

Aging in Place: Making sure your Home works for you...Now *and* Later

Written for Valley Living Magazine

Value is determined when the benefits are equal to or greater than the price paid. How much of what we want do we get for what we pay? A dimension of value that is sometimes overlooked is one of “value over time”: how long will your home meet your needs over time and to what extent will it enhance your lifestyle? These are some “lifestyle value issues” to examine when planning your home so that it will adapt to and accommodate your lifestyle throughout the years. Because our lifestyles change as age, we must figure out how to create a place in which we can retreat, regroup and relax with family and friends, not only now, but also into the future.

Here are some issues to consider:

Many homeowners are interested in incorporating spaces for parents who come to live with them and for young adult children that move back home. The homeowner wants to be sure that there are private spaces in which their parents can live with comfort and dignity. Also, should their older children have to move back in, a place for them to live independently. In addition, everyone is interested in a separate place for guests to enjoy comfort and privacy.

These spaces include mini-kitchens and private entrances. They can be attached or detached and can transition into home-offices, maids quarters, home gyms or home theaters.

Younger clients want space for their children’s educational and entertainment needs that are separate from their own private areas and that can adapt as they grow.

Another “value over time issue” is one of ergonomics. Sometimes a home becomes tough to live in simply because our physical abilities have changed. For example, if levered door handles are used, opposed to knobs, a person with arthritis will have an easier time opening the doors. This is also true with your plumbing fixtures. Better yet, the hands free faucets solve lots of issues. If one needs to use a wheelchair or walker then things such as hall and door widths and shower entrances become an issue. Also, counter heights, kitchen and bath layouts, automation, etc., are all areas to strategize in.

A large component of value is how well your home complements and facilitates your lifestyle now as well as into the future. There is so much that goes into designing a home that will be easy to live in as we age- I have just addressed the tip of the iceberg in this article.