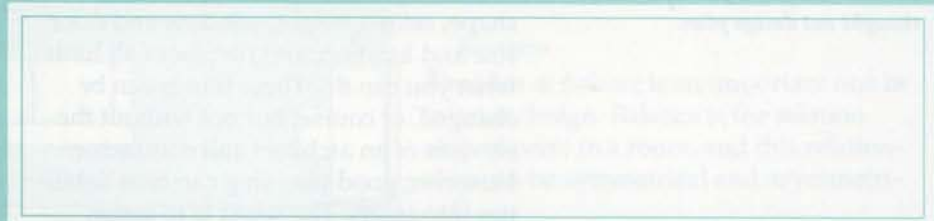
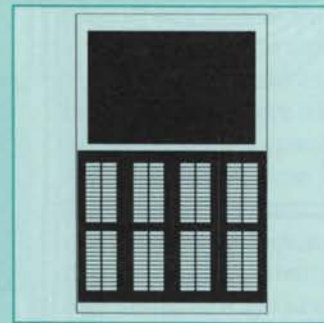


# Interior Design



*Interior design can make a home inviting and functional. A well designed interior should reflect your lifestyle, and it should satisfy your personal ideas of comfort, beauty, and maintenance. By following suggestions outlined in this publication, you can plan and create a unique interior environment of your own.*

### INTERIORS TO FIT YOUR LIFESTYLE

Like people, every house has a personality. Good interior design matches the personality of the home to the personality, activities, and needs of those who live there in an attractive, comfortable way.

Designing an interior isn't quite as simple as it might seem. You might already have begun looking through magazines for design ideas. Or maybe a visit to a friend's house has inspired you to re-decorate. But to make sure the interior of your home reflects *your* family's tastes, you should look systematically at all the things that will eventually affect the room's appearance.

To show you how interior design works, we're going to take you through each step in the design process. The first step is to take a look at the rooms you'll be designing.



*You have a variety of "design tools" to use on your interiors. Fabric, paint, furniture, lighting, and pictures should all be part of a well thought out design plan.*

### Existing Buildings

In existing buildings, room size and shape, ceiling height, window and door size and location, and fireplaces all limit what you can do. These things can be changed, of course, but not without the services of an architect and contractor. However, good planning can turn liabilities into assets. The secret is to assess each room's strengths and weaknesses. By accenting strengths and down-play-

ing the weaknesses, you can make the most of available space.

### New Construction

Individuals planning a new home are free from space limitations – until the first brick is laid. If you're planning to build a new home, don't leave your plans for the interior until last. Make sure you have enough money left in the budget to buy furniture, wallpaper, lighting, drapes, and carpet.

Keep in mind that activities and individual needs may change. It is far easier and far less expensive to anticipate changes than to change the building later.

### Design Tools

Interiors consist of more than just tables and chairs. An interior designer, or an interior design, can take advantage of many "tools" to create attractive interiors.

*You'll be using all these "tools" as you design your interior:*

- ▲ wall coverings (paint, wallpaper)
- ▲ flooring (carpeting, tile, hardwood)
- ▲ window treatments (draperies, blinds)
- ▲ furniture (seating, storage, work space)
- ▲ lighting (table, ceiling, floor)
- ▲ wall decorations (paintings, prints)

Before you decide which of these design tools to use, draw up a preliminary plan to guide your purchases.

### START WITH A "DESIGN PLAN"

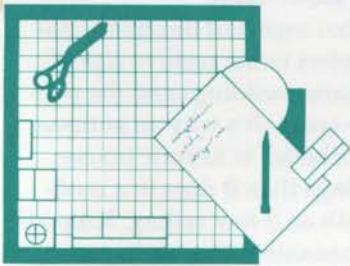
Most home design projects are done in phases. You work on different parts of the home at different times. But even if you plan to do the work in stages, you should develop a long-term *design plan*. A plan will help you avoid splurging, and it will keep you from spending the entire budgeted amount on just one room.

*A simple plan has these elements:*

- ▲ a floor plan;
- ▲ a detailed list of furnishings;
- ▲ a list of priorities for your purchases.

Start by drawing up a floor plan. Include all the changes you plan to make, even those you do not plan to make right away.

As soon as you have completed your plan, make a detailed list of all required furnishings. Then set priorities.



After measuring the room, transfer your measurements to graph paper. A scale of 1/4 inch to the foot works well for developing a design plan.

