 2 vertical file cabinets block 12" of the end of a 60" layout table. The table and copier share the same 60" diameter wheelchair access

just fine, it's only that funny little overlap of the file cabinets and the desk. The access to the file cabinets is also clear.

Schematic:

door swings can overlap the building limit line right? My main entry doors are just creeping over the building limit line about 6 inches.

GO TO SLEEP, THESE DO NOT SOUND LIKE SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

the furniture layout give me trouble, think I worked it all out except the 3' required around the 4 seat table in the pres office. Would this be fatal error?

SINCE IT'S A SMALL TABLE, IF YOU HAD ACCESS TO ALL CHAIRS, OR AT LEAST 3 OUT OF 4 CHAIRS, YOU SHOULD BE OK, ASSUMING EVERYTHING ELSE OK.

if conference table has 36" clear to the side of any chair in the room (but not 36" clear behind all) is this acceptable? I've been trying to do layouts with 36" clear all around and it seems excessive.

PROBABLY DEPENDS ON SIZE OF CONF. TABLE, BUT AS A GENERAL RULE I WOULD SHOW 3' CLEAR BEHIND CHAIRS.

Thanks. on review, page P-17 of Solutions does indicate this as well.

I just got failing results for BP. The only problem I had on the exam was getting clearance to all four chairs of a small conference table. I could only get 3' clearance to 3 of the chairs. I hoped it wasn't enough to fail me. Unless I had a blunder somewhere else, this is what failed me. So, I would suggest getting clearance to all chairs.

For an office layout, is it wise to place two chairs side-by-side (no 3' clearance between them), but with 3' clearances on the remaining sides?

THAT WOULD BE GREAT, ALTHOUGH IF BACKS TO WALL, 3' CLEARANCE ON SIDES WOULD NOT BE NEEDED.

The side chairs do seem to work better in most of my practice layouts with backs to the wall, facing 90-degrees from the front of the secretary or executive desk. Not the way they would end up in the real world, but this isn't the real world :)

What about other furniture pieces? For instance, would I be pushing it to create a layout with a coffee table, lounge chair and a secretarial desk side-by-side along a wall (no spacing between the items, but 3' clear on one side)?

SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM. THE 3' CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS ARE NECESSARY FOR A TRAFFIC AISLE.

I just finished my BP test and had an interesting dilemma that related to a chair clearance question I posted on this site last week.

In the interior layout vignette, I had to place a small circular conference table w/ four chairs in an executive office with some other furniture. I placed the table in the corner adjacent to the door and a five foot turning area. I was able to provide 3' clearance behind all but one of the chairs that backed up to the far wall. There I could only manage 2'6".

Anyway at the time I thought it might be acceptable because I treated it like the executive desk where you don't need a full three feet behind the chair unless there is a bookshelf or something. Now I'm not so sure.

I DON'T FEEL THE SMALL CONF. TABLE NEEDS TO BE CIRCLED BY A WHEEL CHAIR (UNLIKE THE LARGE TABLE), SO AS LONG AS YOU HAVE ACCESS TO ALL CHAIRS, AND IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU DO, THEN GET SOME SLEEP.

1) In the solution to Prof. Dorf's alternative problems for the NCARB practice program, A bookcase is shown about 12" in front of the paper feed extension of the copy machine. I'm guessing that this is okay as long as the rest of the copier is free and clear?

LOOKS TO BE ABOUT 6", BUT AT ANY RATE TRY TO AVOID THIS KIND OF OVERLAP (I'M NOT PERFECT, EITHER).

2) Sometimes in my solutions on the interior layout I end up with three rooms meeting to create a hallway size recess in the reception area rather than make a room an L-shape. I'm thinking here of where the conference room/owners office/work room converge. Is there a minimum dimension that must be adhered to for this recess? The door clearance itself only requires 48" -- I ended up with a 60" square recess.

IF SHORT CORRIDOR, THEN 48" OK. IF LONGER, THEN I FEEL THE 5' WIDE TO BE MUCH MORE APPROPRIATE.

One of my NCARB examples , failing solutions, states that inadequate clearance was left in front of the xerox machine. It appears to be close to 3 feet but perhaps a little less. What would be considered adequate clearance?

I FEEL, BUT NOT SURE, THAT 5' SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN FRONT OF ZEROX AND WORKTABLE, AS A WHEEL CHAIR MUST TURN 90 DEGREES TO WORK AT THOSE ELEMENTS.

I took the BP exam yesterday. The only mistake I can think of was placing an armchair partially in front of the credenza, since I opted to keep the door clearances. The armchair and credenza are at 90 degrees in a corner. I think the overlap was 4". Do you think this is fatal? Or since the armchair is movable it is a downgrade only?

A 4" VIOLATION, SOUNDS MORE LIKE A "JIGGLE" FACTOR, AND NOT VERY SERIOUS.

Schematic Design

I noticed in your suggested solutions that you put 2 doors exiting from the lobby. I did the same to be safe. Is this downgraded?

CERTAINLY NOT NECESSARY TO PUT 2 DOORS FROM LOBBY, OR FROM 2-STORY SPACE. I ONLY DO IT BECAUSE IT LOOKS BETTER, AND I START TO SHAKE VIOLENTLY WHEN I TRY TO PUT JUST 1 DOOR IN.

And the doors from the lobby are allowed to swing over the building limit line, correct?

CORRECT

Are L-shaped rooms downgraded? The program I was given (which was extremely tight!) left me no choice but to place a room within the "L" of another room. Everything else I checked and rechecked, especially ALL code issues. These were just a few issues I wasn't sure of.

IF THE ROOM WAS A MEETING ROOM, PROBABLY NOT A GREAT IDEA TO MAKE IT "L" SHAPED, BUT WOULD ULTIMATELY DEPEND ON THE PROPORTIONS. STORAGE, MECHANICAL ROOMS, WHICH HAVE FIXED FURNITURE, NO DOUBT, WILL BE NO PROBLEM. I AM SURE ANY ROOM COULD BE "L" SHAPED, BUT IF MOST OF THE ROOM SQ. FOOTAGE IS USED FOR CIRCULATION = NOT GOOD, BUT NOT FATAL. PROPORTIONS!!

