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Helping Create Dream Homes

As a leading architecture, construction, and interior design firm, PLATT has experienced first-hand the surge in home construction and renovation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Based in Brevard, North Carolina, PLATT has been offering comprehensive services since 1982 and can attest to the recent spike in custom homes.

"We've definitely seen an uptick in new builds, as well as renovations, over the last year," said Parker Platt, current president and son of founder Alfred F. Platt, Jr. "During the pandemic, people were in their homes more than ever and had time to focus on what they like, what they don't like, and how they could make it better."

Several trends are arising in terms of high-end renovations. While kitchen and bath remodels are always top on the list, homeowners are also interested in taking back their basement space by creating home gyms, entertainment rooms, and additional living areas. People are also motivated to create at-home workspaces that offer an abundance of natural light. The pandemic

showed the world that working full time from home is possible, but individuals want to feel creative and productive in their space.

PLATT has seen an increase in new builds across Western North Carolina, which they attribute to a renewed desire to live in more open spaces. Similarly, new homeowners are coming into the area and purchasing properties.

"For various reasons, some clients have decided to buy versus build," said Platt. "We've helped them update and personalize their new home with some limited but significant changes to kitchen and bathrooms, such as updating fixtures and finishes to make them more in line with personal style and interest."

Many architecture firms have worked with clients to create a flow between outdoor and indoor living space. "Due to the pandemic, many homeowners are now focused on outdoor living," said Platt. "There's a big focus on creating spaces that seamlessly blend the indoors with the outdoors, to be enjoyed year-round."

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The trend observed by PLATT and other regional firms is not isolated to the Blue Ridge Mountains and other rural areas. According to Max Anderson, chief economist at Porch.com, an online company connecting homeowners to contractors, levels of home improvement are at an all-time high. During a study conducted over a three-month period in late 2020, the company tracked 330 million U.S. Google searches for home improvement work, which is up 50 percent from the previous year. Anderson says recent rock-bottom interest rates have made home improvement projects more attractive. He also notes that in unsettling times, spending on one's home can be a comforting investment.

Since the start of the pandemic, Parker and his team have worked with new and repeat clients to ensure they have the home of their dreams. "The best part of what we do is getting to know our clients," said Parker, "really listening to what they want when it comes to their home and then helping them make it happen."