

## Residential Architecture

### *Why Four-Sided Design is Critical*

What makes Bexley a special community visually? Is it the abundance of large trees? Certainly. Is it the wide range of architectural styles? Definitely. I would argue that another reason Bexley is so beautiful is that when our homes were built, they employed four-sided architecture. In the Design Guidelines for the city of New Albany, Ohio, the very first Guiding Principle is:

*Four-sided architecture will be the standard throughout New Albany.  
This principle relates to the fact that every elevation of a building is important  
in terms of design, materials, patterns of windows and doors, and details.*

This is a critical part of architecture that has been forgotten in many new home developments, in lieu of easy cost savings. It is so important that all sides of a home are consistent, so that no matter what vantage point you see the house, all parts are perceived as a unified whole.

Four-sided architecture involves a process of incorporating design elements into each of the four sides of the building, while pairing economic feasibility with sustainable design. This is critical for new homes and additions alike. Design elements on all sides of a building should be compatible. Do this mean if you have a home that is completely stone that an addition needs to be completely stone? No – it is a combination of many design elements. These elements include overall massing, roof slope, window patterns, window style, exterior materials, trim profiles, color, and detailing.

It is so unfortunate that today many builders try to save money and employ a Hollywood-Set mentality, which focuses only on the front façade of the home. The photos in this article are from newer developments in the north part Columbus that are employing this method of cost savings. What does this lead to? A community where there is no relation between the front and sides of any house. It is a degradation of one of the most important principles of residential design. I've had clients in the past say: "Don't worry about the side – no one sees it." We always view architecture in perspective, and so we do see it. As homeowners, neighbors, walkers, and guests, we see it. The true use of four-sided-architecture creates a timeless experience, regardless of any specific design or style.

