

Lighting for the future home

As Americans change the way they live at home, so must lighting



Outdoor lighting is a desirable design element for the home. Here is Crystorama's Glacier outdoor fixture from Brian Patrick Flynn.

BY ANDREA LILLO

Rooms did double — or triple — duty during the pandemic, when people worked, worked out and performed other activities in the same room. Not only is that trend here to stay, but other shifts in home design — such as homes with two offices or primary bedroom suites, for example — were discussed during the American Lighting Association's virtual symposium early in November.

The future will see less decorative lighting because more lighting will be built into a space, such as a tray ceiling or cove, said lighting expert Jeff Dross of Lighting by Jeffrey in his presentation, "Changes in Residential Architecture that will Impact Lighting." "There will be more lighting product in a house — you just won't see it."

One of the reasons for this comes from the rise of movable walls and room dividers, as people create separate — and sometimes temporary — spaces, particularly during the pandemic. So the lighting for these spaces has to be considered, he said. A hanging fixture, for example, will be problematic if it is in the way of a movable wall, and lighting for all areas of the space, regardless of the position of the walls and dividers, has to be thought out in multiple configurations, said Dross. "We'll see a demand for more functional footage."

Single-purpose rooms are on the decline, Dross said. And while experts are split on the future of the open-floor plan (though having a kitchen connected to a communal living space will remain popular), people want more private or semi-private spaces. The functions of a

room will impact the lighting. For example, a craft room will require more lighting than a yoga room. Quiet rooms — for meditation or prayer — are on the rise and can also function as a place for people with autism, Asperger's or ADHD to decompress (for which neutral palettes and LED lights with virtually no flicker should be used, and recessed cans, which can be distracting, avoided, Dross said.)

Now that home offices have become a must-have for many people, they will become more elevated and thought out than before. If both spouses or partners work at home or kids go to school virtually, the home might even require two or more home offices. When video conferencing from a home office, Dross recommended that lighting should be placed at the side so there's no screen glare, or from