My schematic vignette was a school for cooking with a place to eat. In my program there were 2 senior chef offices. Now, the program didn't state which floor they had to be on, so I ended up putting one on each floor. The "L" shaped room was a receiving and storage room and I ended up tucking the chef office in the "L" part. I didn't require windows and it was the only way I could fit all the programmed spaces on the second floor. But, according to what you guys have said, it sounds like I should be ok.

STEVE, SOUNDS OK. RELAX AND HAVE A GOOD HOLIDAY!!!!!!

I had that same question, the cooking school one, and I passed BP - with 2 L shaped rooms, so I think you are OK, as long as they are storage or accessory spaces or something.

In the interiors vignette, when I draw the appropriate rooms using the rectangle or "L", what am I supposed to do with the walls that coincide with the exterior walls? Should I manipulate them so the new wall disappears (overlaps) the existing wall?

NEW WALLS SHOULD DISAPPEAR. DO NOT BUILD NEW WALL INSIDE EXISTING WALL. PROBABLY OK, BUT WILL REDUCE ROOM SIZES, SO PROBLEM WILL BE HARDER TO SOLVE.

I was reviewing the schematic vignette in the mock exam and I noticed that the Main Reading Room on the first floor is an L-shaped room, yet the Open to Below space on the second floor is rectangular. Wouldn't we be downgraded or even fail if the two spaces aren't aligned?

YES, MY ENTRY SHOULD REALLY BE 2 STORIES.....SUCH A SMALL AREA, A MINOR DOWN-GRADE. BUT YOU ARE CORRECT.

On Schematic Design, I see "Wall Opening" icon - where are we supposed to make openings? I noticed that I could connect Lobby to Corridor or one corridor to another but do we connect any rooms with openings??

SO FAR, ONE CAN ONLY USE THE WALL OPENING BETWEEN "CIRCULATION AREAS (CORRIDORS, LOBBIES, ETC).

I was reviewing your suggested solutions to the schematic vignette, and I noticed on one solution you put a double door in the Main Reading Room. Any reason? If this isn't called for, isn't it downgraded?

DOUBLE DOORS AT MAIN ENTRANCE TO BUILDING AND MAIN 2-STORY SPACE WILL NOT BE DOWNGRADED, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARY.

1. Do both levels back to back Toilet rooms have to align vertically?.

THEY DO NOT HAVE TO BE BACK TO BACK, NOR ALIGNED VERTICALLY ON A TWO STORY BUILDING (a multi-storied office, yes)

2. Does the Elevator room and Mech/Elect room both need to be accessed from the corridor or could be accessed from the outside only

PREFERED CORRIDOR ACCESS, ALTHOUGH ELEV. ROOM MAY BE ACCESSED FROM THE MECH ROOM.

3. The travel distance between stair exists and other exits has to be +/- equal? or it doesn't matter as long I provide required number of exits.

EQUAL NOT NECESSARY AT ALL.

Are we downgraded for making corridors in the schematic vignette too wide? I had placed the janitors closet next to the toilet room so that the corridor jumped from 6' wide to 11' wide at one point. Thoughts?

IN THIS CASE A MINOR DOWNGRADE, BECAUSE WASTEFUL WAY TO SOLVE PROBLEM. CORRIDORS SHOULD BE 6' WIDE TYPICALLY. DO NOT MAKE WIDER OVERALL, EVEN IF STILL UNDER 25% MAXIMUM ALLOWED BY PROGRAM.

Speaking of corridors, is going over the 25% allowed a fatal error?

PROBABLY DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH OVER. IT'S PRETTY HARD TO REACH THAT %, UNLESS YOU DESIGNED SOME CRAZY CONFIGURATION, WHICH PROBABLY PRODUCED OTHER SERIOUS ISSUES.

Since both exits in the schematic vignette must be separated by a distance no less than 1/2 the overall diagonal, is this measurement taken from centerline of stair door to centerline of stair door?

TO BE SAFE, YES, BUT DOOR EDGE TO EDGE WILL SUFFICE..OR AT LEAST IT USED TO IN THE OLD DAYS.

Professor, I'm waiting for my BP results, but I am confused about the 5' turning circle within the room. In your Solutions passing problem, you show a 5' circle tangent to the door of the conference room. This circle appears to be the only place where a turn around is possible in that room. So is the overlap of the door swing ok?

I FEEL IT IS OK, ACCORDING TO THEIR CODE.

Could you point out what code (what section) does or does not allow the overlap? ADA, I believe, allows the overlap at toilet rooms, but I am not certain if it has anything to say about other areas of the building. Many vestibules would not have a 5' circle without a door swing overlap, for instance...

SINCE SOME CODES DO ALLOW, I FEEL NCARB MUST ALSO, ESPECIALLY SINCE NOT PROHIBITED IN THEIR CODE.

Schematic:

1. Dead ends: I know to take the furthest dimension away from the corridor and measure back, but do I measure to the corner of the corridor, or 1'-2' into it?

1' INTO CORRIDOR

Your solutions show 3' between conference chairs and the wall. In the ALS books they show 3' between a credenza and office desk instead of 3' from the credenza to the back of the chair. How do we know when to measure to the back of the chair or to the edge of furniture? Thanks for your help!

I CAN'T SPEAK FOR ALS. I FEEL 3' IS REQUIRED IN FRONT OF CREDENZA IN ANY SITUATION.

Professor Dorf, I purchased your NCARB mock exams solutions. After completing the schematic design I was checking my answer and noticed that you wrote in the program that the mechanical space (500sf) should be on the ground. I know that it is suggested to be placed on ground for exterior access, but is it inherently required even though the program does not state it? I solved mine with it on the second floor. I have yet to look at the solution because I prefer to attempt it again if your answer is yes.

BEST TO SHOW MECHANICAL SPACES (HEAVY WEIGHTS, SERVICE, ETC) ON 1ST FLOOR.

If you have a patio on the first floor, can you place a room above it on the second floor so that it becomes a covered patio.....I assume that wouldn't be ideal, but is it allowed as a last resort? Thanks!

DON'T DO IT

1) I was looking at the schematic section of your Solutions book and the passing solution has the exits just about equal to 1/2 the distance of the overall diagonal. Wouldn't this be an instant failure since it needs to be more than half?

DISTANCE IS MEASURED FROM EDGE OF DOORS, AND THUS JUST MEETS 1/2 REQUIREMENT...JUST!

