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## Transitional Design Evolves

2018 DESIGN TRENDS

MODERN OASIS

REIMAGINING FIREPLACES

*Published by*

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## ON THE COVER:

This contemporary home was extruded from the same plan as a traditional Spanish-style home.

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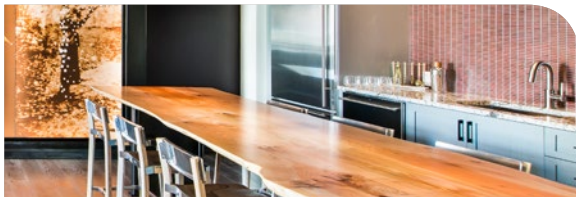
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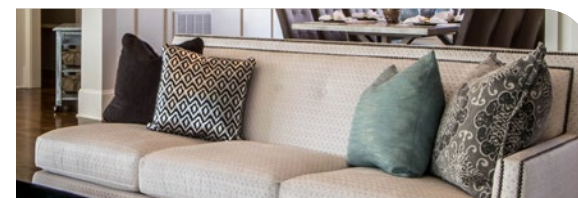


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Steven Dewan



# 2018

By Alexandra Isham

# DESIGN TRENDS

Architects and designers are embracing transitional style, rich colors, and natural materials

The 2017 Best in American Living Awards (BALA) honored an incredible 129 single-family, multifamily, interior design, remodeling and community projects. Winners represent the nation's best in home and community design, interior design, and remodeling. They also showcase top trends, spotted each year by a team of eight prestigious judges. While some trends may be short-lived, others carve out a more permanent place in residential design.

During the 2018 International Builders' Show, the National Association of Home Builders' Design Committee, which includes nationally known design professionals and single-family, multifamily, and custom home builders and remodelers, also discussed what has been trending based on the BALA awards. This information has also been assembled into a presentation that is available to all NAHB members at [nahb.org/design](http://nahb.org/design).



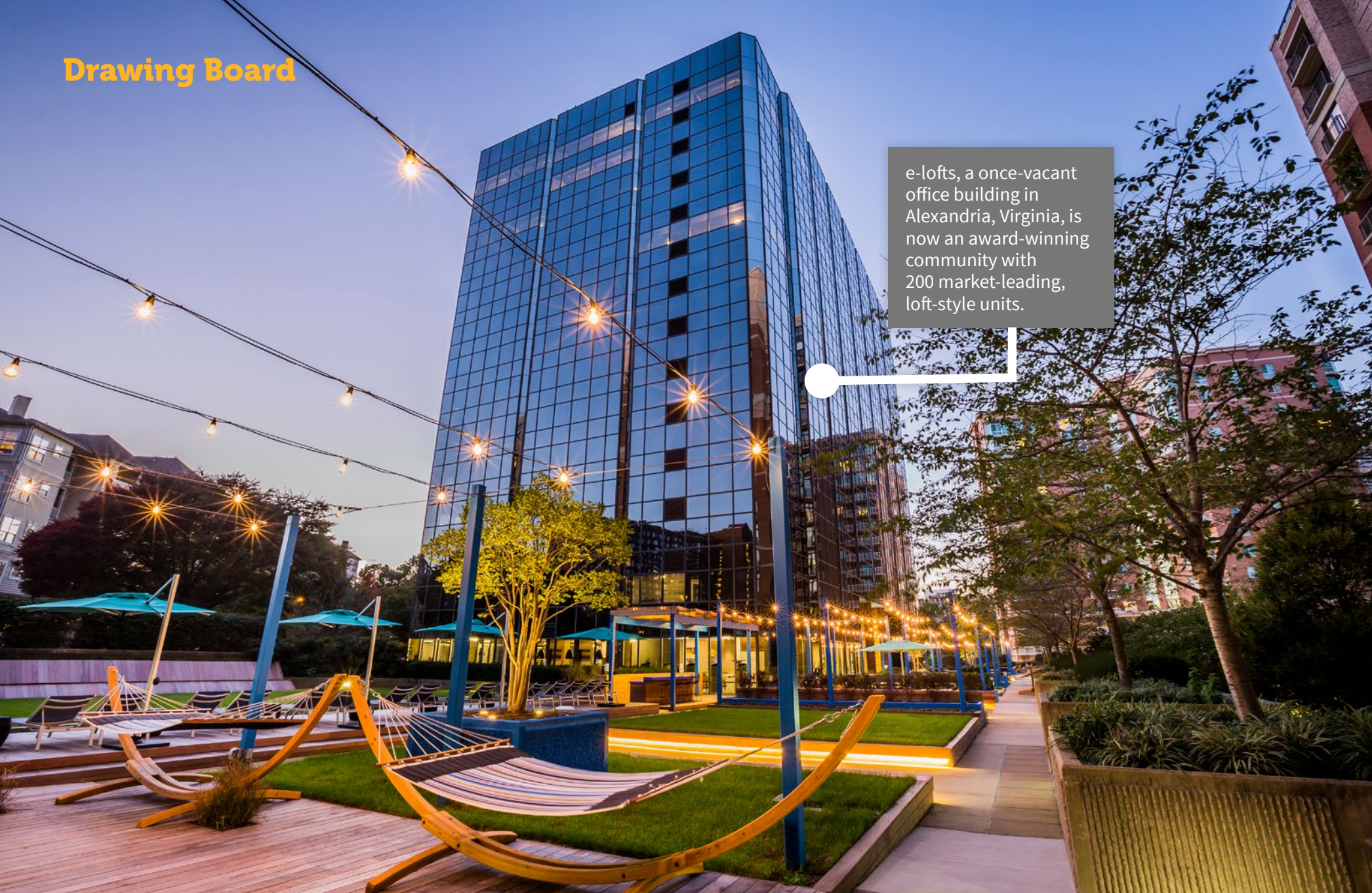
This beam succeeds in pairing the industrial style with more classic details, materials, and shapes. Crisp lines keep the composition clean, while a neutral palette allows each detail to blend seamlessly with the next.

THE BIRDHOUSE ON PROUT'S NECK, PHOTO BY JEFF ROBERTS IMAGING

## OVERALL TRENDS IN SINGLE- AND MULTIFAMILY HOMES

- Architects and designers are blurring the lines between commercial and residential, amounting to a softer industrial look than in recent years.
- The **transitional style** is increasingly popular, defined by its balance of the modern, contemporary style and traditional rules of architecture and massing.
- Less is more. Designers are leaving fussy, traditional architectural details behind in favor of **clean and simple lines and detailing**.
- While open floorplans are accepted as the norm, buyers struggle to envision their furniture and spaces. Designers opt for **open but defined floorplans**, adding unobtrusive boundaries and emphasis to certain areas of the plan by altering ceiling treatments and heights, flooring materials, colors, lighting, and columns.
- **Midcentury modern is trending down** in favor of simply modern.
- Overall style, from traditional to contemporary, is increasingly guided by **regional preferences**.





e-lofts, a once-vacant office building in Alexandria, Virginia, is now an award-winning community with 200 market-leading, loft-style units.

### COLORS

- White with black accents is popular with entry-level buyers. To personalize the home, buyers can add an accent color. Almost anything is guaranteed to match with the black-and-white palette.
- Designers are reaching for **high contrast and lush palettes**. Jewel tones add richness and sophistication; new colors of the year, such as Oceanside from Sherwin Williams and Caliente from Benjamin Moore, are bold and add a sense of luxury.
- Grays are on the way out, although some buyers still think it's an easy, ready-to-buy alternative. **Monochromatic designs** are also trending down.

