

Top Features and Design Trends for 2023 Highlight Post–Pandemic Shifts and Affordability Struggles

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What Builders are Featuring in Today's Homes

merica's home builders closely follow the preferences of today's home buyers to ensure they enjoy their new homes. For example, builders responded at the height of the pandemic by adding square footage in new homes since people were spending more time at home. Now the trend is shifting, partly due to housing affordability factors. Here are a few notable trends in the residential construction industry based on recent U.S. Census Bureau data analyzed by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Home Size is Trending Lower. An expected impact of the pandemic was a need for more residential space, as people use homes for more purposes, including work. The housing boom after covid led to a rise in new single-family home size. However, this trend appears to be reversing due to housing market conditions, namely affordability. According to 2022 third-quarter U.S. Census data and NAHB analysis, the median single-family square floor area declined to 2,276 square feet, compared to 2,326 in the third quarter of 2021.

New Homes Have More Bedrooms and Bathrooms. According to the most recent data available, only a small percentage of new single-family homes have two bedrooms or less (9.2%), while nearly half (44%) of new homes had three bedrooms and more than a third (36%) had four bedrooms. Moreover, 2021 marked the second year that the share of fourbedroom homes increased.

In addition, a majority (62%) of new single-family homes have two full bathrooms. According to an NAHB analysis, since 2005, most new homes tend to have two full bathrooms. And it is no surprise that an overwhelming majority (93%) of homes that were 5,000 square feet or more had three or more full bathrooms.

Patios are Preferred to Decks. Home owners treasure their outdoor space. For the sixth consecutive year, 2021 showed that the share of new homes with patios increased. In contrast, the share of new homes with decks is trending in the opposite direction. However, decks remain relatively popular in certain parts of the country, according to NAHB. For example, more than half (60%) of new homes in New England came with decks in 2021.

Interest in Two-story Foyers Declines. In 2021, most new single-family homes were built without a two-story foyer nationally and regionally. According to the Census Bureau, a twostory foyer is an entranceway inside a house's front door and has a ceiling at the secondfloor ceiling level. In the United States, the share of new homes with two-story fovers fell from 29% to 25% in 2021, the lowest level in the last five years. A two-story foyer has been an unwanted feature for many home buyers since 2012, as many consider two-story foyers energy inefficient.



President's Message



"Here are a few notable trends in the residential construction industry based on recent U.S. **Census Bureau** data analyzed by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)."



Top Features and Design Trends for 2023 Highlight Post-Pandemic Shifts and Affordability Struggles

ome buyer preferences have continued to shift home building trends in the wake of COVID-19. Following a brief uptick in new home sizes in 2021, the average size of a new home dropped slightly from 2,525 square feet to 2,480 square feet in 2022, and the percentage of new homes with 3+ full bathrooms and 3+ car garages dipped to 33% and 17%, respectively. Meanwhile, the percentage of homes with 4+ bedrooms rose slightly to 48%, in part because of the flexibility in use that bedrooms can provide, with the expectation that home size and amenities will continue to grow in 2023 before dropping again in 2024.

"The decrease in new home size reflects the escalation of home prices in 2022 and builders scaling back to try to meet demand," said Rose Quint, NAHB assistant vice president of survey research. "The move toward larger homes and more amenities in 2023 will reflect the preferences of those who can afford higher

interest rates, and in 2024, size will fall back as affordability improves with lower mortgage rates and more buyers re-enter the market."

Amenities no longer necessarily translate directly to number of rooms or types of features within the home either ---it can also be simply having a space within the home that provides respite.

"Home buyers are looking more and more to their homes to provide a sense of well-being," observed Donald Ruthroff, AIA, founding principal at Design Story Spaces LLC. "They want their homes to support their day-to-day health - physically, emotionally and mentally."

