

A good patio feels effortless. You step out the back door, your feet land on a surface that stays level through spring thaws, sheds water after a summer storm, and holds heat just long enough in September to make supper outside comfortable. In London, Ontario, that ease never happens by accident. Our clay soils swell and shrink, winters chew at surface finishes, and fast temperature swings test every joint. Designing and building patios in this region means respecting those realities and then finding beauty inside them.

What follows pulls from two decades of building and restoring outdoor spaces around the Forest City and nearby towns. You will find ideas you can use right away, along with the kind of details that separate a resilient patio from a pretty one that fails too soon. Whether you are planning a small seating pad or a connected network of entertaining areas and backyard pathways London Ontario homeowners increasingly want, the principles stay consistent.

## **Start with climate, soil, and water**

Southwestern Ontario winters are freeze-thaw heavy. The same week can swing from a thaw to a hard freeze, and that cycling stresses both finished surfaces and the layers underneath. Many London lots sit on clay or silty clay, which holds water. That combination demands two things above all others: competent drainage and a well compacted base that can resist movement.

I have seen a brand new patio heave two inches in its first winter because the builder skipped a proper base and relied on high strength concrete alone. Concrete resists compression well, but it cannot make up for a poor foundation or trapped water. Treat the soil and water like the stubborn realities they are, and your options for finish materials open wide.

## **Choosing materials that live well here**

Different materials change the feel of a backyard, and they also wear differently in London's climate. Here is how I think about the common options when I meet with a client.

Poured concrete suits modern lines, larger uninterrupted areas, and tight budgets. A standard slab with a light broom finish is often the lowest upfront cost per square foot. Quality comes from what you do not see. A slab that survives here usually has at least 4 inches of concrete over a compacted granular base, sawcut or tooled control joints no more than 10 to 12 feet apart, and air-entrained mix to handle freeze-thaw. For custom concrete work, we often add a decorative treatment. Exposed aggregate gives texture and grip, seeded glass or stone adds sparkle, and stamped patterns mimic flagstone or wood. Stamping demands consistent timing and crew coordination, which is why experience matters more than the stamp pattern you pick.

Interlocking pavers create a classic look and repair easily. If a corner settles, a good installer can lift and relevel the affected area without jackhammers. Pavers rely on edge restraint and a consistent bedding layer to stay flat. I prefer a concrete or engineered plastic edge over spiked wood, and I keep the bedding layer thin and even, usually 1 inch of concrete sand over 6 to 8 inches of compacted Granular A for most residential uses. Polymeric sand between joints reduces weed growth and resists washout during spring downpours.

Natural stone sets a tone that nothing else matches. Full-thickness flagstone on a mortar bed over concrete gives a permanent feel, though it costs more and takes longer. Thin stone on a concrete slab is a good compromise in weight and price. For clients who love irregular stone but worry about wobbly chairs, we choose sawn stone with tight joints and a gentle pitch. Limestone and sandstone both show well in Southwestern Ontario light. Sealers help, but the right base and slope do more for longevity than any topical product.

Composite decks and wood patios can connect gracefully to a concrete or paver main area. I mention them here because many London backyards combine a raised wood deck off the door with a ground-level patio below. The change in elevation lets you separate uses. Coffee upstairs in spring, dinner on the patio in summer, a fire pit near grade in fall. Good design ties them with consistent lines and materials, and smart backyard pathways that handle traffic without making the yard feel chopped up.

Gravel has a place too. I keep it near vegetable beds, under moveable seating, or in slim side yards where you need permeability and low cost. In London's clay soils, I almost always include a geotextile fabric beneath gravel to keep fines from pumping up and creating ruts.

## **How custom concrete work earns its keep**

Clients often ask what custom concrete work buys them beyond a simple slab. The short answer is control. Control over texture, colour tone, movement joints, and the way the patio meets the house, lawn, and features like steps or seat walls.

Texture matters when the surface is wet or icy. A light broom finish across the field with a slightly deeper broom on steps adds insurance. On stamped patios, an antiskid additive in the sealer helps a lot in shoulder seasons. Colour also lives better in London when it runs through the slab. Integral colour mixed at the plant will not peel like a thin topical stain. If we use a release powder for stamping contrast, I make sure the crew washes and seals at the right time so you get depth without a plastic shine.

