

# entrances hallways + staircases

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the entrance

The main entrance to the home is often a key element of how the home appears to others; first impressions are important. The door marks the boundary between the exterior and interior and is also an important design consideration in itself.

A heavy timber door suggests a solid and secure building structure. However in an entrance lobby without windows a partially glazed door will allow more light into the space.

Always consider the security and privacy when selecting any glazing in this area. One-way glass allows you to see out but offers privacy inside the entrance, and some people select strengthened glass in entry doors to minimise a break in.

Both the style of the door and handles should support the architecture of the building.



security + safety

Ideally the front door should be protected from weather, such as with a roof or canopy above it, which also provides an area to take off wet shoes/coats, or somewhere to put your bag or shopping down while you are searching for your keys or operating the keypad to open the door.

Exterior lighting is also important at night. Pathways and steps to the door need to be illuminated, as well as the doorway itself, so that you can identify your visitors before opening the door to them. Both can be controlled by infra-red security lights which automatically go on when someone approaches.

Once inside the door a small table in the entrance to put keys, mail or messages on is handy, and somewhere to hang coats and stow umbrellas is also useful. Some homeowners have a 'no shoes inside' policy so a large basket or cupboard for shoe storage works well in this area if room permits.



doors + access

A sense of entry can be achieved by painting the main entrance door in a strong colour to help direct visitors to the correct door. Using a high-gloss paint or varnish adds a bit of drama to the door as well.

As well as timber, popular door materials include metal sheeting over a timber core, laminated MDF, reinforced glass or polycarbonate sheeting. The locking surface of the door can be reinforced with steel plates.

As people become more and more concerned with their personal safety and security, there are lots of options for locking and opening entry doors. Lock and key used to be the norm, but now we have numerical key pads and remote controlled openers, many homes today control access to their property at the front gate, or at the lift of high-rise apartment blocks.



entrance necessities

There are door bells, intercoms and speaker phones for visitors to announce their arrival. Door viewers and video systems enable you to identify visitors and door chains give some added protection.

It is essential to have an efficient door mat to remove moisture and dirt from shoes before entry.

Natural light from windows or glazed side panels to the front door make an entrance feel more welcoming than stepping into a dark space.

Surfaces should be strong and durable, especially the floor where non-slip tiles are a good option. Another mat inside the door helps to remove dirt and moisture from shoes as well, especially if you have timber or carpet on the floor.



**entrance lobby**

Once inside the entrance should feel welcoming to both the family and visitors. It is usually a transitional space where you only greet visitors and direct them into another room of your home. Keep it clutter free, as you do not want people tripping over objects on arrival. As a thoroughfare you must allow for smooth flow from outside to inside. Movement also creates wear and tear, so finishes need to be durable and easy to clean. Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen waterborne enamel is ideal for walls.

Colours that are conducive to welcoming occupants home or greeting guests are rich reds or ochre yellow and golds. On the other hand colour should not be overwhelming in an entrance so equally as popular are pale neutrals and off-white colours, which may be applied to painted walls and furnishings.

A small entrance is a great space to hang a big mirror above a hall table to increase the feeling of space and light. A more generous sized entrance lobby can accommodate art or books, display collections and ornaments or plants and sculptures



**entrance décor**

If the entrance lobby is spacious this is a space to set a scene with the style of furnishings placed within it.

In traditional homes a grandfather clock often adorns the entrance, or a large antique cabinet. And an old Persian rug on the floor with a decorative chandelier overhead adds to the theme.

A lobby that is bathed in sunshine or has a view may be an ideal space for a small table and couple of chairs, or a small sofa or day bed with a side table and reading lamp. Folding chairs that can be easily stacked away when not in use are a perfect solution when space is restricted

If the family have a pet dog, the lobby is sometimes where the dog bed or basket is placed so the dog can alert the family when someone comes to the front door, especially at night.



**stairs**

Planning for safety here is largely a matter of eliminating all unnecessary clutter and preventing falls by making the stairs safe. Ensure floorcoverings are secure and slip resistant, no fraying carpets or loose tiles. A rubber or non-slip safety stair tread on the edges of the stairs reduces accidental falls.

Make sure children do not leave their toys on the stairs, which may result in someone tripping. And ensure handrails and banisters are steady and secure. Since stairs are usually the escape route in the case of fire, good maintenance is critical.

Lighting the stair risers with wall-mounted halogens provides added safety; but all stairwells should be well illuminated at all times. Light switches should be available at the bottom and the top of each set of stairs.



**stair cases**

Stairs can be a very dramatic element of the home, but their function to move people efficiently from one level to another is obviously their prime purpose.

One way to make them feel less enclosed is to allow views through to other levels and rooms of the house, especially if they do not have a full height ceiling. Paint them in lighter colours to add to the feeling of space or use glass blocks on the side wall to allow borrowed light to flow into the stairwell.