Builders and designers are achieving this through walking paths and other outdoor spaces connected to the home, as well as the incorporation of natural materials and other examples of biophilic design. Builders saw a large jump in the demand







for exterior amenities, such as patios, decks and porches, in 2023, along with increased demand for home office — which appeared on the list of buvers' most-wanted features for the first time this year.

Demand was also on the rise for more flexible and better equipped spaces to meet buyers' changing needs. This is true for both first-time and repeat buyers, the majority of whom prefer an open-kitchen family room. This space, Ruthroff highlighted, can be reconfigured and better utilized to provide more space for additional rooms or allow builders to incorporate higher-end components to increase the feel and function.

"We're learning that if we use less space, we can spend more on details and finishes to make rooms such as bathrooms feel more luxurious," he added. "And people will pay a little more for solutions, such as cabinetry add-ons that eliminate dead space, that add utility."

Other home features that resonate with both first-time and repeat home buyers include:

- Laundry rooms
- Exterior lighting
- Ceiling fans
- Patios
- Walk-in pantries
- Hardwood flooring on the main level

Housing affordability remains a struggle, which home buyers recognize. The majority of home buyers (91%) are willing to compromise to afford a home. The top three areas are:

- A smaller house
- Simpler/more basic interiors
- Fewer exterior amenities

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Tradesmen's Education Council Visits the Navarre High School Construction Academy

n February 13, 2023 the Tradesmen's Education Council visited the Navarre High School Construction Academy. We were given a tour of the construction academy by James Fox, head of the Building Construction Program. Mr. Fox has been the lead instructor for 10 years.

Mr. Fox explained the students are required to complete the HBI certification basic certification carpentry, safety, basic electrical, basic plumbing. There are 200 students currently enrolled in this program. When students graduate from this Construction Academy, they are ready for an apprenticeship program.

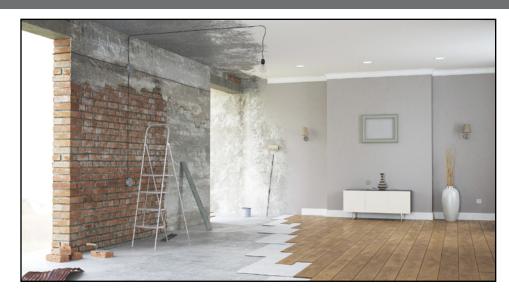
While there, we were able to witness several students pouring concrete for a driveway ramp at the rear of the academy entrance.

Members in attendance were Amir Foladi, Chad Edgar, Mickey Clinard and Mary Jordan.









Confidence in Remodeling is Strong Despite COVID-19

ne National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) Remodeling Market Index (RMI) posted a reading of 79 in the fourth quarter of 2020. The reading indicates remodelers' confidence in their markets, for projects of all sizes, despite the ongoing negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic (Table 1).

The RMI is based on a survey asking remodelers to rate five subcomponents of the remodeling market as "good," "fair" or "poor." Each question is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, where an index num-

ber above 50 indicates that a higher share view conditions as good than poor.

The Current Conditions Index is an average of three of these subcomponents: the current market for large remodeling projects, moderately-sized projects and small projects. The Future Indicators Index is an average of the other two subcomponents: the current rate at which leads and inquiries are coming in and the current backlog of remodeling projects. The overall RMI is calculated by averaging the Current Conditions Index and the Future Indicator Index. Any number over 50 indicates that

Table 1: Remodeling Market Index		20	20	
	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
<u>RMI</u>	48	73	82	79
Current Conditions Index	58	77	86	85
The current market for <u>large</u> remodeling projects (\$50,000 or nore) in the area you operate.	53	70	80	78
The current market for <u>moderately-sized</u> remodeling projects at least \$20,000 but less than \$50,000) in the area where you operate.	59	78	86	88
The current market for <u>small</u> remodeling projects (under 20,000) in the area where you operate.	62	83	90	89
Future Indicators Index	39	70	77	72
he current rate at which your <u>leads and inquiries</u> are coming n.	30	72	78	71
four current backlog of remodeling projects.	47	67	77	73

more remodelers view remodeling market conditions as good than poor.