2) When drawing the stairs for the schematic, I've been using 10'x20'. If my entrance to the stairs on the second floor is directly above the entrance from the first floor and the discharge exit is along this same wall, shouldn't this stair be wide enough? I'm assuming 4'-0" wide stairs and 12" wall thickness. Or is it just safer practice to use a 12'x18' stair?

IN THIS CASE, 10' IS FINE.

Your NCARB solutions shows a couple of rooms greater than 20' deep/wide without a secondary exit (i.e. LM on second floor).

ONCE INSIDE A ROOM, THEIR CODE DOES NOT COVER DISTANCES ALLOWED FROM A DOOR. SO A ROOM COULD BE ANY DEPTH, AND STILL MEET CODE ISSUES. IF AN AREA IS OPEN TO CORRIDOR, THEN THAT AREA MUST BE LESS THAN 20' DEEP.

Does this mean that an open area like a lobby which connects to a corridor cannot be deeper than 20 feet in the direction away from the corridor edge without having another door on the opposite side?

POSSIBLE....DEPENDS ON WHERE LOBBY ENTRANCE IS. SEE MY FAILING SOLUTION IN MY BOOK, FOR AN EXAMPLE.

My solution was less closed off. Your failing solution had the lobby as a closed off room from the vestibule and corridor. The lobby in my solution wrapped around a desk area and connected to the corridor along one edge of the L shape. The distance from the edge of the desk area to the outside wall was around 15' but I believe the distance from the outside wall to a theoretical "corridor" directly in line with the front doors might have been over 20 feet. I will cross my fingers.

-from another candidate...

I had a similar concern - specifically wondering if the vestibule door counted as an exit. I posted my solution on this board earlier in the month. My solution does have other problems that Professor Dorf pointed out (very helpful), but I forgot to ask about the dead end in the lobby. Notice that the corner of the lobby is 19.5' away from the vestibule door (the sketch circle).

link:

<http://architectureworkroom.com/sample.jpg>

PROBABLY OK

1. Does it matter in the schematic vignette what the size, spacing, and amount of windows we should draw for spaces programmed for windows? Is there a standard width for these windows?

REALLY THERE ARE NO SET RULES. ONE WINDOW WOULD PROBABLY SATISFY THE PROGRAM....JUST USE GOOD JUDGMENT.

2. I have your Solutions book, the NCARB solutions and your NCARB computer mock exams. Do you have any other computer mock exams?

NOT AS YET, BUT WORKING ON SOME.

I'm going to be re-taking BP in late December. The last time I took this test, on the schematic design section, the program required at least 75% of the spaces to be on the first floor. That left a lot of roof on the second floor. When I got my results, it listed the schematic design as the vignette that I did poorly on. Now, if I followed the program exactly, putting rooms where they belong, would I fail for having too much roof on the second floor?

NOT IF YOU FOLLOWED THE PROGRAM TO THE LETTER. THE BUILDING MUST FUNCTION PER PROGRAM, AND IF THAT LEAVES A SMALL 2ND FLOOR, THAT'S LIFE!

-Is there a minimum/maximum size limit for window openings?

NOT THAT I KNOW OF.

-When placing doors do we need to maintain proper push/pull door clearances?

NOT ON SCHEMATIC DESIGN.

-When creating corridors is it a downgrade if the corridors aren't exactly linear? The one solution that I came up with for your mock exam has double loaded corridors and a relatively linear floorplan, but I had to use the L-shape tool several times to draw my corridor where the rooms did not align. Is this acceptable?

YES, BUT DON'T GO OVERBOARD WITH WIDER CORRIDORS THAN REQUIRED BY CODE.

-When program calls for 2 exits from a room, are both exits required to discharge to exterior, or can they both discharge to the corridor?

BEST TO DISCHARGE ONE TO EXTERIOR, ONE TO CORRIDOR.

-When views are specified by program in a certain direction, are the largest rooms, (i.e game rooms, main reading rooms) required to face that view even if not required, or do rooms that are specifically required by program to have a "view" need to face in that direction only?

ONLY ROOMS REQUIRING VIEW NEED FACE THAT DIRECTION.

In the NCARB practice vignette for Schematic Design, it says the stacks must have direct access to the 18'-high Main Reading Room.. Per the seminar I took with you, direct access means the spaces must have a "direct connection" between them.. Per NCARB's notes related to the Block Diagrams, I recall and now quote, that you are to use "the connector tool to indicate that there is to be direct access between spaces by means of doors or wall openings".... SO I am having a difficult time placing the stacks on the first floor, connected by a door or "direct access" to the Main Reading area (required to be on the first floor) and making the rest of the program work.

Does placing the Stacks on the second floor, overlooking the main reading area work? To be a little pickier still, the stacks are not allowed to have exterior windows. Would overlooking the main reading area that has required exterior windows be acceptable?

Keep stacks on the ground. The upstairs of the reading room is volume only - no corridors, etc. This area is defined as Open to below - a blue shape.

The program states that this space goes on the first floor. All related, associated, connected spaces with the reading room go on the first floor.

Going out on a limb, I do not think there is enough area on the ground floor to even make the 1000 sf stacks on the 2nd floor possible. Pay particular attention to clues given in the program to adjacencies. These will get you most of the way to understanding what floor things need to be on. A critical step would also be tabulating your 1st floor / 2nd floor areas to ensure that you have less on the 2nd than the 1st. Don't forget to count the 2 story volume for both floors!

Direct access = door as far as NCARB is concerned (you have to be able to travel from one space to the other). So these 2 spaces HAVE to be next to each other with a door between them.

I had trouble with this vignette in the exam too, but I would just practice and practice this one, so that you can do it quickly/look for alternates within the time given. If something isn't working, try attacking it from a different angle (there's enough time in the exam to do this, if you are comfortable using the drawing tools).

How much importance is put on reducing the amount of open roof space for the schematic design problem? Is there any way to quantify what is acceptable?

THE AMOUNT OF EXPOSED ROOF AREA IS REALLY DEPENDENT ON THE PROGRAM. AVOID DEEP POCKETS, AND SIMPLIFY AREAS, IF POSSIBLE.

Also, can the elevator machine room be NOT adjacent to the elevator. In the real world it can...What is the rule for the test?

