

# Q&A on emerging architectural trends in Jacksonville

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There's been somewhat of a shift in trends in residential architecture over the past few years as sustainability efforts have gained ground and urban walkable neighborhoods became a popular term.

Mark Macco, AIA, has been designing structures around the country for the past two decades and sat down with the Jacksonville Business Journal to discuss how trends in architecture have been applied in the River City.

## What are some of the trends happening in architecture in residential projects here in Jacksonville?

Clients are going for simpler cleaner lines. That may mean contemporary to some people. But what's also interesting is the fact that people are embracing what had been considered avant-garde architecture or contemporary architecture is becoming mainstream. I'm absolutely blown away by that fact. People are up there with us now. They are not going for the traditional projects that you always saw in the 90s, which is causing some issues in neighborhoods that have not updated their allowable architectural standards.

## How so?

What I have noticed with that trend is that the gated communities are not keeping up with the public. A lot of the architecture review boards in gated communities are using parameters and metrics that they have had in place for 20 years. Times have changed completely. I've had several clients move from gated communities to regular neighborhoods. That's a trend that I'm seeing as well.

## That could be a problem. What needs to happen in those neighborhoods to stop the outflow?

Some of them are realizing they have to make a change, and a few ARBs that I have had to deal with lately have been more open to what the client wants. For example, if I offer something that's a little more contemporary, even if it is like a lower pitched roof, a lot of times they will only accept a certain pitch on the roof. However, they are starting to realize that people will move or not buy if they are not listened to about what they want. It's not the 90s. People don't want these overly fussy, tons of gables and all that nonsense. They want a different look. And a lot of these gated communities have not kept up. They are going to have to start keeping up with it because if they don't there will be people leaving. People like choices. They don't want to be shoehorned into parameters some architecture review board has chosen for them.

## How about sustainable technologies. How are they being used?

I get asked every-single project I'm asked how can we make it sustainable. It's not just about putting solar panels on the roof. It's about what materials are creating this structure that are friendly to the environment. People have also caught up with architects on this respect as well. Buildings produce nearly 40 percent of the carbon dioxide emissions in the United States. (This stat is often attributed to the U.S. Green Building Council and does include emissions from power plants used to produce electricity for the building.) That's more than automobiles and industry. Architects are on the front line of sustainability. We are the ones that are



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Mark Macco, AIA, has been an architect for more than two decades.

having to teach the public about this. It's very important. People are really catching on here. It's a trend and I think people are aware of sustainability and want to make a difference.

**What trends do you see as emerging that will shape Jacksonville?**

If I had one emerging trend to pin down and say this one is going to continue it would be that people are living in smaller spaces. So, this late 90s/early 2000s McMansions era where you had sprawling houses and didn't make a lot of architectural sense, they were just large — I think that era is over. A lot of younger families want to live simpler. That is on the cusp of changing. You see small, tiny houses in the Northwest. You are also seeing this in multifamily residential. Millennials want to live in an environment where there's a common area. That's a trend (smaller living space) that I see as about to take off. People want to live in urban environment, but can't afford it. So affordability is driving these smaller environment.

**What challenges do you see in architecture here locally and how can they be overcome?**

The challenge has always been in Jacksonville — which is not unique to Jacksonville — is that Jacksonville is very spread out. It's sprawl affects how we can design. If we are designing around the automobile, and very little pedestrian life, the challenge has been to create very walkable neighborhoods. It's been a challenge to create that live-work-play attitude that people want. The way to overcome this is through creating density. We have to start thinking more in that way. Maybe the lots are smaller. Maybe the houses are smaller. But getting everything closer.