

Post Pandemic Building & Design Trends

Andy Pace:

Believe it or not folks, we are finally reaching the point of post-COVID, at least for the most part. Today on Non Toxic Environments, I'll be talking about post-COVID building and design trends. So stick around.

Hello, my friends. This is Andy Pace, Non Toxic Environments. I'm here today to talk about post-COVID design and building trends. Now I know I might be jumping the gun a little bit because there are folks all around the country, all around the world, still dealing with a pandemic. I understand that. But maybe just call me optimistic. I'm always looking for the silver lining in a dark cloud, or always looking at a glass half full instead of half empty. I believe that we are days, weeks, months away, but very close from being post-COVID. And I thought it would be really fun and quite enlightening to talk about what are the trends that we're seeing now that we've gone through this worldwide pandemic, how it's changed the way of life for all of us spending more time at home, spending time with our families, everybody in the same house, and not being able to do the things we are used to on a daily basis. And it's interesting how I believe it's changing our design and building trends moving forward.

Andy:

So I'll jump right into it. Every year the paint companies come out with their, what they call their "color of the year" or "colors of the year." And it's interesting, I think they all read the same publication or get the same email notification, to tell them all to choose a very similar color. But let me just give you five examples of the big paint brands that you know. Benjamin

Moore, Glidden, Sherwin-Williams, Behr, PPG, I'll even throw AFM in there because it's interesting even one of their colors is similar to the others that are out there.

Andy:

Benjamin Moore picks as their color of the year for 2022, a color called "October Mist." Essentially it's a medium sage green. Sage green is a combination of actually black and yellow, and when you mix those two colors together, it gives you this very dull green color.

Glidden chose a color called "Guacamole," which is just actually a brighter version of sage green. So it's a little bit brighter, a little more yellow in there and it just lends itself to a brighter room.

Sherwin-Williams has a color called "Evergreen Fog," excuse me, which is a very, very gray looking green.

Behr paints, their color, "Breezeway" I think it's called, is a light silver green. So not necessarily a gray smokey charcoally green, but silver. Again, a shinier, brighter green.

And then PPG has "Olive Sprig," which is an olive green. And AFM has a color called "Dowager," which is also a gray green.

Andy:

So it's interesting how all the paint manufacturers are seeing things the same way, which is the idea of bringing nature inside of the home. And it actually, this brings us to the conversation of overall design trends moving forward, and that's really why I wanted to have this podcast today,

because it's interesting how all the paint manufacturers are sort of getting it. They're getting the idea that we want to bring nature inside, the fact that we're all in our homes more and we just want that feeling of being outside where the air is fresh and where we can exercise and get sunshine and just enjoy life a little more. And so they've got that concept correct. So I want to expound upon that and talk about the idea of bringing nature inside of the home. And it's not just paint.

Andy:

I wrote an article for a magazine, gosh, back in 1999 or 2000, so guess I was a little bit ahead of my time. But I talked about the feeling of bringing the outdoors in, and how after 100 years of industrialization in this country people are finally realizing that they like the outdoors. It's nice to have the conveniences. It's nice to have running water and flushing, toilet and electricity and heat and air conditioning and so forth. I mean, obviously these are things that 100 years ago were not found in everyday life. And now we just take it for granted. But notice how people want to spend more time outdoors. There's a huge trend out there with camping or glamping where you're camping, but with all the amenities. Or tiny homes, RV life, you see that a lot on Instagram typically with the younger generations who are taking vans and restoring them into camping vans.

Andy:

But the idea is folks that people want nature in their life, whether it's outside in nature or inside in their homes. And this trend has been going on since, I mean, I wrote about this 20 years ago, plus. And it's only going to get stronger. And we're seeing that now in design trends. The idea of having hardwood floors well, again, it's that natural material inside of the home. It feels good inside of the home. But even more, talking about kitchen design. Using wood and stone

together in a kitchen, utilizing more plants in the house, bringing more of that green space in. There's even a trend of not only putting in more windows in a home, but then not putting any window treatments on the windows and maybe giving up some privacy, but to gain natural sunlight, natural moonlight. These are things that we're finding is not only just a fad, but a true trend, and this will only grow year after year.