PROGRAM ASKS FOR "CLOSE TO". DO YOUR BEST.

I am having difficulty understanding what situations create dead-ends, however. If a room is over 20' deep, does that create a dead-end?

DEPTH OF ROOMS IS NOT AN ISSUE ON THIS EXAM, NOR COVERED IN CODE. THEORETICALLY A ROOM COULD BE ANY DEPTH, BUT STILL WATCH OUT FOR POOR PROPORTIONS. OPEN SPACES CONNECTED TO A CORRIDOR ARE, HOWEVER, A DIFFERENT MATTER.

I assume the only other danger of creating a dead-end would be If a corridor extends past a stairwell for 20' or so. In other words, if I have a corridor with stairs at both ends, ALL rooms double-loaded BETWEEN those two stairs would NOT be considered dead-end.

CORRECT

I found it curious that spaces like meeting rooms -assembly occ., area / 7 sq. ft. = # of people- and the like did not have two exits in your solution. Is this another case of if its not in the test's code section then don't worry about it?

CORRECT.....ONLY ROOMS REQUIRING 2 EXITS IN PROGRAM SHOULD GET TWO DOORS, AND THEY BETTER SWING IN THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL!!

Would it be a downgrade if you put another door in just in case?

DEPENDS HOW OFTEN YOU DID THIS.

1. In schematic design, because of small 1st floor footprint, somehow I just couldn't fill in 2nd floor rooms around perimeter of 2nd floor. I ended up having a gap in right upper corner of 2nd floor. That means 2nd floor corridor faces outside with single wall without exterior facing room like one tooth missing. The gap size is about 30' x 16' or something like that. Is this O.K or could be a fatal error?

NOT IDEAL, BUT SOUNDS OK

2. In schematic design, I had tried to keep 6' width corridor but some instance like in front of elevator or toilet rooms I ended up having 10' wide corridor for the 1st and 2nd floors. I think length of wider corridor like 20' to 30'. Is this cause serious downgrade?

DOWNGRADE, BUT NOT TOO SERIOUS

3. In schematic design, a program requires a weaving studio needs to be located near art gallery which is largest room in the program. I had tried to place a weaving studio as closest possible to art gallery. But I ended up locating it next to a room right across the art gallery. I don't know how far it is apart, but it seemed like little farther than what supposed to be.

GOORS TO THE TWO ROOMS SHOULD BE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE.

*****|
am working on your solutions book schematic design vignette. And I see that the doors to the stairs are approximately 45' apart and the max. diagonal to the building is around 105'. I tried to place them around 52' apart and it made things difficult. Am I misunderstanding the diagonal specified in the code?

NO, YOU'RE BEING PROPERLY OBSERVANT. I MEASURED BETWEEN CENTERLINE OF DOORS, AND AN OLDER VERSION OF MY BOOK DID VIOLATE THAT DIMENSION. NOT TOO CRITICAL AN ITEM ON THE TEST.

"The second floor envelope must be congruent with or wholly contained within the first floor envelope with the exception that doors to the exterior may be recessed for weather protection."

Does this statement implies that we must recess ent. door or its an optional.

NO NEED TO RECESS DOORS.....OPTIONAL.

On schematic I believe you are recommending a minimum 6' width corridor. Would 5' be acceptable for the Block diagram Vig hallway or is it not as critical since there is no real egress requirement?

YOU ARE PROBABLY CORRECT, BUT I WOULD STICK WITH 6' ANYWAY.

I just finished the BP Planning test and am worried I made a fatal mistake. I used an "L" shaped corridor to connect the stairs, but with 10min left, it dawned on me that the short leg of the "L" did not align vertically. The 1st level and 2nd level corridors shared one wall, but were offset 6'-6". To clarify, the outside edge of the 1st level was the inside edge of the 2nd level. Because of that, the

corridor turned back to connect to the stairs. I am pretty sure most everything else was correct, but does anyone know if it is a fatal mistake if corridors do not align?

NOT AN ISSUE HERE, AS LONG AS YOUR EXITING WORKS.

In schematic design, when measuring the distance between stairs to fulfill their requirement - do they measure from door to door, or how is that measured?

CENTERING LINE OF DOOR TO CENTERLINE OF DOOR.

I am preparing to take the Building Planning test, and had a couple questions. First, I realize it is good design logic to stack restrooms, and try to align as many walls as possible, but how much of a requirement is it. Second - Is it good to provide exterior access to an area if it is not required - such as the mechanical room.

TOILETS NEED NOT BE STACKED ON A 2-STORY BUILDING. ALIGNING WALLS IS NOT REQUIRED. EXTERIOR DOORS NOT IN PROGRAM ARE NOT RECOMMENDED.

On BP Schematic, I worked out a solution with a double loaded corridor on first floor and second floor - aligned with each other.

The first floor worked out with rooms on both sides of corridor all the way down, but the second floor corridor had one space without a room. So the hallway became an exterior wall of the second floor. Is this an acceptable answer?

I DON'T SEE ANY PROBLEM WITH THAT.

The Schematic Design came together after quite a bit of effort. About 1 hour left, I noticed that there was a room that was to be NEAR another. I measured about 50' distance between them. Room was up front next to lobby and the other room was farther down the hall on the opposite side. This and one room about 35 sf larger than needed were the only things I see that were wrong. I hope it is not too flawed. Praying for the best...any thoughts????

DOESN'T SOUND 'CLOSE', BUT EVERYTHING ELSE BEING OK, THIS SHOULD NOT BE FATAL. 35SF ISSUE REALLY DEPENDS ON PROGRAMMED SIZE, AND HOW FAR OFF YOU WERE, AND WHETHER YOU WERE LARGER OR SMALLER THAN PROGRAMMED.

If a written requirement says "the dorm should have a view of the park" - if only half of the space block has a view, is that enough of a view to pass? Will it be downgraded, or a fail?

I THINK IT RESPONDS ADEQUATELY TO PROGRAM, BUT BETTER TO GIVE IT MORE VIEW, IF POSSIBLE.

I have a few schematic design questions:

1) Do the main exit doors have a width requirement? Should double doors be used to take care of the egress width? I didn't see anything about this in the code.

NO SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS. I GENERALLY PUT DOUBLE DOORS SOMETIMES, AS A MATTER OF HABIT, RATHER THAN A CODE REQUIREMENT FOR THE EXAM.