Decide which pieces of furniture, or other elements of the interior, you will need to purchase first. Buy appropriately. Remember that every room has areas that will be used more often and will have different wear patterns. Invest the most money in items that will get the most use. Save money by purchasing inexpensive items for areas that do not get a lot of use or wear.

Knowing the basic approach, where do you start? If you try to juggle all the pieces of a good design at once, you end up with too many balls in the air. Try the approach interior designers use. Look at each element in the design by itself. This can help you visualize the finished room.

### ARRANGING FURNITURE

Home furnishings should serve those who live there and simplify day-to-day activities. Furniture arrangement is important because it can make a room more functional. Appearance is not its only role. Analyze each area to see what furnishings are needed and how they should be arranged.

To begin you may need to draw a floor plan of the areas or rooms to be furnished. The floor plan is a two-dimensional view of a three-dimensional space. The floor plan should show the walls, doors, and chimney locations. You can also indicate where windows are located so that you don't accidentally place furniture where it will block the view.

Use a tape measure to make a rough sketch of the floorplan in an existing room. Then transfer the measurements to grid paper to help scale your plan. (A scale of 1/4 inch to the foot is best.)

Using duplicate copies of this plan makes it possible to experiment with a number of different furniture arrangements to create a space you like. A few simple principles can help you decide on the best arrangement.

First, leave adequate space around furniture and equipment for easy use and operation. Always keep pathways clear and doors unobstructed.

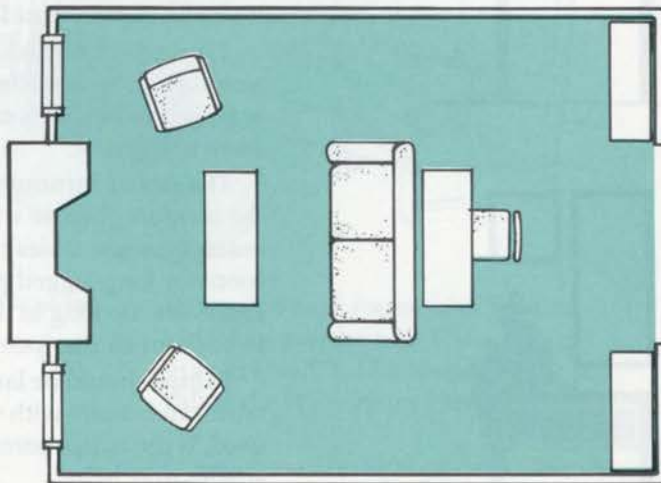
Determine the traffic pattern through the room. Use the flow pattern to establish a "focal point." Perhaps your eye naturally looks toward a picture window or pauses at a fireplace. Create your room arrangement around such centers of interest.

Determine the position of the largest piece of furniture first. Then look for ways to balance the room arrangement as you place the smaller pieces. The smaller pieces fall into place as you experiment.

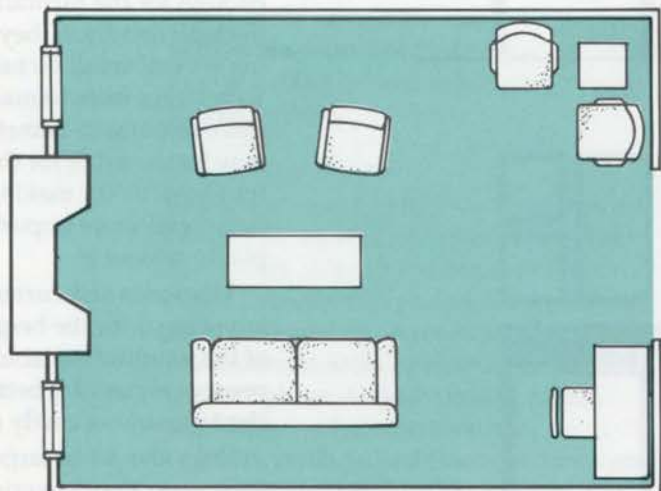
#### Balance

The idea of *balance* is an important one in interior design. Balance is the relationship of parts in a room, and this relationship can be symmetrical and asymmetrical.

Generally, a symmetrical placement will create a more formal and traditional

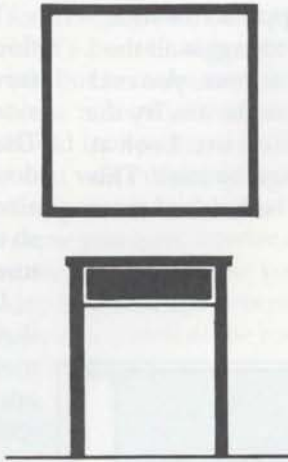


Experiment with different room arrangements. Use fixed features, such as a fireplace, as a focal point. The design at the top uses two bookcases on the walls next to the doorway. The room arrangement at the bottom has placed a desk in one corner and two chairs and a table in the other. Though both arrangements use the same pieces of furniture, the top arrangement is the best because the seating is arranged around a focal point.

