



As we jump into the New Year with our updated new website, I would like to tell you of a few upcoming events I will be attending:

- **Feb.13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>** : AIBD Mid-year Conference and International Builders Show in Orlando, FL
- **March 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>** : AIBD NC/SC Spring Conference & Trade Show in Myrtle Beach, SC
- **July 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>** : AIBD National Convention in Kansas City, MO

All of these trips help keep us up to date on all of the new building trends and products including Green Building. They help us in turning your dreams into reality and designing your “Dream Home”. The following is some thoughts on the process of designing your dream home.

## **DESIGNING YOUR DREAM HOME**

You probably have a pretty good idea of what you want and need in your new home just from the homes you have lived in in the past and from other homes of friends and family. Now that you are designing your own home you will need some guidelines on how to get your ideas on paper, so that others – especially building professionals – can see and work with them. But before you begin designing, you must identify the conditions that will limit your home’s design: your budget, your site, your climate and your local building codes.

### **BUDGETING YOUR NEW HOME**

It is important to design your home with your budget clearly in mind. Do not make the serious mistake of designing a home you can’t afford to build. Good design and realistic budgeting go hand in hand. A visit to a local lender can give you a rough idea of how much money you can borrow.

### **YOUR BUILDING SITE**

A well-designed home works in harmony with its surroundings, taking advantage of as many natural features as possible. If you have a survey of your property, take a copy of it with you to your property and make notes on it. Observe the contours of the land: homes designed for sloping sites can be quite interesting. Look for the best views so you can plan for windows to face those directions. Note the daily path of the sun and seasonal prevailing winds to capture the best natural light and ventilation. Study the solar orientation to capture free energy in the winter and note the existing tree cover which can shade the house in summer months.

## **YOUR CLIMATE**

Unfortunately, more than one house has been designed without any regard for climate. When a home is designed without taking the climate into consideration, it can't provide for the comfort of your family. You can research such climatic factors as sun, wind, precipitation, and temperature at a local library or weather bureau to determine which will have the greatest impact on your home's design.

There are many fine examples of architecture which effectively integrate climatic factors. For example, in the New England area, houses are traditionally designed to withstand the long winter months. Stone foundations prohibit cold air from circulating beneath the floor, steep roofs keep snow from piling up, and small windows reduce heat loss. In the Lowcountry area and along the coast, homes are built to withstand high winds and hot summers. Roofs are usually at a lower pitch to help wind shear and also have longer overhangs to shade windows from direct sunlight.

Some other typical design responses to the Lowcountry climates are the following:

- High ceilings to allow hot air to rise
- Tall windows to welcome the prevailing summer breezes
- Operable shutters to protect against hurricane-force winds

## **BUILDING RESTRICTIONS**

Local ordinances and building codes must also be considered before you begin designing your home. In many parts of the country, homes must be built to resist earth tremors, wind, snow, or rising water. Many areas have rules about where on your property you may build. Some areas even have restrictions on your home's size or style. To find out if there are any such restrictions in your area, check with the local building department or the developer.

## **GATHERING YOUR DESIGN IDEAS**

You will find it easier to put your thoughts on paper if you collect ideas from other sources. Go through home design magazines and tear out photos that show something you particularly like – from the light inside a room, to the mantel over the fireplace, to the way a bay window creates a reading nook. Also, collect pictures of exterior home styles, roof designs, landscaping, porches, decks and anything that catches your eye. Collect and study these images so that you can put them to use when you begin designing your home. Homes must be more than beautiful. A home designed to serve your family's lifestyle and needs will make other activities easier and more rewarding. Here are some important activity areas to consider:

## **COOKING AND EATING AREAS**

Kitchen design is no longer a simple question of an efficient work triangle and enough room for the family table. Many families now enjoy kitchens that open into much larger spaces, such as family rooms with comfortable seating, a fireplace, or room for children to play. Do you prefer a kitchen that is open to the family room or dining area, or do you prefer a more traditional kitchen in its own space?

If you have more than one person working in the kitchen, you may want to design multiple work areas, including extra counter space, additional sinks, and individual areas for food preparation, serving, and clean-up. What type and size appliances will be included in the kitchen? Plan counter and work space accordingly. Do you prefer a pantry or cabinets for storing food and dishes? Do you require a formal dining room or will an informal dining area be sufficient? What about a breakfast bar in your kitchen, sunroom, keeping room, screened porch or deck off the kitchen? All are options for informal dining space.

## **SLEEPING AREAS**

How many bedrooms do you need? If you have children, will they have their own rooms or will they be sharing with a brother or sister? What kind of play and study areas do they need? Should the master bedroom be on the first or second floor, near the children's rooms or isolated from them? Small children may need to be near you, while adolescents would probably prefer some distance. Will your master suite have his and hers closets, whirlpool, or a sitting area? Do you have long-term house guests? You may want to design a guest suite with its own bedroom, sitting area and kitchenette.

## **GATHERING AREAS**

Every house needs one central gathering area to serve as the hub of the home. For your family, should that include cooking and dining space? A great room can play host to several types of activities, or you may desire a more private gathering area, such as a formal living room. How about a playroom for your kids or a media room for your own relaxation? Do not be afraid to let your imagination run wild.

## **PERSONAL PRIVACY AREAS**

Our homes should be refuges for individuals as well as families. Private space can take many shapes: a quiet corner for reading or study, a den where you can do family bookkeeping, a sewing room or studio for hobbies.

## **ENTERTAINING AREAS**

If you entertain formally, you will probably want dining and living rooms that can be closed off from the other areas of your house, especially if you have children. If you tend to entertain less formally, or as a family, an open floor plan which allows large groups to flow from one space to another with ease may be more suitable.

## **FUTURE PROVISIONS**

Be as complete as possible in considering your needs for today and the future. Remember that with thoughtful planning today, a properly designed children's wing can be a great guest suite for a college student and, after graduation, the perfect in-home office for a semi-retiree.

Once you have a good idea of your needs, it is time to document those needs in a format that your architect can use in designing your home. A written list describing the function of each space and what it should be near will

suffice. This list (or program) will detail what you both need and want in your new home, and it provides a base of information that defines the functional requirements of your home.

## **WORKING WITH A PRO**

Before you get too far along with any sketches, you will probably want to enlist the services of a pro. The aid of a residential design professional may help you fine-tune your ideas or catch potential design problems in the early stages. A professional can also point out many ways to save money in one area, which may allow you to indulge somewhat in another area.

The design phase will begin once you have selected the professionals to work with to design your home. The design phase involves taking your ideas and transferring them into working drawings. This requires many levels of refinement. There are many different approaches to the design stage, but most designers will begin by interviewing you at length to get a detailed idea of your home needs. If you have your program and have collected pictures, share them with your designer.

During the design phase, it is critical that you communicate your ideas. Before you accept a final design, be satisfied that it comprises the best solutions possible to meet your needs. Changes will be expensive once construction starts.

Depending on the complexity of your home, the design phase can take up to several months to complete. Once complete, you will be ready to “TURN YOUR DREAMS INTO REALITY.”

## **ELEMENTS OF DESIGN**

**D**esign your home to serve your family’s lifestyle and needs.

**E**nlist the services of a pro. A professional will show you ways to save money and fine tune your ideas.

**S**pace Program is a written list of rooms describing the function of each space and what it should be near.

**I**nterest is what your home can be. Good design and realistic budgeting go hand in hand. Visit your local lender and make your home a good investment.

**G**ather design ideas from home design magazines and other sources and keep them for further reference.

**N**ature and your home should work in harmony, careful planning makes it happen.

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