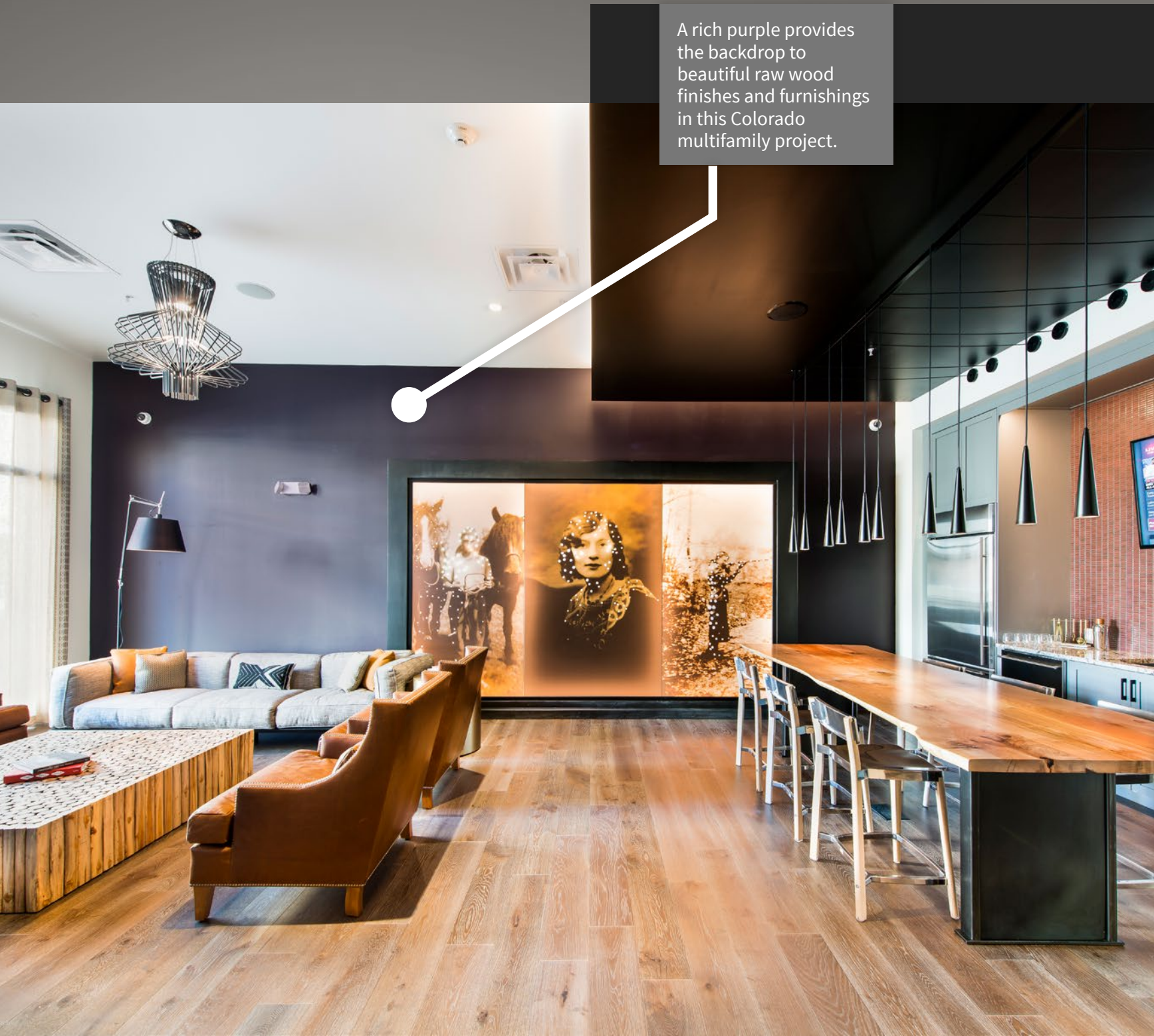


THE KINGSLEY, PHOTO BY WILLETT PHOTOGRAPHY

### MULTIFAMILY TRENDS

- Old is the new new. **Adaptive reuse** is increasingly popular, particularly in urban areas. Old hotels, office buildings, and factories create trendy backdrops for multifamily product.
- Architects are **restoring and modernizing older housing types**, such as 1970s and '80s garden-style apartments. They are finding it a more affordable alternative to building new product.
- **White and black** are the hottest multifamily exterior colors for 2018, either primarily white with black details or completely black with punches of white.





A rich purple provides the backdrop to beautiful raw wood finishes and furnishings in this Colorado multifamily project.

MATERIALS

- Raw and real materials, including wood, stone, and concrete, are popular in production and custom homes.
- Wood ceilings and floors are in demand, and they can help define spaces in open floorplans.



By using different ceiling finishes and materials, the architect has better-defined spaces while maintaining an open plan in this Michigan home.

GUNBARREL CENTER, PHOTO BY DANIEL O'CONNOR

RIDGECREST



## KITCHENS

- Kitchens and islands are more proportionately sized. Even in larger custom homes, kitchens fit the size of the family rather than the size of the home.
- For countertops, designers are increasingly using **quartz**, thanks to its relative affordability and antibacterial properties. Quartz also tends to work better with the popular color palettes.

There has also been uptick in **porcelain** usage in the kitchen. Custom countertops, though potentially more expensive, are also wanted by buyers and can be made of wood, concrete slab, or multiple materials.



Even in this 12,000-sq. ft. Chicago home, the design team opted for a right-sized kitchen that has everything a chef needs without being a monstrosity.

LINCOLN PARK TRANSITIONAL HOME, PHOTO BY CAMERA DEPARTMENT INC.



WHITESIDE RESIDENCE, PHOTO BY REBECCA LETHE

Is this a home or a luxury resort? Home owners at this North Carolina residence may never want to leave, thanks to natural and fine finishes, a large tub, ample light, heated towel racks, and more.

## BATHS

- Taking a page out of the hotel play-book, buyers want **spa-like baths and retreats** in the master, including high-quality materials, spacious showers, and luxe detailing.
- Buyers still want tubs, but unique **freestanding tubs** reign.
- Adding another level of luxury, designers are including **heated tiles** in the shower and bathroom floor.
- **Fireplaces** in the master bath are also popular, but not at the foot of the tub, where it is too hot. Linear gas units are a great alternative.

This year will be a mix of bold colors, clean lines, and luxury (or luxury look-alikes) for all levels of housing. While these trends provide an overview of the national housing market, it is important to research your buyer type to find out their top priorities and preferences.

Alexandra Isham is program manager, design at the National Association of Home Builders.





New Jersey builders partner with an advocacy group for a proactive approach to regulations

It's no secret that stormwater regulations are getting more complex. Since there is no uniform approach, it's important to understand how to get involved early and build the case for sensible standards. That's just what the New Jersey Builders Association did, and it's paying off in a big way.

In the absence of a national stormwater rule from the Environmental Protection Agency, states and localities are continuing to tighten permanent, or post-construction, regulations using existing Clean Water Act authority.

If stormwater regulations are not designed and implemented in a thoughtful way, they can increase costs, delay projects,

Curb cuts, pervious pavement, and bioswales are three of the practices detailed in the *New Jersey Developers' Green Infrastructure Guide*, created by the Developers' Green Infrastructure Task Force.

# Sensible Stormwater Standards

By Elizabeth George-Cheniara, Esq., George T. Vallone, and Eva Birk







Philadelphia's Thin Flats, the nation's first LEED Platinum-certified residential duplex project, features solar panels for hot water, green roofing, and rainwater-harvesting cisterns for irrigation.

result in poorly designed or maintained features, or simply occupy valuable space that could be used for housing or other community amenities. If implemented appropriately, approaches such as green infrastructure can seamlessly integrate into existing requirements, build value, and achieve multiple community and environmental benefits.

### HELPING BUILDERS MAKE THEIR CASE

NAHB released an online stormwater toolkit in 2017 to help builders and HBAs make the case for programs that provide a clear path to compliance, reduce redundancy, and meet water quality

goals. As part of the toolkit launch, NAHB released *A Developer's Guide to Post-construction Stormwater Regulation*. This report breaks down state-by-state data on top stormwater permitting trends affecting members in the field.

"This research allows professionals in the construction and development industry to learn what's being adopted across the country and how their state fits in," said Daniel Lloyd, chair of NAHB's Environmental Issues Committee. "Since there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to stormwater, we wanted to provide simple checklists that compare pros and cons of different regulatory approaches based on climate, geography, and local land use patterns. Our hope is

this data will be a powerful tool for our members to use when sitting down with state regulators to find a recipe that works."

NAHB's study also found that since standards change so rapidly (most state stormwater permits are renewed every five years), success often hinges on HBAs taking a proactive role to ensure programs that can be implemented well on the ground *before* big changes take place.

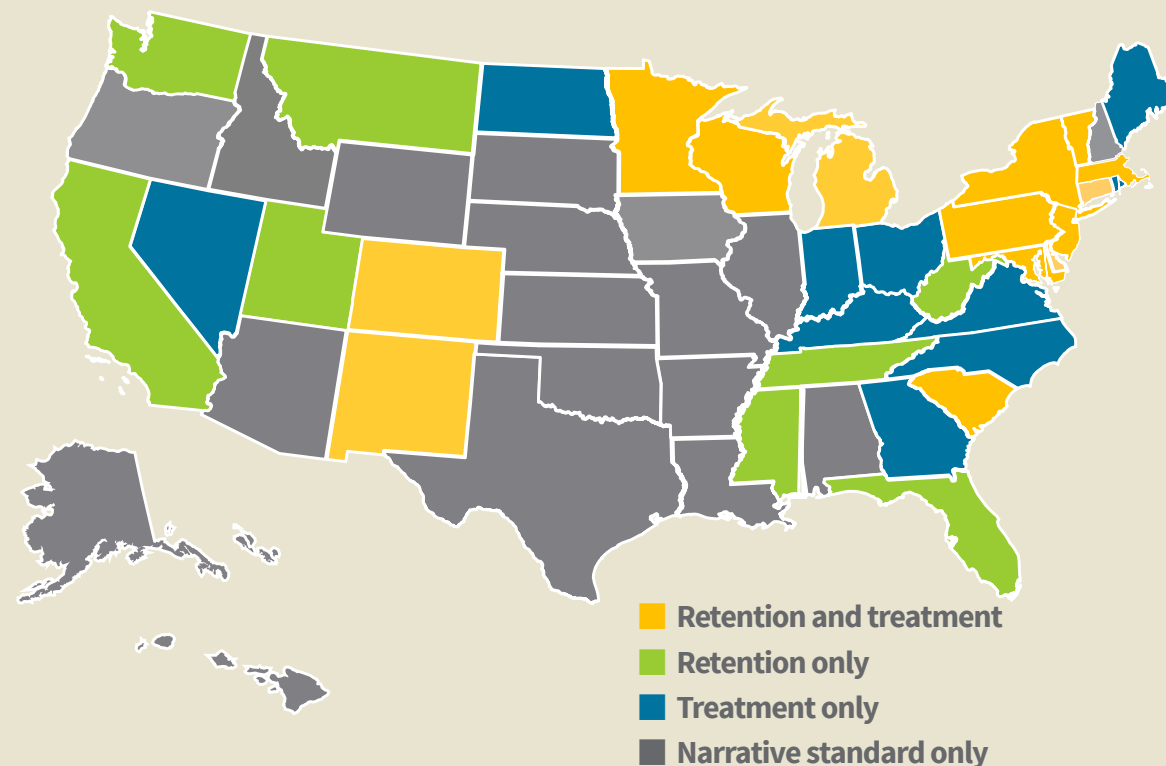
### NEW JERSEY'S APPROACH

The New Jersey Builders Association is a great example of the benefits of a proactive regulatory approach: getting ahead of the curve, and making the case for approaches that meet environmental goals without breaking the bank.

Similar to other states, construction projects in New Jersey must comply with stormwater management requirements to address runoff and water pollution concerns. New Jersey's regulatory process for obtaining stormwater permits at the state, regional, and municipal level is a morass of subjective—and often contradictory—standards and duplicative agency reviews.

The availability of green infrastructure technologies has been gaining national attention as an alternative to traditional "grey" infrastructure practices that rely upon pipes and stormwater detention and retention systems. Instead, practices cited in the *New Jersey Developers' Green*

### Results: State Post-Construction Standard Approaches (June 2016)







An infiltration strip between two driveways is one of many methods for addressing stormwater runoff.

result in poorly designed or maintained features, or simply occupy valuable space that could be used for housing or other community amenities. If implemented appropriately, approaches such as green infrastructure can seamlessly integrate into existing requirements, build value, and achieve multiple community and environmental benefits.