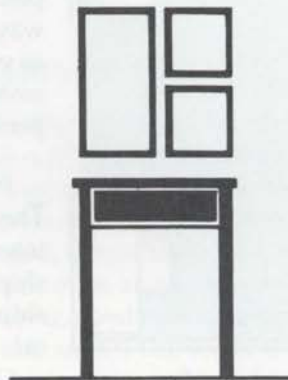
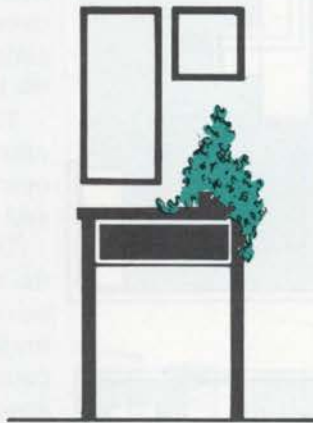


look. Symmetrical arrangements place similar items on either side of an imaginary line, creating a mirror image. Asymmetrical balance is more informal and contemporary. Objects of different sizes, shapes, or colors are arranged together to create balance and unity. A room lacking in balance appears awkward and can be very displeasing to the eye.

*Pictures and mirrors should be large enough for the furniture under them or the walls on which they hang. This mirror is too large for the table under it.*



*This group of pictures matches the size and scale of the table. In one arrangement, the plant makes the table seem more important.*



### FINDING THE RIGHT SCALE

Scale is another aspect of design to consider. Scale refers to the relative size of furniture, rooms, buildings and the people using the space. It's why an antique armoire looks better in historic houses with tall ceilings than it does in a modern house with an 8-foot ceiling. Keep all furnishings consistent in scale to each other, the occupants, the room, and the building of which they are a part.

When the time comes to purchase furnishings, keep the arrangement simple and use only as many pieces as are needed. Overdone or overcrowded rooms can be very unappealing and difficult to live in.

Furnishings used together should be similar in scale to achieve harmony. A small end-table with long, thin legs will look out of place beside a large sofa.

The scale of furnishings must suit the room. Huge overstuffed chairs are out of scale with a small room and make it seem smaller.

The size of furniture must be right for the comfort of those who use it most. For example, some tables do not have knee room for long-legged people. Some chairs are too long in the seat from front to back for shorter people.

Lamps should be large enough for the tables and chairs with which they are used. If the lamps seem too small, larger shades may help.

Pictures and mirrors should be large enough for the furniture under them or the wall on which they hang. Try grouping several small pictures, or frame them with larger mats to make them look more important. Sometimes the table may be too small for the picture or mirror above it. Try making the table seem larger and more important by using plants around it.

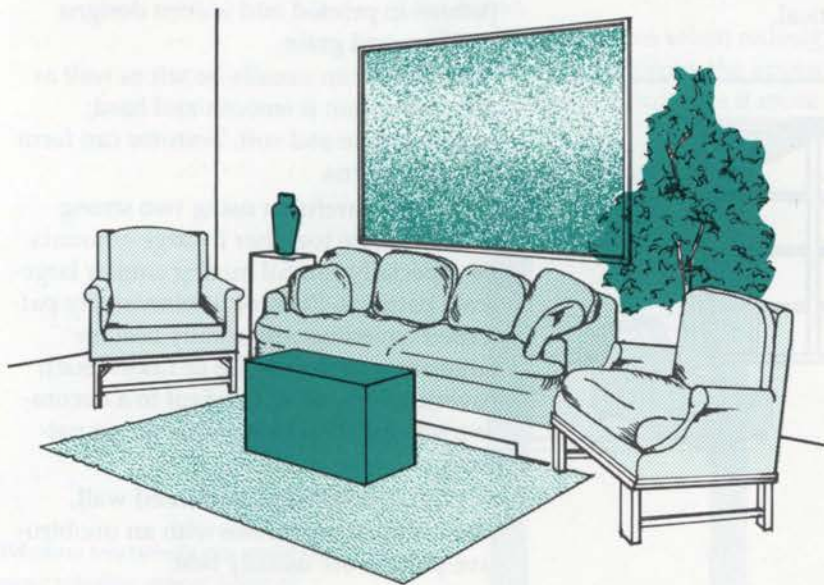
Draperies and curtains should not be too skimpy for the height and the width of the window. An abundance of inexpensive material is better than an insufficient amount of costly material.

