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Building Success 101

Q: What is Northwest Craftsman style architecture?

A: Northwest Craftsman is the architectural style Landed Gentry currently uses most frequently throughout our communities. It's an updated variation of the traditional Craftsman style, with a few details favored in the northwestern U.S.

Features include grid patterns, squares, and right-angled trim pieces, with the prominent use of wood, including gable roofs, exposed decorative beams or braces, wide overhangs, and front porches with columns. In the northwest, we tend to use more stone and wood siding, as opposed to stucco or brick, which is more common in other parts of the country.

The Craftsman movement began in the early part of the twentieth century with the Green brothers, architects from Southern California. The trend developed from about 1905 through the 20s, and has been established as a popular, uniquely American architectural tradition ever since.

Backyard as Destination Resort

Most of us have fond memories of family barbecues in the back yard or running through the sprinklers. Only the clairvoyant among us could have imagined the new 'back yards': the highly appointed outdoor spaces that are becoming increasingly popular in today's new homes.

Long gone are the days of the patio slab, kiddie pool, and rolling kettle grill. Current outdoor living features and materials are just as stylish and creative as the homes they serve, providing multifunctional destinations for owners and guests.

Professional designs ensure a smooth transition to and from the indoors, provide artful square footage, and utility connections for all of the desired features. Careful planning can even accommodate year-round enjoyment through creative options for shade, sun, and other weather conditions.

One of the primary requests for outdoor space is a cooking area. A gas-powered barbecue grill, complete with warming drawers, heating elements and plenty of grilling surface, is essential equipment for today's outdoor chef. And, an outdoor kitchen logically demands an outdoor eating area. Weather-resistant furnishings and upholstery are available in an increasingly wide range of styles to suit any taste and need, from formal dining tables to casual, plush seating options.

To add to the atmosphere of your outdoor room, try a fireplace or music system. Modern gas-powered fireplaces are designed to simulate authentic wood-burning units, but with better energy use, heat distribution, and ventilation. Small, outdoor-rated speakers can be designed for surround-sound and can easily blend with your decor. What used to be a plain patio has now become an enviable destination for family and guests.

A great resource for grills, fireplaces and outdoor furniture is Backyards in south Mount Vernon, a division of Baron Heating (our primary heating & cooling systems contractor).

The living space extends beyond the covered area, of course. Patios can be equipped with interlocking pavers, flagstones, or stamped or colored concrete to add dimension and interest. The open-air space might be a deck, increasingly finished with weather-resistant engineered planks that require little maintenance, maintain their color and structural integrity, and are eco-friendly. To complete the look, consider adding comfortable built-in seating and a freestanding fire pit.



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Combined, a covered outdoor room and open deck or patio create a value-added feature for any new home. By extending the living space with year-round options to enjoy it, the modern back yard provides years of enjoyment and boosts property value for any homeowner.

The old backyard has become a destination resort.

Warm regards,

Brian

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