Joints are the unsung heroes. I line them up with doors, posts, and changes in elevation so the patio reads as thoughtful rather than chopped. In a 12 by 24 foot slab, I will usually place joints at 6 to 8 foot intervals, biasing toward shorter spans near corners or re-entrant angles where cracks like to start. On complex shapes, stainless steel or PVC control joint strips embedded in the slab can bend with the curve and still do their job.

Finally, the meeting points. Where a patio meets brick or siding, I prefer a compressible isolation joint rather than hard bond. That small detail helps the slab move without pushing your foundation or telegraphing cracks.

## **Flow, zones, and the power of good pathways**

A patio that works feels natural from the first step out the door. London homes vary in lot width and depth, but the same planning questions help bring order to any yard. Where do you want morning light, and where do you want shade at dinner? How many people do you host most often? What needs to be within two steps of the kitchen, and what can sit twenty feet away?

Backyard pathways London Ontario homeowners add often become the missing link. A simple 36 inch wide path can solve traffic pinch points and change how you use space. I like to set paths slightly off axis to sightlines so the yard feels larger. On a recent North London build, we used a 44 inch exposed aggregate path along the fence with tight LED bollards. It moved wheelbarrows easily, looked sized for people rather than cars, and felt elegant at night. Paths also matter in spring when grass is soft. A raised or clearly defined walkway saves lawns from ruts.

Serpentine for the sake of serpentine rarely helps. Curves should come from the way you move, not a desire to avoid straight lines. One trick is to pull furniture into the sketch early. A dining table needs a 10 by 12 foot zone to allow chairs to move, a grill station wants 5 to 6 feet clear behind the handle, and a lounge grouping breathes at around 12 to 14 feet across. Once those blocks land, the connections between them suggest where a path belongs.

## **A quick reality check on water and frost**

Water wants to go somewhere. Give it a plan. Most patios do well with a minimum 2 percent slope away from the house. That is roughly a quarter inch of drop per foot. If you need to hold level for furniture, work the slope across the short dimension instead of the long run, or integrate a linear drain along the house wall. On tight urban lots, we sometimes bury a perforated pipe wrapped in fabric and stone to move water away from foundations. It is not glamorous, but it saves basements.

Frost heave is another quiet adversary. You cannot beat it with weight alone. The base layer does the heavy lifting. I use a compacted Granular A or open graded stone depending on drainage goals, placed in lifts and compacted with a plate tamper until you get that drum-tight sound underfoot. For pavers, I avoid over-watering the bedding sand. A mist is plenty. For concrete, reinforcing matters. Wire mesh tied and held mid-depth or rebar on a reasonable grid cuts the size of cracks when they occur. In high risk areas, fibres in the mix help control plastic shrinkage.

## **Lighting that respects winter and your eyes**

London's winter light is low, and the right fixtures make a patio usable for more months. I prefer warm white LEDs around 2700 to 3000 Kelvin. That tone keeps snow from turning blue and flat. Recessed step lights are worth the effort, even on a short run. On grade, cap lights under seat walls and small, shielded path lights do more work than a single tall flood. Wire sizing and connections matter in freeze-thaw. A clean, watertight hub with dielectric grease at joints saves headaches. Aim for light on surfaces, not in eyes. If you have neighbours close by, downward cast fixtures preserve their comfort and yours.

## **Planting around hardscape without creating maintenance headaches**

Patios look better with life around them. In London's climate, think structure first, then seasonal interest. Hardy shrubs on the windward side cut winter gusts. Ornamental grasses hold interest in snow and can be cut back in March. Keep roots that like to wander, like certain bamboos or running sumacs, away from paver edges. Leave 18 to 24 inches of planting bed between the patio and a fence to avoid the claustrophobic feel [residential driveway repair london](#) that tight hardscape can create. If you want edibles close at hand, a low steel or stone edge keeps soil off the patio and looks crisp.