Rugs should be large enough for the floor area. Floor coverings laid wall-to-wall, or nearly so, unify a room and make it seem more spacious.

### CHOOSE COLOR WISELY

Color can accomplish more for less cost than any other element of interior design. Everything in a room has color, either natural or applied.

Color creates mood or atmosphere. It can make a room seem cheery or restful, warm or cool. Color can be used to unify a room, hide ugly shapes, accent points of interest, make a small room seem



Color can unify a room or accent points of interest.

larger or a dark room seem lighter.

Colors may be pure ("strong") or grayed ("soft"). This characteristic is called the *intensity* (or *chroma*) of the color.

Color may be light or dark. This characteristic is called the *value* of the color.

Both intensity and value exist in all colors at the same time. For example, vermilion is a pure, medium-value red; maroon is a dark, grayed red; buff is a light, grayed yellow.

#### Balancing Color

Successful use of color is achieved by a balance of colors of different intensities and values. A room in which all the colors are light and grayed is often bland and uninteresting. A room in which the predominant areas of color are pure (either light or dark) is usually harsh, and will soon become tiresome.

Walls, ceilings, and floor coverings are large areas which form the basis of any color scheme. Generally, these large areas should be soft and light in value. They

are easier to live with and form a background which complements the stronger colors of the furnishings and accessories. The pure colors form the accents in a room because a small amount of pure, strong color will balance a large area of soft, light-valued color. Notice how occasional chairs, vases, flowers, pictures, and small accessories can be brilliant in color, and much lighter or darker, without destroying the unity of a color scheme.

There are three types of color schemes:

- ▲ contrasting;
- ▲ analogous, or similar;
- ▲ monochromatic, meaning various values and hues of one color.

All can be used successfully. Their use depends upon you and the mood you want the room to express.

#### Pick Colors You Like

Choose colors you like, not necessarily the colors of current fashion. Forget such rules as: "Blue and green should never be used together." Use your eyes; not your fears. Select from samples, and you will find many combinations that are pleasing.

Before you decorate, collect color samples of wallpaper, paint, upholstery, and carpeting. Have samples of every color you intend to use. Study possible combinations carefully. Take your time. If you still like a particular combination after a day or two, you may want to use it.

If you wish to use a new and daring color on a large area such as a wall, and are unsure about it, try painting a large piece of paper – a square yard or more in size – with the color, and let it dry as a test area. Or, paint the smallest end of the room and let it dry. This will enable you to better judge how the color will look in large amounts. Similarly, large samples of carpeting, drapery, and upholstery materials are much easier to judge than smaller samples.

Do not be drab in order to be practical. Bright colors do not show soil any more than neutral colors of the same value. Many present-day materials are amazingly soil resistant.

Generally, limit yourself to three or four principal colors in a room. This limitation will require you to repeat each

color throughout the room, helping to achieve unity.

It is much easier to harmonize the color of walls and draperies with a carpet than to match a carpet to the walls and draperies. For a spacious look, use drapery material of the same value (lightness or darkness), but not necessarily of the identical color, as the walls.

Various colors of woods harmonize and add interest. All wood in a room need not be identical.

successfully combined, as long as their forms complement each other. This makes it easy to combine pieces you already own with new pieces to create a unified interior.

### PATTERN AND TEXTURE

Everything in a room has pattern and texture – fabrics, stone, wood, glass, metal, plaster, brick, china, plants. You can see pattern in printed and woven designs and in wood grain.