2) How can you make sure that your lobby is not a dead end corridor? If the lobby does not exceed 20' in depth and has exit doors is this sufficient? Does the diagonal distance of the lobby come into play?

JUST MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TRAVEL MORE THAN 20' IN YOUR LOBBY (FORGET DIAGONAL) TO GET TO A POINT OF TWO CHOICES OF EXIT TRAVEL.

in schematic design can anyone assist me in determining the narrowest width for the toilet rooms?

also, in my practice runs, i have a difficult time getting the rooms to align along the corridor from first to second floor. is it acceptable for the corridor to change in width (larger, not smaller of course)?

I USUALLY ASSUME 10'-0" JUST BECAUSE A STALL IS USUALLY 5'-0" AND ANOTHER 5'-0" FOR CIRCULATION. I DON'T THINK IT MATTERS THOUGH IN THE SCHEMATIC DESIGN CAUSE WE DON'T HAVE TO LAYOUT THE ROOMS. I GUESS AS LONG AS IT'S NOT TOO NARROW FOR IT TO BE UNFUNCTIONAL THEN IT'S OK. HOPE THIS HELPS.

One question, when drawing the corridors in the almight Schematic Design vignette. Do you cut wall opening whenever they hit the edge of the lobby, And should you cut it so the two blue squares it makes are in the corridor walls, i.e. no reduced clearance. I am assuming this is right, but just making sure, since the program likes to draw walls the whole way around the lobby.

YES, THE WALL OPENING TOOL IS USED TO ERASE THE WALL BETWEEN TWO CORRIDOR ELEMENTS OR CORRIDOR AND LOBBY. LITTLE BLACK SQUARES I FEEL SHOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM.....DON'T KNOW WHY NCARB'S PROGRAM PUTS THOSE THERE.

Question about the NCARB Mock Exam for Schematic Design:

One of the requirements for the Lending Desk is:

Visual Control of Lobby, Children's Reading, and Work Room.

Now: Since the workroom has direct access to the Lending Desk, is that enough for a visual control, or does the entrance door of the workroom need to be seen from the Lending Desk?

Visual Control: Shall we show a window in the wall between the Lending Desk and the Lobby?

PROGRAM DOES NOT STATE WHICH SIDE OF DOOR NEEDS VISUAL CONTROL. I FEEL A WINDOW BETWEEN LENDING DESK AND WORKROOM WILL MEET REQUIREMENTS.....JUST A GUESS THOUGH. **WINDOWS ARE DEFINITELY REQUIRED FOR VISUAL CONTROL....DO NOT ASSUME YOU CAN LOOK THROUGH AN OPEN DOOR.**

On the computer, I made room shapes for every space in the program on the computer, making each shape approx. 10% smaller than the program listed. This gave me some wiggle room for massaging the plan later. Then from there, I worked out all my room and floor adjacencies, kind of like a puzzle. After a couple hours, I had a good plan working upstairs and downstairs. Lastly, I put in the doors and windows and checked for code violations (ADA and dead corridors, etc.).

Practice knowing what dimensions work for a 500,400,350 s.f. space; 25x20,20x20,20x17.5. If the space shares a dimension then they will stack easier. The times I failed I wasted more time trying to play with the space size. Use 10,15,20 and 25 for dimensions off of corridors for rooms excluding two-story space and adjust in the long direction. First figure out what is lower level and upper level than draw both floors and then arrange. Last and final attempt took 2 1/2 hours with this method.

I would not recommend undersizing any rooms from the start. If you want the spaces/rooms to look smaller, Zoom Out. Its the same thing. It is much to easy to forget to resize all the rooms. All you need to do is forget one and that is points off.

I would recommend.....

1. Drawing all spaces on both floors, appropriate SF.
2. Start with the first, Zoom out and treat it similar to the block diagram. Solve the big issues, get the adjacencies, relationships.
3. Do the second floor.
4. Flip back and forth. Tweak.
5. Check all program and code requirements.
6. Add all doors and windows.
7. Check it all again

I would recommend that you have a system in your head before you go in. An order in which you will do things. This will keep you from getting distracted and missing something.

I would not have incorrectly sized rooms floating around at any time. They are to easy to forget.

Can anyone give any feedback on the NCARB mock exam:

1. There is a 500 sf Electr./Mech. Room that could go on either floor (unspecified). Having it on the 1st floor makes that floor about 20% larger than the 2nd. Is it still the better choice? Should a service door to the outside be provided even if the program doesn't specify it?

DESIGN LOGIC: HEAVY EQUIPMENT, NEEDS SERVICING BY GUYS (OR GALS) IN GREASY SHOES = PUT ON FIRST FLOOR. EXTERIOR ACCESS SHOULD NOT BE PROVIDED UNLESS SPECIFIED IN PROGRAM.

resulting 20% 1st story roof area is acceptable?

DON'T PANIC IF 2ND FLOOR IS A GOOD DEAL SMALLER.....JUST FOLLOW THE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

2. There is a 750 sf meeting room, theoretically with over 50 occupants. Should the door swing out into the corridor in the direction of travel even if the "code" doesn't specify it. Should 2 out-swinging doors be provided?

PROVIDE EXIT (OUT-SWINGING) DOORS ONLY FOR THOSE ROOMS SPECIFIED IN THE PROGRAM.....USUALLY THE 2-STORY SPACE ONLY.

Schematic Design

- Not too long ago, I read Prof. Dorf's comment stating that if the program doesn't ask for a second exit for an "area", then we shouldn't (consequently it shouldn't be more than 20 feet deep). But how about a "room"? If the room is more than 20 feet deep, should I provide an extra door even though the program doesn't require a second exit for the room? Or will that be an error?

ROOMS CAN BE ANY DEPTH WITHOUT SECOND EGRESS ACCORDING TO THEIR CODE, UNLESS PROGRAM CALLS FOR 2 EXITS.

My colleague just took BP two days ago. In SD, she made her corridor 8 feet wide. Is she going to be down graded for that (you have mentioned before that the corridor shouldn't be more than, say, 6'-6" wide)? Or, is it perfectly okay to have an 8 feet wide corridor? (the project I'm working on right now requires 8'-0" clear corridors everywhere.)