## **Costs, timelines, and how to phase work**

Project planning always circles back to budget. Quality varies, and so do site conditions, but the ranges below reflect what London clients commonly encounter with reputable contractors.

Plain broom finished concrete patios often land between 10 and 16 dollars per square foot for straightforward layouts. Add complexity, demo, or access constraints and the price can edge higher. Stamped or exposed aggregate concrete usually runs 18 to 30 dollars per square foot depending on the pattern depth, colour complexity, and sealers.

Interlocking pavers with a proper base and edge restraint commonly range from 20 to 35 dollars per square foot for midrange products. Premium pavers and curves raise the number. Natural stone, set on concrete or a mortar bed, can span 35 to 60 plus dollars per square foot, with large format sawn pieces toward the upper end.

Small add-ons collect quickly. Steps in concrete might run a few hundred dollars each. A simple gas fire pit kit with a concrete or paver surround might sit between 2,500 and 5,000 dollars installed, while a custom masonry build can double that. Low-voltage lighting for paths and walls tends to fall between 150 and 300 dollars per fixture once all the trenching and wiring are included.

For timing, a simple 300 square foot patio might take three to five working days, depending on weather and inspection schedules, whereas a complex build with walls, lighting, and an outdoor kitchen can stretch to several weeks. Many homeowners phase projects over two seasons. We might pour the main patio and run sleeves for future gas and electrical in year one, then add the cooking station, shade structure, and planting in year two. Phasing well saves money compared to tearing up finished work later.

## **Permits, locates, and the rules worth following**

The City of London does not typically require a building permit for a ground level concrete or paver patio without a roof. Pergolas, covered structures, privacy screens above certain heights, and decks tied to the house may trigger permits and zoning rules. Setback requirements for accessory structures and height restrictions can apply, especially in smaller lots or corner properties. Because interpretations change, it is wise to confirm current requirements with the City before starting.

No matter what you build, call Ontario One Call before you dig. The service is free and usually takes a few business days. Even hand digging near gas or electrical without a locate exposes you to risk and fines. I mark out the proposed patio and path edges with paint so the locate crew can flag along the exact lines, not just the property perimeter.

## **Working with residential concrete contractors and local concrete experts**

Experience shows in the small things. Ask prospective residential concrete contractors how they handle drainage at door thresholds, what mix design they prefer for freeze-thaw, and how they place and cure in hot weather. Air entrainment in our climate is not optional. Neither is curing. I like a curing compound for broom finishes and a controlled sealer schedule for decorative work. Crews who say they never get cracks are selling fairy tales. Good crews plan where cracks will go, control them, and stand behind their work.

Local concrete experts earn that title when they combine technical knowledge with judgment. They know when to propose a thicker base because your yard stays wet in spring, or to shift a joint to align with a downspout that might add moisture on one side. They recommend realistic maintenance and explain trade-offs without drama. If you are interviewing multiple firms, pay as much attention to how they answer questions as to the number on the quote. Clear scope and consistent line items make comparison possible.



## **A build story from Masonville**

A family in Masonville wanted space for eight at dinner, a compact outdoor kitchen, and a quiet corner for reading. The yard sloped 18 inches across 30 feet, and a mature maple owned the best shade. We kept grading gentle, poured a 6 inch thick slab near the house for the grill station and bar, and transitioned to a 4 inch exposed aggregate patio for the dining zone. A narrow, 40 inch wide paver path peeled off to the back corner, ending in a small stone pad with a bench under the maple.

We ran sleeves beneath the path for future lighting and set a linear drain where the bar area met the original brick. Joint lines matched the brick coursing, a detail you feel more than see. The family uses the space almost daily from May through October. In winter, the path still matters. It keeps boots out of the grass when they refill bird feeders or check the shed. That is a small example of how connected spaces outperform isolated pads.

## **Design ideas that lift everyday use**

Fire features extend shoulder seasons. Gas fire tables start up quickly and keep air cleaner than open wood. If you choose wood, place the pit far enough from the house and trees, and plan for a spark guard. Precast concrete caps around the pit hold drinks and stay cool to the touch along the perimeter.