HELPING BUILDERS MAKE THEIR CASE

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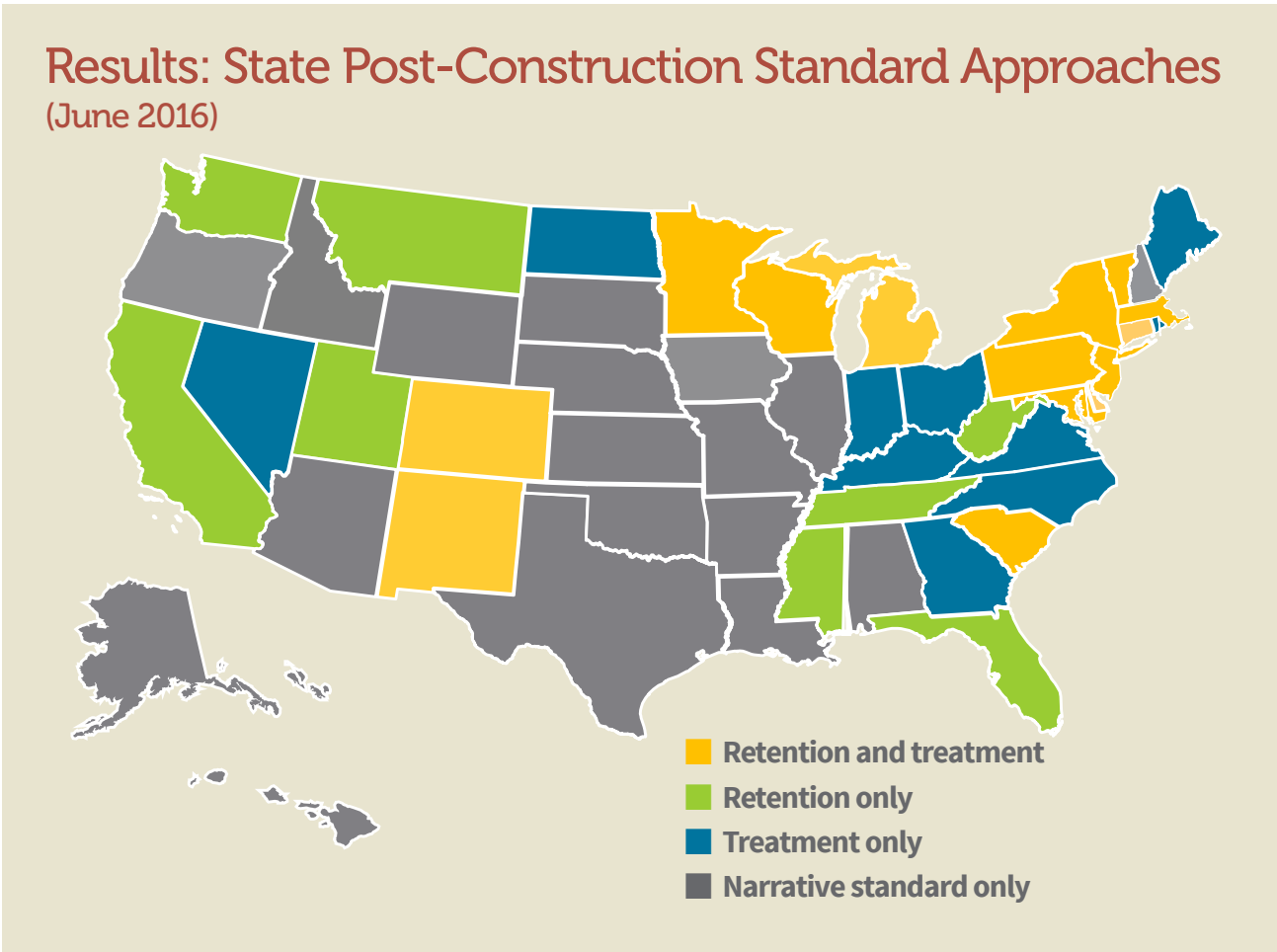
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Going Green

*Infrastructure Guide* emphasize using systems that mimic stormwater absorption as it occurs naturally, utilizing landscaping, plants, soil, ponds, constructed wetlands, stones, and pipes “...to capture, filter, absorb and/or reuse stormwater.” Other examples include street tree trenches, pervious pavement, bioretention basins, rain gardens, green roofs, cisterns, and vegetated swales.

Recognizing the potential environmental and societal benefits from utilizing such progressive development practices, the New Jersey Builders Association (NJBA) partnered in 2015 with the nonprofit advocacy organization, New Jersey Future (NJF), to establish the Developers’ Green Infrastructure Task Force. Comprised of developers, stormwater design professionals, attorneys, and public policy advocates, the task force’s efforts centered on producing a reference guide for development company executives and stormwater design professionals. Using funding from the William Penn Foundation, NJF managed the preparation of the *New Jersey Developers’ Green Infrastructure Guide*, which was released at NJBA’s 2017 Atlantic Builders Convention trade show.

Both builders and New Jersey Future see this collaboration as a win-win that will pay off in the long term.

“Managing stormwater in the same way that Mother Nature does it—by creating

infiltration pathways back to the aquifers like bioswales and constructed wetlands and ‘parking places for runoff’ like cisterns and wet-ponds where man and animals can reuse it—is less expensive, more popular with end users and regulators, and is much more cost-effective,” said NJBA Past President George Vallone and task force co-chair.

The guide provides decision-making tools and methodologies that help developers understand how green infrastructure can improve the bottom line of their projects. Further, it provides a framework for addressing key issues that affect real-world decision-making, such as site characteristics, short- and long-term costs, and community consensus-building.

EXPANDING THE MISSION

While the task force initially focused upon how to best inform the development community about incorporating green infrastructure techniques in site design, it became apparent that the developers’ guide could provide the basis for changing the state’s subjective regulatory standards and duplicative review process.

Consequently, the task force’s advocacy efforts expanded to addressing these impediments with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Specifically, the task force advocated that the subjective



The New Jersey guide debunks the myth that pervious pavement doesn't work in cold climates.



Rain barrels capture and store stormwater for such uses as irrigation and flushing toilets.

standards should be replaced with an objective approach based upon using green infrastructure techniques as best management practices.

Approaching the NJDEP jointly with a well-known environmental public policy advocacy organization gave valuable credibility that was impossible for the state agency to ignore.

“NJBA is committed to pursuing this progressive approach with the new state administration to establish an objective permitting process that would also lead to better water quality results and societal benefits throughout New Jersey,” said NJBA Chief Executive Officer Carol Ann Short. 🏡



If you need more information about changing stormwater regulations, access the *New Jersey Developers’ Green Infrastructure Guide*, *A Developer’s Guide to Post-construction Stormwater Regulation*, and more at [nahb.org/stormwater](http://nahb.org/stormwater).

**Elizabeth George-Cheniara, Esq.**, is vice president of regulatory and legal affairs at the New Jersey Builders Association.

**George T. Vallone** is president of Hoboken Brownstone Company and a past president of NJBA.

**Eva Birk** is environmental policy program manager for the National Association of Home Builders.





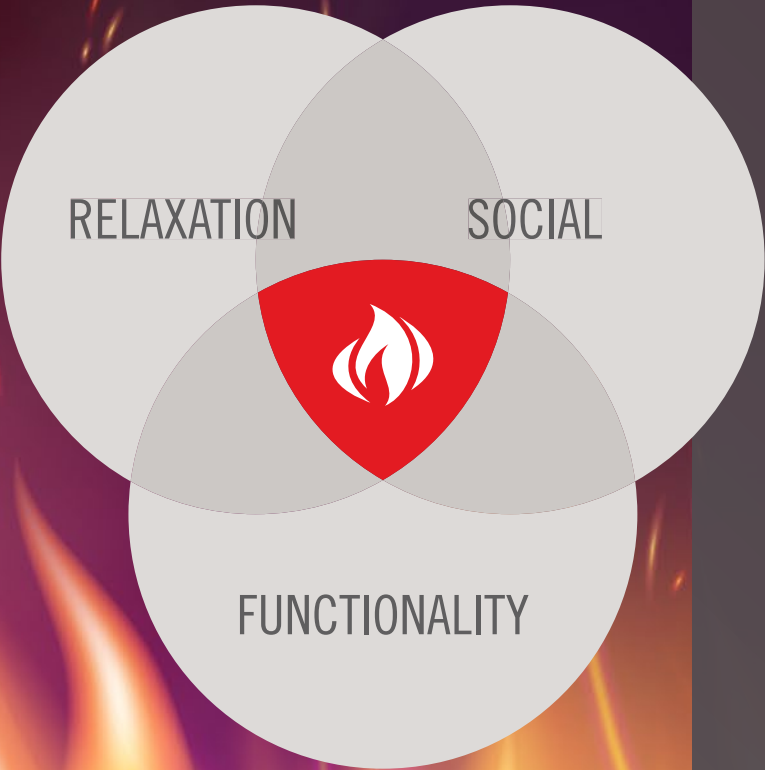
# REIMAGINING FIREPLACES

By Wayne Visbeen, AIA, IIDA

**RELAXATION**  
a space that encourages personal relaxation, intimacy and tranquility

**SOCIAL**  
a gathering space for social interaction

**FUNCTIONALITY**  
functional spaces that are used for a very specific, unchanging purpose



## New technology solves four common design challenges

Nothing enhances the quality of life in a home more than great design, but it doesn't happen by accident. It's the result of taking the time to thoroughly understand the meaningful experiences home buyers dream about in their new space, even before an architect or designer puts pen to paper.

An in-depth consumer research study, *Hot Spots*, examined how key areas and attributes of the home impact home buyers and their purchase decisions, measuring the emotional connections that are made with various living spaces. What's more, it revealed what many experienced designers and architects intuitively have come to recognize. The level of a space's appeal correlates with its ability to deliver on the intersection of three key room dynamics: relaxation, socialization, and functionality.

The study also identified the unique contribution that fireplaces—whether gas, wood, or electric—make to enhancing dynamics and appeal. As a result, over the past two years, Visbeen Architects has become increasingly creative with fireplaces, integrating them into more fun and unexpected locations.

