

Central Oklahoma HOMES



Outdoor kitchens

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TOP 10 building trends

Above: This building at 719 N Francis reflects a move toward Asian influences. Photo provided by American Institute of Architects Central Oklahoma Chapter

Below: Laura Warriner purchased and remodeled the old warehouse at 1 NE 3rd street. The upstairs features a living space and a studio. Photo by Steve Sisney, *The Oklahoman*

By M. J. Van Deventer

Staff Writer

Planning on building or buying a new home in the future? You'll want to take the latest design trends into consideration as you begin your quest to find the perfect home for you.

The choices — and the decisions — are numerous. Take into consideration what the homes of the future will look like as you begin the daunting task of finding or building a new home or even remodeling or renovating your current residence.

Tomorrow's homes on the drawing boards look nothing like your grandparents' or even your parents' home, which you probably remember from your childhood. New materials, new technologies and new ideas are reshaping the way people build new homes. Floor plans are shifting to accommodate the changing patterns of our lives.

Yet, architects and designers are also drawing upon ancient materials and building techniques. What will the homes of the future look like? There are 10 important trends to watch for in tomorrow's home design.





Above: Tomorrow's homes have sliding doors, pocket doors and other types of movable partitions to allow flexibility in living areas.

Right: The home of Jerry and Charlotte Hess on Grand Boulevard features large walk-in closets and lounging area.



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EARTH-FRIENDLY HOME DESIGN: The most compelling and important trend in today's home design is the growing sensitivity to the environment. Architects and engineers are taking a look at ancient building techniques that used simple, biodegradable materials.

In the book "Living Homes — Sustainable Architecture and Design," the authors note: "We have found 22 sustainable residences in states across the West for this book. We chose to categorize them by their wall materials, starting with adobe and rammed earth homes, which represent a continuum of man's oldest building material — mud. In some adobe homes, an insulated skin of polystyrene is added to the exterior walls before the stucco is applied to help stabilize the interior space during extreme temperature fluctuations. Other currently popular unusual building materials include straw bales or other reinvented materials."

"PREFAB" DESIGN: Forget your old image of trailer park living. Builders and architects are using modular building materials to create bold designs with glass and steel.

ADAPTIVE REUSE: The concern for the environment also includes a desire to preserve historic architectural structures. Abandoned churches, old or outdated warehouses or factories are being repurposed as residential dwellings. Oklahoma City's downtown lofts, the ones at the former Automobile Alley, and Laura Warriner's Untitled Gallery, in an old Bricktown warehouse, are good examples of this trend.

Local artist Dennis Johnson chose a large metal storage building to create his home, art studio, gallery and storage area for frames and art supplies.

The art area is two stories high with plenty of display space for his contemporary art. Stairs from the gallery lead to a cozy private master suite for privacy. The metal storage building has been a perfect structure for Dennis' life as an artist.

A HEALTHY HOME: If you've ever said, "My house makes me sick," you're probably not alone. Home designers are more aware of how some synthetic materials and chemical additives in paint and composition wood products can be

toxic and harmful to our health. Builders are shunning plastics, laminates and fume-producing glues.

STORM-RESISTANT HOMES: Oklahomans are having no trouble embracing this trend. Every shelter should be built to withstand the elements and engineers are making progress in building storm-proof home designs. In areas plagued by hurricanes and tornadoes, some builders are relying on insulated wall panels constructed of sturdy concrete. Safe rooms, which are popular in new home designs, are an outgrowth of this trend.

FLEXIBLE FLOOR PLANS: Changing lifestyles call for different living spaces. Tomorrow's homes have sliding doors, pocket doors and other types of movable partitions to allow flexibility in living arrangements. Dedicated living and dining rooms are being replaced by large multi-purpose family areas.

The dome homes being built by James Lynch are a good example of changing living spaces. Lynch says, "In a dome home, you can have a second floor instead of an attic. Rooms are free-flowing, not constricted

by corners and walls.

A kitchen doesn't have to be an island. You can have large walk-in closets, two vanities in the master bathroom, even a large garden tub for relaxing and lounging. Furniture arrangement is easier, more inviting for entertaining."

Lynch, who lives in a dome he built in Oklahoma City, says, "The Japanese are way ahead of us — by almost 300 years — in building dome homes."

But it was a 19th-century architect, Buckminster Fuller, who encouraged the dome home as a simple round shape solution to American housing.

ACCESSIBLE HOMES: The homes of tomorrow will be easy to move around in, even if you or a member of your family have physical limitations or are planning ahead for a time when your mobility may be challenged.

