



## What Will My Next House Be Like?

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Having recently returned from the National Association of Home Builders International Builders Show in Orlando, it was reinforced to me that many of the features we build into new homes in the Dayton area are leading the trends that will define the future.

Granted, with diverse audiences with different needs in a new home, it will always be challenging to say what the new housing trend will be. Homebuyers have always turned to seasoned homebuilders and residential architects for answers. See what might appear in your next home.

One of the biggest factors impacting design is in how technology will change the space needs in the home. With the option to telecommute expanding throughout the country, people will need dedicated home office space with appropriate telephone, fax, modem and computer service. While this will create a more fluid workday with less rigid lines between professional and personal lives, it will also affect the use of space in the home and family dynamics. In addition, people are looking to the home to be their center for entertainment. Many homes will have media rooms with sophisticated sound and video systems built in or retrofitted to suit the owners.

Life cycle housing is another trend in home design and construction. Many people are moving less, and they want their homes to grow and change with them as they go through different stages in their lives. For example, a builder may offer a home with three bedrooms today, but he'll give the new owner the option to finish an attic or garage area as needed to accommodate a new child or a parent that comes to live with the family. Other homes will be placed on a lot so that there will be plenty of room to add an addition for a family room or sitting area, and the owner can see the plans for that addition when the original house is purchased. This will also help when the owner wants to sell the home since the floor plan is flexible and can meet the needs of many potential buyers.

Garages are likely to be set back from the street and be attached or detached depending on the market. In addition, the space above the garage can also be flex space for later additions such as an in-law suite or home office. Garages are increasing in size to an average of three berths both to accommodate more vehicles in the household and to provide more storage space.

We will see more features designed for casual entertaining such as front porches and expanded kitchens and family rooms with formal areas like dining and living rooms becoming multi-purpose rooms. For example, many new custom homes come with bookshelves built into the dining room so the area can be used as a substitute home office or study area when it is not needed for formal entertaining. The architects also called for all-season rooms in a finished basement to allow for specialized areas for exercising, hobbies and other projects. The rooms will have light shafts from the ground level to allow for natural lighting, floors designed to cushion an exerciser's feet and specialized storage for tools and hobby supplies.

Homeowners will continue to ask for homes that use energy efficiently and are easy to maintain. More and more homes will come with flat ceilings, vinyl windows and use glass strategically to enhance natural lighting without creating glare.