Shade solves more problems than you expect. A simple steel pergola with a retractable fabric canopy can tame late afternoon heat. If you want vines, choose species that will not strangle a structure or tear at finishes, and be sure the posts can handle the load in winter wind.

Water features calm a city yard. A small rill or a standalone bubbling urn plumbed with a recirculating pump adds sound without much splash. For durability, set pumps in an easy-to-reach vault and blow out lines before freeze.

Outdoor kitchens work best when they stay compact. A grill, landing surfaces on both sides, closed storage below, and a protected gas line give you 90 percent of the benefit. If you add a sink, plan for proper drainage that will not freeze. A hose bib close by covers most needs and avoids winterizing a full plumbing run.

Seating walls pull double duty. On narrower patios, a 16 to 18 inch high wall along one edge provides overflow seating and frames the space without eating floor area. Cap stones with a slight overhang feel good to the legs and keep water off the face.

## **A practical planning checklist**

- Confirm how you will handle drainage at the house, including slope and any need for a linear drain.
- Decide the primary zones and their sizes based on furniture footprints, not guesswork.
- Choose materials with maintenance in mind, and map where joints or paver lines will fall.
- Schedule Ontario One Call locates and verify any permit needs with the City of London.
- Line up power and gas plans early, with sleeves under paths to avoid future cuts.

## **Building a base that survives London winters**

- Strip organics and soft soil until you reach firm subgrade, then compact the subgrade.
- Place base stone in thin lifts, compacting each layer, until you reach the design depth.
- Establish slope with string lines or a laser, then fine grade the bedding layer evenly.
- Install edge restraint before laying pavers, or forms for concrete that hold their shape.
- Compact finished pavers with a plate and protective pad, or cure concrete correctly before sealing.

## **Maintenance that keeps the patio looking new**

Every material asks for a little care. Broom finished concrete appreciates a light wash in spring and a breathable sealer every few years if you want to resist stains. Stamped and exposed aggregate patios look best with a quality sealer reapplied on a measured schedule. I avoid heavy gloss. It wears unevenly in winter and can get slippery. On pavers, top up polymeric sand when joints open and watch for low spots after the first winter. A quick lift and relevel in year two can save a future trip hazard.

Snow removal deserves a note. Plastic shovels or rubber-edged blades treat finishes kindly. If you use de-icers, pick products safe for concrete and stone. Many calcium chloride blends are gentler than rock salt, but always read labels. On driveways, I often leave a small snow pad rather than scraping to bare surface during a deep freeze. That buffer reduces direct salt contact.

Plants appreciate mulch, but keep it a couple inches back from paver edges and away from the face of seat walls to avoid staining and ant colonies. In fall, a leaf blower on low clears joints without dislodging sand.

## **Making the most of backyard pathways London Ontario homes can use year round**

Paths extend the patio's usefulness. They keep shoes clean, carry grills to winter storage, and draw you to quieter corners. For durability, I build them like small patios, not afterthoughts. A compacted base, tight edges, and a pitch that feels gentle underfoot. Narrow paths at 30 inches can work in tight side yards, but 36 to 42 inches feels generous and carries a wheelbarrow smoothly. Lighting a path takes restraint. A fixture every 8 to 12 feet is plenty when you choose shielded lights that spill onto the surface rather than glare up.

On a budget, crushed stone paths with steel edging remain the best value. They drain, they are simple to top up, and they read as intentional when the edges stay crisp. Where mud collects near a gate, a two foot deep apron of pavers turns a mess into a landing zone.

## **When to call in help, and what to expect**

Some projects reward weekend ambition. Others do not. If your design includes complex grading near a foundation, a stamped or exposed finish, or integrated gas and electrical, hiring residential concrete contractors keeps risk out of your living room and off your insurance. Good firms walk you through the schedule, mark utilities and levels on site, and keep you updated when weather interferes. You should see compaction happen, joints cut on time, and curing addressed, not ignored.

Local concrete experts also save you from mismatched expectations. They can show you a broom finish sample next to a light wash exposed finish and explain how each behaves in January. They can pull photos of patios three winters old so you know what colour and texture look like after real use. If a contractor only shows you day-of glamour shots, ask to see work in all seasons.