Architects often use the phrase, "universal design," to describe these homes because they are comfortable for people of all ages and physical abilities. Special features such as wide hallways blend seamlessly into the design so the home does not have the clinical

appearance of a hospital or nursing home.

OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES: An increased interest in eco-friendly architecture is encouraging builders to incorporate outdoor spaces with the overall home design. The yard and garden become a part of the floor plan when sliding glass doors lead to patios, decks, pools and cabanas. These outdoor "rooms" often include kitchens with sophisticated sinks and grills.

The garden of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Yingling is a good example of this new trend. The garden was recently on the Nichols Hills Garden Tour and featured a beautiful pool, with a special area designed for a young grandchild, a guest house that serves as a cabana and spaces for cooking and dining al fresco.

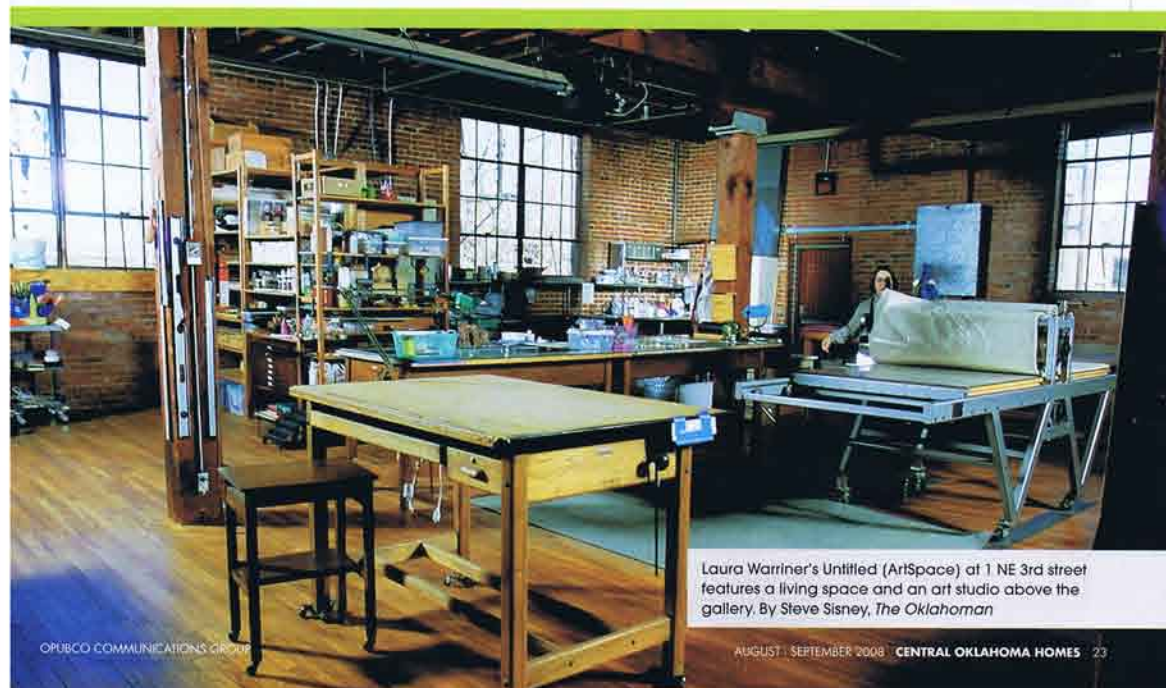
ABUNDANT STORAGE: During the past century, homeowners have demanded more storage space, not just for clothes and accessories but everything from cooking supplies to home office and athletic equipment.

Newer homes feature enormous walk-in

closets, spacious dressing rooms and plenty of easy-to-reach cabinets. Cathedral ceilings are becoming passé because families tend to prefer usable space below the roof. Garages are also getting bigger to accommodate the ever-popular SUVs and other large vehicles. However, this trend may change as the result of skyrocketing gas prices.

The home of Jerry and Charlotte Hess on Grand Boulevard features large walk-in his and her closets on either side of the master bath, which also has a lounging area. Charlotte's closet includes a large center island, special racks for shoes and several closet areas arranged by season and occasions. She even has a television and a seating area, making her closet a cozy retreat.

EASTERN IDEAS: Feng Shui, Vastu Shastra and other Eastern philosophies about home design have been guiding builders since ancient times. Today, these principles are gaining respect in the West. You might not immediately see the Eastern influences in the design of your new home. According to believers, however, you will soon begin to feel the positive effects of the Eastern ideas on your health, prosperity and relationships. ■



Laura Warriner's Untitled (ArtSpace) at 1 NE 3rd street features a living space and an art studio above the gallery. By Steve Sisney, *The Oklahoman*