

# Business

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# Full House

## New homes loaded with perks to lure buyers

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Melanie Stengel/Register photos

**ABOVE:** A kitchen with pantry in a home at The Willows in Wallingford. Like other developments, homes at The Willows have a smaller footprint than found in older homes, but aim to use space more effectively.

**BELOW:** A "drop zone" in a new home at The Willows development. The feature is intended to be a convenient place, right inside the entrance, to stow everyday items.



More and more, home buyers are looking for innovative features that make daily life easier, said Liz Verna of Wallingford-based Verna Properties.

Verna and Sundwood Development Corp. owner Bob Wiedenmann Jr., also based in Wallingford, have joined forces — under the moniker VW Homes — on The Willows, a 65-lot project under way in Wallingford.

Homes there offer "flex rooms," or spaces that may be used for multiple purposes depending on the owners' needs. They also have "drop zones," where everyday items can be stowed in an easily accessible area, typically between the kitchen and garage.

Verna also said the houses have full room-sized laundry rooms and ample storage space, and at 2,000 to 3,000 square feet are smaller than many homes built in recent years, all things that homeowner focus groups said they wanted.

"We brought in an architect to come up with designs for us to get away from the old-fashioned design," she said. "We tried to meet people's lifestyle needs."

The development also offers a "Smooth Moves Program" to help those interested in buying a new house sell their old one.

"Our buyer is the move-up buyer or move-down buyer," Verna said, meaning they typically have an existing home to sell. "Basically, we act as their building counselor. We want it to be a smooth move for the buyer."

Like VW Homes, Woodbridge-based Brookside Development is taking a smaller approach to homes at its Frank Gates Lane project in Derby. The five-lot project, currently under way, will have single-family homes ranging from 2,000 and 2,200 square feet, said Brookside Development owner Mark Nuzzolo.

"We clearly reduced the square footage of the home," he said, as well as added flexible-use spaces through the home designs. "As families change, we're trying to create spaces that can be used as multiple functions."