


NEW HOMES & CONDOS

You say foy-er, I say foy-yay!



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**DESIGN
CONFIDENTIAL**

Call it what you will, foyer, vestibule, lobby, entry way or dumping zone, in modern times they all mean the same thing, it's the area we land in when we enter a building. It can be tiny and efficient or over-the-top grand.

The word foyer has been used to describe a waiting room, corridor or lobby to a large space like a concert hall, hotel, theatre or corporate head office.

It's basically a chamber or area between the indoors and the outdoors of a structure, accessed by an exterior door. We've adopted the French pronunciation here in Canada

where the word loosely translates to, "place for fire", or fireplace.

Because the grand old theatres of the 1700-1900s were drafty, large buildings, the gathering area inside the entrance usually had a large fireplace to warm audiences between acts. It was called the foyer.

Way before that the elite classes in ancient Rome would generally live in two homes, a grand villa in the countryside or on the seashore and a domus (where the word domestic came from) in the walled city.

The hallway-like vestibule led to an open atrium which

was sparsely furnished yet filled with marble decorations, artwork on the walls and painted ceilings. This space served as the meeting room for the home.

Few windows existed, so an open portico in the ceiling allowed rain water to fall into a small indoor pool and allowed sunshine to light up the interior like a skylight today.

The vestibule/foyer/entrance way simply acted as an air lock to keep heat in, in the winter, and cooler air in, in the summer. But like the thresholds to the theatre, this gave way to today's symbols of wealth, the power lobbies we see in hotels, government buildings, large corporations, all portend the wealth beyond greater and grander entryways.

How does that translate into today's homes?

If we look at the ever-diminishing examples of 1950s post war era homes, the entrance ways are small, efficient spaces to get you in from the

outdoors.

Motorized vehicles were more common and affordable and carports and garages were often at the side or back of a home so the path of least resistance into the house was a side or back door, hence, front doors were for visitors.

Still, it was somewhat of a utility space with just enough room to hang a coat, remove footwear and turn around.

As suburbs began to give way to the ex-urbs, bigger and grander homes began to dot the horizon and the foyer set the prosperity tone for the whole home.

The elegant two-storey high entry with a sweeping staircase was no longer just a Disney castle fantasy, it was being replicated in multiple homes, in new communities.

As Canadians, I suspect most of us grew up being told to use the side doors, back doors and mud rooms to transition from indoors to out and vice versa and although it may go against our very nature to



No matter how grand or how small your foyer, decorate it to reflect your taste.

use anyone's front door, do it.

It may be one of the few times it gets used. That goes for the humble home foyer, too. No matter how grand or how small, decorate it to reflect your taste and treat yourself to the front door treatment as often as you can... no

matter what you call it.

— Award-winning designer, TV personality and spokesperson Jane Lockhart is one of Canada's leading experts in the world of design. Visit www.janelockhart.com.

OMB a necessary public forum for appeals



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The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is a necessary independent body that provides a public forum for appeals on local land-use planning disagreements.

It is essential that today's planning system have an unbiased, non-political, third-party, administrative tribunal

where municipalities, communities, ratepayer groups and landowners can appeal decisions that have been rejected or delayed locally and have them reviewed against sound planning objectives.

The OMB handles appeals on such things as landowner variances, municipal official plans

and zoning bylaws and development projects. A homeowner who wants to make changes to his/her home that were not approved by his/her municipality can appeal the decision at the OMB.

The Board serves the public good which is important because local interests are not always in keeping with public interests. It makes decisions in the interest of the public based on sound planning principles, away from local political pressures.

The OMB is a critical element of the development process but it doesn't get enough credit for its role. Many celebrated and award-winning

projects across Toronto only exist because of OMB decisions. The Distillery District is a prime example. The highly sought after tourist area was only developed because the OMB approved the three-tower condominium component that made the whole project financially viable.

It is often criticized for siding with developers, but there are many examples of development projects that didn't get approved by the Board.

Independent research by a leading U of T expert on public policy found that the OMB most often favours the expert testimony of municipal planners.

The OMB acts as a check and balance to ensure applications are dealt with. Often cases go to the OMB because municipalities have failed to make decisions.

If the OMB did not exist, appeals would go to the courts which are not as knowledgeable about local planning and have longer wait times.

A review of the OMB, how it operates and its role in the land-use planning system was recently launched by the Province.

While it is important that we have a tribunal like the OMB, we as an industry also believe that there is room to improve it.

Hiring and training more

experienced mediators would help improve efficiencies, for example, and the OMB could provide planning resources to ratepayer groups to assist with mediation and settlement.

The important thing is that we work together to develop ways to help make the OMB more efficient and more accessible to everyone.

— Bryan Tuckey is President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) and can be found on Twitter (twitter.com/bildgta), Facebook (facebook.com/bildgta) and BILD's official online blog (bildblogs.ca).



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