Andy:

So let's talk about kitchens for a moment because I think this is a really strong trend now in the last 20 years has been to go to all white kitchens or all gray kitchens, essentially making things very sterile, very industrial, although it lent itself really well to then accenting with colors for your hand towels or for your furniture, even for your pots and pans, cast iron enamels pans in bright colors, but we're finding that people are starting to go away from that.

Andy:

Now it'll always be considered on trend to have a white kitchen. I don't think that'll ever change, but I think what's happening now is people are getting away from just that pureness of white or gray. And now we're getting into more of these somewhat neutral tones, but are still more saturated. And even more than that, utilizing colors, mixing colors, mixing your whites with other colors. So having white upper cabinets and a painted blue lower cabinet, or having your white cabinets on the perimeter of the kitchen, but an island that's in a deep, dark, color. This is happening more and staying away from the tone on tone, and now intermixing color with that those white accents and now making white the accent and those other colors are more of your standards.

Andy:

And so I think this is part of the trend of, again, wanting to bring the nature indoors. It's if you've ever heard the term, biophilic design. And biophilic design is much more than color. I mean, that's a very basic way to put it. But biophilic design is about creating materials in our everyday life, consumer goods, even building materials, that we get the concepts and the idea building blocks from nature. So utilizing cell structure ideas to build materials, utilizing textures and patterns you find in nature and bringing that inside. Biophilic design is now finding its way into everyday life inside of our homes, again, because we want to bring nature inside and we kind of do this subconsciously. And so think of utilizing in a kitchen stone countertops, but made from porcelain because then it doesn't have to be sealed. And this porcelain looks like Carrara marble or utilizing a sisal, normally a flooring material, but on a wall, to add texture and design to that wall, bringing in that natural grass feeling and look. All of this is encapsulating that whole idea of bringing the outdoors in.

Andy:

I see more warmth coming into homes, less industrial. And contrary to the last couple of years where we all thought about minimalistic, industrial, sanitary, cleanliness, I think people have had enough of that, and we're starting to see trends away from that. And again, more warmth, more color, more texture, more of that, again, the outdoors coming inside.

Andy:

Let's think about floor plans for a moment because it's interesting, my wife and I are in the process of analyzing the floor plans to build a non-toxic or a low tox house here in Wisconsin. And we truly think this is going to be the first example of how I've been consulting with people for years on how to build healthy homes. This is actually going to be an example of that

consultation and how it's going to look, and we're going to be videotaping it and doing podcasts. It's going to be a pretty big production for us, but we really want to show off the fruits of our labor. We want to show off the ideas that we give people on a daily basis and how to do it. And we'll give examples of sort of a good, better, best mentality. Ideas of different ways to do things, but then ultimately we're going to show you what we've done.

Andy:

But in putting together that floor plan, this is really interesting. I think in the last 20, 30 years, we've all been in this mindset of more of an open concept of a new home, because people wanted the idea of big airy rooms. And when you have kids in the home, you want to be able to see where they are and what they're doing. If you are entertaining, it's nice to have a big open kitchen and dining room and great room that are all kind of connected because everybody gathers in one place.

Andy:

What my wife and I have found out in the process of designing our floor plan is while we do like that in some parts of the home, we also now think we're kind of giving way to the mentality of more individual rooms, but those rooms are multitasking. And think of this, now, again, the last two years, we've all been in our homes more, with people in the house at the same time, the family's there, you've got Mom and Dad on Zoom calls for work and you've got the kids studying from the kitchen table. So let's think about rooms that are separate, but then are also multitasking.

Andy:

So what I mean by that is having a dining room that's also maybe a library, maybe the student room or a study room for the students where they can set up a laptop computer, or possibly where you would have a home office to work out of during the day, but at night that's a den or a sitting room. And so things of that nature, multitasking rooms, but separate to provide for privacy, sound deadening, not just big areas of open rooms where everybody's congregated in and we're all trying to do our daily living of work and study from the same space and it gets a little loud. So I think the trend now is going away from those open concepts and going into the individualized multitasking rooms.

