

# New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

## *THE COMFORTS OF HOME*

Serene Spaces &  
Restful Retreats

Style Report:  
Expert Design Advice  
from Local Pros

# New Horizons

In these uncommon times, New England design pros weigh in on the importance of home today, as well as the shifts we may see as the year progresses.

**I**n this special survey, local professionals share their expertise and personal insight on the immediate changes (and challenges) facing the New England design community. How we live, work, and play is certainly in a time of transition, and their collective wisdom and spirit of collaboration will help usher in a new era of style innovation across our region. The importance of home will be greater than ever before, and the power of design has the power to unite us all.

**With change in the air, what key things are going to be most important to your clients right now when it comes to the design of their homes and landscapes?**

» People are really going to think about home offices more. It's likely that we'll all be surprised by how much we can get done remotely, and there may be a new trend toward partially working from home. The flipside is that we are all going to be so excited to spend time

with one another that people will be focusing their design budgets on outdoor entertaining spaces and dining rooms and living rooms. Wouldn't it be exciting to see the formal dining room and living room come back into vogue? —**ANNSLEY McALEER**, *Annsley Interiors*

» We will find a lot more people working from home, and the need for home office space will be a bigger factor in smaller homes as well as larger luxury homes. With the rise in video conferencing, lighting (which is so often overlooked) will be even more important than it already is, as well as acous-

tics—the ability to shut a door to keep noises out. —**CATHERINE TRUMAN**, *Catherine Truman Architects*

» My clients' priorities remain the same: the goal is still a beautiful home to serve as a gathering place for family (and friends, once things normalize). People want their homes to be a source of comfort and stability, a refuge, a safe place in the most uncertain of times. —**KATHLEEN HAY**, *Kathleen Kay Design*



Today's environment reminds me a little bit of post 9/11. The value of hearth and home is a priority, and people will seek homes that reflect the objectives of feeling safe and secure but are also memorable and romantic.

—**Patrick Ahearn**, *Patrick Ahearn Architect*

» I can imagine a new way of thinking around public spaces in the home, especially the kitchen. Areas will likely be designed so that they can be kept clean and sanitary. People may add a second sink, and hands-free devices such as faucets will become more popular. —**KEVIN CRADOCK**, *Kevin Cradock Builders*

» Our clients express the desire for beauty and artistry of nature in their own backyards. The idea that your outdoor spaces are an integral part of home has become more important. —**TRENT LLOYD AND AMY FLEISCHER**, *Lloyd Fleischer*

» There's more of a focus on the home as a place for family connection. We're seeing an increased



This crisis has certainly given us the opportunity to figure out what is important, in life and in work. Even before this crisis, we were seeing requests for more rooms to entertain—not just home theaters, but social barns and home gyms. This trend will definitely continue after something like this.

—Sarah Lawson, S+H Construction

call for things like virtual golf, wine-tasting rooms, and craft/project studios. The ultimate sign of luxury has now shifted such that clients can engage with their families within the boundaries of their own property. —MICHAEL CARTER, Carter & Company Interior Design

How do you see design in New England evolving?

» “Transitional” or a blend between old and new is still the predominant style. That being said, we are seeing a lot more color as

opposed to stark whites, grays, and beige, and a return to some fancy wood grains in millwork.

—BOB ERNST, FBN Construction

» Over more than two decades I have witnessed a significant cultural shift in New England that places greater emphasis on preserving natural resources, embracing wildlife patterns, and working with, rather than against, the context of a site. When we awaken from this pandemic, we will see an incredible spike of environmental advocacy that will lead to significant positive impacts in residential landscape architecture. —MATTHEW CUNNINGHAM, Cunningham Landscape Design

» I feel that the experience of this pandemic is a call toward simplification. In the landscape,

that means right-sized lawns, native groundcovers instead of mulch, plantings that attract wildlife, and outdoor furnishings that can stay outside in all seasons rather than creating a storage burden.

—ANDREA NILSEN MORSE, Nilsen Landscape Design

» People are steering away from traditional interior finishes and leaning toward more edited, lighter, and crisper interiors that maintain a high quality. However, exterior design will continue to be more historic in nature, reflecting the New England vernacular. —PATRICK AHEARN

In your projects, how do you honor New England’s rich design heritage and tradition, while also embracing the needs of twenty-first-century lifestyles?

» Quality and lasting materials, put in place by skilled craftsmen, is a very New England tradition. Now, however, breakneck speed is required in leaning about new materials and technology. That requires persistent

commitment to continuing education and collaboration between the design and building industries.

