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THE PERFECT HALLWAY

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THE PERFECT HALLWAY

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JANE PRICE-STEPHENS, INTERIOR DESIGNER

This month I am going to focus on the ‘all important’ entrance hall. After the ‘all important’ front door (you can see where I am going with this...), this is the first internal space in your home that you ‘interact’ with when you get past the front door (see [last month’s blog on ‘front doors’](#) for the first external aspect of the home) and where you welcome guests into your home (with champagne reception and canapés if appropriate).

As the first internal aspect of the home that you and others experience, the hallway needs to reflect, as far as possible, the overall feel that you are trying to create for your home. Findings (potentially from the ‘honest estate agents’) suggest that your attitude and mood are affected either positively or negatively when entering a

property (clearly no room for ambivalence in this respect), depending on how well the entrance hallway has been designed. Stating the obvious again, but if your hallway is light, warm and welcoming, it will make your visitors instantly feel relaxed and at home; alternatively, if it is dark, dingy and cluttered it will create a negative impact, making the space feel much smaller and oppressive. It is worth pointing out that different combinations of the characteristics listed above can be made to work - so a hallway can be dark, but welcoming (but only if it is designed in the right way).

However, in reality and in most cases, the hallway is a transient area of the home which traffic passes through en route to another space... as a consequence, it is often left as an afterthought from a design perspective, with simple décor and furnishing (or not) and it often becomes a dumping ground for shoes, brollies, wellies, pushchairs and coats (all the things you furiously tidy away when you know someone is coming round to visit...).

Here are my top tips for creating an entrance hall that makes an impact:

Ensuring your hallway flows seamlessly into other rooms



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- Your hallway design should not be considered in isolation, but in association with how it will work with other rooms which lead directly off the hallway (an important point, but often overlooked) - it should also be designed to be consistent with the overall look and feel of your home
- Also think about how the hall connects to the other areas in the home; if space allows, double doors can create a dramatic entrance to the rest of the house or directly into the main living area
- If your front door opens straight onto your living room, the most effective thing that you can do is to invent your own 'hall zone'. This can be achieved simply using a well-placed rug or by adding a shelf for hats and gloves and coat hooks
- The staircase is typically a feature of most hallways (unless you live in a bungalow or a tent), so it needs to be visually appealing

The importance of colour and light - dingy just won't do...

There are two different but related 'schools of thought' when it comes to the colour of hallways;

- The first suggests that a dark hallway says all the wrong things about your home, and that you should use colour to make the entrance as light and appealing as possible. Hence, the general advice is to steer clear of dark or very bold colours
- The second suggests that a dark hallway won't be made brighter by painting it a light colour. Hence, choosing darker shades will give the artificial illusion that

the rooms beyond are much, much brighter and airier

My personal view is that if your hallway is narrow or small, neutrals invariably work the best. In contrast, if your house is a large listed building or a grand period home (i.e. you have a cavernous hallway), a deep traditional red or green will add enormous impact

Hallway floors must be able to stand up to wear and tear

- The wrong choice of flooring for such a heavily used area will result in rapid deterioration and, as a consequence, a tired look that may not reflect the rest of your home
- A decent-sized door mat is a must and, if possible, sink your mat into a shallow well as it prevents slipping (and will help accumulate doorway dust)



(Imaae from *Homebuldina*)

G44 in Hall 1 – open to both exhibitors and visitors.

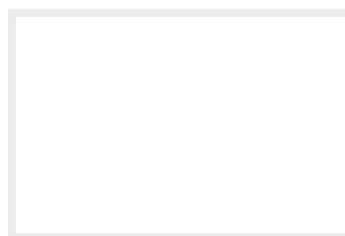
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In the hallway, less is most definitely more

A spacious hallway not only creates an important first impression, it actually makes the house feel bigger (ask the honest estate agents if you don't believe me)

- Keep your hallway as clutter-free as possible. Only store the absolute essentials in your hallway. Stating the obvious once again, but the smaller the hallway, the clearer and less cluttered it should be kept (so hallway storage may be an important consideration)
- Limit the number of coats hanging in the hallway to one per family member and try to do the same with shoes (very difficult for us ladies)
- A piece of furniture such as a narrow console will make a hall feel inhabited and somewhat distinct as a room in its own right. It can also provide a proper home for keys and phone chargers so they don't go astray (but do remain conscious of security considerations). However, as a consequence of having a table just inside the front door, it can often become a convenient dumping ground for newspapers, pocket junk and morning post...
- If your home is 'shoe free' (i.e. you have light coloured carpets and no pets...), make sure there's plenty of storage next to the front door. A bench with built-in storage is a good idea



(Image from *Christina Fluegge*)

Create a focal point in your hallway

- It is essential in a hallway to create some sort of focal point. Floor space is for most people at a premium, but your walls are the perfect place to make a statement with a mirror or a provocative piece of art
- Mirrors in general can make a huge difference, as they can help add to the illusion of more space by reflecting and bouncing light around
- Also consider a statement lamp or pendant to add flattering and decorative ambient lighting to the space





(Image from *Christina Fluegge*)

So, that's the front door and the hallway sorted - according to the honest estate agents you have increased the value of your home by 10% and made the world a happier place. Goodness knows what you will achieve when you get to the rest of the house...

Jane Price-Stephens runs her own interior design business, to find out more visit: www.janepricestephens.com, <http://janepricestephens.blogspot.com/>, follow Jane on Twitter [@jpricestephens](https://twitter.com/jpricestephens) or call 07970 547433.

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