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Small Homes with Huge Appeal

New, smaller homes combine charm, details, and efficient use of space to garner big sales

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ZERO-LOT-LINE DESIGNS

2014 HOUSE REVIEW THEMES

- JULY** Multigenerational Homes
- AUGUST** Suburban Infill
- SEPTEMBER** On the Boards
- OCTOBER** Homes for Traditional Neighborhood Design
- NOVEMBER** Casitas and In-Law Suites
- DECEMBER** Family Homes

The House Review team presents a wide variety of functional and appealing plans for narrow lot widths that offer privacy and low maintenance.

By **Larry W. Garnett, FAIBD, House Review Lead Designer**

A direct relationship exists between escalating land prices and reduced lot widths. With development costs closely tied to the linear footage of roads and utilities, it's not surprising to see lots range from a mere 30-feet to 55-feet wide. Creating functional and appealing designs with narrow footprints can be an extremely difficult task. One approach that's been used for a number of years places one side of the home directly on the property line (zero-lot-line). While this approach provides for a larger and more usable side yard on the opposite side of the house, it also means there can be no windows along the zero-lot-line side. Along with the challenge of having an entire side of the home without windows, the narrow footprint calls for very sensitive garage design. It is possible, however, to offer carefully conceived narrow-lot projects with exciting indoor and outdoor living spaces in a very private and low-maintenance environment.





ASHER NEIGHBORHOOD

ARCHITECT

Robert Hidey, AIA
Robert Hidey Architects
rhidey@roberthidey.com
www.roberthidey.com

PLAN SIZE

Total: 2,435 sf to 2,757 sf
Width: 33 feet, 3 inches
Depth: 69 feet



KB Homes and Robert Hidey Architects (RHA) conceived Asher as a neighborhood of three-story contemporary homes for the environmentally conscious, discretionary buyer seeking an urban lifestyle.

While open space is clearly hard to come by in a conventional detached small-lot scenario at this density—14 dwelling units per acre on a site with 2.55 acres total—RHA’s approach, which gives more usable private outdoor space to the residences and increases the perceived distance between buildings, is what lends Asher its distinction.

Introducing an angle into the building footprint by rotating the dwellings at 152 degrees to the street, RHA was able to create perspective views, resulting in longer sight lines between dwellings, a more interesting and animated street scene, and more unobstructed building surface area, maximizing daylight within the residences along the street edge.



COURTYARD HOME

ARCHITECT

Donald F. Evans, AIA
 The Evans Group
 devans@theevansgroup.com
 www.theevansgroup.com
 407.650.8770

PLAN SIZE

Total: 2,815 sf
 Width: 35 feet
 Depth: 70 feet

A zero-lot-line home does not have to sacrifice design savvy or outdoor space, as evidenced by this courtyard home with traditional brick elevation and lane orientation.



- Ⓐ Front porch entry
- Ⓑ Grand room/dining room with three-sided fireplace
- Ⓒ True split plan with secondary suites at the front end of the home and the master suite at the back of the home
- Ⓓ Courtyard with optional pool or spa or garden complete with summer kitchen, outdoor storage, and gated entrance for service and maintenance
- Ⓔ Large covered veranda
- Ⓕ Kitchen, café, and Internet space at the heart of the home
- Ⓖ Bonus room on second floor can become whatever the owner wants or needs.



THE LANDING

DESIGNER

Larry Garnett, FAIBD
 larrygarnett@larrygarnettdesigns.com
 www.smartlivinghomedesigns.com
 254.897.3518

PLAN SIZE

Living area: 1,500 sf to 1,775 sf
 Width: 39 to 40 feet
 Depth: 65 to 75 feet

Designed for 50-foot-wide lots, this collection of homes was created for homeowners who want a smaller house with low maintenance and private outdoor areas. In addition to providing extra windows for natural light, careful attention was devoted to traffic flow and furnishing options for every room.

Although essentially the same as typical zero-lot-line designs, these homes utilize a "use easement" to create private side yards. Rather than placing the zero walls directly on the side property line, these blank walls are located 5-feet away from the side property lines. Each homeowner then uses 5 feet of their neighbor's side yard. This layout eliminates a number of potential problems involved with building directly on the property lines.



- A** Blank wall of adjacent home creates a 10-foot-wide private side yard for each home.
- B** Secluded front entry courts
- C** Optional study or third bedroom
- D** Open kitchen/family/dining area
- E** Two-car garage
- F** Owner's suite is separate from other bedrooms.