For both quality of light and enjoyment of views, windows along the stairs are a good idea. Landings can accommodate a small desk or bookshelves, while narrow shelves along a staircase can display collections of small objects. And as the stairs are a transitional space the walls of this area can house masses of art and photographs.

Some modern homes today have glass bricks, polished concrete or industrial steel stairs, which can be noisy and slippery so take care if considering these materials.



**under stair storage**

The space below the stairs is often difficult to use or furnish so it is an ideal space to incorporate storage. If the stairs are close to the main entrance, it is a great place to design and build cupboards for boots and shoes, shoe cleaners and polishes.

Another idea is hanging space for coats, keys and bags, or narrow shelves can be built into this space for books or collections.



**hallways**

While nobody spends much time in the hall, its main function being to provide a means of access from one room to another, it can be transformed into a pleasant or useful space with a bit of thought.

One of the most important elements is good lighting, preferably natural light via windows or overhead glazing.

If the hall is wide enough you can use it as a library with floor to ceiling bookshelves, or by installing a small desk or laptop mobile it could be used as an office or study area. Additional task lighting would be needed for this.

Another common use for a hallway is a laundry in behind floor to ceiling cupboards on one wall.



**hall safety**

If the hall is quite narrow in width, ensure you do not install furniture or fittings that will obstruct access. Minimise clutter by keeping the walls clear of protruding objects, but it is a good place to hang family photographs or art so that it becomes a more interesting space to pass through.

If the space is dark, keep the floor, wall and ceiling colours light, but if there is plenty of natural lighting this is an area where you can use quite strong colours for added interest.

The surfaces in a hall need to be durable and easy to clean. If the hall has same flooring as stairs or entrance it will be thought of as a transit space, but if the flooring matches adjoining rooms it may feel more an extension of these rooms.



**transition spaces**

Often there are a lot of doors opening off a long hall, which can also make the space feel very busy. In this case paint the doors into the walls by using same colour.

How you move from one space to another affects the way you feel in the new space - the actual transition influences your anticipation of the new space. To avoid abrupt changes you can introduce each new space through careful graduations of light, colour and materials.

Often the hall or stairwells do not get the design considerations that individual rooms receive, yet these transitional spaces are heavily used and vital in the impression the home makes on visitors and occupants.

Looking through an opened front door for instance into a hallway with areas of light and dark, and glimpses of rooms beyond, can be dramatic and fascinating.



A coat stand is great for bags, umbrellas and hats.



The door hand is the 'handshake' of the house, and should be easy to operate.

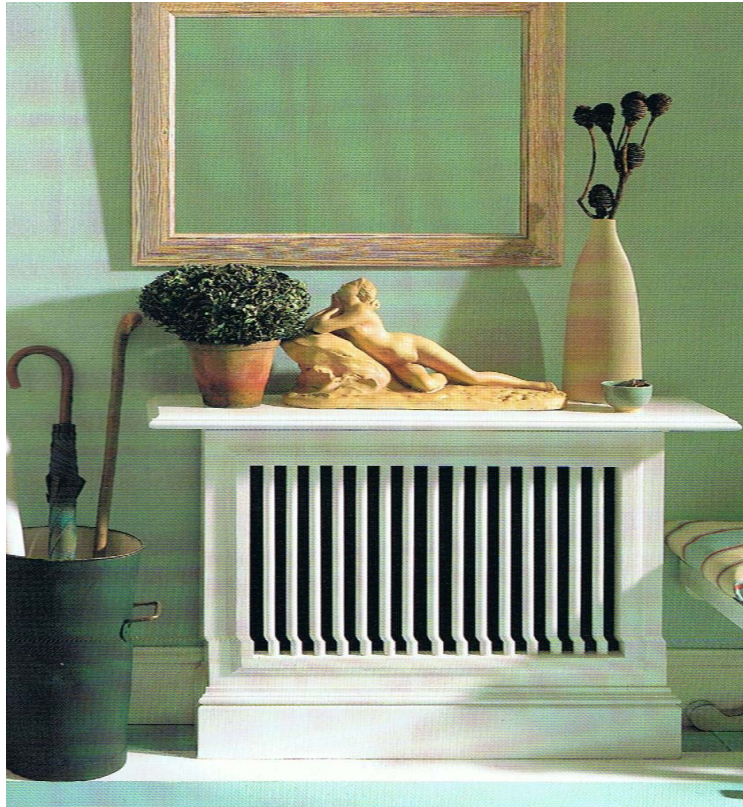
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**Resene**

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Narrow shelves for books and ornaments work well in a passage way.



Lighter colours and a mirror reflect light and make the space feel larger.

compiled by

- Colourwaves - Jill Carroll

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