

As more and more people decided to buy their first home during the COVID-19 pandemic – or purchased their second – pressure on the housing market increased. Home renovation is in high demand as well – a study of home improvement site Porch.com found that 3 in 4 homeowners completed a major project in the past pandemic year. Construction has thrived during the pandemic, but, naturally, this has caused a domino effect.

And at the end of last year, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce released its Commercial Construction Index (CCI) and found that approximately 41 percent of contractors said the pandemic has led to less availability of building materials.

This stands in contrast to where market trends are expected to land – toward the end of 2020, residential construction began to trend upward. And now, the Mortgage Bankers Association expects single-family housing projects to rise above 1 million homes for the first time since 2007, with that number forecast to increase in 2022 and 2023.

With material shortages, turning to recyclable materials like aluminium and emphasising stability will be essential.

Aluminium's "Superpowers"

Aluminium is an exceptional option for architects, contractors, builders and homeowners considering construction materials. Benefits abound, starting with the fact that it's infinitely recyclable and the most recyclable construction material.

Featuring a wide range of uses and benefits in construction, aluminium is durable and resistant to water, rust, and pests – leading to sturdier and more sustainable builds. Plus, aluminium is highly reflective and protective against UV radiation, making it a safe and efficient choice.

Then there's aluminium siding, a cost-effective, energy-efficient insulator that's great for the environment. Since aluminium is 100 percent recyclable, it's the most green-forward siding option. On top of that, the industry has made great strides in upgrading the aesthetic of aluminium. It's now highly customizable, giving homeowners the option of many different patterns and textures that come pre-painted to specifications.

Aluminium gutters withstand temperature fluctuations best as well, while other metal gutters are susceptible to being adversely affected by extreme temperatures. Investing in aluminium gutters means avoiding costly repairs down the road and gives homeowners increased peace of mind that the infrastructure of their homes will remain intact.

Lesser known but just as critically

Why aluminium will be at the forefront of the post-COVID-19 housing boom

With the housing market expected to continue its boom period post-COVID-19, building smart with aluminium to create a greener and sustainable future will be essential.

Aluminium metal roof

important are aluminium building products like soffit and fascia. Aluminium soffit provides excellent air circulation, reducing the moisture responsible for decay and helping prevent rot from wooden rooflines. Aluminium fascia also protects the home from rain as well as pests. And both enhance the structural beauty of a home's roofline.

As a lightweight alternative, aluminium can also be used for framing houses. Not only are these frames more portable, but they're also easily taken apart and reassembled due to their low mass. And with a pandemic-incited lumber shortage,

aluminium, which doesn't absorb moisture like wood does and won't rust like other metals, could become the preeminent building material for new housing.

Sustainable Homes

Increased aluminium usage is also better for the environment. Properly coated aluminium roofs can reflect up to 95 percent of solar energy that they absorb. This contributes to energy efficiency and is the reason why so many aluminium-based buildings have garnered LEED certification, which is a universally recognized symbol for sustainability leadership.

Builders looking to keep up with demand and establish green practices could soon find themselves thinking of aluminium first when it comes time to start construction. Some architects are on the forefront of this trend. Principal Barry Alan Yoakum of Memphis-based archimania, a veteran in sustainable design, led the team that designed the first single-family home in the Americas to be registered as a Zero Energy/Zero Carbon home.

For exterior walls, Yoakum said, "We went through a process of energy studies, and aluminium started coming in" as a

favored choice. "If you install it correctly, it will last forever."

Post-Pandemic Homes

With a majority of contractors anticipating revenue to hold steady in 2021, there is cause for optimism for the future of the building and construction industry. Contractors will be in high demand throughout the next year.

There's a positive feeling in the residential sector as well – an August 2020 National Association of Home Builders

report found its confidence index at 78, the highest reading in its 35-year history and an increase from already encouraging numbers reported in early summer 2020.

COVID-19's push to stay at home put a spotlight on the importance of homes, raising the bar for design and construction. Today's homes go far beyond places to eat and sleep – they now serve as offices, classrooms, and even vacation spots. Building for durability and sustainability is paramount, and aluminium is key to achieving that in the post-pandemic future. ■



Gutter Downspouts Fascia and Soffit