Adding fireplaces to more locations within the home required more flexibility from our suppliers. This led us to discover some interesting new technologies, which provided us with solutions for four common design challenges.



## CHALLENGE 1: HEAT CONTROL

Due to their clean appearance and superior design flexibility, linear fireplaces have been increasing in popularity. One of their key advantages, seemingly, is being able to place a television at viewing height, directly above the fireplace. However, having to provide significant distance between the fireplace and the TV or installing an obtrusive mantel has been a real design challenge due to the heat emitted by the fireplace.

Recently, Visbeen Architects' go-to fireplace supplier, Napoleon, launched its new line of Luxuria linear fireplaces. This line comes standard with a patent-pending system, Dynamic Heat Control, which eliminates the problem by redirecting heat from the fireplace to other areas of the home, or even outside. This innovation now enables a TV or delicate artwork to be mounted within inches of the fireplace. Even the glass is cool to the touch, making it safer for everyone in the home.





## CHALLENGE 2: COST CONTROL

Frequently, the material surrounding the fireplace is much more expensive than the fireplace itself. Home owners and designers want the continuity of a single material surrounding the fireplace and extending the full height of the wall, but using noncombustible finishes, such as marble or tile, can cost thousands of dollars when you factor in both the material and labor.

Thanks to the new Dynamic Heat Control system, the Visbeen team has been able to significantly reduce the cost, while achieving a great aesthetic. Simple framing and the use of wood or drywall as a finishing material right up to the firebox is inexpensive; it also allows the home owner to change the look without incurring significant expenditures.



## CHALLENGE 3: INSTALLATION CONTROL

Another hurdle encountered with fireplaces is not being able to cost-effectively install them in an ideal location because of venting challenges. New flexible venting systems have remedied this problem. They are easy to install, and fewer pieces and connections are needed for installation.

Flex venting allows an installer to work around obstacles without multiple parts and crazy joints or connectors. Unlike rigid venting, flex venting will flow joists or other obstacles, completing an install without a hassle. This takes half the time, which reduces labor costs.





**Wayne Visbeen, AIA, IIDA**, is principal and founder of Visbeen Architects Inc. The firm has received hundreds of national awards, including dozens of Best in American Living awards and more than 100 American Residential Design awards. Visbeen Architects is a partner with Napoleon Fireplaces.



## CHALLENGE 4: ATTITUDE CONTROL

As the winner of more than 40 BALA awards, Visbeen Architects' success has stemmed in large part from embracing new thinking and trends. Years ago, I wouldn't have seriously considered specifying or owning an electric fireplace. And, at the January, 2018 Design Committee meeting, attendees had a tough time believing that electric fireplaces are becoming the fastest-growing segment of the market. However, new research from Napoleon identified a significant segment of home owners who are embracing the technology.

I am now specifying electric fireplaces, and even put two of them in my home. By using decorative surrounds, we have found them to be an outstanding design alternative that requires no difficult installation. Due to the latest innovations in electric fireplaces that have increased their aesthetic and authenticity, my clients' attitudes are changing, as well.

In summary, fireplaces are an amenity that evoke a high degree of positive emotion and home owner appeal. Today's new fireplace technologies are making it easier and more cost-effective than ever to deliver significant design impact in multiple spaces within the home. 🏠



A four-story San Francisco spec house is transformed into a modern oasis

# REMODEL OF THE YEAR Glen Park Residence

By Cass Calder Smith, AIA



 The objective of the 2017 Best in American Living Remodel of the Year was to transform

a spec-built house into a bespoke home. The client was a young technology entrepreneur who wanted his first home to be both an urban retreat and a place to entertain.

As the team from Cass Calder Smith | CCS Architecture worked with the client, he became more knowledgeable and appreciative about modern architecture and



the design process. As an example of working with an architect and the opportunity he was in to create a unique, personalized home, the team shared examples of Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye, Mies Van Der Rohe’s Farnsworth house, some of the mid-century California houses by Neutra, Schindler, Ellwood, and various others.

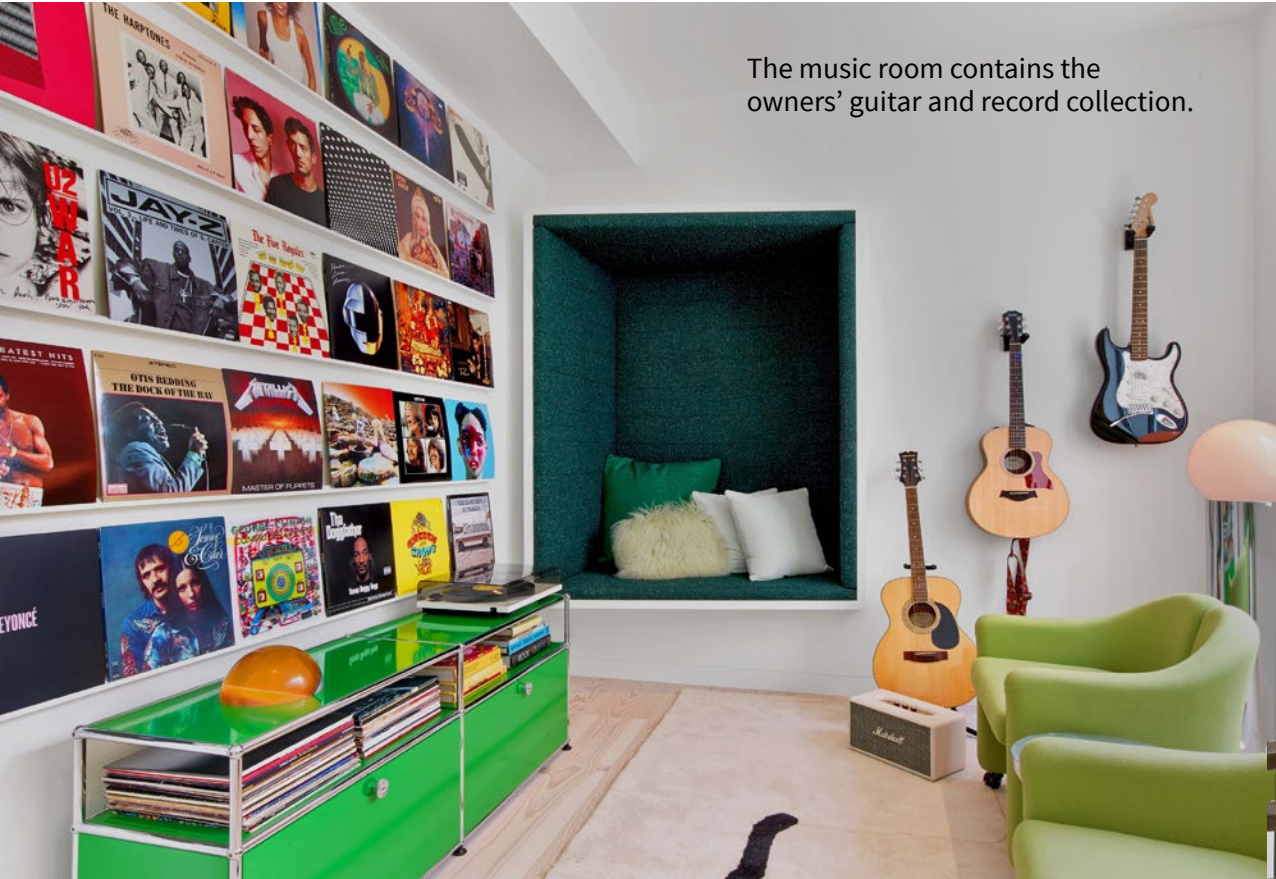
A BLANK SLATE

When CCS works on existing houses, it tries to uncover the good and bad to find solutions and opportunities that are rooted in and derived from the original

home. This spec house had a wide range of good and bad, with a stunning city view as its most desirable feature. CCS chose to gut the inside, some of the roof, and the exterior stucco, creating a blank slate to rebuild and redesign. All the windows and sliding doors were replaced, rearranged, and enlarged.

San Francisco’s residential neighborhoods are often comprised of 25-foot wide row houses of between two and four stories that can exhibit a vast range of façade styles in a single block. This

View from dining to living space—which is located on the top floor.



The music room contains the owners’ guitar and record collection.



The *shou sugi ban* process renders the wood siding less flammable and with a stable dark finish.

street is typical in that contextual way, and the architects took the opportunity to design a new, unique, and iconic façade. The stucco was replaced with cypress siding charred with the Japanese *shou sugi ban* weatherproofing process. This charcoal façade is not only quite modern in relation to the neighbors, but also dark versus their pastel colors. The architects also felt the house needed a notable entry to establish a sense of transition: from outside to inside, from charcoal to white, from busy to calm. To accomplish this, they specified an all-red vestibule and Italian-made pivot door.





Doors open to the outside terrace overlooking San Francisco.



The master bathroom has floors and walls of carefully selected and matched Carrara marble slabs. These contrast with dark fixtures to evoke a spa-like feeling.

The interior of the original house had four floors with 8-foot ceilings and had very little visual connection between them except a narrow, unremarkable staircase. The architects created an alluring sense of ascension, with the city views and natural California light improving from good to great, from the bottom to the top of the building. They designed a clearly defined stairway space, with its own distinct material character of white-stained Douglas fir, steel, and glass. As a vertical

space within the house, it becomes the essential counterpoint to the wafer-like stratification of the four floors.

**CONNECTING WITH THE OUTDOORS**

To take full advantage of the highly vertical site, the entry and garage are on the street level. A guest suite and home theater occupy the second floor, and the third floor is a private floor for the owner's master suite, office, and music room/study.

The top floor is home to the main living zone: an open area for cooking, dining,





and lounging. It's a minimalist space that maximizes the magnificent city views in one direction and the landscaped yard in the other. The architects used full-height sliding glass doors to open onto a city-facing roof terrace. At the opposite end, another set of sliding glass doors connects the kitchen and dining area to the yard. It's essentially a long room that leads to the city as the 'beyond', and to nature as the 'close up'.

