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Tools to Fight "Fast-Food Architecture"

The "slow home" movement explores better ways to live.

By [Erica Christoffer](#) | August 2008

A new approach to home design is percolating across the country to a point where buyers may soon be asking you about it. The "slow home" movement emphasizes quality over quantity in home construction and decorating. It calls for homes to be constructed in an environmentally responsible way, slowly and thoughtfully.

John Brown, founder of the year-old "slow home" movement and a registered architect, real estate broker, and professor of architecture, launched its site, www.theslowhome.com, to provide information on and exposure for the movement. By September, he plans to have a slow home guide to buying real estate on the site.

Brown's guide will include a checklist that will look at organic materials, heating and cooling, and sustainability issues. Real estate professionals can use it to work with clients and rank homes in terms of how buyers want to live, says Brown.

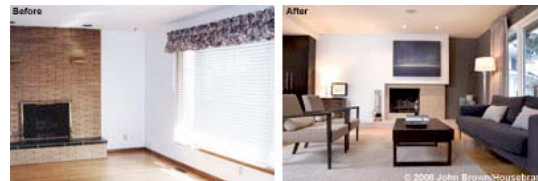
The guide also will offer ways to adapt an existing home to incorporate slow home principles by remodeling kitchens and bathrooms, opening up small closets, adding handmade artisan touches, using local, independent contractors, and reducing the environmental footprint.

"It's the ultimate recycling—to take a house and be able to redesign and rework it," Brown says.

Using existing structures and rebuilding on sites are also principles of the slow home movement. As gas prices rise and signs of global warming multiply, building miles away from urban centers no longer makes sense, contends Brown.

The "slow home" philosophy is "not a product you can buy; it's a process," says Brown. "And real estate professionals can expand their kit of tools by learning about it."

Real estate pros also can play a key role in the movement, Brown says. "I think real estate professionals can be coaches for their clients in design and sustainability issues and the potential of a property. You could direct this kind of expertise to the service you provide to your buyer."



You can contact the staff of REALTOR® magazine by e-mail at narpubs@realtors.org.

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