



Flex Spaces Blend Efficiency and Convenience

Flex spaces, or flexible-use rooms, are increasingly common in modern housing as homeowners demand areas that can accommodate their changing lifestyle needs and allow them to "age in place" from a young couple through retirement. A den might one day serve as a nursery; a small parlor might transform into a playroom or an art or music studio. The choice is entirely personal.

DDC Design Ideas

Refresh Your Kitchen

The kitchen is the center of the home and the room most used by all members of the family. Short of replacing the entire kitchen there are improvements that you can make that will improve the appearance and functionality of your old kitchen.

--Update the lighting with new halogen over the counter task lighting. Pendant lighting over islands not only provides excellent direct lighting but can visually highlight the space.

--New countertops will create a real impact. Granite and Corian along with other natural or manmade materials can enhance a kitchen but can also be quite expensive. Consider adding new backsplash materials such as ceramic or

Professional homebuilders recognize the value of providing flex spaces in the floor plans of almost any type and style of house. Luxury and custom homes, in fact, often include more than one flexible-use space to allow the owners to follow several passions, whether it be a full-time or off-hours home office, a hobby or game room, an in-home theater, a wine room, or a craft area. Smaller homes might provide a flex room for more practical needs, but the value to the homeowner is no less important.

Flex spaces may also serve multiple functions. An occasional guest bedroom or suite can easily double as a home office, studio, or sewing room (or maybe all three); a loft between secondary bedrooms is a perfect solution for an out-of-the-way play space and quiet homework area for school-age children, perhaps also housing their myriad computer and video game collections.

The latest floor plans also incorporate flexible space into more private areas. A sitting room in the master suite can serve as a temporary nursery, while a nearby home office alcove might, upon retirement, become a quiet reading nook or library for the couple.

Full-depth basements and full-height attic areas are also prime spots for additional multi-use or flexible space that allow the house to grow with the family. Left ready for wall and floor finishes but otherwise perfectly functional, such areas may initially provide generous and easily accessible space for long-term and seasonal storage needs. Later, they can be fully finished (and furnished) as the family's needs change and their budget allows.

Flex space provisions extend outdoors, as well. A covered outdoor area, complete with a compact kitchen or barbecue, seating, and perhaps even a fireplace or flat-screen television, extends and expands adjacent indoor living space and serves a variety of functions in its own right.

The "future-proof" concept of flexible-use spaces in today's housing also demands that these rooms are properly equipped to handle the family's technological needs for communications, data, audio, and video access.

glass which would add a new look and accent the work area.

--A new sink and/or faucet may be just the thing that is needed to dress up your kitchen. An upgraded faucet with taller and longer spouts can make washing or filling pots and pans a bit easier.

--How are your appliances? There are so many new features available in cook tops, range hoods and ovens. What about a new combination microwave/convection oven?

--Changing the flooring will have a major impact on a new kitchen upgrade. There is now a large variety of ceramic tiles that look like stone but at lower prices. Hardwood flooring continues to be popular and now there are new materials such as bamboo and cork that are being used more and more in kitchens.

We have local trade partners who can assist you with many of these kitchen enhancements. Call us for contact information.

Regardless of how the flex room is used, chances are good there's some electronic gizmo or network that needs to be plugged in without having to rewire the house. Modern flexible-use spaces allow for simple "plug-and-play" access no matter what's on the other end of the cord ... or if there's a cord at all.

The increasing popularity of flexible and multi-use spaces in today's new homes is a reflection of contemporary lifestyle demands. Modern households need their homes to enable them to follow a variety of passions and pastimes, as well as allow the ability to change those uses as the family matures. When designing new homes and additions, we at Dickson Development recognize and provide for the needs of modern families with floor plans that deliver maximum flexibility so that our clients can truly customize their living experience.

Warm regards,

Richard

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