

Municipalities Demand Better-Looking Neighborhoods for Increased Home Values

Municipalities nationwide are enacting ordinances requiring the use of "curb appeal" techniques to beautify neighborhoods to increase home values. Major contributors to curb appeal, especially in budding neotraditional-style developments, are carriage house garage doors like the Steelhouse Carriage Door manufactured in Tempe by 1st United Door Technologies (1stUDT), as well as decorative rocks, shutters, and wrought iron supplied by companies such as Phoenix-based Arc Styles.

"Architects are designing more and more communities in the pre-World War neotraditional style using nostalgic elements creating strong curb appeal. The character of a carriage house door fits the style of these communities," said David Gibson, President of Collaborative Group Architects Inc. Gibson serves on the City of Gilbert design review board, and helped design Verrado, a unique "home-town" community nestled in the foothills of the White Tank Mountains in Buckeye, Ariz., recognized for its use of timeless town-building principles.

Since contemporary garage doors often take up 30 percent to 40 percent of the front elevation of a home, more municipalities are demanding housing characteristics which downplay the garage door's large horizontal mass.

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Carriage doors -- reminiscent of the wooden doors on old-fashioned carriage houses -- are a cost-effective way for builders to meet this need. By adding a steel carriage door selling for \$20 to \$30 per square foot, builders can avoid more costly options. These options include: changing the elevation of the home with expensive brick or other treatments, designing homes with a side-entry garage requiring greatly expanded lot widths, or designing the garage entry into the back of the home which lengthens the driveway and can diminish curb appeal.

Steven Berry, Manager of Residential Design for the Verrado development, said, "To help create the authentic architectural styles for our homes, we require the use of steel relief-panel and carriage garage doors, which complement the elevation styles required at Verrado. To look like a wood door with authentic patterning and wood grain texture, the door's total design in terms of panels, relief, shade and shadow must be believable and credible. Like great front-yard landscaping, good carriage door designs enrich the appearance of the home and generate tremendous value. If all homes on the block have them, then the entire street and neighborhood becomes more valuable."

Today's carriage house garage doors may look attractively old-fashioned, but they open overhead like any other modern sectional garage door. But, they also offer steel's durability and low maintenance.

"The Steelhouse door and design plant-ons [patent pending] are all steel, creating 'car stopping, jaw dropping, curb appeal,'" said 1stUDT Vice President of Sales and Marketing Jeff Jella. "Since all the parts are steel, there's no warping or buckling like you can get with wooden and composite doors."

1st United Door invented the all-steel carriage house door, and holds several patents earned during its development. They also have a patent pending on a 28-inch steel panel which creates a more aesthetically pleasing, three-section door rather than the traditional 21-inch four-section door.

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Carriage house garage doors offer hundreds of design choices which can complement other artistic elements in a home's elevation such as window shapes, shutters, and trim. In choosing the look of the door, builders can choose among multiple designs using "plant-on" board; solid arches; window treatments; and decorative iron handles, knockers, strap hinges and other hardware. Steel doors with steel plant-on boards also offer a clearly defined, wood-grain texture which matches the door.

Homeowners are driving the curb appeal trend by actively expressing dissatisfaction with living in homes that do not reflect their personalities. With the same front elevations, same tile roofs, same color schemes, and same garage doors, neighborhoods can look plain and uninteresting. Add a few touches of curb appeal -- with decorative rock, shutters, wrought iron, water features, or an expanse of unique carriage house garage door -- and neighborhoods grow beautifully in character and value.

Arc Styles provides builders with these curb appeal products in the Southwest United States. President Dave DeNure said, "Curb appeal products complement the home with wood shutters, corbels, and magnificent stone created by true artisans and innovators, who have spent years dealing with the construction industry. Our products, build 'curb appeal' right into the Southwest's enchanting authentic Hacienda-style homes."