

Online House Plan Purchases Reveal Hottest Trends in Real Estate

–According to [The Plan Collection](#), more consumers and home builders are purchasing house plans online today and offering early insights into upcoming home design trends–

STAMFORD, CT–(July 17, 2013)–The Plan Collection (TPC), the leading online house plan provider, reports that with marked improvements in both consumer and home builder confidence in the single family housing market more Americans are choosing to purchase [house plans online](#) for new homes or renovations to accommodate future lifestyle needs. While higher mortgage rates in recent months seem to have briefly spooked multi-family construction, consumer spending on the web continues to see double digit growth, home builder confidence hit a seven year high this month, and both single family housing permits and construction starts in June 2013 were up by double digit percentages versus last year while essentially flat as compared to a solid May performance.

In May Forrester Research reported that e-commerce spending in the United States will hit approximately \$262 billion this year, up 13.4 percent from \$231 billion a year ago. These same Internet buyers are offering earlier and deeper insights on home design trends based upon their online house plan selections.

Despite bumps along the way, after over five years of waiting on the sidelines, families are finally showing signs of confidence in the single family housing market. First came higher sale prices of new and existing homes. Today, we see a rate of 591,000 seasonally adjusted single family housing starts for June 2013 – an 11.5% increase versus June 2012 – and a rate for single family building permits of 624,000 for June 2013 – an increase of 24.6% versus June 2012 – according to the just released [construction report for June 2013 from the U.S. government](#). While overall housing starts in June 2013 were down 9.9% as compared to the prior month, the drop in new housing starts was almost entirely driven by declines in construction starts of multi-family buildings of five or more units.

Home mortgage approval rates are also up significantly – while approval standards remain unchanged – showing a stronger financial picture for the average family applying for a home loan. Mortgage approval rates are up nearly 20 percent while there is little evidence lenders are relaxing underwriting standards, according to the February originations report from Ellie Mae.

“Although mortgage rates have spiked the last couple months they remain low in terms of historical standards,” said James McNair, president and chief operating officer, The Plan Collection. “Households aren’t ratcheting up their consumer spending at unreasonable rates as seen by relatively slow retail sales growth – but they are purchasing ‘smarter’ post Great Recession. Consumers drawn to purchases they see more as investments as well as to economic value, and online house plans are capitalizing on both.”

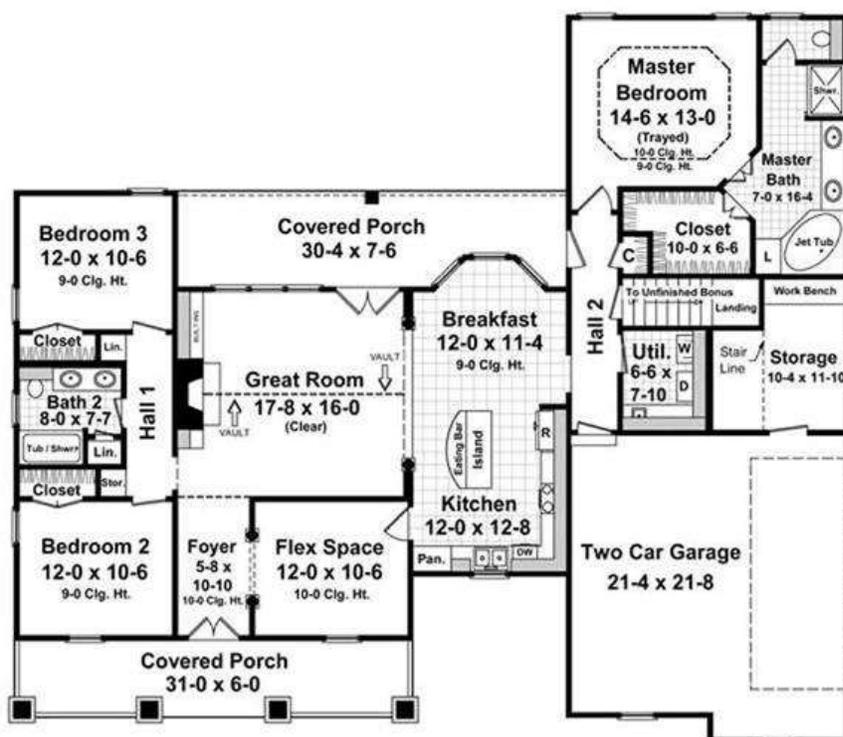
As consumers – many of whom are baby boomers – shop for [house plans online](#) they want plans featuring smaller one story homes with flex space to accommodate either children who are still living at home or elderly parents. More than one third of boomers are also caring for an older parent. More than 40 percent of new homes have master suites downstairs, a 15 percent increase over a decade ago, states the Master Builders Association (MBA). Bedrooms are bigger, with larger walk-in closets and bathrooms that have a separate tub and shower and dual sinks. Plus many are seeking plans for homes with wider doors and hallways for wheelchair access.

