

# Clue 3: Adjacency

## What Adjacency Is

Adjacency describes **which spaces should be near each other, far from each other, or connected in specific ways** to support how people use a building. It's the study of **functional relationships** between spaces.

Adjacency is about:

- **Efficiency** (minimizing unnecessary travel)
- **Comfort** (noise, privacy, temperature, smells)
- **Logic** (what naturally belongs together)
- **Experience** (how people move, transition, and feel)

Adjacency is *not* about aesthetics. It's about **function, flow, and human needs**.

## The Three Types of Adjacency

### 1. Direct adjacency

**Definition:**

Two spaces that must physically touch or share a wall because their functions depend on immediate access.

**Functional meaning:**

People move between these spaces frequently or in quick sequence, so distance would interrupt the workflow.

**Why designers use it:**

To reduce travel time, support efficiency, and allow shared utilities (plumbing, HVAC, electrical).

**Example:**

A kitchen and dining room must be directly adjacent because food moves straight from one to the other.

**More Examples:**

- Bedroom ↔ Bathroom
- Reception ↔ Waiting

## 2. Close adjacency

### **Definition:**

Two spaces that should be near each other but do not need to touch. They should be within easy reach, but separation is acceptable or even beneficial.

### **Functional meaning:**

Users need convenient access, but the spaces don't share a workflow that requires immediate connection.

### **Why designers use it:**

To balance convenience with comfort, noise control, or privacy.

### **Example:**

A classroom should be close to storage, but it doesn't need to share a wall.

### **Other Examples:**

- Kitchen ↔ Pantry
- Lobby ↔ Elevator

## 3. Distant adjacency

### **Definition:**

Two spaces that should be **intentionally separated** because being near each other would cause conflict, discomfort, or safety issues.

### **Functional meaning:**

Distance protects quiet, privacy, cleanliness, or sensitive activities.

### **Why designers use it:**

To prevent noise, smell, traffic, or safety problems.

### **Example:**

Bedrooms should be distant from mechanical rooms because of noise and vibration.

### **Other Examples:**

- Bedrooms ↔ Noisy living areas
- Exam rooms ↔ Public waiting
- Offices ↔ Mechanical rooms

## How Designers *Decide* Adjacencies

### Function

- What activities happen in each space?
- Which activities support each other?

### Users

- Who uses the space?
- What do they need easy access to?

### Privacy

- Which spaces require separation?

### Noise

- Which spaces generate noise?
- Which spaces need quiet?

### Utilities

- Which spaces benefit from shared plumbing, HVAC, or natural light?

### Sequence

- What is the natural order of activities?

Adjacency is essentially **mapping human behavior onto space**.

## Adjacency and the “Program”

Adjacency is derived from the **program** — the list of spaces and their requirements.

## Common Adjacency Mistakes Beginners Make

- Putting noisy spaces next to quiet ones
- Ignoring privacy needs
- Forgetting about plumbing
- Creating long, inefficient travel paths
- Treating adjacency as “nice to have” instead of essential
- Designing based on aesthetics instead of function
- Jumping to furniture before adjacency is solved

### Mystery File

You discover an old memo from Elias Wren:

"The building began to fail when rooms that depended on one another were separated. Other rooms were forced together despite having no reason to be connected."

**Problem You Must Solve**

Determine which spaces should be located near each other.

**Your Task**

Create an adjacency relationship chart for your corrected plan using:

- Must Be Adjacent
- Prefer Adjacent
- Should Not Be Adjacent