In the fourth quarter, all components and subcomponents of the RMI were 71 or above. The Current Conditions Index averaged 85, with large remodeling projects (\$50,000 or more) yielding a reading of 78, moderately-sized remodeling projects (at least \$20,000 but less than \$50,000) at 88 and small remodeling projects (under \$20,000) at 89. These readings indicate remodeling activity is strong across projects of all sizes.

Meanwhile, the Future Indicators Index averaged to 72, with the rate at which leads and inquiries are coming in at 71 and the backlog of remodeling jobs at 73.

The fourth quarter RMI reading signals robust growth for remodelers going into 2021. The NAHB forecast predicts an acceleration in economic growth in the second half of 2021 as vaccination rates rise, further supporting remodeling activity.

The RMI was redesigned in 2020 to ease respondent burden and improve its ability to interpret and track industry trends. As a result, readings cannot be compared quarter to quarter until enough data are collected to seasonally adjust the series. To track quarterly trends, the redesigned RMI survey asks remodelers to compare market conditions to three months earlier, using a 'better,' 'about the same,' 'worse' scale. In the fourth quarter, 68 percent indicated conditions were the same as in the third quarter, 21 percent said 'better' and 11 percent 'worse.'





Heath Kelly Construction

en life closes one door for a good person such as Heath Kelly, you can be sure a new door opens and an even brighter future lies ahead. That's certainly the case for the energetic owner of Heath Kelly Construction, who is poised to break into the ranks of the top custom home builders in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

Heath did what every young boy dreams of. He was a high school and college baseball star at Tate and Auburn, respectively, played in the 1997 College World Series, and was drafted by the Florida Marlins, launching a seven-year career in professional baseball.

"I enjoyed my baseball experience and developed some lifelong friendships and sweet memories through it," says Heath, "but God called me to follow a different path and gave me the opportunity to do something else that I really love."

Heath didn't have to look very far to find a sterling role model. His father Glenn was a subcontractor in all facets of the construction industry for more than 45 years and Heath was at his side on the construction sites as a young boy.

"Dad is amazing in that he could build anything and his work ethic was off the charts," says Heath. "Learning from him gave me the best education in construction that I could ever have."

In addition to his father-mentor, college helped Heath grow into the businessman he is today. "At Auburn, I majored in marketing but had lots of courses in business and finance. By the time I graduated, I felt I had the foundation to be successful in business."

After his baseball career, Heath gained valuable experience handling production for a large-volume home builder and as a project manager for the Pensacola-based custom home building firm and commercial contractor Williams Brown, Inc. Confident in his experience and knowledge, Heath became licensed as a statecertified general contractor and struck out on his own with Heath Kelly Construction in 2012.

With a high level of customer service and an intense focus on the hundreds of details that go into a construction project, Heath built the company volume up to over \$4 million annually with a mix of custom homes and commercial structures. He employs one project manager and relies on long-standing relationships with subcontractors and suppliers to assure construction quality.

Heath finds joy in both the residential and commercial sides of the business. "We like thinking outside-the-box with our custom home clients and giving them the experience of creating a truly one-of-the-kind home that fits their wants and needs," says Heath. "The commercial sector comes with a different set of challenges but it's still about meeting our client's needs and helping them achieve their goals."

Whether it's cheering fans, proud parents, or satisfied customers, Heath has a passion for making people happy. After the Tampa





Heath with his Dad (Glenn Kelly) and son (Taylor) out in Omaha at the **College World Series**

Bay Rays released him in 2003, he returned home to play for the Pensacola Pelicans during his last year of professional baseball so his parents could see him perform.

When he started at shortstop on that 1997 Auburn team that featured the likes of David Ross (a former major leaguer and now the manager of the Chicago Cubs) and Tim Hudson (who had a stellar 17-year career pitching for the Oakland A's and Atlanta

We did and had a great time."