Andy:

Finally, I want to talk about the outdoor space because we obviously spend a lot of time talking about what's happening inside of the house and wanting to bring nature inside, but what about the outside? Here in Wisconsin when the pandemic started, I think all of us thought, "Well, let's get outside and get our exercise." I remember this, this was March of 2020. Now I just had full blown shoulder replacement surgery so I really couldn't do much for the first month anyway, but after that, I wanted to get outside. And unfortunately we had some situations with our government of Wisconsin saying, "Well, you can't go to a state park." Well, which makes no sense. We need fresh air. We need sunlight. We need to get in exercise. They figured that out after a while.

Andy:

But what it made us think about was if we own a home, maybe making some of our own outdoor space places we'd like to visit more often. Having, if you have a little bit of land, having a patio or a deck, or even the idea of making your outdoor space an extension of your indoor

space. So if you have a patio, maybe put a grill or a pizza oven outside. Doing what's called entangled design, which is kind of a newer concept in landscape design. Entangled design would mean if you have the property for it to have a series of grassy areas and hardscapes and flower beds, and maybe some larger trees and where you can almost have like a walking path through like an old English garden. This is coming more into our design trends because again, we want to be able to get that fresh air and get natural sunlight, be outdoors, be one with nature, but do it in the privacy of our own yard. So this is definitely a trend that is starting, and I think will just rise in its popularity.

Andy:

So kind of bringing this all back to where I started a little while ago, the idea of bringing the outdoors in, into the home, with your colors, utilizing more colors found in nature, your greens, your blues, your browns, those neutral tones, those earth tones. Utilizing the textures found in nature, the idea of biophilic design. The textures, the patterns, the colors of nature inside of the home. Floor plans that are the typical open concept floor plan giving way to more of a individualized room concept, but those rooms are also multitasking so we don't have to have very large homes, but the rooms are designed to be used for multiple things. And then finally the idea of making the outdoor space an extension of the indoor space. Cooking areas outside, sitting area, walking paths, reading areas, but all of that feel of being out in a natural state park somewhere, but in your own backyard.

Andy:

So that's what I see as the trends for design in 2022. I see this as our post-COVID design trend list, because we've learned a lot in the last two years. We've learned an awful lot in the last two years about ourselves, about how we live life, about how we need to live life, and how our

homes and our surrounding space is such an integral part of how we live, and how we keep our sanity, how we heal ourselves. And, folks, I just think this is going to be the next 10 years, these few items that I talked about today, this is what we're going to see. And I know it's already reflecting in the phone calls and emails that we get, the sales that we get, of materials we seeing certainly a fall along the lines of these trend ideas today.

Andy:

So thank you very much for listening. I appreciate it. Years ago I used to write my yearly design trends out and sent it out in a blog, and I stopped doing that many years ago. And now with the podcast, I'm really excited that I can bring this to you in this format. And of course, it'll be written up in show notes and we'll have that on the website for you to read as well. But it's really exciting for me to be able to come back every week or two and talk to you folks one-on-one about what I see in the industry, and as always, I really appreciate your ideas and recommendations for shows in the future.

Andy:

Matter of fact, this one was somebody told me, "You've got to tell people about your design trends." So thank you very much. I appreciate that recommendation. It was very exciting for me to do this once again. And we'll be back again next week with another episode of Non Toxic Environments. Before I let you go, please do me a favor and go to iTunes. You may listen to your show via iTunes, listen to my show via iTunes. You can always go there if you don't. If you listen on Spotify or through one of the other play methods, but iTunes actually allows you to write a review, and even give us a rating between one and five stars. Five stars is, of course, appreciated and loved, but anything you give just helps other people find the show. The more

ratings, the more reviews, the easier it is for people to find the show, because it comes up on their searches a little faster. So we appreciate that.

Andy:

Thanks again, everybody. We'll talk to you again next week. This is Andy Pace with Non Toxic Environments.