DESIGNING WITH 8' WIDE CORRIDOR IS OVER-BUILDING ON THIS PROBLEM. CERTAINLY DOWN-GRADED FOR THAT, PROBABLY NOT FATAL.

Schematic design vignette of the Building Planning Exam

1.) If your program requires the two story space to have a window and a view, does it matter if another programmed space or "Area" (also requiring a view) is placed in front of the two story space leaving about one third of the elevation of the big space for window placement and facing the view?. Or does the entire elevation of the big space have to be exposed to that view?

BETTER TO GIVE MAX VIEW FROM 2-STORY SPACE, BUT IF NOT, I FEEL YOU ARE STILL SATISFYING THE PROGRAM.

2.) If your two story space is programmed to have direct access to an "area", should the doors between the two spaces exit (egress) out of the large space and into the "area" since the "area" could be used as circulation. (is this true even if the main doors exiting from the big space is to the lobby and are positioned for egress)?

DON'T UNDERSTAND QUESTION. 2-STORY SPACE WILL REQUIRE 2 EXIT DOORS....ONE INTO CIRCULATION AND ONE TO THE EXTERIOR (BEST SOLUTION).

To clarify question No. 2: if we were to use NCARB's Practice problem as An example. The big space would be the "Main Reading Room," The "Stacks" must be accessed with a door between the two spaces. The program requires two egress doors from the "Main Reading Room" and a direct access door to the stacks, therefore three(3) doors are required for this pace. If we changed the program for the "Stacks" to say.... "Stack Area" and when you drew the space it had a yellow net pattern (same for corridors and lobbies); How would this fact effect the door connecting the two spaces. Would it be an inny or an outty(egress)?

IF THE STACKS ROOM BECAME AN AREA, THEN IT WOULD BE PART OF THE READING ROOM, AND 2 EGRESS DOORS WOULD BE REQUIRED. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THIS, I DON'T THINK NCARB IS USING "AREAS" AS THEY USED TO IN THE PAST.

I had this type of question last week for this exam. The two storied space was a "Main Meeting Room. The adjacent connecting space was a "Break Out Area" The "Main Meeting Room" was over 4000 sf and the adjacent "Break Out Area" was 1000 sf. The site was only 100'x150' - Very tight. By using such a large "Area" as a programmed space along with the traditional lobby and corridors; NCARB was testing a candidate's response to a forced dead-in scenario. I was very impressed with the level of sophistication NCARB demonstrated in the design of this Vignette. It was a real challenge!. With your approach to attacking these issues I walked away from this one with fling colors! I think I did well!
Thank You for "SOLUTIONS!"

PLEASE EMAIL ME MORE ABOUT THE "AREA" THEY MAY NOW BE INCORPORATING.

3. If your programmed "Area" is 1000 sf and a good proportion for that space requires a space depth of 25 to 30 feet. Is it taboo to place a door from this space directly to the outside in the direction of travel to mitigate a dead-end condition If : a) the program does not call for a door to the outside?. B) There is a stairwell door over 20 feet away from this door on the same side of the space? ..

"AREA" CANNOT BE DEEPER THAN 20' OR WILL BE DEAD-END. PLACING DOOR TO EXTERIOR WILL SOLVE THAT CONDITION, BUT IF DOOR NOT IN PROGRAM THAN PROBABLY A MARK-DOWN.

I can only think of one issue that I may have been misinterpreted, but according to the study materials, "near" is within 20 feet, "adjacent" is, well, touching.

Does it seem reasonable that if the program stated that 1 bathroom be "near" 2 bedrooms and there was a total of 3 bathrooms, 6 bedrooms that you could double load a corridor - bathrooms on one side, bedrooms on the other as long as the doors between the 2 spaces that were required to be near each other were within 20 feet?

Comment 1: Actually I did have the "near" issue in my exam. I placed the entrances of 2 rooms with a "near" relationship almost 30 feet away!! At that time, I realized that but somehow I thought it was ok, because comparing to the size of the building, 30' seems fairly close to me. Anyway, I passed. So I suspect that it's not "near" that failed you, maybe something else.

Comment 2: look under site design down the list a bit, Prof. Dorf sheds some light on this issue. I think "near" in BP is within 20' is OK. Mainly, BP is looking for meeting every code and every program requirement. Things like near would be a downgrade, but since they are not defined absolute, like code, then it probably is not a fail. However, messing up on the code or other more defined areas of the program, would fail you.

GOOD EXPLANATION

Does the exam software measure dead end from the corner of the corridor in question, or the centerline of the perpendicular corridor? LS Code is from the corner, but I've run into this problem with building inspectors twice, and am nervous about NCARB...

BEST TO FIGURE 1' BEYOND CORNER.

Two questions: several of my solutions seem to wind up with a secondary corridor on the first floor, with toilets, mech., custodial etc. The corridor gets longer than 20', so I take it to the exterior wall and add an exit door. That's not in the program, but it works really well with the layout. Is this something that might get downgraded for some reason? Also, common sense says the elevator equipment should be next to the elevator, but the program doesn't. In reality, this equipment can be remotely located to some extent, but will it hurt the scoring if the solution requires them to be separated (within reason)? Any thoughts?

EXTRA EXTERIOR DOORS ARE NOT ENCOURAGED (SECURITY ISSUES), AND WILL BE MARKED DOWN. ONE EXTRA DOOR AS YOU DESCRIBE WOULD NOT BE TOO SERIOUS. HOWEVER, AS A GRADER, I CAN REMEMBER THAT IF I SAW THE CONDITION YOU DESCRIBE ON THE FIRST FLOOR, I WOULD BE PRETTY CONFIDENT THAT I WOULD FIND A DEAD-END ON THE SECOND FLOOR, WHERE A DOOR TO THE EXTERIOR COULD NOT BE PROVIDED. DO BE CAREFUL. TRY PULLING THE MAJOR 2-STORY SPACE BACK FROM THE CORRIDOR (10' - 12'), STILL PROVIDE A 6' CORRIDOR INTO IT, BUT THE AREA REMAINING ALONG THE CORRIDOR, ON BOTH FLOORS, WILL BE A GREAT LOCATION FOR THOSE SMALL PROGRAM SPACES... I.E. TRY TO DOUBLE-LOAD YOUR CORRIDOR AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. TRY IT.

