

Special Advertising Feature

Home Buying Advice: Old-World Charm V. Brand New Construction

by Fiona Dogan Real Estate 07/07/15



Fiona Dogan believes that there are pros and cons to buying both older and newer homes. Photo Credit: *Contributed*

Prospective homebuyers often begin their search for their dream home with a specific vision of what kind of house they hope to find. Some dream of a warm and inviting 1920s Tudor with cozy nooks and dark hardwood floors; others envision a bright, newly built center-hall colonial with an open-floor plan, finished basement, walk-in closets and cathedral ceilings. Each buyer is looking for something different, and older and newer homes have their pros and cons.

Antique and older homes are highly appealing because of their history and the interesting people who have lived under the slate roofs and gabled façades of these enchanting Colonials, Tudors, and Victorians. Incredible period detail such as stained glass windows, secret staircases, attic bedrooms, carved mantels, and stone fireplaces are often found in these houses. However, they also can come with tiny

kitchens, ancient appliances, detached garages, and a lack of modern conveniences. The utility systems in older homes can often present challenges for today's buyer if the heating, air-conditioning, water and drainage systems need updates or repairs. In addition, roofs, leaders and gutters should be carefully assessed, as water damage over time can cause significant structural deterioration if not taken care of. Still, if new construction leaves you cold, nothing beats moving into the warmth and graciousness of a well-preserved older home.

New homes can be a true delight to own, since everything is usually in excellent working order and under warranty from the builder for one to six years. Architects often maximize light, space and flow in a brand new house, and buyers benefit from a home built with today's young families in mind. Kitchens and family rooms are often combined in an open layout. Basement space is maximized with extra bedrooms, recreation space, wine cellars and media rooms. Master bedrooms may be accented with tray or cathedral ceilings, his and her closets, and even a study or office. Additionally, a good builder will add the charm and detail found in an older home by installing attractive mouldings throughout, adding stone or ornate wood mantels to fireplaces, and replicating old-style kitchen cabinetry.

My advice as a Realtor is to find the home you love, then hire a reputable engineering inspector to assess any needed or desired renovation. If you love the home, a few repairs and upgrades will always be worthwhile.

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