## **Bringing it together**

The best patios London Ontario residents enjoy are rarely the most expensive. They are the ones where fundamentals quietly support the design. Water leaves the area without pooling. The base holds steady when April plays tug-of-war with frost. Materials suit how you plan to live outside. Pathways connect zones so you use every corner of your yard.

Start with a clear idea of how you want to spend time out there. Pull furniture into the plan. Respect slope and soil. Choose finishes you will maintain. If you work with pros, seek those who explain their choices and welcome your questions. Whether you lean toward the precision of custom concrete work or the flexibility of pavers and stone, a thoughtful build will return the favour with years of easy mornings and long evenings outside.

## **NAP**

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Sunday: [Not listed – please confirm]

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**Logo URL:** <https://www.ferrariconcrete.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/423A0786-F561-4AC7-B20A-DF2D6D5A155A.png>

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Ferrari Concrete is a family-owned concrete contractor serving London, Ontario with residential, commercial, and industrial concrete work.

Ferrari Concrete provides plain, coloured, stamped, and exposed aggregate concrete for driveways, patios, porches, pool decks, sidewalks, curbing, and garage floors.

Ferrari Concrete operates from 5606 Westdel Bourne, London, ON N6P 1P3, Canada (Plus Code: VM9J+GF) and can be reached at 519-652-0483 for project consultations.

Ferrari Concrete serves the London area and nearby communities such as Lambeth, St. Thomas, and Strathroy for concrete installations and upgrades.

Ferrari Concrete offers commercial concrete services for parking lots, curbs, sidewalks, driveways, and other site concrete needs for facilities and workplaces.

Ferrari Concrete includes decorative concrete options that can help homeowners match finishes and patterns to the look of their property.

Ferrari Concrete provides HydroVac services (Ferrari HydroVac) for projects where hydrovac excavation support may be a fit.

Ferrari Concrete can be found on Google Maps here: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=Ferrari%20Concrete%2C%205606%20Westdel%20Bourne%2C%20London%2C%20ON%20N6P%201P3>

## Popular Questions About Ferrari Concrete

### What services does Ferrari Concrete offer in London, Ontario?

Ferrari Concrete provides a range of concrete services, including residential and commercial concrete work such as driveways, patios, porches, pool decks, sidewalks, curbing, and garage floors, with finish options like plain, coloured, stamped, and exposed aggregate.

### Does Ferrari Concrete install stamped or coloured concrete?

Yes—Ferrari Concrete offers decorative finishes such as stamped and coloured concrete. Availability can depend on scheduling, season, and the specific pattern/colour selection, so it's best to confirm details during an estimate.

### Do you handle both residential and commercial concrete projects?

Ferrari Concrete works on residential projects (like driveways and patios) as well as commercial/industrial concrete needs (such as curbs, sidewalks, and parking-area concrete). Project scope and site requirements typically determine the best approach.

## **What areas does Ferrari Concrete serve around London?**

Ferrari Concrete serves London, ON and surrounding communities. If your project is outside the city core, it's a good idea to confirm travel/service availability when requesting a quote.

## **How does pricing usually work for a concrete project?**

Concrete project costs typically depend on size, site access, base preparation, thickness/reinforcement needs, drainage considerations, and finish choices (for example stamped vs. plain). An on-site assessment is usually the fastest way to get an accurate estimate.

## **What are Ferrari Concrete's business hours?**

Hours listed are Monday through Saturday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Sunday hours are not listed, so it's best to call ahead if you need a weekend appointment outside those times.

## **How do I contact Ferrari Concrete for an estimate?**

Call [\(519\) 652-0483](tel:5196520483) or email [info@ferrariconcrete.com](mailto:info@ferrariconcrete.com) to request an estimate. You can also connect on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#). Website: <https://www.ferrariconcrete.com/>

## **Landmarks Near London, ON**

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Ferrari Concrete is proud to serve the [London, ON](#) community and offers residential and commercial concrete work. If you're looking for concrete contractor help in [London, ON](#), visit Ferrari Concrete near [Victoria Park](#).

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