If you do business with previous members, please give them a call and reinforce the value of membership as well as the importance of Members Doing Business with Members.

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Heath and his son at the Auburn game in Omaha at the **College World Series**

Braves), his father was unable to go out to watch Heath and Auburn play in the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska. "I always felt bad about that," says Heath. "So when Auburn made it to Omaha this year, I told Dad to jump in the truck and let's go.

You could say that while baseball influenced Heath Kelly, it didn't define him. Today, he takes great joy in being a son,

husband, and father (especially coaching his 9-year-old son's Little League team). And when it comes to his business, he's working hard, with ingenuity and integrity, to take Heath Kelly Construction to the next level of professional performance.

For more on Heath Kelly Construction, visit their web site at www.heathkellyconstruction.com, call 850-232-7195, or email heath@heathkellyconstruction.com.



HEATH KELL CONSTRUCTION



Boosting Housing Production is Best Way to Ease the Affordability Crisis



he National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) in early February commended Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Ranking Member Tim Scott (R-S.C.) and their fellow committee members for making housing the focus of the panel's first hearing of the new Congress and recognizing that market-based solutions are needed to boost the production of affordable housing and ease the nation's housing affordability crisis.

"We applaud the committee for making housing a top national priority and allowing NAHB to share its views on the barriers the residential construction industry faces to increase the production of quality, affordable housing," NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz said while testifying before Senate lawmakers. "Building more homes and apartments is the only way to tame inflation, satisfy unmet demand, achieve a measure of price stability in the for-sale and rental markets, and ease America's housing affordability crisis."

The primary challenge of the housing market is a lack of attainable, affordable housing in both the single-family and

multifamily markets stemming from a lack of construction over the prior decade that has resulted in a structural deficit of 1.5 million residences.

"The causes of this underbuilding are multifaceted and complex, but we commonly cite them as the 'five Ls' – a lack of labor, lots, lumber and building materials, lending for development and construction purposes, and legal and regulatory barriers," said Dietz.

Solving all these problems is critical to bending the affordability curve as Dietz cited the following facts:

- The construction sector faces a persistent labor shortage, with more than 400,000 unfilled industry jobs.
- Regulatory costs account for about a quarter of the purchase price of a new single-family home and even more for apartment buildings due to delay costs and zoning issues, and these regulatory burdens have made it very difficult to build entry-level housing for first-time home buyers.
- Due primarily to supply chain disruptions, construction material costs are up 36% since the start of 2020, ultimately resulting in higher rents and home prices.

The need for safe, affordable housing is critical. Nearly one-third of renters were cost burdened in 2020 according to Census data. Reducing these burdens requires building additional housing.

"Unfortunately, construction of new, affordable rental housing is often impossible without some type of public support, such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit or tax-exempt bond programs," said Dietz.

And with home buyers experiencing a doubling of the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage over the past year as the Federal Reserve continues its fight against inflation, singlefamily for-sale affordability has plummeted. According to the latest NAHB/ Wells Fargo Housing Opportunity Index, just 38% of new and existing single-family homes are affordable to families earning the U.S. median income of \$90,000. This is the lowest affordability measure on this index in the post-Great Recession period.

Dietz called on Congress to use its legislative tools to help improve affordability for both renters and home buyers, and said this will also help to fight inflation.

"Passing legislation to alleviate supplyside bottlenecks, ease burdensome federal regulations, and promote careers in the skilled trades would increase home construction, expand housing inventory and lower inflation," Dietz said. "However, if action on these issues is delayed, housing costs, which are roughly 40% of the Consumer Price Index, will continue to be persistent drivers of inflation, and remain a burden on American families."



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New Member Profile



Brandon & Sonia Rogers Inspire Luxury Homes

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As a member of HBAWF, it provides the opportunity to network with local industry lealike to support the small guys, develop partnerships with vendors and take part in continuing education that enhances both the business and ultimately the customer.