—BOB ERNST



We like to incorporate interior finish and trim details that nod to the traditional New England vernacular—things like shiplap and beadboard and other cottage details—but reworked to be more updated in proportion and feel for a fresh take. —Kathleen Hay

» The problem with historical houses for modern families is the location of the kitchen (not central) and the cut-up nature of the common space. To open up the living area, walls must be removed. But it’s possible to do this and retain moldings and other decorative trim where walls remain, and to match those details on new walls. —SARAH LAWSON

» We love traditional materials like reclaimed brick, granite, and fieldstone, but we want to pair them with more modern elements like ipe decking, corten steel, and clamshell aggregate so the overall vibe becomes a bit less traditional.

—TRENT LLOYD AND AMY FLEISCHER

**Brick and mortar retail offerings have been changing as online shopping builds momentum. How are you adapting to make the in-person shopping experience special?**

» Frankly, online shopping is a bore. There is no interaction with a shopkeeper, no conversation, no touch and feel of merchandise, and often what is presented online is not so appealing in the flesh. Online shopping brings out our laziness. Shops and showrooms must be more

demanding of their vendors, more creative, rather than following trends that have gone on for years, and invest in good design and quality products.

—CHARLES SPADA, *Charles Spada Interiors*

» The in-store shopping experience is uniquely special and will continue to offer a sense of community that online shopping cannot. Stores are offering new and unexpected experiences, like workshops, pop-up shopping, and in-store cafes. At our own boutique, we have a maker's space with a sewing machine operating where customers can talk to our store manager about what she's creating. A visit to stores now is becoming a learning and entertaining experience. —LINDA CABOT, *Linda Cabot Design*

**How do you think social media, especially Instagram and Pinterest, will continue to influence design?**

» Online platforms are already the number-one influencers for residential design. Influencers and blog trendsetters are sharing fabulous design innovation right at your fingertips and on your schedule. It's all there for

both professionals and consumers to explore, react to, and be inspired by. With all this tremendous access and sharing, residential design is on the cusp of something extraordinary! —LINDA CABOT



**Social media is a fact of life. Our clients are exposed to an**

**endless source of visible inspiration. On the one hand, it's great because it opens their minds to diverse design points of view. But it can also breed sameness. Part of our job is developing not only a cohesive design direction, but a unique one. —Trent Lloyd and Amy Fleischer**

» Both will continue to play an important role in terms of reference material. Pinterest, in particular, while Instagram will continue to be more a social show-your-stuff platform. —CHARLES SPADA

» Social media is a powerful way for people to establish and develop relationships with companies. Residential design and construction are very personal, and people need to feel comfortable with who we are. It's a way for customers to get to know us in a low-key, ongoing way.

—SARAH LAWSON

**What role will technology continue to play in our homes?**

» Many of the "conveniences" of the early 1990s and 2000s were too complicated and frustrated a lot of people. Simplification

of technology will continue. Voice-activated and extremely intuitive functions are where it's at.

—BOB ERNST

» Technology touches everything. It should be considered at the very start of design.

—KEVIN CRADOCK



From sophisticated irrigation systems that conserve water usage to low-voltage LED landscape lighting, there seems to be a commitment from our clients to try to neutralize their carbon footprint.

—*Matthew Cunningham*

**What impact do you think the growing emphasis on sustainability has on New England Design?**

» New England will be at the forefront of sustainability as we have been (quietly) in so many other areas of social importance. I believe the design industry in particular is keenly aware of the importance

and is most active in achieving sustainability.

—*CHARLES SPADA*

» People want to be good to the environment. For us that might mean using native plant materials, drought-tolerant perennials, permeable surfaces like clamshells, recycled decking materials, repurposing a beloved artifact from your Grandma's garden, using cisterns for irrigation, or using solar panel sculptures.

—*TRENT LLOYD AND AMY FLEISCHER*

» I'm hoping it has become understood as a must, so that we can move on to creating beauty and design that have lasting influence.

—*MICHAEL CARTER*

» An increasing number of our customers are integrating energy efficiency into their projects, beyond what's required by building code.

Beefy thermal envelopes—thick insulation and strict air movement controls in the exterior walls, roofs, and basements—are popular. These things increase the thickness of exterior walls, and that has an effect on design. I’m sure you’ll see design innovations in the coming years as thicker exterior walls become more common. Remember, mansard roofs became popular as a beautiful way to get around zoning regulations!

—SARAH LAWSON



It remains a part of the equation for an overwhelming majority of our clients. —*Bob Ernst*

### What impact do you think the current crisis will have on people’s attitude toward home?

» This is an unsettled time that has required most of us to spend more time at home. We’re working from home and eating at home, and are getting

reacquainted with what we like and don’t like about our environments. There is going to be greater interest in creating functional workspaces, living spaces, and sleeping spaces that are uplifting, have meaning, and bring us joy. The old phrase “home is where the heart is” is now more poignant than ever.

—LINDA CABOT

» Some of us will be so bored we will just want to escape. A few will realize their home is actually wonderful. Others will realize how awful their home design really is and will want to change it all, which will be great for the industry. —CHARLES SPADA