

# Quality, Prestige Architecture Helps Home Sellers Cash In

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*Special to the Palisadian-Post*

I recently found myself doing some research on Pacific Palisades, which I thought would be of interest to property owners here. In comparing new construction, non-architectural homes (that were active, pending or sold in the past 12 months) to new construction, architectural-designed homes I discovered that architectural properties are commanding about 20 percent more at \$940 per square foot (compared to about \$784 a foot for non-architectural new construction). Why is there a discrepancy here?

I think one contributing factor is the fact that there are not that many architectural-designed homes to choose from in the Palisades. In fact, many of the non-architectural, new construction properties that are being built all over town tend to be more cookie-cutter to keep costs in line, presumably. And traditional styles, such as Spanish and Mediterranean, still seem to be most popular with local builders.

However, there is a class of buyer that appreciates and wants something more, something different, something "special" and is prepared to pay a premium for it—even if the home is on a small lot or has a limited amount of space. For these buyers it's all about the quality and prestige. It seems the better known the architect and/or if the home has been published in a shel-

ter magazine (from Architectural Digest to Better Homes and Gardens) the greater the value—in the mind of the buyer, anyway. I have seen buyers take great pride in showing off the uniqueness of their property to family, friends and business associates.

Last year, I had a client who bought a unique architectural home at 970 Chattanooga for \$3 million (that's \$1,034 a foot). The designer, Marco DiMaccio, had done an extensive remodel on an existing property but you would never know it to see the end product. The house, which has a huge entry door that rotates on a pin, was described in the Multiple Listing Service as a "Mid-Century design, brand new, a sublime fusion of wood, concrete and glass. Celebrate the joy of architecture. Truly defines architecture as art. Open plan features 3 bdrms, 4 baths. Vaulted ceilings, walls of glass."

I represented the buyer on that sale who was specifically looking for an architectural-significant or "truly unique" home. The research I have been doing more recently is to assess the value of "twin houses" that will be built in the next year on Akron. The builder is a longtime friend and an architect by training. I have no doubt these two houses will sell—and sell quickly when they finally hit the market here.

*(Editor's note: New construction refers to properties built in the last three years.)*