

Making an Entrance

By Jackie Sears - an interior designer who specialises in design-led advice to help people sell or rent their property quicker and more profitably.

Buyers' Eyes

The entrance hall is one of those signature spaces in a property. Whatever viewers perceive here, they will look to substantiate it in all the other rooms: present this area beautifully and the rest of the viewing is set up to flow well. Get it wrong though, and you'll find yourself defensively correcting that first impression throughout the visit. Being able to view your property through buyers' eyes is a key marketing skill when time comes to sell. No area should really be excused from your appraising eye, but if you have to prioritise, do pay special attention to thresholds like these. To set up the entrance hall itself in a good light, attention must be paid to the approach to it. As evenings darken early, do make sure your property is readily identifiable from the road, the name or numbers clearly lit. Ensure the doorbell can be heard from inside, and to protect your flooring, invest in an effective and welcoming door mat.



Grow Your Space

Hallways are very varied in shape, often long, narrow and poorly lit, and therefore hardly welcoming! An instant way to make the space appear larger is to have pale materials on the floors and walls. Patterned wallpaper should be removed or painted over - use a matt paint to minimise imperfections. If there is a panelled dado, keep the contrast between this and the wall colour to a minimum, otherwise the space will appear smaller than it is. Ideally, the colour

on the rack to the bare minimum, and if you have an alternative entrance at the back or the side, consider setting up another coat and shoe store there for the majority of items.

palette will be fairly neutral with an appropriate accent colour and a few interesting textures to prevent blandness. Create drama with a background in blacks and whites, enlivened with a splash of vibrant colour, like scarlet; create calm using tints and shades of the same colour punctuated with a highlight colour that relates to one of the rooms off the hallway. Accent colour can also be introduced through plants and flowers which always enliven a space (but avoid anything strongly scented!).

Focal Focus

To distract from the room's geometry, create focal points that will draw the eye out of the space. These can be furniture or planting on the landing and along the hallway, or an appropriately coloured rug on the floor, or mirrors and artwork facing the entrance door. Not only do mirrors increase the sense of space, they also multiply whatever light comes into the hallway.

Shadow Boxing

If possible, have more than one electrical light source in the hallway. Ceiling pendants should have a fitting that covers the bulb which will diffuse the light and avoid unflattering shadows on the faces of you and your viewers. If there's room for a small lamp on a table or shelf at the end of the hall, this will double as a focal point as well as combating shadows. If not, consider the landing above or an adjacent room as candidates



from which to cast a deflected glow.

Love Your Floor

A good moisture-absorbing floor mat at the entrance is essential. Don't risk embarrassing your visitors by failing to provide the means to prevent muddy footprints. This goes for any other external entrance too. Dig out that spare carpet you've kept in the loft all this time, cut a piece to the width of the hall by a few feet deep, and have it edged at The Rug Edging Specialists. Call Graham on 01392 437210 - he can turn it around in an hour for you - a metre square will cost around £14. If you have to buy a mat, ensure it's washable and is a low contrast to the flooring colour.

Reinvention

Too often the hallway's role as the welcome entry point gets overshadowed with the practical need to divest our outdoor clothes here. As winter draws in, the growing thickness of everyone's coats intrudes bear-like into the space. For the purposes of selling the property, it's really best if you can return your hallway to that role of welcome transition. At least edit the coats and shoes

For more advice on interior design for home owners or property presentation home movers, call Jackie Sears on 01392 670485 or www.present2sell.co.uk

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