

# around the HOUSE

## A Courtyard View

**In October, Around the House** focused on the value of integrating thoughtful exterior spaces into the life-span-designed home.

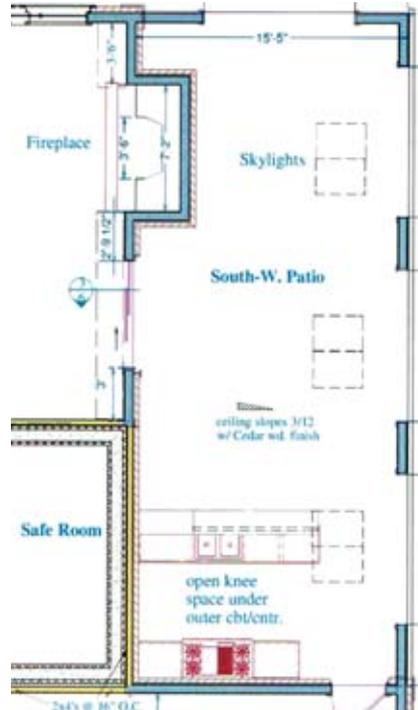
Smooth connections within and without can enhance a home's habitat and make the interior feel larger. Including the exterior spaces into the overall design gives the home a unique personality and ultimately increases the property's "sense of place" and possibly its financial value.

A well-designed life-span home works inside-out when it functions and flows effectively. Accomplishing this can be tricky while maintaining privacy and security.

## Stealthy Security

I try to design a covered entry and porch at the front of a house. This is the obvious public exterior space and can sometimes be the most entertaining and pleasurable.

I've had customers who love to sit outside and chat with neighbors or just keep an eye on the area and



A courtyard becomes the common node between nearby, yet separate, structures.

watch the birds. This area can be a clear opportunity to embrace the neighborhood's entire habitat.

In the past, when a ramp has been required, as in the case of a remodel to an older home, I've designed brick or stone planters that conceal the ramp. When colorful foliage is planted, this will enhance the appearance from the inside-out and make the outside more attractive from the streetscape.

This can also be a stealthy security idea, as some predators may see a home with a ramp as an opportunity to take advantage of someone who may not be able to chase them as quickly.

## Connecting Structures

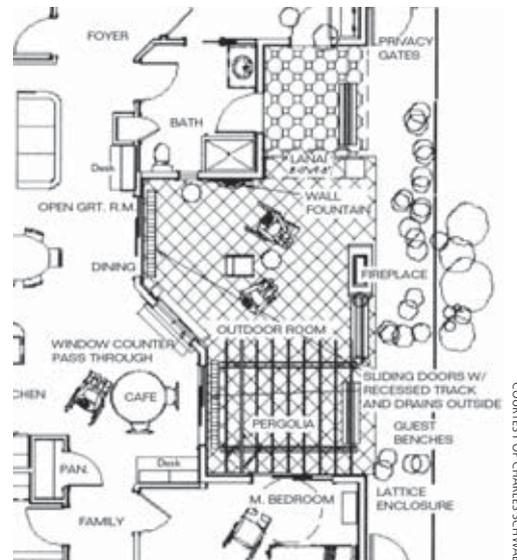
Another opportunity for inside-out space is a courtyard room.

This is most effective when enclosed by at least three sides. When an exterior courtyard is located with sensitivity, the increase in a home's total perceived area expands exponentially.

Bringing in natural light from an exterior courtyard room into three interior spaces will make the house live and feel bigger. This is one example where sensitivity to privacy and functioning of the home really needs to be studied and understood.



When an exterior courtyard is located with sensitivity, the increase in a home's total perceived area expands exponentially.



COURTESY OF CHARLES SCHWAB

COURTESY OF CHARLES SCHWAB

Keeping track of an elderly family member in your home may be needed for safety purposes. However, you still want to provide him or her with a certain level of privacy away from places such as a noisy kitchen.

For example, if someone is snoozing on a lounge chair in the courtyard room, he or she can possibly be seen from three rooms if windows are properly detailed and the climate permits. This concept can be applicable to people of all ages.

The courtyard room is a great way to connect different structures on the property. It becomes the common



COURTESY OF CHARLES SCHWAB

Brick or stone planters with colorful foliage help enhance and conceal a wheelchair ramp.

plants or fish will add serenity and could be likened to a Japanese garden. If surrounded on at least three sides, people in all four spaces might be able

## Bringing in natural light from an exterior courtyard room into three interior spaces will make the house live and feel bigger.

node between nearby, yet separate, structures. This is a design technique to create perceived building connections in multi-generational homes when they are separate.

My favorite art teacher taught me the value and meaning of negative space.

On a canvas, negative spaces are those that surround the objects of the painting. Negative space can be as revealing and exciting as the subject itself. In this instance, the courtyard room is the negative space and the home structure is the subject.

### Using Negative Space

There are several features that can enhance a courtyard's negative space.

A simple water feature such as a small fountain or pond with aquatic

to appreciate the soothing sounds water provides.

A pergola or arbor can be intertwined with colorful fabric, climbing roses or vines. This can result in an interplay of sparkling light and shade as the sun moves across the courtyard room throughout the day.

This may also provide a sense of security from above, as well as sun protection. Exterior LED lights can also be attached to the pergola for nighttime down lighting. This can actually become another exterior room within the courtyard itself.

Raised planters are healthy and pleasant if they include vegetables and herbs. When coupled with raised and lowered benches, they can add casual seating space when entertaining.

## THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR STAYING HOME

Nuprodx builds the most portable shower / commode and tub / slider systems available. Strong, yet lightweight with modular, all-aluminum construction, they quickly pack down into easy-to-handle cases, and the 3000Tx and 4000Tx easily meet FAA requirements for carry-on luggage. When it comes to giving you the freedom to travel the world, Nuprodx systems are the *only* way to go!



**MULTICHAIR 3000Tx**

16 lbs. including standard transfer bench



**MULTICHAIR 4000Tx**

Carry-on w/ wheels for easy handling



**MULTICHAIR 6000Tx**

The best portable tub / slider system

**nuprodx inc**

(855) 220-5171

[www.nuprodx.com](http://www.nuprodx.com)



MOODBOARD / THINKSTOCK

Climbing roses or vines, or a simple water feature such as a small fountain or pond with aquatic plants or fish, will add serenity and could be likened to a Japanese garden.



PIG GUTTENBERG UK LTD / ISTOCK / THINKSTOCK

Back the planters with vertical trellises, perhaps with climbing vines again, and you've created a type of visual structural security screen.

The negative space of the courtyard room will come alive with greenery, color and aroma when an array of plants are grown in simple planters. That, combined with water, sun and shade will all be enjoyed as you live inside and outside in your own place we call home, sweet home.

For more information visit [universaldesignonline.com](http://universaldesignonline.com). ■

*Wishing You a  
Merry Christmas &  
Joyous Holiday Season*

*from the PVA Publications Staff*

Richard Hoover

Tom Fjerstad

Christopher Di Virgilio

Diane Doyle

Ann Garvey

John Groth

Suzi Hubbard

Chuck McKenzie

Andy Nemann

Devon O'Brien

Sherri Shea