Aside from the views and the yard, the top floor is essentially a study in white, which the architect adopted as the best way to create a calm and peaceful room without distractions. White-stained wood floors are complemented with white walls and ceilings. There is no trim and the baseboards are flush to the walls.

### A PEAK EXPERIENCE

Although the spectacular view is the main connection to the outside, the terraced yard also plays a significant role in the experience of the house. The yard steps up through a series of board-formed concrete walls and is bordered with tall landscaping for privacy. Each level has a specific function: The first is an outdoor kitchen and fire pit for gathering; the



From the kitchen, the top floor opens to the terraced yard.

second is a stainless steel Jacuzzi for plunging; the third is a lawn for sunning.

The fourth and final level of the terraced yard has *The Cube*, a 10'x10'x8' mirrored cube that is slightly rotated to juxtapose it to the orthogonal site. Designed by CCS and based on James Turrell's *Skyspaces*, *The Cube* is a mysterious and changing sculptural object that reflects the landscape, the sky, and the view, depending on the

onlooker's perspective, essentially photographing its surroundings. Inside, *The Cube* transforms to a circular drum-shaped space with an oculus to the sky: Call it a mini modern Pantheon.

The structure of *The Cube* is reinforced fiberglass, which allows for the tapered oculus to come to a knife edge. It was craned into place in five pieces and



## Portfolio

*The Cube* is a mirrored sculptural object that reflects the landscape, the sky, and the view, and can be entered on the opposite side.



### PROJECT TEAM

**ARCHITECT** Cass Calder Smith | CCS Architecture, San Francisco, California  
Design Principal, Cass Calder Smith, AIA  
Project Architect, Björn Steudte  
Interior Designer, Barbara Turpin-Vickroy, IIDA

**CLIENT DESIGN ADVISOR** Akemi Tamaribuchi, principal and creative director,  
Subject to Change, San Francisco, California

**BUILDER** MT Development, San Francisco, California

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT** Sculpt Gardens, San Francisco, California

**PHOTOGRAPHER** Eric Laignel, New York, New York

assembled onsite. The circular seating is precast concrete with very warm integral heat. The walls are curved white marker board to encourage creative expression, and the ceiling is covered in felt to tame the acoustics.

Although primarily a place of retreat, *The Cube* also serves as an intimate place for ideation, conversations, and

contemplation. Located at the highest point of the site, it completes the home's sense of ascent. Once inside, the sky is the only view; the city and its action are left behind. 🏡

**Cass Calder Smith, AIA**, is principal of Cass Calder Smith | CCS Architecture.



# WHAT WILL YOU IMAGINE?



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# New Home Buyers & Renters

By Paul Emrath

## » Are households moving up, down, or sideways?

Home buyers and new tenants in rental housing can have different impacts on housing markets depending on where they come from. If they are newly

formed households, they represent an increase in the number of housing units needed. If they are switching from renting to owning, or vice versa, or trading up or down in terms of price or quality, there may be mismatches between the types of homes desired and those available in the market.

Data from the HUD/Census Bureau American Housing

Survey (AHS) can be used to investigate these tendencies. The latest AHS show a natural order to the households who recently moved, depending on the type of home they moved into:

1	Buyers of newer homes
2	Buyers of older homes
3	Renters of newer homes
4	Renters of older homes





As you move upward on this list from 4 to 1, some trends become obvious:

- The movers have, on average, higher incomes.
- More of the movers are previous home owners.
- Fewer are newly formed households.
- More are moving up in terms of subjectively measured housing quality.
- More are also moving up in terms of housing costs.

The AHS is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and conducted in odd-numbered years by the U.S. Census Bureau. It is one of the few sources of information on the previous residences of current home owners and renters.

The 2015 AHS shows that roughly 14.9 million households moved per year in the two-year period before the survey was conducted. Two-thirds—or 10.1 million—of the recent movers are renters of older (built before 2010) housing units, and one-fourth are buyers of older homes. The remaining, smaller slice of the pie is divided roughly evenly between buyers and renters of newer homes (built in 2010 or later).

The sources of these buyers and renters differ drastically depending on the type of home moved into. Not surprisingly, former home owners account for a significantly larger share of home buyers than of new tenants in rental housing. In other words, a large share of home buyers consists of repeat buyers.

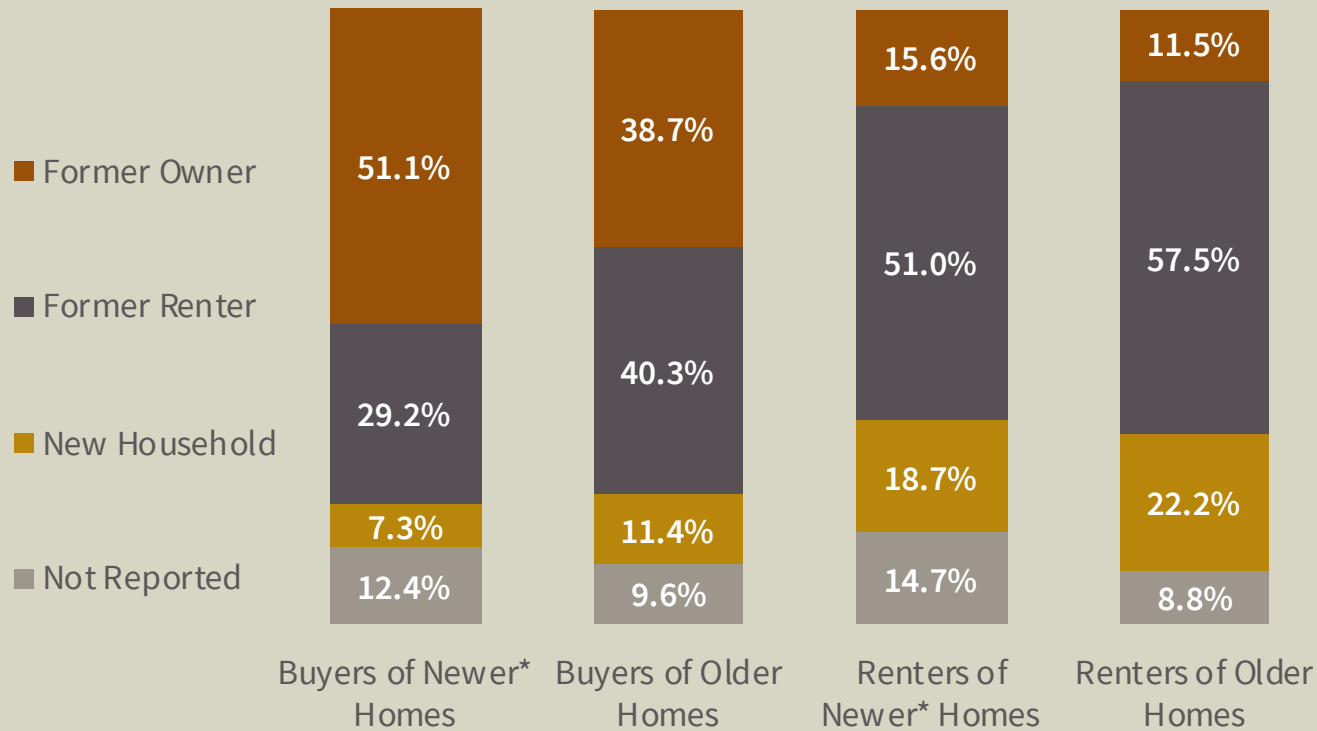
This is especially true for buyers of newer homes, where repeat buyers account for 51 percent of the market. Former renters and new households account for larger shares of the home buying market for older homes, still larger shares of the market for newer rental housing, and shares even larger than that of the market for older rental housing (Figure 1).

TRADING UP

A related question is how the new homes compare to the ones buyers and renters were living in previously. Are they trading up, down, or sideways? In terms of the quality they believe they’re getting, most buyers and renters say they are trading up.

This tendency, however, is more pronounced for buyers than for renters, and for movers into newer rather than older homes. Nearly 70 percent of buyers of newer homes say their new residences are better than their previous ones,

Figure 1  
Sources of Home Buyers & New Renters



\*NEWER HOMES ARE THOSE BUILT IN 2010 OR LATER.  
SOURCE: NAHB TABULATION OF THE 2015 AMERICAN HOUSING SURVEY, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND HUD.

compared to 60 percent of buyers of older homes, 53 percent of renters of newer homes, and only 43 percent of renters moving into older homes (Figure 2).

Next to trading up to better-quality residences, the most common move is sideways—that is, to homes that are about as good as the previous ones. Trading down into a worse home is the least common of the three possibilities. However, compared to buyers of newer homes,

sideways and downward trades are both more common among buyers of older homes, more common still among renters of newer homes, and most common of all among renters of older homes.

