

Out-of-the-Box Homes

With housing costs at unaffordable levels for many, some people are turning to alternative homes. Here's a breakdown of some of the other options out there:

Tiny living – If you can compromise on space, there are tiny homes (approx. 120 to 500 sq. ft.), some of which can be hauled around, micro apartments (approx. 200 to 400 sq. ft.) in buildings with varying amenities, and shipping container homes, which can be tiny (approx. 160 sq. ft.), or the size of an average-sized home constructed of multiple containers.

Vehicle conversions – For a 2-for-1 home and transportation deal, consider an RV or a converted school bus.

Houseboats – This option may be for you if you are a water lover. While the price is much lower than a condo and can even offer more space, consider the maintenance costs and how you feel about seasonal weather like wind, rain, and snow while on a boat.

Eco homes – In our ever-increasing eco-conscious world, there are different kinds of eco homes, such as passive Homes, designed to minimize energy consumption, and off-grid homes that are self-reliant for electricity and water.

Laneway homes – Typically found in urban centres and accessed from a back lane, these homes could be new builds or converted garages. Note, that not



all jurisdictions allow laneway homes.

While alternative homes can offer an appealing price tag, consider that you may have to compromise on space, location, and quality of the build itself. In some cases, you may not qualify, or it may be more difficult to obtain a mortgage or insurance.

Virtual Staging: Dos and Don'ts



It's well-documented that staged properties tend to sell faster and for more and can either be done traditionally or virtually. So, what are some reasons you might use virtual staging? Virtual staging makes sense for properties that are vacant, pre-construction, have tenants, or have dated furniture. It's also more cost-friendly than traditional staging.

If you decide on virtual staging, it's important to get it right to ensure you maintain credibility with potential buyers.

Here are some must-know virtual staging dos and don'ts:

DO:

- Have any repairs or updates done before the photos are taken
- Use professional virtual staging services
- Label each photo as "virtually staged"
- Sync décor choices with the style of the property

DON'T:

- Conceal or misrepresent issues or defects
- Add anything other than furnishings and accessories (e.g., don't change the wall colour, countertops, or floors)
- Discard original photos of the room

Done right, your potential buyers will be inspired by the before and afters using virtual staging. Ultimately, you want them to see themselves living there, rather than feeling like the staging is a scam.

Think, Act... Live!

"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer." *Albert Camus*

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." *Nelson Mandela*