We enjoy the outdoors with our family, hunting, fishing, camping, etc., we also enjoy the beautiful Pensacola beaches as often as possible.





HBAWF Members Enjoy Annual Clay Shoot

sk any clay shooter how hard it is to shoot clay targets zipping across the sky, and they'll probably answer, "They're not hard to hit, but they sure are easy to miss." This was not the case with this year's winners. First Place went to the Ready Mix USA Team, David Snyder, Donnie Goolsby, Greg Parsons and Scott Goolsby. You might notice that Mr. Bob Price is shown in the photo, he wanted to win so bad! A close Second place went to the American Concrete Supply Team, Noah McBride, Jerry Campbell, Ben Campbell and Scott Campbell. American Concrete came equipped to feed an army for lunch, grilling up a large batch of burgers and brats with all of the fixins'.

A huge shout out to our Sponsors this year. This event would not be such a success without their support.

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1st place team - Ready Mix USA - "Bob Price was close to winning"



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Final WOTUS Rule a Blow to Housing Affordability, **NAHB Tells Congress**

th the nation in the midst of a housing affordability crisis and an economy confronting high inflation, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) told Congress in early February that the Biden administration's decision to push through a far-reaching waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule will needlessly raise housing costs, add unnecessary regulatory burdens to small businesses and harm economic growth while doing little to protect America's waterways.

Testifying before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, NAHB Chairman Alicia Huey, a custom home builder and developer from Birmingham, Ala., said "the new WOTUS rule is so extreme that the federal government will have the authority to regulate certain roadside ditches, isolated ponds and channels that may only flow after heavy rainfall."

The nation's home builders are strong stewards of the environment and believe that common-sense best management practices and understandable regulations are the best path to achieving the goals

of the Clean Water Act and maintaining housing affordability.

"Unfortunately, the final rule fails to provide the clarity and certainty the home building industry seeks," said Huey. "This rule will increase federal regulatory power over private property and lead to increased litigation,

permit requirements and lengthy delays for any business trying to comply. Equally important, these chang-

es will not significantly improve water quality because much of the rule improperly encompasses water features already regulated at the state level."

The final rule's regulatory definition for WOTUS includes the problematic significant nexus test to establish federal jurisdiction over minor waterbodies such as isolated wetlands, human-made ditches or features that contain water only in response to rainfall events. The test's

results are determined by a federal regulator who decides whether a specific feature, along with similarly situated waters in the region, has material influence on the chemical, physical or biological integrity of a traditional navigable water.

Consequently, when developers and home builders acquire property, it will be nearly impossible for them to know the jurisdictional status of certain features without having federal regulators perform significant nexus tests on each requested jurisdictional determination. This results in further regulatory delays and increased costs for new single-family and multifamily housing at a time when housing affordability is at a more than 10-year low. Ultimately, it is prospective home buyers who will bear the brunt of this ill-conceived rule.

"Builders and developers, already grappling with the housing downturn, cannot depend upon the future home buying public to absorb the many costs associated with overregulation," said Huey. "This final rule only adds to the headwinds that our industry faces."

Finally, this regulatory morass is made worse since this new regulation could be overturned within a few weeks or shortly after it is implemented because the Supreme Court has heard arguments in Sackett v. EPA. The Sackett case is squarely focused on the legality of the significant nexus test.

"The administration has already declared a housing affordability crisis," said Huey. "So our message to policymakers is twofold: If the

"This rule will increase federal regulatory power over private property and lead to increased litigation, permit requirements and lengthy delays for any business trying to comply."