Home buyers trade up in quality more often than they trade up in cost. For example, while 70 percent of buyers of newer homes trade up in quality, only 52 percent of them trade up in terms of cost (Figure 3). There are similar but



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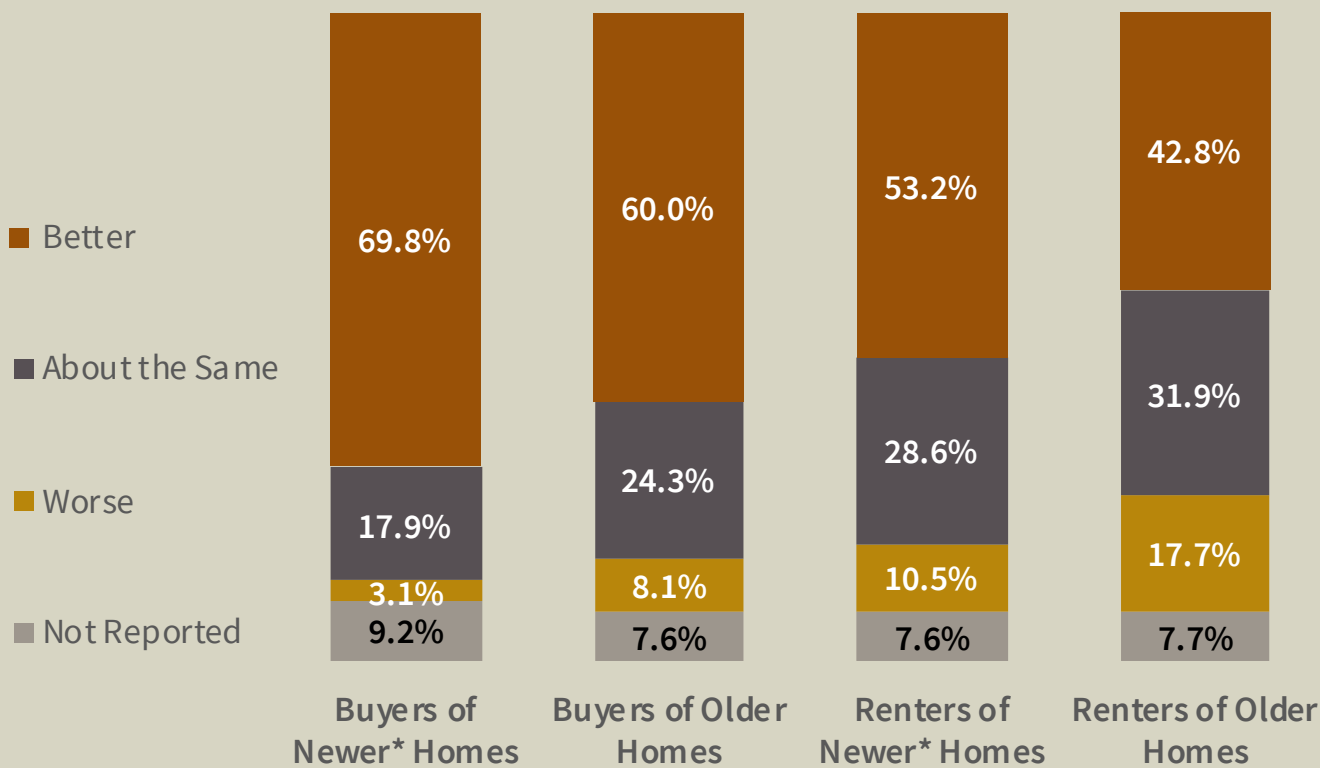
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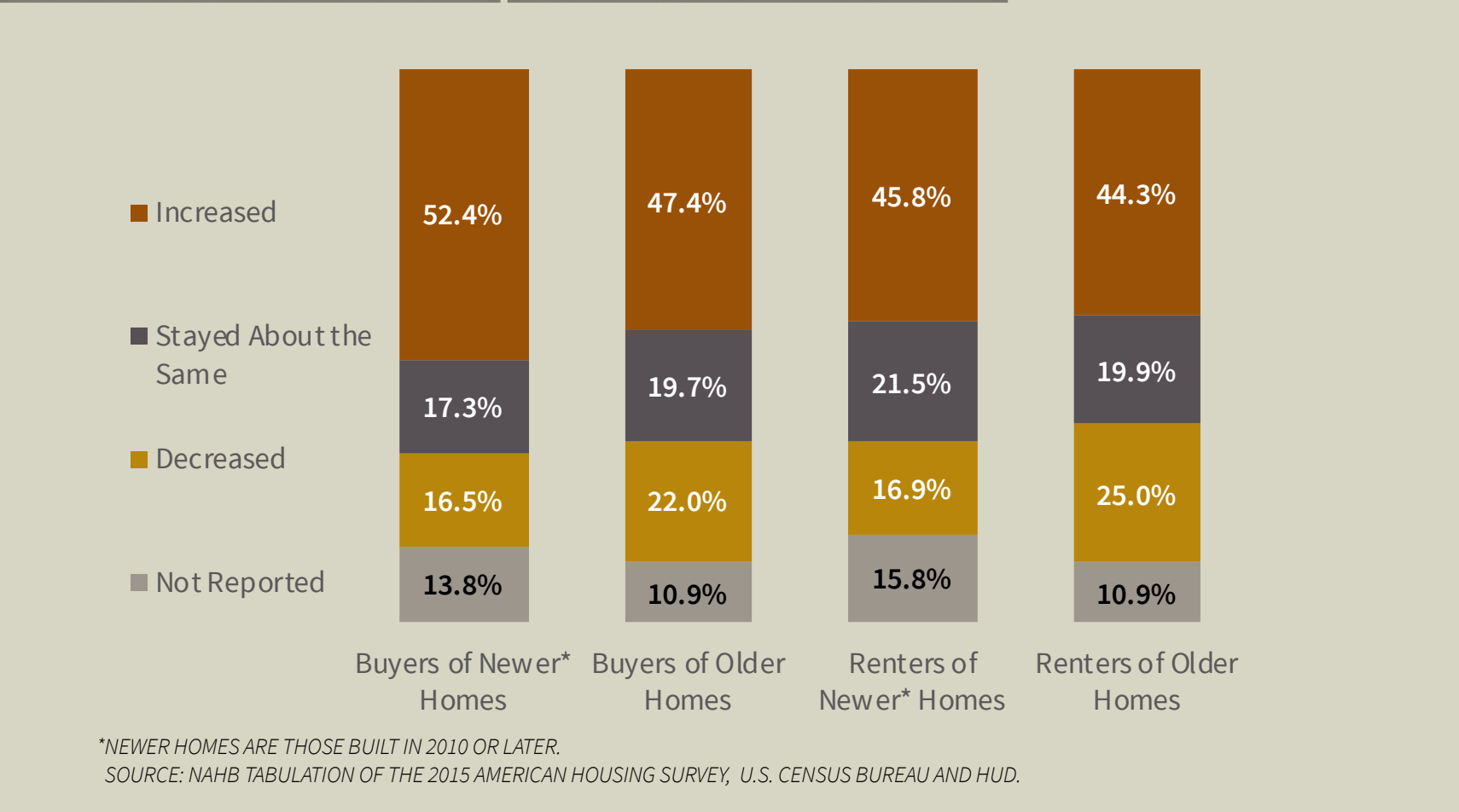
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## Proofs & Truths

**“Home buyers trade up in quality more often than they trade up in cost.”**

smaller spreads between quality and cost trade-ups for buyers of older homes and renter of newer homes.

In contrast, renters of older homes trade up in cost about as often as they trade up in quality. However, renters of older homes trade down in cost (25 percent of the time) more often than they trade down in quality (18 percent of the time).

All four types of movers are either moving up in quality more often than in cost, or (for renters of older homes) moving down in cost more often than in quality. In other words, movers are acquiring better housing without always paying more for it, or (for renters of older

homes) reducing their housing costs without always sacrificing quality.

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The AHS also allows us to look at the incomes of households moving into older and newer homes. Of the four types of moving households considered in this article, buyers of newer homes tend to have the highest incomes, renters of older homes the lowest. The average income of buyers of newer homes is \$123,000, compared to \$95,000 for buyers of older homes, \$64,000 for renters of newer homes, and \$49,000 for renters of older homes.

As you would expect, the movers with the highest incomes are the ones most likely to be trading up, both in terms of the cost and subjectively measured quality of the homes they are moving into. 🏠

**Paul Emrath** is vice president for surveys and housing policy research for the National Association of Home Builders.





A man in a wheelchair is seen from behind, with his arms outstretched horizontally. He is wearing a dark blue shirt and a red backpack. He is positioned in front of a modern building with large glass windows. The sun is low in the sky, creating a bright, hazy atmosphere. The ground is a light-colored paved area.

# Accessible Living

By Sewin Chan and Ingrid Gould Ellen

## Study shows a strong need for more homes that accommodate mobility difficulties

Living in an accessible home can reduce spending and dependency on institutional long-term care. Societal shifts toward aging in place and away from nursing homes suggests a stronger need for homes to be modifiable and accessible.

Yet our findings show the current housing stock is not up to the task. Even among seniors who are disabled, only a small minority live in a home suitable for people with moderate mobility difficulties. While newer homes are more likely to be accessible, we clearly have more work to do, both to build new adaptable homes and to identify cost-effective ways to help seniors move to accessible homes or modify existing homes.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2030, more than one in five people in the United States will be age 65 or older. Most





Watermere at Frisco, a 55+ Multifamily Community winner in the NAHB Multifamily Pillars of the Industry Awards, incorporates ample outdoor space that is easily accessible by people of all abilities.

PHOTO BY ROBERT GERMANY

seniors want to remain independent and stay in their current homes and neighborhoods as long as possible, and studies show that they benefit from doing so.

Yet aging in place typically requires a home that accommodates disabilities. Consider that 17 percent of individuals age 65-74, and 53 percent of those age 85 or older, have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Thus, if this aging

population is to remain in the community, they will require housing that is suitable for people with mobility difficulties. The need is even greater for the growing number of seniors living alone.

In a recent paper published in *Housing Policy Debate*, we analyze the distribution and changing occupancy of American homes that have—or could potentially be modified to have—the accessibility

features that would allow seniors with mobility difficulties to successfully age in their homes. We document that only a fraction of 1 percent of units are fully wheelchair accessible. Fewer than 4 percent are livable for people with moderate mobility difficulties, or have some essential structural features for accessibility, but may not be accessible without further modifications.

Perhaps most concerning, only about one third of units are potentially modifiable. This is defined as having no entrance steps to the building; if there are multiple floors, the building has either an elevator or both a bathroom and bedroom on the entry floor.

There are clear regional differences. Only 18 percent of homes in the Northeast are potentially modifiable, compared to 41 percent in the West and South. As for types of homes, public housing and subsidized, privately owned rental units are far more likely to be accessible, as are homes in the lowest quartile of rents or market value.

Large rental buildings with more than 50 units are more likely to be modifiable due to the presence of elevators in those buildings. Buildings with 50+ units are twice as likely to be livable and four times as likely to be wheelchair accessible than single-family homes. Finally, compared to older homes, those built after the year 2000 are 85 percent more likely to be accessible for people with moderate mobility difficulties and over 1½ times as likely to be wheelchair accessible.

## FEW SENIORS LIVE IN MODIFIABLE OR ACCESSIBLE HOMES

Older adults are significantly more likely to live in accessible homes. After controlling for a variety of factors,



seniors that are 85 years and older are 91 percent more likely than those age 65-75 years old to live in an accessible home, while seniors age 75-85 are 55 percent more likely.