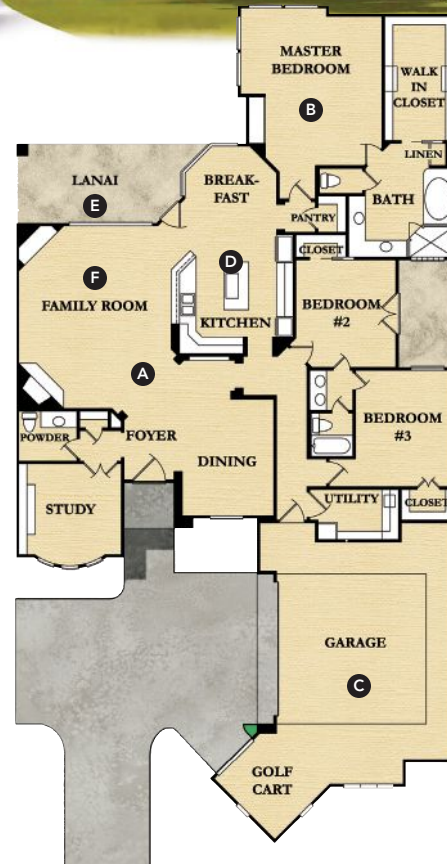
VILLA VERDE

DESIGNER

Guy Land
 Guy M. Land Designer Inc.
 info@gmlanddesigner.com
 www.gmlanddesigner.com



This high-end, empty nester, zero-lot-line community is located on a private golf course north of Houston. The goal was to accommodate the move-down buyer while not compromising on design or construction quality. The homes were marketed in the \$600K to \$900K range and sold out within 18 months.



- Ⓐ Big views through the house and open concept living
- Ⓑ Luxurious master suites
- Ⓒ Oversized garages with golf-cart parking
- Ⓓ Gourmet kitchens with walk-in pantries
- Ⓔ Backyard living areas
- Ⓕ High ceilings with lavish trim and finish details

WEXLER HILL

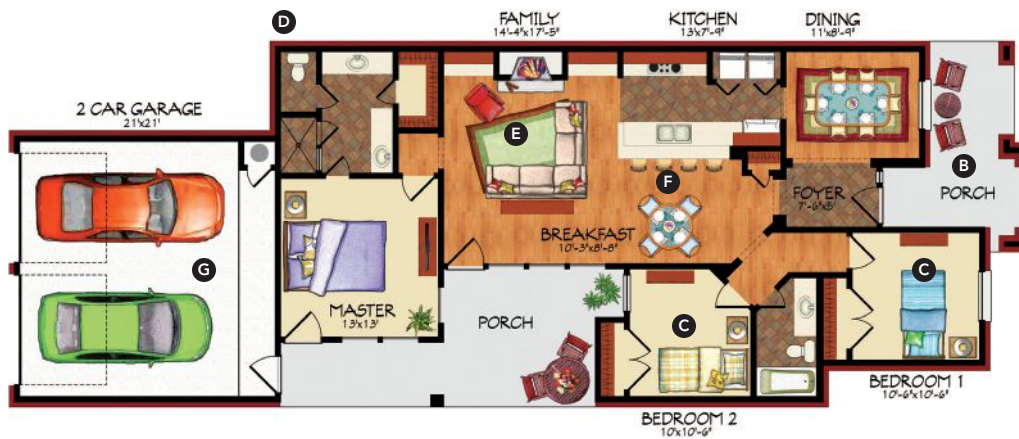
ARCHITECT

Rick Garza, Principal Architect
 RPGA Design Group
 rickgarza@rpgaarchitects.com
 www.rpgaarchitects.com
 817.332.9477

PLAN SIZE

Total: 1,403 sf

There are many different solutions for creating desirable and functional small homes that live large. With today's rising land prices, increasing density by slightly reducing lot size can yield more homes and raise the bottom line. In many cases, that calls for a zero-lot-line plan, typically on a 50-foot-wide lot. Creating a slightly narrower zero-lot-line increases profitability without sacrificing livability. Wexler Hill, on a 45-foot-wide lot, is a three-bedroom home that lives large and provides all of the comforts and livability of a big house. Its Craftsman-style cottage design also adds to the home's strong appeal.



- A Craftsman-style cottage
- B Usable front porch
- C Secondary bedrooms separated from master bedroom
- D Smaller lot that can yield more homes
- E Large open family, dining, and kitchen area for entertainment
- F Breakfast area and breakfast bar
- G Rear two-car garage