ELEVATOR MACHINE ROOM SHOULD IDEALLY BE LOCATED ADJACENT TO ELEVATOR. THE FURTHER AWAY, THE GREATER THE DOWN-GRADE.

I took this exam on Monday, and found the schematic problem more difficult than all the practice vignettes that I did (Ncarb, Ballast & Dorf solutions). Specifically, the site was very tight - my scheme touched the diagonal corners of the site - and the reception area required visual control of 3 spaces in addition to the lobby (the main double height space, a large 800 sf space, and an office that began a cascade of 'nears' and 'adjacencies'). The second floor was pretty small even after filling it with everything not explicitly or implicitly stated as first floor. I think it turned out to be approx 2/3 the size.

I won't presume to say that I came up with the only scheme, but the only thing i could see after two hours was to have an L-shaped corridor at the ground floor with the lobby and a set of stairs at the bend in the L; another set of stairs at the long end of the L; and a door to the exterior at the end of the short leg of the L. The second floor was confined to spaces off the the long leg, between the two stairs. Since my square footage was so small, the short leg corridor didn't show up on the second floor - all roof.

my questions are these:

1. Did it make more sense to do what I did or to have a long empty corridor on the second floor leading to a stair at the end (doesn't make sense to me, and it turns out i wouldn't have had room for it, but theoretically speaking...)
 2. The entry lobby seemed way to small to provide all the access and visual control I needed from the reception - i kept the lobby within the limits, and ran a lot of corridors into it/adjacent to it (which made it bigger). Seemed messy to me, but I didn't know how strictly that lobby is looked at in terms of 10% size.
-

How seriously would I get downgraded if

- 1- the elevator and the elev. equipment room are separated by the secondary corridor(6' wide)?
- 2- 2 rooms' entrances with "near" relationship is separated by approx. 30 feet?

ELEVATOR MACHINE ROOM LOOKS OK, BUT 30' FOR "NEAR" REQUIREMENT SEEMS TO BE STRETCHING THE ISSUE QUITE A BIT. PROBABLY NOT FATAL. GET SOME SLEEP.

1. I noticed on several of the ALS SD solutions that a double door was provided as one of the exit doors out of the 2-story space. Is this just good practice, or only required if specifically requested in the program?

DOUBLE DOORS ARE NOT REQUIRED UNLESS PROGRAMMED. I OFTEN USE THEM AT MAIN LOBBY ENTRANCE AND DOORS INTO 2-STORY SPACE, BUT ONLY BECAUSE IT FEELS BETTER, BUT IT IS NOT NECESSARY.

2. Overhangs are allowed at recessed doors - but how much overhang is allowed, and how wide a 'doorway' allowed before being downgraded?

GOOD QUESTION. ASSUME 5' LIMIT, BUT I SUGGEST TO STAY AWAY FROM ANY OVERHANGS TO AVOID THE ISSUE.

3. If a window to a view is required for a given space, and the long dimension of that space (reasonably proportioned) is oriented perpendicular to the view direction (however, still providing the shorter dimension of the space the required view), would I be downgraded?

SHORT END OK.....YOU ANSWERED THE PROGRAM.

I just took the BP exam and I'm not sure if I had trouble with dead end corridors. The first was the lobby, I couldn't scale the proportion to limit 20' access in any one direction. Second I developed a corridor off of my main axial corridor to get to the 2 exit Multi purpose room. This corridor I believe was over 20' but led to the door of the multi-purpose room. Is this fatal? I aced the first 2 vignettes with your help and feel a bit broken hearted to have been so close to passing.

CORRIDOR TO THE 2-STORY SPACE SOUNDS LIKE A SERIOUS DEAD-END SITUATION. IF YOU WERE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 20' - 22' YOU SHOULD BE OK.

If the program suggests a kitchen needs delivery from the back alley, then although that door I should provide is not labeled as exit door in the program, that door should still swing OUT to the exterior, right?

EITHER IN OR OUT.

-When putting together two corridor pieces to make up a circulation area, do we have to put a wall opening at the boundary or is this zone already open?

WALL MUST BE ERASED BETWEEN TWO CORRIDORS.

-In sample passing solutions, some larger rooms show double doors. How do we determine when to use double doors vs., single doors? Are they required, if the program does not state it?

DOUBLE DOORS ARE NOT REQ'D UNLESS SPECIFICALLY STATED IN PROGRAM. SOMETIMES I USE THEM JUST BECAUSE IT LOOKS BETTER.

-Should we put windows in rooms where neither required nor prohibited?

I LIKE PUTTING WINDOWS IN, EVEN IF NOT PROGRAMMED, BUT IT SHOULD NOT BE REQUIRED.

-Is there any recommendation on whether to put the elevator near the main entrance or at another location?

UNLESS PROGRAMMED OTHERWISE, ELEVATOR CAN GO ANYWHERE ALONG CORRIDOR LENGTH.

-Should the custodial closet always be near the toilets if program doesn't state requirement?

CUSTODIAL AND TOILETS RARELY HAVE ANY RELATIONSHIP TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT.

On the building vignette, is it OK to make the electrical/mechanical space a long skinny proportioned space? In real life it would be ok, but didn't know if I would get downgraded for that.

BETTER THAT SPACE THAN MORE PUBLIC AREAS.....YOU WILL PROBABLY BE OK.

One thing that frustrated me was trying to put a door into 2 straight corridors that ran together - the program won't let you put a door near the wall opening of the 2 corridors (don't ask me why). So at the last minute I had to redraw my corridor as an L shape, it worked fine. Just look for stuff like that under pressure, there's usually another way for it to work without redoing everything most of the time!

My advice - just practice the example problems over and over again, so that you can work fast on test day, and you should not have a timing problem.

The program states that there must be at least 2 exits from the building. Does an exit through the stair, or through another room count?

Exits through the stair count. It should be stated in the code portion of the program.

Through an exit stair counts as an exit. Through another room only if the program and/or code given allows it. not a good idea. The 2nd exit for the large space is really for that space only.

General / Miscellaneous Building Planning Comments:

I took BP yesterday and it was very much like Dorf's practice problems. (Thanks Prof!)

