

# Curb Appeal: 2013 Design Trends in Exterior Home Design

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Home Design is like a fashion show – with the neighborhood streets as the catwalk. For as much as apparel design changes with the seasons, so it does with home design. Newer designs emerge and classics are reintroduced and enhanced. Elevation styles are important to buyers. They have an idea of what their dream home might look like – so deliver it. They don't want to settle for anything less...and they don't need to.

I've heard Realtors say that the two most important things in real estate are location and lifestyle. Well, I contend that the third most important thing must be curb appeal. Curb appeal is the attractive quality of a home's appearance. A home is usually considered appealing when it has a positive, striking character and charm that adds value to the neighborhood.

Today's new home buyers tend to agree, and curb appeal ranks high on many of the latest consumer preference surveys. Buyers say that they:

- No longer want to buy a home just for resale value
- Plan to stay in their home longer
- Are once again seeking "pride of ownership"
- Prefer not to have a cookie-cutter home
- Are looking for something fresh and new, especially Gen Y buyers

The first impression of a home is forged the instant a buyer pulls up to the curb. Make an impact with an architectural style that is attractive, not forgettable. Do not rely on architectural cosmetics to dress up a front elevation, but rather create a well-designed style that gives the home a personality that fits within the neighborhood. Entice them to stop the car and get out before they decide to drive on another builder's model or the next listing.

## Hot Architectural Styles Trending for 2013:

Across the nation, here are a few of the hottest styles attracting today's home buyers:

### Traditional:

Yes, Traditional Architecture is still appreciated. Classical looks with authentic styles are timeless. Many older styles are still around such as Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, French, Arts and Crafts, Mediterranean and Coastal Styles.

## about the author



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Location	60%
Home style and design	55%
Price	54%

Adapted from John Burns Real Estate Consulting 2011 Prospective Buyer Survey

- 10,000 Prospective Homebuyers surveyed
- Over half ranked home style and design among their top three priorities
- "Many of the best-designed homes outselling the competition by 300%."

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**Old World Spanish:** Strong, recognizable character and beautiful through its simplicity and elegance.

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**West Indies:** Borrowed from the Caribbean, this stucco and siding coastal combination has interesting details and colors that give this style a distinctive character.

## Transitional:

Favorite familiar styles but now with a new twist – hybrid styles are emerging. These newer Transitional styles are a mix of the historic and contemporary and include straighter and simpler lines, less ornament and stronger colors.



Harmony House: Right-Sized, Net-Zero Transitional Style



Canin Cottages: Transitional Styles

**Cottages:** Even with today's "right-sized" homes, strong character is important, no matter the size. The beauty is in simplicity and design restraint.



Canin Cottages: Modern Mediterranean

**Modern Mediterranean:** Mixing the historical basics of white reflective stucco and terra cotta roof tiles with new contemporary features such as geometric and proportional windows, wood accents, stone and modern light fixtures.



2012 Builder Magazine Gen "X" Concept Home: Mod Med

## Contemporary/Modern:

**Retro throwbacks:** Mid-Century Modern styles (of homes with that were built in the mid 50's) are making a comeback, but with a modern touch—there is strong interest in clean, modern design.



**Remodel in College Park, Florida :** This one story home, originally built in 1957, is transformed for the lifestyle of today's family from Mid-Century modern to a clean contemporary style, blended with a slight Prairie Style influence.

## Downward Pressure on New Home Prices: Costs Influence Elevation Design

The dramatic change in our economy has had a significant impact on home design. A rediscovered simple, only-what's-needed pragmatic approach to home design has not only affected the size of floor plans and the furnishings of its interiors, but the exteriors as well.

Home buyers are more practical-minded now and they are asking for no-waste design, evident in many consumer preference surveys. The American Institute of Architects, in their survey of residential architects, reports:

*“Due to concerns about housing affordability, home styles have become somewhat simpler, with the trend toward placing fewer upscale elements on the façade accelerating over the past year.”*

-Reference: AIA Community Design Trends Survey, [www.aia.org/practicing/AIAB091814](http://www.aia.org/practicing/AIAB091814)

Today's new home elevations have to respond to today's economy and buyer's demands. How does one achieve good design within limited budgets? Here's how:

### Simple Form: Curb Appeal & Proportions

- K.E.S.S. Principle – Keep Elevations Simple and Smart
- Design the home with the right balance and scale of all primary and secondary building blocks, resulting in an aesthetically pleasing composition
- Design each structural section of the home with beautiful proportions using the golden ratio; even the simplest home can look good if it is designed with the right proportions (Cosmetologists will agree that natural beauty doesn't require a lot of make-up)
- Design facades by making full use of functional, required materials; strive for authenticity
- Place tasteful ornamentation where it can be appreciated.
- Minimize the presence of the garage with passive design techniques
- “Less is more” – demonstrate design restraint
- Limit exterior finishes to 2 or 3 different types

### Money Saving Elevation Ideas!!!

- Limit exterior building corners to simplify the roof design
- Avoid unnecessary garish cosmetic elements
- Replace a full porch with a smaller, more inviting portico
- Avoid faux dormers or blackened glass windows
- Avoid unnecessary extra gables
- Use windows of common types and sizes
- Simplify columns for a trendy modern appearance without the classical detailing of capitals and bases
- Use color as inexpensive means to create interesting facades.



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### Not Done Yet: Complement and Enhance the Architecture

**Paint Colors:** Complement the architecture by using an appropriate paint color palette that goes with the home's architectural style. Select colors with a suitable intensity for the neighborhood. Two and three color paint palettes provide variety and enhance curb appeal.

**Landscaping:** Enhance the architecture with low maintenance plant palettes that are appropriate for the style of the home and the local climate.

**Lighting:** Think about the home's appearance at night and consider the best use of lighting for safety as well as using light fixtures as stylish architectural features. Accent lighting can illuminate the home's best features.

Tie it all together and deliver the best design value for your budget. Remember, simple doesn't necessarily mean cheap. Achieve great homes and neighborhoods with better, smarter design – without extra costs.



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