Flex space has become more prevalent in both new homes and remodeling. Flex spaces are rooms that take on the purpose of the present home owner’s needs but can adjust with changes as they occur. What may have once started out as a guest bedroom can be redecorated to serve as a hobby room, library, office or elderly parent’s room. This allows home owners to stay in their homes longer as it continues to serve their needs throughout life’s stages.

Looking beyond the updated floor plan design, today’s tech-savvy family also requires top-of-the-line amenities such as a wireless home networks (Wi-Fi), remote control lighting and security features. They also prefer a media room with a surround sound and central control systems to manage all media sources in one location.

A good example of the floor plan flexibility that is trending today in house design as well as the amenities desired by families in new home construction is this three bedroom country style house from The Plan Collection (house plan 141-1017). The front steps leading up to the covered porch along with the dormer windows give the home's exterior an attractive and traditional presence. However, once inside the open floor plan creates the feel of a much more spacious and inviting home than its 1800 square feet would suggest. On the first floor, the flex space could be used as a home office, a dedicated media room or even a traditional dining room if so desired. The master bedroom includes a large walk-in closet and a spa-like bathroom, while the other bedrooms are split from the master so as to offer more privacy. For families looking for additional space, the staircase leads to a large bonus room over the two car garage which could be finished out as a play room, an additional bedroom, or used as extra storage space. [Link to this plan: <http://www.theplancollection.com/house-plans/home-plan-16276>]

Below: Floor plan of main level for Plan # 141-1017.



To provide further confidence to home builders and families, [The Plan Collection](http://www.theplancollection.com) offers a *Best Plan Price Guarantee* program which guarantees that TPC house plans are offered at the best and lowest price possible. If a consumer finds an identical plan on another house plan website for a lower total price* (including advertised promotion discounts and shipping), TPC will match the price, providing an additional five percent off the purchase for the house plan. Customers may claim the best price guarantee by sending TPC the URL link of the plan detailing the same pricing on another website within 30 days from time of purchase.

About The Plan Collection (<http://www.theplancollection.com/product-ideas/>)

The Plan Collection is driven by the simple idea that great house design should be affordable and readily accessible to everyone. The company provides homeowners, prospective homeowners and builders with more than 20,000 house plans selected from the nation's leading designers and architects along with tens of thousands of instructional images and inspirational photos.

From the days of printed house plan books to PCs, the Internet, social media, and now tablets – [The Plan Collection](http://www.theplancollection.com) – and its founders have been dedicated to providing users with a better, more convenient and more valuable home building experience. Customers enjoy the benefits of a broad selection of high

quality home plans and detailed how-to information, an easy-to-search site and knowledgeable customer service. TPC understands what homeowners are looking for, and delivers better search results to its users. As a result, thousands of houses have been built at a lower cost using pre-drawn house plans that meet homeowners' specific needs and desires.

* The price must be in United States currency, published on a competitor's site and verifiable. It also must be for the same quantity, plan construction drawing package, foundation and other options and shipping. We will not honor misprints or other pricing errors.

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Caption:

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