

## Building and Design Trends For a Convenient and Healthy Home

Home designers are incorporating the latest trends in their floor plans, making it possible for clients to build a home that is both beautiful and functional. Newer home designs often reflect the growing awareness of environmentally friendly materials, healthy homes, and flexible areas that accommodate changing lifestyles.

Building Green - Eco-friendly building is a great way to save – both the environment and on your utility bills. Ask your builder about using Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified lumber. These wood products are grown and harvested in an ecologically-sound manner. Large home improvement stores such as Lowes and Home-Depot carry the products, which are readily available.

Energy-Star certified appliances and materials are another way to improve the environment and lower the cost of running your new house. Everything from windows to dishwashers can carry the Energy Star logo.

Healthy Home – Homeowners want a home that looks and feels great. The increasing concern indoor air quality has created a new class of healthy building materials.

Ask your builder to use low VOC (volatile organic compounds) adhesives, sealants, paints, flooring and underlayment. Drywall can be primed or sealed with a specialty paint to reduce or eliminate gases being released into the home. Use solid wood for cabinets, shelving and trim to avoid the formaldehyde that can be emitted from composite wood with veneer.

Consider using carpets without stain repellents and fire retardants in low-traffic areas, and ask for non-toxic padding.

Flexible Space – Many current floor plans include extra space that can be changed and used according to the needs of a family. An office can be turned into a nursery. A bonus room can be a playroom or a bedroom. When choosing your floor plan, keep in mind your future needs and build a home that will suit your lifestyle for years to come.

As more people get ready to retire, they are finding that downsizing their home does not mean downgrading. Many small house plans offer the amenities retirees have become accustomed to.

The type of home you choose for your retirement will depend on your type of retirement. Home plans with two master suites allow guests to visit and maintain a sense of privacy. For the semi-retired, a home office will allow greater freedom to work around your schedule and telecommute. House plans featuring Universal Design standards will ensure that your home remains accessible and convenient for years to come, possibly allowing you to remain in your home longer instead of residing in an assisted living community. Applying the basics of universal home design provides a set of design layout tactics to provide a home that is suitable for every member of a family who will be living there; from a toddler who will be crawling around, to an elderly member of a family who may be unsure in their footing.

Retirees have never had more choices when it comes to where to live. Retirement in urban areas is becoming more popular due to higher gas prices and a desire to be close to cultural attractions and medical care. Choosing a small house plan affords the homeowner the opportunity to take advantage of a small or irregular lot that has been overlooked by a larger builder.

Best wishes in the building of your new home!

### About the Author

Jill Phillips operates one of the leading stock home plans websites on the Internet, [Home Design Central.com](http://www.HomeDesignCentral.com). Here you can quickly search through thousands of house designs from the nation's leading building designers and architects. Have questions about how the house plans process works? All your questions are answered in the Just-Released and FREE [House Plans Guide](#).

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