

HOMES

Say no to instant gratification

Slow Home movement teaches that love at first sight is probably not right



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DESIGN EDGE

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you fell in love with a home, bought it, moved in and then realized that it just wasn't right?

If so, chances are you bought a Fast House. According to John Brown, founder of Slow Home (theslowhome.com), almost 20 per cent of homeowners move within the first three years of their purchase and buy another home because they are unsatisfied with the way their house functions. That's because they bought a fast house as opposed to a slow home.

THE FAST HOUSE

A fast house is a bit like fast food. It's standardized, quick and easy and it's not really good for you.

In fact, just like fast food, a fast house provides you with short-term satisfaction. "Fast houses are designed to attract our attention, ignite our desire, and give the illusion of value, rather than functioning efficiently as homes," says Brown.

"They might be beautiful, but they lack substance."

While you might be amazed by the finishes, important elements, such as a decent-sized closet in the bedroom is usually missing.

THE SLOW HOME

A slow home is more like a healthy home-cooked meal. It's good for you. Slow homes are "designed to be more personally satisfying, environmentally responsible,



John Brown, a registered architect, with his business partner Matthew North, a graduate architect, started Slow Home in 2006.

and economically reasonable," says Brown. Special attention is put in the design of the home to make it work for you, while respecting the environment. They are a joy to live in and make life easy.

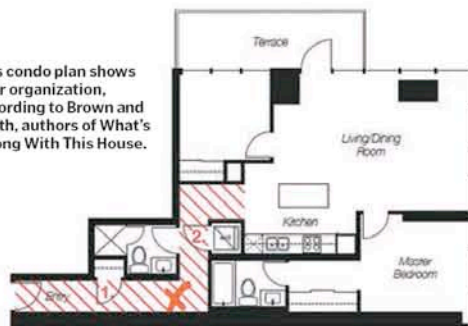
THE SLOW HOME MOVEMENT

Brown, a registered architect, along with his business partner Matthew North, a graduate architect, started Slow Home in 2006 as a social movement for better homes.

Today, daily videos are posted on theslowhome.com to help educate viewers and collaborate with them on various projects. They recently started the Slow Home Project, which is an open-source, mass collaboration project to evaluate the design qualities of new homes in nine North America cities: Los Angeles, Toronto, Dallas, Denver, Miami, Philadelphia, Vancouver, Atlanta and Chicago.

Once that project ends, they are

This condo plan shows poor organization, according to Brown and North, authors of *What's Wrong With This House*.



a Slow Home. For example, spatial organization to minimize circulation is worth two points. The plan at left, taken from a Toronto condo, would not get full points because a corridor takes too much space — almost as much square footage as the second bedroom, making the space a lot smaller than it should be.

THE BOOK

Brown and North recently released a book called *What's Wrong With This House* aimed at helping people evaluate houses efficiently. This 103-page guide, filled with detailed descriptions and plans, is available for \$17.99 at the slow home store (www.theslowhomestore.com)

Marie-Judith Jean-Louis, owner of M2JL Studio, teaches interior decorating at La Cité Collégiale and writes a regular blog. Visit her at www.m2jlstudio.com

considering evaluating other cities, including Ottawa. Anyone can participate. It's a great platform to learn about what makes a better home and discuss with others on ways to improve the layout of various homes.

THE SLOW HOME TEST

In order to evaluate the design quality of a home, Brown and North created a practical and simple evaluation sheet based on a 20-point system. Points are allocated for each of the positive attributes that match

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