

# 25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

## HOMES FULL OF LOVE

*Beautiful rooms to inspire...*

DOWNSIZING TO A  
SURREY NEW-BUILD

CONTEMPORARY  
COTSWOLD COTTAGE

TRANSFORMED FROM  
A STABLE TO A HOME

AN ELIZABETHAN  
MANOR HOUSE

*'You can paint  
your own picture'*

IDEAS &  
SHOPPING  
*for every  
room*

### THE SIMPLE TOUCH

PRETTY COUNTRY SPACES  
FULL OF PERSONALITY

WIN  
**£5,000**

FOR YOUR  
DREAM  
KITCHEN

# Insight

## SPATIAL PLANNING

*Keen to make the most of your space? Scale it up, like James Neil and Giles Morrison have done*

**C**ompact and larger homes can benefit from good spatial planning, both at the build or renovation stage when you'll be able to design the layout yourself. And in the case of existing properties, all it may take is a simple tweak or two to improve the flow of the layout.

### Scale it up

Though James and Giles's home is a one-bedroom apartment, their decorating approach makes the space appear much larger than it is, and while 'less is more' is a common interiors mantra, in this case, larger pieces of furniture and plenty of eye-catching accessories have created the illusion of a more spacious property. The key is to add a sense of generosity and scale by using bigger pieces that may at first feel too large, rather than smaller items, which can create a cluttered look.

It's important to vary scale to create interest – try juxtaposing deep sofas with a slimline console, or teaming an oversized coffee table with a pair of delicate side tables. Pattern, fabric, artwork and strong colours can have a cocooning and welcoming effect. James and Giles have used darker hues and copious framed art in the hall for interest, while elsewhere, light tones, full-length curtains and plenty of mirrors add depth and a touch of luxe. Storage is key, too – a corner bookcase makes clever use

of limited space, while a compact kitchen and bathroom is improved with large, deep baskets to hold accessories, as well as additional cupboards.

### Make a plan

If you are renovating or building from scratch, aim to avoid creating rooms of identical proportions – varying the layout within a new-build, from a double-height hall to a more compact snug, will introduce a sense of variety throughout. It's important to respect the setting of your home, too and, if possible, enlist the help of a professional architect at the earliest planning stages to help realise your vision.

Colour is closely related to scale, too. For instance, a house that has a light-coloured interior will appear much larger, while a darker exterior, featuring materials such as grey render or timber, will make a building seem smaller and more discreet within its landscape or streetscape. Doorways and windows can impact on our impression of space as well – in an existing property, try heightening and widening doorways, or even remove the doors and replace them with glass versions. Consider adding skylights or roof lanterns and in an apartment, create an enfilade – where one room leads to the next without a corridor – which can both simplify and enhance the sense of space and proportion.

### EXPERT EYE



*'Keep colour and pattern considered and not too busy or dominating. If your budget allows, opt for bespoke pieces that are purpose-built to suit your home. Multifunctional furniture is incredibly useful when optimising available space'*

MILA PODIABLONSKA, ABSOLUTE INTERIOR DECOR



### PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

'Successful spatial planning depends upon your home. In some cases, building regulations will make decisions for you – for example there usually has to be a protected lobby or staircase in an apartment or three-storey property. If a building is listed, there will be similar rules on what can and cannot be done.

**Beyond restrictions, there are a number of things you can do to achieve a good flow of space. Introducing an open-plan layout helps connect rooms together and is an easy way of creating a better arrangement.**

You can add a sense of fluidity by reducing circulation space. Opening up a staircase to the rooms is sometimes a good approach, as it removes the need for corridors or halls, which are generally less exciting parts of a house and often take up valuable space.

**Larger windows or glazed doors can help to lighten smaller rooms, while roof lights bring in light and make an area feel larger.**

Depending upon the size of the house, consider the vertical flow of areas if you can. Double-height spaces can create interesting spatial relationships – although this does compromise square footage above.

**Open-plan kitchens allow rooms to look larger. If necessary, the kitchen can be closed off with sliding or folding doors.'**

SHAHRIAR NASSER, BELSIZE ARCHITECTS

### ADDRESS BOOK

■ **Royal Institute of British Architects**  
020 7580 5533, [architecture.com](http://architecture.com)

Professional body, offering information to homeowners as well as a list of architects

■ **Royal Town Planning Institute**  
020 7929 9494, [rtpi.org.uk](http://rtpi.org.uk)

Planning Aid Advice line offers up to 15 minutes of free planning advice

■ **Belsize Architects** 020 7482 4420,  
[belsizearchitects.com](http://belsizearchitects.com)

Award-winning architectural practice, specialising in modern extensions