



Meeting Today's Needs with Today's Design

Have you ever walked through a home and thought, "This feels right." You may not be able to put your finger on exactly why it feels that way, but there's definitely a sense of comfort, security, and of being "home" that's no less real than finding a house in the right location and at the right price.

Building Success 101

Q: What's a "change order"?

A: A change order is a request to alter, exchange, or substitute a product or design feature that has already been approved, delivered, or installed. When you request a change, your builder will likely have a process in place to confirm the request and make sure it is done to your satisfaction. As construction progresses, a change order is likely to increase in cost because of the additional time and money spent in making an alteration to an already complex structure. That means it's wise to take the time up-front to make informed decisions and try to stick to them during the building process.

What you're experiencing is likely good architectural design, and it's no accident. Good design is a combination of proper scale, proportion, mass, and authenticity that transcends time and trends. Good design is also contemporary, meaning that it reflects current lifestyle needs and taste both inside and out. But what is "authenticity?"

The majority of homes in the Princeton area are "Traditional" in style. We seem to place value on so-called "traditional" homes and we romanticize about living in something historic or "authentic." The truth is, however, that older homes were designed and built for another day, not ours. A well-designed house today accommodates the manner in which we *live* today. A house that clings to past practices can actually reduce comfort and convenience. The challenge for us is to take the features of a "Traditional" home that our client wants and add those elements to make it a modern house that meets all of their needs. This is the same for the construction of a new "Traditional" home or a remodeled "Traditional" home. We at DDC meet directly numerous times with our clients during the design phase. At the very beginning of the design process we discuss not only our client's needs but also their lifestyle so that we develop the program for the design that will result in a wonderful home.

Consider, for example, the modern kitchen: It's a blend of kitchen, eating nook, and family room in one big area. A variety of contemporary influences have driven that design concept into almost every size and price of home. Arising from a desire to expand the home's natural gathering place, modern kitchens have become a center for casual entertaining as well as a focal point for family activities such as dining, homework and craft projects. These big rooms also provide more natural light and greater access to the outdoors -- subtle, yet critical, changes that create a contemporary sense of comfort and value.

And what about today's garage? Multi-car garages are a modern reality and testify to our continuing love affair with the automobile, as well as other vehicles. Garages with three and four bays are seen more often in today's housing design. Rather than allowing them to dominate the front facade, large garages can be placed on the back of the lot (perhaps accessed by an alley), to the side, split within in a motor court, or in a tandem arrangement to achieve modern needs and good architecture.

Attention to detail is another cornerstone of timeless design. Assuming that the details are appropriate to the overall style of the house, it makes sense to use contemporary materials that incorporate durability and longevity to execute those details. For example, modern engineered hardwood floors, composite siding and composite roofing materials achieve a rich level of detail *and* increase the value of the building. There's simply no sense in using "authentic" or "old time" materials if those age-old products will break down and need replacing sooner than modern materials.

Dickson Development Corporation has been designing and building new homes and renovating existing homes for 36 years. Along with our design expertise we incorporate the most current building methods and material selections in the designs of our projects no matter what the style of the home may be.

Simply put, then, what is authentic is what's current to the times, with a foundation of human scale and proportion and a respect for appropriate detailing. That's just good design.

Warm regards,

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