

Signs that your new building was originally designed for another purpose: Rest rooms

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There's always a settling-in period when you move offices, learning where things are, like the rest room, the kitchen, the printer room, the cafeteria, the locker room, your boss...

My new office is conveniently close to the rest room. Actually, this building is laid out kind of weird. There are two sets of rest rooms within a short distance of each other, on opposite sides of a stairwell. You can wave hello from one to the other and have a conversation. My office is nearly halfway between them. But I can use only one of them.

On the south side, there are two rest rooms, a men's room and a women's room. On the north side, there is a women's rest room and a storage closet.

Clearly the people who originally commissioned this building were not a tech company with a stereotypical gender balance.

Bonus rest room imbalance: There is a men's room on the upper floor near some conference rooms. It has no urinals, only stalls. This was clearly a former women's room that merely has a new sign on the door. Whenever I use it, I have this brief moment of panic when it appears that I went into the wrong rest room by mistake.

Double bonus rest room quirk: There is a rest room just off a large gathering area. It is a unisex rest room which serves only one person at a time, and it is huge—maybe two thirds the size of an office. Last year, a friend of mine flew up to Redmond to interview with Microsoft. (It was for a group I have no connection to, so there's no conflict of interest, thanks for asking.) Her inbound flight was delayed, so she arrived at Microsoft campus with only a half hour to spare before her first interview. I took her to the luxury rest room, which gave her plenty of space to change from her travel clothes to her interview clothes, freshen up, and make it to her first interview.

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