Block Diagram - I had 12 connections and after mentally rotating the bubble diagram so the entries were in the correct spaces, the diagram came together quite easily. The site was VERY cramped, with trees and a pond, so that was a little tricky. Also, the porch needed FULL noontday sun, so watch out for that. I aimed to finish in 20 minutes because I knew what was coming next....

Interiors - Five rooms, 32 pieces of furniture. It wasn't terrible, but took FOREVER....an hour and ten minutes. Every door swing, push/pull latch, furniture, etc. clearance was EXACTLY the minimum, so don't try to over design...you will run out of room. Also, I took Dorf's suggestion and placed the Conf room first and it worked out.

Schematic - This took me 3 1/2 hours to complete. I kept thinking that it would somehow work out but it was frustrating. Again, Dorf's words of wisdom "your first solution WILL NOT WORK" stuck in my mind and after many, many trials, it ended up coming together. I had an entry location that required it to be on the shorter side of a rectangle, so the typical "entry in the middle of the building" could not work. Anyway, it was okay. I hope I passed. Good luck to you all.

I used this list for taking building planning. It can be adjusted for each vignette.

1. I'm a big fan of getting everything drawn first. Everything,... It take a little discipline, but I think its worth it. Get it all on the screen.
2. Solve the big design moves first, the obvious stuff in the paragraphs. (Views, Big adjacencies, sun issues)
3. Adjust areas so that all design problems are solved per programs.
4. Check all program requirements again.
5. Now start to finalize. This is the point of commitment. Add doors, furniture, window, connectors, etc...
6. Check all requirements again. Everything, no matter how simple. Code, Program, adjacencies, everything.
7. Get out of there. If you have done all these steps and feel confident exit the exam. This is only after you have check the requirement multiple times through the process. The last check should super redundant. I kept checking and check and checking until I started tweaking the exterior walls so that they lined up better. Big mistake,.. doors and windows started disappearing. In had to recheck everything. Don't start tweaking the design for aesthetic reasons if you have time left. It does not matter.

After having the undo problem happen I remembered a message that you or someone had posted previously about it so I didn't use undo again. In the interior vignette it is best to practice without the undo because it is highly stressful and infuriating to watch a message come on the screen that says "One Moment Please". It seemed to not be a problem in the other vignettes. Good luck to all.

My advice for Building Planning design portion is make sure you can lay out an "L" , "T" and straight double loaded corridor configuration and figure out which one works in sketch form before you draw anything. The site may be very constricted so only one of these may work. Also, have a good sense of how long it takes you to draw, I got half way through the interiors layout and

realized the furniture wouldn't have the proper clearances & I needed to flip rooms around. Luckily, I new approx how long it would take and was able to finish with 1 minute left! good luck!!!

Some observations for those interested... The block plan seemed easier than the practice test. I only had 10 (I hope) connectors. One exterior space needed solar orientation. Two spaces needed entry orientation. I just didn't have time to triple check.

With the extra time, I moved on to Interior lay-out. Like others before me, I found the time flying by at a tremendously fast pace! The only real challenge was that damned 4 chair table. I fear that I put the back of the executive desk too close to a wall to come at all close to 3' around all chairs. Prof. Dorf believes that only 3 of the 4 chairs needs clearance, though. Frustrating. Professor, if you are reading this, what mark down can I expect for putting the back of the executive desk too close to the wall?

Schematic was tough yet fun! Sorry, I know that seems stupid. But it did get me to think. I am thankful for the generous time allowance to make it easier. Here, I was challenged by a space that needed to be "near" the 2 story space, but, still have direct access to 2 large spaces. I kept the single - double-loaded corridor, but the spaces ended up over 30', well 35' apart. I could not make it closer and still have all the spaces on the corridor, and without strange L shape rooms. One office needed visual control of the lobby, 2 story space, and an accessory "near" space. The near space ended up adjacent to the office so I use the ol' interior window with a view to the door trick... Thanks Professor, that was another of the lessons learned... that one space had 4 windows: one to the entry (east), the two-story space (north), adjacent room (west), and a req'd window to the outside (south).

For the first section (Block and Interior) I have about 20 minutes left to go thru the solutions. For Sch. Dgn, I have over an hour left to check thru my stuff. Overall I feel confident about the exam.

Block Diagram: It's quite similar to the NCARB problem, but it has only 10 connectors, so it's easier.

Interior Layout: It was an L-shape room, has windows on 2 walls instead of one. There was one wall with 3 windows and I initially placed 2 rooms against that wall and misplaced the separation wall at the ctr of the middle window, glad I caught that.

Schematic Design: Quite similar to NCARB as well. It's a museum with Art Gallery (windowless and 2 story), different studio (painting, ceramics, sculpture, etc) It's a square site, major view to the south. I used the "double-load corridor" idea of Prof. Dorf, linear corridor with one secondary corridor to the big room, 2 stairs at the end. I took advantage of the 20' dead end corridor limit and place the toilets 12' passed the west stair entrance on the first floor. I found this helpful when you have the 2nd fl smaller than the first. On the 2nd floor, my west stair entrance is at the end of the corridor, and the corridor is fully loaded. After I final checked it over and over during the last hour, I suddenly realized I mis-swing one of the regular doors into the corridor! :P Glad I caught that too.

My conclusion: I felt myself well prepared and understood all the materials b4 the exam, so the exam didn't seem hard to me. And you should really re-check you solutions couple times, sometimes you might caught something that you keep missing, just like I did.

I just took this exam and I followed Dorf's suggestions to the letter. Using his methodology I finished over an hour early.

In the 4 hr vignette I found his "note" taking method (listing the rooms and using connector lines etc) very helpful. The toggling between first floor and second floor was the most helpful suggestion. Seems like a simple idea but I don't know if I would have thought on it on my own. Watch out for doors and windows disappearing when you adjust a room.

Interior layout: Use the sketch tool to draw a series of circles 5' and 3' dia. Draw A LOT of them and place them to the sides of the floor plan. Also, draw rectangles the size of required clearances at the striker jamb of doors.(per your test's code. Then its really easy to move the rectangles (12" by 48" and 18" by 60" per my test's code) next to the jambs as an easy check.

Block Diagram: One item I almost missed was the shadow created by a tree. I placed my outdoor terrace on the south of my diagram because I needed noon sun - almost missed that the tree casts a shadow up to 50'. Moved it just in time.