Nonetheless, more than 90 percent of seniors live in homes that are not accessible to people with moderate mobility difficulties. Being disabled clearly increases the likelihood of a senior residing in an accessible home by about two-thirds for livable homes and for wheelchair-accessible homes. Again, however, the fractions remain extremely low: only about 15 percent of disabled senior households reside in homes that are livable for those with moderate mobility difficulties.

FEW SENIORS MOVE INTO ACCESSIBLE HOMES

Part of the issue is that many seniors have homes they have lived in for a long time. Seniors who have lived in their homes for more than 10 years are far less likely to live in modifiable or accessible homes. But even those who move rarely end up in accessible homes. Over three-quarters of disabled seniors who move end up in a home that is not suitable for people

with moderate mobility difficulties. We examined seniors who moved since 2009, and found that seniors who are older, disabled, or living alone are more likely to move into a potentially modifiable or livable home. Higher income and white seniors are also more likely to move into a home that is accessible.

ONSET OF DISABILITY DRIVES HOME MODIFICATIONS

Seniors can also make modifications to improve the accessibility of their homes, but we find seniors rarely make accessibility-enhancing modifications, such as remodeling kitchens, adding/replacing doors, or updating driveways and walkways.

Indeed, seniors without disabilities are no more likely to make such modifications than younger adults. They generally wait until someone in the household develops a disability to make any modifications. Examining owner-occupied homes that were not accessible in 2011 and where there was no change in householder, we find households with a disabled member are 20 percent more likely to make an accessibility-enhancing modification.

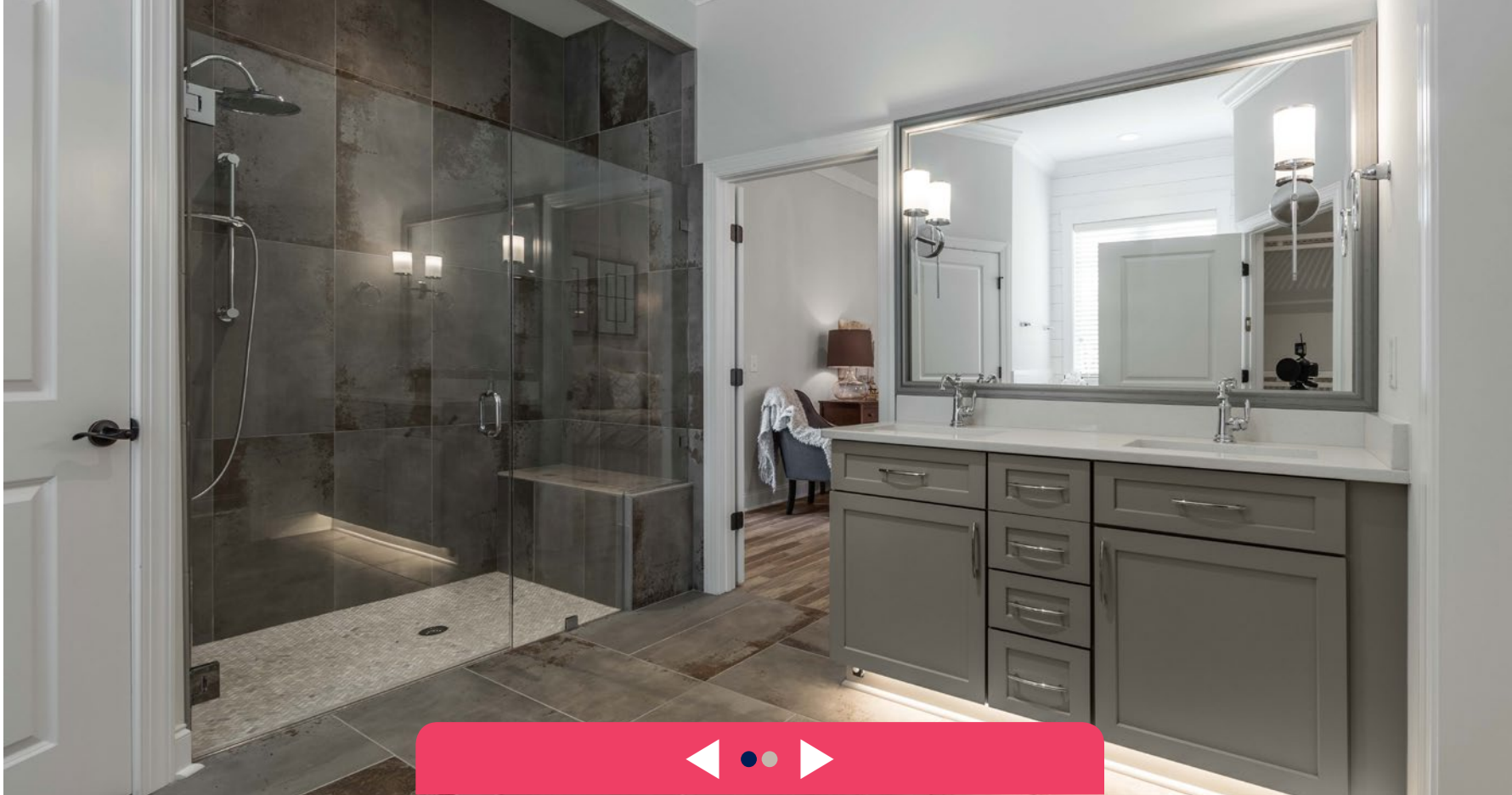


PHOTO BY TRISTAN CAIRNS PHOTOGRAPHY

A silver winner in the NAHB Best of 55+ Housing Awards, this universally designed home features a curbless shower in the master bath. The shower also includes a seat and handheld showerhead, all fitting seamlessly into the modern and chic design.

CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE

Our analysis poses a challenge to the development community. Our population is aging and most would like to age in place. New development must keep these changing demographics in mind. Local governments should consider allowing more accessory dwelling units and multifamily housing so that their residents have more options to remain in their neighborhoods and towns while

living in a single-story unit as they age.

But new construction will change the stock only slowly. We must also work to make existing homes more accessible. Further, researchers and practitioners need to identify cost-effective ways to help seniors to modify existing homes so they can remain in their communities and avoid high-cost institutional care. ■

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes the American Housing Survey (AHS), which in 2009 added six questions that focus on ambulatory, self-care, independent living, hearing, visual, and cognitive difficulties for each household member. In 2011, the AHS

added a module with information on the presence of specific accessibility features. These two data sets allow an examination of the suitability of the U.S. housing stock for older adults to age in place.

Sewin Chan, an associate professor of public policy at NYU Wagner, is an economist who studies economic and financial risks faced by households.

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TRISTAN CAIRNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Sometimes overlooked, door thresholds are another detail to consider in universally designed homes. This master flows seamlessly into the bath without a threshold. The doors are also wider to allow for any wheelchair access.

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# SET THE STAGE

By Joan Inglis

## Staging vacant inventory homes can produce quick sales

New home builders have long realized the value of model merchandising and the impact it has on volume and velocity of sales. Staging for home builders—when done properly by a professional familiar with new home selling—is basically scaled-down merchandising.

Though staging is most widely used in resale properties, the process is picking up steam in the home building industry, said Barb Schwarz, a Pacific Coast Realtor and interior designer who created the concept in the 1970s.

“Time is money to a builder when it comes to selling a home, and staging saves time,” Schwarz said.



Appropriately scaled furniture shows prospective buyers the livability of a home.





Properly priced and staged, an inventory home should sell within 30 days and close in another 30 days.

The goal of **staging a home** is to make it more appealing while still allowing the potential buyers to envision putting their own personal touch on the property. Home stagers will bring in furniture, art, and accessories to ensure the decor is on-trend and aspirational.

Furnishings in at least the open concept area of inventory product will give buyers a spatial perspective, take their focus off scanning for flaws, and encourage them to relax and linger. Model merchandising details, such as costly custom window treatments, are eliminated.

“Time after time, buyers look at the drapes and not the crown molding the builder installed,” Schwarz explained. “Buyers talk about the excessive artwork

and the excessive furniture. They start mentally buying the furnishings instead of purchasing the house.”

“Builders have myriad options when setting up a staging strategy,” said Rhinehart Realty Realtor Cathie Campbell, MIRM, an accounts manager with Carolina Spaces. “Depending on budget and time, plans can include leasing or purchasing furnishings, or utilizing furnishings that a builder might already have warehoused.”

**BUYERS NEED HELP VISUALIZING**

According to the National Association of Realtors 2017 Profile of Home Staging, 77 percent of buyer’s agents said staging a home made it easier for

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Eliminating custom window treatments reduces costs and puts the buyers' focus on the structural details of the home.

a buyer to see the property as a future home. Buyers have problems visualizing empty rooms. They get confused with the room’s purpose, potential layout, and furniture scale.

NAR’s report states that about one-third of buyer’s agents said staging a home increased the dollar value offered between 1 and 5 percent, compared to other similar homes on the market that are not staged.

Realtor Jenny Chung with Real Living at Home in the Washington, D.C., area, and owner of Jenny Chung Interiors, said she

recommends staging new construction properties to all home builders she represents.

“Prior to going on the market, these homes are fully staged from top to bottom and the investment in staging has brought them list price, multiple offers, and a quick sale 100 percent of the time.” Chung said.

Builders normally consider home staging when their inventory homes have remained unsold at about 60 to 90 days, Campbell said. By the time a builder investigates a staging company,

gathers a proposal, schedules, and completes the staging, the home has been on the market about five months. Properly priced and staged, the inventory home should sell within 30 days and close in another 30 days.

“All told, seven months have passed,” she said. “The builder missed their goals on this home, which they probably targeted at having sold and closed in no more than 120 days.”

New Tradition Homes of NC in the Charlotte, North Carolina, market hired our firm to furnish and stage the main floor and parts of the second floor of an 8,000-sq. ft. new construction, custom home that had been listed at \$1,599,000, and shown vacant with no offers for eight months. After staging, the builder did not reduce the price and sold the home within 21 days for the full list price.

