Building Your Dream House? Four Important Ideals Not to Overlook...

by ARA

Few things offer a greater sense of accomplishment than designing, building or customizing a home to your specific desires. Done properly, a home can offer decades of enjoyment to you and your family - with little or no need for major updating or improvements.

The exterior details are some of the most important aesthetic and value-influencing aspects of the home. Photo by Western Red Cedar Lumber Association With so many necessary decisions however, it's often easy to lose sight of the truly critical choices that will help make your home "endure." While choosing the desired carpet color and kitchen appliances can be fun, creating a truly timeless home requires your attention elsewhere. Rather then focusing only on interior details, it's vital you spend sufficient time researching and choosing the exterior details of your dream home as well. Often overlooked, it's the exterior details that are some of the most important aesthetic and value-influencing aspects of the home.

To maximize your home's curb appeal, remember to utilize these four important ideals:

* Incorporate Nature.

There's often a key reason why some homes appear more serene than others. More than likely, the setting incorporates designs and materials embracing the natural environment, thus creating an outward appearance that is a harmonious blend of architecture and nature. This concept is especially important when considering what material to use for your home's exterior siding. The siding of a home is the face it presents to the world, defines the mood and character of the home's exterior and reflects the image desired by its owners.

All-natural Western Red Cedar remains a popular choice as an upscale exterior siding due to its exceptional beauty, versatility and durability. Cedar brings an all-natural warmth and character to exteriors that will last for years to come. Composite or plastic materials just can't compete when compared to the beauty and feel of all-natural cedar - despite man's best efforts, Mother Nature still knows best.

* Decorative Accents Differentiate.

Exterior accent details are the differentiating touches on a home of distinction; they really set the home apart. Giving your home that elegant appeal of handcrafted beauty with decorative accents like: shutters, gables, cedar soffits or dentil mouldings, these upgrades all provide an affordable, yet beautiful complement to your home's design and individuality.

"Exterior decorative accents offer homeowners a choice in their home's appearance so they feel like their home is not only unique to them on the inside, but on the outside as well," says Peter Lang, general manager of the Western Red Cedar Lumber Association. "They customize the home so when you drive thorough the community the house doesn't look like everyone else's on the block."

* Protect Your Investment.

With centuries of proven performance, materials like Real Cedar are well known for their ability to stand up to the elements. It's often overlooked however, that what's installed underneath your new siding is equally important to providing your home long-term durability and protection. Specifically, you need to make sure the siding is backed by a high-quality weather barrier to help block moisture and air from entering the home.

In recent years, a number of excellent weather resistant barriers have been designed to provide superior water drainage, combat moisture and help prevent air infiltration - creating a more comfortable, energy-efficient home. One such weather resistant barrier is Dupont Tyvek DrainWrap. It offers the unique combination of a drainage system and a weather resistant barrier in a single product. Even better, it does not support the growth of mold or mildew and helps keep heating and cooling costs down by stopping outside air infiltration. Teaming such a weather resistant barrier with a low-density material like Western Red Cedar improves the overall insulation of the home, keeping interiors warmer in cold weather and cooler during summer.

* Remember the Environment.

Homes of distinction increasingly have a similar attribute in common - they utilize materials that are environmentally responsible and sustainable. Whether interior features like hardwood flooring or exterior elements such as siding or stone, today's dream homes are being constructed with long-term consideration of the environment in mind.

When examining siding materials for example, it's interesting to note why all-natural Western Red Cedar remains so popular. As the world's only renewable building material, wood can not only be recycled, but regenerated as well. In fact, North America has more forestland now than it did one hundred years ago. Western Red Cedar is entirely biodegradable, and at the end of its life cycle, can be absorbed by the earth without negative impact. Some alternative products can sit in landfills for years and years without breaking down - making building materials like Cedar ultimately more earth friendly.

For more ideas about how to increase your home's curb appeal, or to learn more about the virtues of Western

Red Cedar, call (866) 788-9096 or visit www.realcedar.org.

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