

Study: Green Features In Demand

McMansion Features? Not So Much

September 2008

A new report from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) finds that sustainable features continue to grow in demand while design elements once popular for larger homes have shrunk in popularity. Those are some of the conclusions from a just released AIA Home Design Trends Survey which asks residential architects to describe which home features people were asking for this spring – and which they were not.

“There is a strong demand for green home design features and products like solar panels, geothermal heating and cooling, and water reclamation systems,” said Kermit Baker, AIA Chief Economist. “As there is more focus on making homes more energy-efficient, there is less emphasis on investing on special function rooms such as home offices and game rooms.” For instance, 88 percent of the architects reported increased interest in tankless water heaters in the last year, 68 percent reported a higher emphasis on insulation systems (including panelized systems such as SIPs and ICFs), and 69 percent saw more interest in sustainable features such as green flooring. Synthetic or engineered materials (such as countertops, flooring, siding, trim or decking), water-conserving devices, and the use of reclaimed or salvaged materials are also seen as increasing in popularity by at least 60 percent of respondents.

These trends represent a clear indication that home buyers are willing to downsize if necessary to achieve a greener, more energy-efficient result.