

5C

REAL ESTATE

ROLAND HAWKINS



Home buying choice is all yours

When you are ready to purchase a home there are two choices. You can either buy new construction or an existing home.

Whether you purchase a new or a resale home there are advantages and disadvantages with either choice. The selection of a home has the potential to be one of the most important decisions you will ever have to make. Sometimes this decision is made for you because of your financial situation.

The diversity of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community creates substantial homeownership opportunities for everyone. There is enormous range of home styles and price ranges to choose from. The toughest part of the home buying decision is deciding whether it is better to purchase a new home or a resale property.

Everywhere you look construction is occurring. New homes and subdivisions are in progress all over the county. Many of these new homes are entry-level prices. Believe it or not you can still find a nice home for as low as \$90,000.

A new home may or may not be the best fit for you. If you do not wish to wait the 4 to 6 months for a new home to be built and still desire a new construction, you may benefit best by considering purchasing a builder's spec home. Most builders have spec homes that are ready or near completion and could be ready for occupancy in a short period of time.

Since some of these homes were formal builder's models they may include some upgrades. Spec homes are usually professionally decorated with neutral colors. However, when you purchase a builder's spec home you usually lose your right of selections (i.e. carpet, appliances, flooring covers etc) and other new home options.

Another drawback of purchasing a new home in a subdivision are the modest sizes of the building lots. Other than the estimated time to build and the minimum sizes of the lots, a majority of potential buyers object to the small sizes of the rooms in entry-level new homes.

The sales price and some builders' concessions can frequently be negotiated when purchasing a spec home. These concessions are definitely in the buyers favor when negotiating on a spec home. Gaining immediate possession is another purchasing advantage. The chances of inheriting some immediate home repairs are greatly reduced considerably by purchasing a new home.

If you desire a larger yard and more home space for your dollars then an existing home may be your best option. The resale homes price per square foot are usually lower than that of new homes sales, therefore you can normally gain a little more home and land by purchasing a resale home.

Some buyers like the architectural designs and structures of older homes. Some buyers believe that the construction of traditional older homes are much more desirable than today's transitional new homes. Some of the most desirable neighborhoods only have older homes located in it. Resale homes often include overlooked concessions such as established landscape, window treatments and settled neighbors.

If you are truly ready to get your piece (or a bigger piece) of the American dream, then today is a great time to purchase a home. No matter what your choice is, purchasing a home will be one of your best investments. This is especially true because of the unbelievable low home interest rates and lenient mortgage program that are currently available today.

The primary reason for choosing a home should be because it has those desired features (i.e. location, schools, room size and/or home characteristics). The selection of a new home or a resale home comes down to a personal choice. The choice is yours.

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PHOTO/ARA CONTENT

ALL DECKED OUT

5 tips for designing your deck

ARTICLE RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

Are you ready for spring? For many of us, it's a season for entertaining friends and family or just relaxing around the house with our loved ones. These are the times when memories are made that last a lifetime.

After the winter blues, we turn

to our backyards for comfort and beauty. Many plan their flower gardens year round, why shouldn't you spend as much time and energy choosing your decking materials?

Research has shown that deck contractors claim to have a lot of influence on their customers,

but readily acknowledge that advertising, branding and name recognition are strong influencing factors. Homeowners select composites over wood because of the perceived benefits of composites, assessment of product knowledge, branding, name recognition and the source of

information for the products in the market. There are five points to consider when designing a deck to best suit your needs:

- Homeowners – Determine the materials you choose by your environment. Consider the surface texture and color of the product. Remember that children, pets and furniture may scratch the surface of your deck. Also, make sure the deck surface can stand up to abuse or scratches; that these scratches can be masked or reduced in appearance or re-sanded to remove cigarette burns.

- Entertaining – If your deck is a place that you use for entertaining, make sure it will be low maintenance so you can spend more time with your guests and less with yearly maintenance. Design the deck to allow for people to move freely from the deck to the house, including wide stairs to any garden areas or exits. Plan railing, benches, planters and other decorative accessories on the deck to create an inviting surrounding for friends and family.

- Deck boards – The height of the deck from the ground is determined by the position of the access to the house, which will affect the design, function and look of your deck. From second story walkouts to low lying decks, choose your material to fit the form and functionality of the deck. Manufacturers such as Nexwood have traditional 2 by 6 and 5/4 Radius Edge boards as well as a newer 5/4 Tongue and Groove flooring. All deck boards have their appropriate applications. Also, make sure the board performs to the best of its ability with proper joist spacing and installation.

- Installer – From do-it-yourselfers to professional installers, make sure to have the correct

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Welcome to the New Old World: Modern design trends update traditional style

ARTICLE RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

Despite the deluge of minimalist magazine images as slick as a well-licked plate, there are countless reasons to remain drawn to traditional décor: Perhaps you grew up surrounded by antiques or antique reproductions; you marvel at the craftsmanship and delicious lines of an inherited desk (lamenting that it seems lost amidst a hodgepodge of competing elements); you're comforted by the style's staying power and the feeling it creates of living well.

Or perhaps you're just puzzling over how to fit your traditional furnishings into a new, larger, or more open home. And this is 2004, not 1804. You want to honor your heritage, but link it to real life – your own life. Design today should make life easier, better, and

more pleasurable. Enter: traditional style, enabling us to integrate a feeling of being grounded with the faster-paced new millennium – if we only knew how.

Actually, times have never been better or more filled with ideas for defining today's New Old World. Solutions lie in applying current style trends in a way that complements, enhances, and takes advantage of the sculptural lines and fine craftsmanship of traditional design. Balance and Scale Match the scale of each piece to its surroundings and accessories.

- To show off their best features – a handsome profile or elegant inlay, for instance – silhouette shapely furnishings like sculpture against a simple wall treatment. The wall should pleasingly frame the piece without dwarfing or crowding it. If older traditional

furnishings appear out of scale in today's larger homes, give them a prominent place in a more intimate area, such as a hallway, foyer, or even bath. A bedroom chest makes an elegant and practical hall piece; a tea table fits alongside a chair rather than in the middle of a room.

- Alternately, blend older pieces with new, classically styled furnishings designed for the scale of today's more expansive spaces. The pared down, classic styling of Gentleman's Quarters from Palmer Home, for example, complements antiques, or, used on its own, has a refined, authentic appeal.

A soft patina and worn finish lend a sense of richness and warmth. The graceful sleigh bed, for example, has a baseball-stitched leather headboard for comfort, a low footboard for support.

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