

Today's new home buyers enjoy a variety of housing options



Builders are taking a fresh approach to the rear of a home.

Depending upon where and how you live, buyers have helped to create a demand for different housing types as well as a desire for more variety in designs of smaller homes. This demand has spurred both creativity and innovation as builders and architects are challenged to improve the use of space and to make sure our industry is meeting buyers' needs with homes that work for today's families.

Every home design begins with an analysis of the lot size the home is to occupy and compatibility with the regulations which govern the size of home that can be built. Beyond these planning principles, the design process is really guided by the constantly evolving requirements of you – the new home buyer.

In a relatively short time period, say the past decade, lifestyles have changed and so have peoples' priorities. Our modern families are time constrained and want to be able to prepare food, relax, and entertain while catching up with each other. Homes with open concept floorplans accommodate this lifestyle and the Great Room, as part of a spacious configuration of kitchen/eating/living area, has become the new heart of the home. Formal living rooms have virtually disappeared in the more compact footprint, eclipsed by the introduction of "flexible space" to be used as a home office, retreat or den as the owner prefers. New home floorplans you review today, will not include a 'computer niche' because the prevalence of Wi-Fi systems has negated the need for this tiny, dedicated space. Current designs often have spacious master bedroom retreats which offer an oasis of privacy – a possible response to more open main floors. These retreats may include a television viewing or sitting area, a fireplace, and an ensuite bathroom with spa-style appointments to pamper the owners!

Looking to the outside appearance of new homes you'll find that many master-planned communities incorporate strict architectural control guidelines which govern the integrity of exterior elevations, the variety of materials used, and minimize the repetition of particular designs. With more attention being paid to designing attractive neighbourhood streetscapes, the garage has taken a back seat to inviting front porches. As well, builders are taking a fresh approach to the rear of the home to incorporate covered loggias or verandas that overlook the garden. These outdoor rooms offer privacy and shelter, essential for smaller lots and in higher density developments where neighbours are closer together.

Today's buyers are willing to move to accommodate their changing lifestyle and, for the most part, builders have embraced consumer demand for different housing options. Whichever buyer 'category' you may fall into, think about your lifestyle before you choose your home. Do you have an older adult or perhaps a nanny who will live with you? Is there a home office in your immediate future? Are you dependent upon public transit to get to and from your job? Is access to outdoor activities important to your lifestyle? The home buyer who takes the time to think about these and other lifestyle questions will discover that they are better equipped to find exactly what they are looking for among the many new homes available.



An occasional column contributed by York Region-based new home developer and builder Boaz Feiner, President Housing Division of Geranium Corporation.

Builder's Notebook

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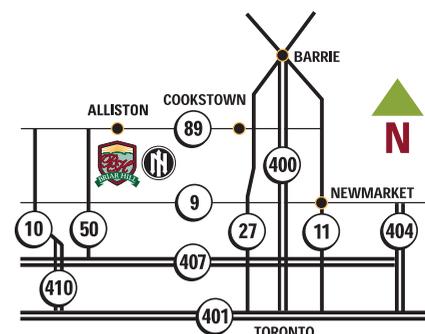
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