A COST-EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

So, what can a home builder expect to pay? For staging services performed by a new construction staging professional, home builders should budget between 1 and 3 percent of the list price for all-inclusive services. The lower percentage pertains to a lesser amount of staging. Adding more spaces to furnish and stage will bring the price up.

Realtor Sharly Ward, owner of Hawaiian Global Staging, stages properties for D.R. Horton in Waimea and

DO'S AND DON'TS OF INVENTORY HOME STAGING

DO	address the landscaping of your inventory product. Flowers, whether planted or potted, draw buyers inside.
DO	accessorize and stage the bathrooms to give them a spa-like feel. Kitchen and baths help sell houses.
DON'T	clutter the kitchen countertops. Buyers need to see kitchen workspace. A few well-chosen, well-placed items are enough.
DO	completely furnish and stage rooms/areas to show lifestyle. Furnishings that are the wrong scale or style for your demographic will only further confuse buyers.
DON'T	assume that all stagers do cheap work and work alike. You could waste your money on a bargain basement stager, plus lose a sale.
DO	ramp up your budget to furnish and stage the owner’s suite. Buyers get the impression that bedrooms look small when they’re vacant.
DON'T	block any traffic patterns in the home with furnishings. Buyers like wide open spaces.
DO	have your inventory product photographed after staging and be sure to change out the photos on the MLS and marketing materials.





Pay extra attention to the owner's suite; vacant bedrooms look small to buyers.

Kailua-Kona, as well as for local custom home builders. She said her fee amounts to about 10 percent of the price of fully decorated models.

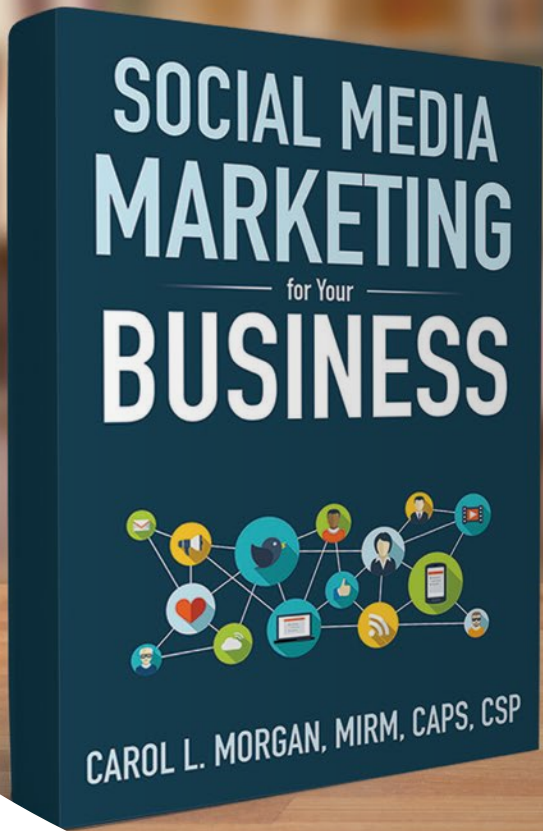
“My builder clients are able to have several different models staged at one time because the cost is so much lower than interior design,” she said. “They appreciate that I am making their product more attractive to a wider audience instead of designing for a particular buyer.”

A word of caution: Not all stagers work alike or have equal abilities. Many use common rental furnishings, flea market finds, and garage sale items. Remember

that the quality of the staging will reflect on your product. Staging is an unregulated industry and cheaper does not mean equal or better.

You will get what you pay for, so you must check qualifications and education, and the quality of staging in person. Schwarz recommends home builders visit new construction homes that have been staged by any company they are considering. 🏠

**Joan Inglis** is an Accredited Professional Staging Master and is owner of Carolina Spaces LLC, a home staging, model merchandising, and interior design company that provides nationwide service.



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It's all in the  
details

# Transitional DESIGN

By Steven Dewan

## Getting the Details Right

The art of new home design has always been a continuous process of innovation and evolution, driven by changing consumer preferences and advances in building materials and technology. Traditionally, home design has been driven by historic precedents that pull from European roots: styles such as Tuscan, Spanish, Italian, etc. Similarly, colonial architecture, the American farmhouse, and mid-century modernism have all influenced our built environment.

The latest step on this journey is transitional design, homes that reference a familiar aesthetic but are liberated from the style dictates that were previously imposed. This new look allows builders and architects an opportunity to explore elevations that lean forward with cleaner lines and purposeful details.

Mastering this next step in architectural evolution means understanding new ways to employ the foundations of design: form, massing, details, color, and material. Here are the details that bring this architecture to life. ■

Steven Dewan is senior principal  
at Bassenian | Lagoni.

PHOTO BY BRETT BEYER



## BLEND FUNCTION AND AESTHETIC

Gone is ornamentation for its own sake. Transitional design incorporates details that add function to the aesthetic. The awning shown in **Photo 1** takes on a more contemporary character; it also shades the window and is a solar panel that generates power to meet the electrical needs of the home.

In **Photo 2**, several details combine on the elevation. The large horizontal overhang above the second-floor balcony shields that space from intense desert sun and creates a sculptural corner. On the first floor, rather than include decorative shutters on the three vertical windows, perforated metal eyebrow awnings add visual interest and shade the windows. Similarly, the dominant architectural wall that dissects the home is designed to protect the entry courtyard from the sun.



PHOTO BY A.G. PHOTOGRAPHY



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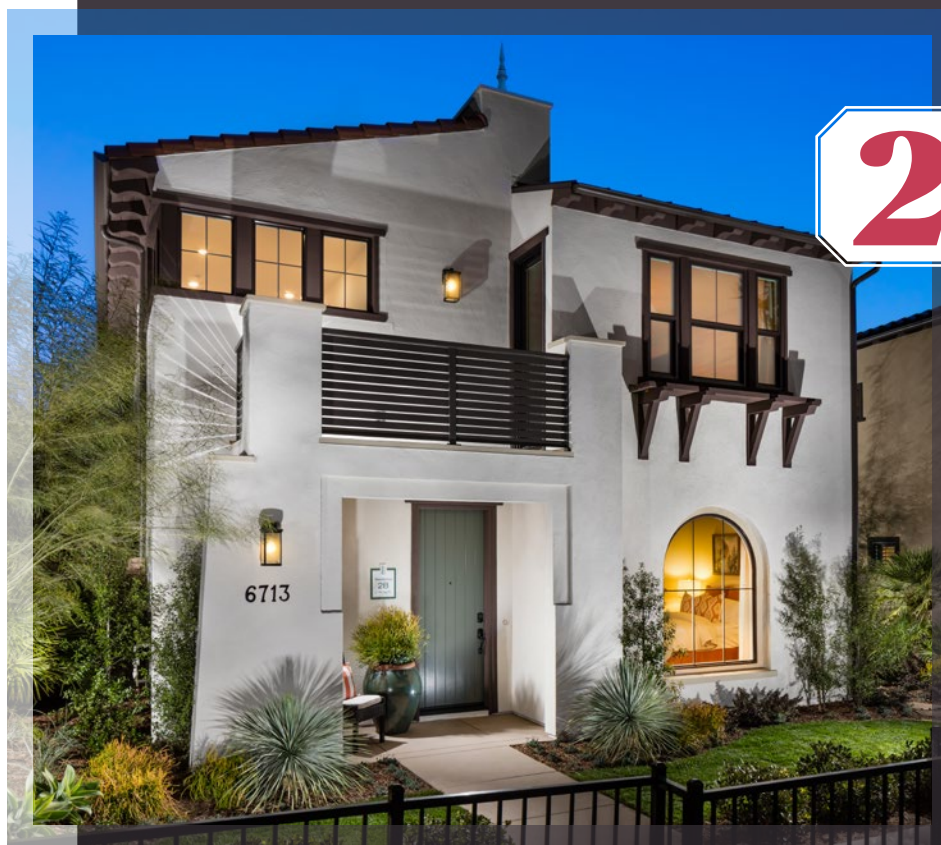
The latest step on this journey is transitional design, homes that reference a familiar aesthetic but are liberated from the style dictates that were previously imposed. This new look allows builders and architects an opportunity to explore elevations that lean forward with cleaner lines and purposeful details.

Mastering this next step in architectural evolution means understanding new ways to employ the foundations of design: form, massing, details, color, and material. Here are the details that bring this architecture to life. ■

Steven Dewan is senior principal  
at Bassenian | Lagoni.



1



2

## TRADITIONAL TO TRANSITIONAL

Traditional Spanish architecture receives an update. Details that reference the historic aesthetic—stucco, arches, balconies, and iron—remain in an updated expression. **Photo 1** represents traditional Spanish architecture.

**Photo 2:** Further along the design spectrum, transitional elements, such as the banding corner windows, the geometric forms around the entry, and a negative arch, start moving the elevation away from the traditional while still holding onto the roots.

**Photo 3:** Fully transitioned away from the traditional, windows are grouped around a corner and tied together vertically in a contemporary pattern that also allows natural light to reach the interior. Similarly, the standard trellis above the windows morphs into an eyebrow. Even the massing changes. Rather than the gable end, the parapet wall reinforces the strong corner forms and accentuates the difference between solid and void.



3

PHOTOS BY CHRIS MAYER



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### FAMILIAR MATERIALS, NEW APPLICATIONS

**Photo 1:** Board and batten siding, a time-honored material, is applied around the strong shed form. Applying the siding vertically around a corner window box that mimics the roofline differentiates this element from the strong clad, rectilinear form of the entry.

**Photo 2:** The combination of form, color, and materials take traditional materials into a completely modern expression. From decorative tile around the entry and horizontal siding on the vertical structure to window groupings that reinforce the design character, the familiar can be made fresh.

PHOTO BY ERIC FIGGE





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## NEW THINKING

Don't get trapped into thinking that a traditional plan can only elevate traditionally. In this 40-foot-wide, 2,800-sf home, both elevations have been extruded from the same plan. The traditional elevation relies on decorative elements and familiar forms, while the modern elevation draws its sculptural expression from the interplay of solid and void, as well as linear planes. There is also continuity in this expression from front to rear.



PHOTOS BY A.G. PHOTOGRAPHY