

8 Home Features Middle-Class Buyers Demand in 2024



On Jan. 31, Fortune quoted an economist who said buyers must be either “wealthy or lucky” to afford a home in the current [real estate market](#). With property prices rising and mortgages at two-decade highs, much of the middle class is watching the dream of homeownership slip out of reach.

But many others are adapting by shelving the idea of finding their dream home and instead focusing on must-have features in homes they can afford.

Middle-class buyers are facing tough choices in 2024, and they have to insist on [these features if they’re going to succeed in one of the toughest housing markets in recent memory](#).

1- Efficient Use of Limited Square Footage

Homes were already prohibitively expensive before mortgage rates hit 20year highs and shrunk budgets even further. The result is that buyers of modest means can't afford nearly as much house as they could just a few years ago – and they're compensating by targeting homes that put smaller spaces to good use.

"The staggering price of prime real estate made middle-class buyers draw towards houses that maximize the use of every inch of the property through smart storage, open layouts, and convertible zones," said [Matt Strickland](#). "Through the efficient use of space, a 1,000 square-foot residential property can go a long way in accommodating a family with kids."

2- Convertible Spaces

Like an ottoman that opens for storage, any space that can perform double duty is at the top of the list among this year's square-footagestarved buyers.

"In 2024, middle-class buyers will lean on houses with convertible spaces such as a basement that doubles as a home office or guest bed, an attic that serves as a kid's bedroom, and a garage converted to an in-laws suite," said Strickland.

3- Open Layouts

Open layouts have gone in and out of style over the years, but considering the realities of 2024, they are most definitely trending once again among buyers who can't afford as many rooms as they need or would like.

"Open-layout houses are perfect for making a modest house look more prominent and arranging furniture items as the homeowner sees fit for a family gathering or seasonal activities," said Strickland. "Rather than an open interior that feels like a warehouse, a space that utilizes biophilic elements and the full length of a property will be more popular among buyers."

4- Creative Storage

Limited square footage leaves less room for stuff, which means middleclass buyers have their eyes on homes that optimize places to accommodate everything a family brings into a home.

“Smart storage solutions such as built-in, vertical shelves and elevated floor storage ensure a small space can go a long way, saving thousands in real estate prices for middle-class buyers,” said Strickland.

5- Updated Windows

Old, inefficient windows place a double burden on your wallet by dragging down your home’s value and increasing your energy bills at the same time. On top of that, they’re expensive to replace – which is why middleclass buyers in 2024 are insisting on portals to the outside world that are modern and efficient.

“Most middle-class homebuyers understand – and if they don’t understand, I’m there to tell them – the significance of upgraded windows,” said [Bradley Wilson](#). “Not only do they contribute to the overall aesthetic of a property but also play a crucial role in energy efficiency, providing long-term savings on utility bills.”

6- Modern Flooring

Average earners are also placing a premium on what’s beneath their feet this year.

“Middle-class homebuyers recognize the importance of updated flooring not only in elevating the visual appeal of a home but also durability and ease of maintenance,” said Wilson.

According to Better Homes and Gardens, the flooring trends poised to dominate 2024 include:

- Tiles with warm tones
- Retro carpet

- Sustainable floors
- Farmhouse flooring
- Hardwood in the kitchen
- Neutral tiles in the bathroom

7- Home Offices

While much has changed in the real estate market, the trend toward remote work — and the demands it places on home spaces — continues to steer purchasing decisions among buyers with average incomes and tight budgets.

“Dedicated home office space will, in my opinion, be the most important feature for middle-class consumers in 2024,” said John Molek, owner of [Best Offer REI](#). “Having a dedicated workspace that can be used for more than simply working a 9to-5 job — such as passion projects or passive income — is becoming essential as more and more people start side gigs in addition to working remotely. Therefore, homes with clear, well-lit spaces and soundproofing areas are preferred by prospective tenants and buyers since all this facilitates a productive work environment at home.”

8- Efficient Appliances and Meaningful Smart Home Technology

The trend toward smart, connected everything tapered off in recent years as expensive IoT tech proved too costly, too complicated and, in many cases, little more than a novelty to show off to the neighbors.

But in 2024, middle-income buyers are demanding the tech that truly adds value without the clutter of excessive connectivity.

“Middle-class buyers in 2024 are expected to prioritize features that blend comfort, convenience, and cost-effectiveness,” said Dennis Shirshikov, head of growth at real estate investing company [Awning](#). “Energyefficient appliances and smart home technologies are high on the list, as these features not only improve day-to-day living but also offer long-term savings on utility bills.”