> implementing this rule until the Supreme Court issues its ruling in the Sackett case. Second, because this rule is fatally flawed, Congress should direct the agencies to implement a durable and practical definition of WOTUS that will truly protect our nation's water resources without infringing on states' rights and triggering additional expensive, time-consuming permitting and regulatory requirements."

administration is truly interested in knocking down barriers to affordable housing, it will direct the EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to keep from

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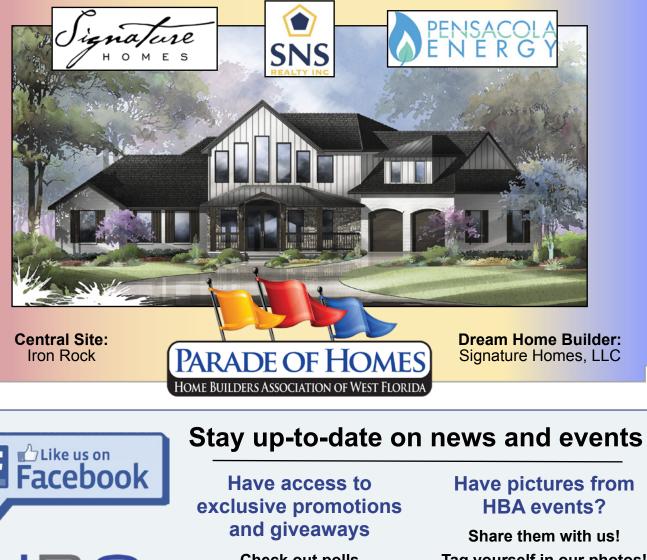
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In construction, a spike is a steel object that is essential to making a building strong. As in construction, the HBA of West Florida sees a Spike as someone that works to keep our association strong. Spikes work on the recruitment and retention of members in addition to keeping members active with the association. Anyone is eligible for Spike status. On Spike credit is awarded for each new member recruited and an additional credit is awarded for that new member's renewal on or before their anniversary date. If you help to retain a member, you are eligible to receive a half point for each member.

Spike Club Levels

Spike Candidate	1-5 credits
Blue Spike	6-24
Life Spike	25-49
Green Spike	50-99
Red Spike	100-149
Royal Spike	150-249
Super Spike	250-499
Statesman Spike	500-999
Grand Spike	1000-1499
All-Time Big Spike	1500+

Spike Club Members and their credits as of 12/31/2022.

us of 12/51/2022.	
Statesman Spike	500 Credits
Harold Logan	525
Super Spike	250 Credits
Rod Hurston	430.5
Jack McCombs	303.5
Royal Spike	150 Credits
Rick Sprague	209.5
Edwin Henry	201
William "Billy" Moore	181
Bob Boccanfuso	165.5
Red Spike	100 Credits
Charlie Rotenberry	150
Oliver Gore	114.5
Ron Tuttle	109.5

101

Green Spike

50 Credits

Oleen Spike	JU DIEUILJ
David Holcomb	99
Newman Rodgers IV	99
Doug Sprague	90
Kenneth Ellzey, Sr.	80
Russ Parris	73.5
Paul Stanley	67.5
Blaine Flynn	65.5
Bob Price, Jr.	59.5
Thomas Westerheim	57
Darrell Gooden	52
Wilma Shortall	50.5
Life Spike	25 Credits
Bill Daniel	50
John Hattaway	45
Doug Whitfield	42.5
Suzanne Pollard-Spann	32.5
Garrett Walton	32
Amir Fooladi	27
Luke Shows	26
Steve Moorhead	22.5
Brent Woody	22
Karen Pettinato	20.5
Larry Hunter	20
Taylor Longsworth	19
Lee Hudson	19
Alton Lister	17
Milton Rogers	16.5
Doug Herrick	16
Dean Williams	16
Lorie Reed	15.5
Martin Rich	14.5
William Merrill	14.5
Bruce Carpenter	12.5
Rick Faciane	12.5
Kevin Ward	12.5
Bill Batting	12
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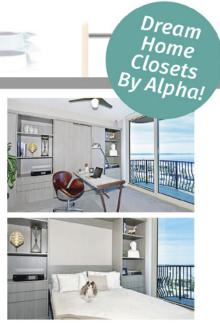
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