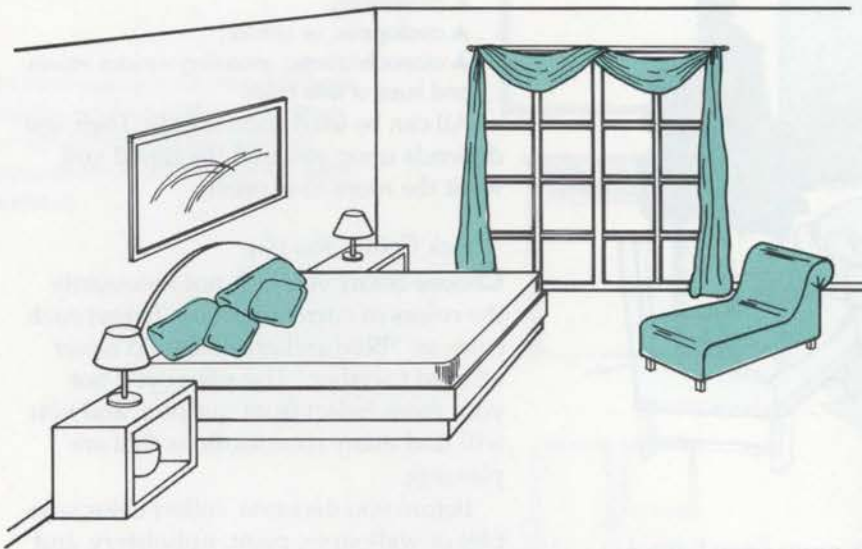
Textures can usually be felt as well as seen. Porcelain is smooth and hard; tweed, coarse and soft. Textures can form subtle patterns.

Be very careful in using two strong patterns close together in large amounts. Be especially careful mixing similar large-scale patterns. Plain or unobtrusively patterned coverings are usually best for large areas such as walls or floors. Such coverings are easier to adapt to a decorative scheme than those with strong patterns.

With a textured or patterned wall, plain draperies or those with an unobtrusive pattern are usually best.

Use contrasting textures for variety where contrasting colors or patterns might destroy unity.

*Plain or subtly patterned coverings are usually best for large areas such as walls or floors. Be careful when using two strong patterns close together and in large amounts.*



*Organic shapes and curved lines suggest a softness and slow movement ideal for a restful bedroom.*

### USE SIMPLE FORMS

Form is the shape of furnishings and accessories within the interior. Different types of form produce rooms with different characters. For example, organic shapes and curved lines suggest softness and slow movement ideal for a restful space. The use of predominantly rectangular shapes and straight lines creates a serene and uncluttered space. However, triangular forms and diagonal lines can produce feelings of dynamic movement and speed.

While there are no explicit rules involving the use of form, a good general guideline is to go with simplicity. Enrichment of shapes with carving or ornamentation can be beautiful as long as the decorations do not detract from the basic shape of the piece of furniture or accessory.

If the shapes are kept simple, furniture from different periods can be very



Use a patterned covering where soiling is a problem or where an empty space, such as a hallway or foyer, lacks interest.

**TIPS ON REDESIGNING A ROOM**

Although no two design problems will be exactly alike, it may be helpful to examine a typical design problem to get a feel for what can be done to improve your home.

The main objectives when redesigning your home are to improve the appearance of the area and to make it more

functional and comfortable. Each room will also have its own needs, such as efficiency in a kitchen, or coziness for a den or family room.

The current trend is to design a multi-purpose room. This enables many more activities to occur at the same time, drawing family members together. Many times, you can use space better by simply rearranging the furniture to meet your needs.

Scale the furniture according to other pieces in the room. Wall arrangements of photographs or prints should be scaled to look appropriate with nearby furniture.

Provide adequate lighting. Lamps should be large enough to provide reading lighting, yet not too large, or they will look cumbersome on a small table. You can use track lighting to draw attention to centers of interest.

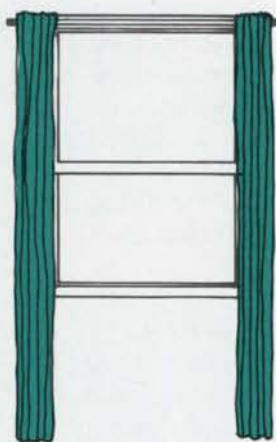
Use rugs to set apart different activity areas. Runners are a type of rug that can lead one visually from one room to the next. Rugs need not be restricted to areas where hard flooring is covered. They can also be used over existing wall-to-wall carpet.

Use space wisely. Small areas should not be cluttered with large, overly ornate pieces. Diagonal pieces in the corners can waste space and make the room seem cluttered. This is particularly true in small rooms.

Use finishes to enhance the structure of the room. Large prints, for example, will enhance the graciousness and volume of spaces with high ceilings.

Small rooms, or spaces that are overly large, can be made more comfortable with color, pattern, and wall and ceiling treatments. Light colors will "open up" a small area. Porous floor and wall coverings, such as carpets and heavy fabric can minimize noise problems in very large rooms. Hard surfaces reflect sound and light, whereas porous floor and wall coverings absorb sound.

Use window treatments to accentuate or disguise the size and shape of the window. Window treatments can also frame a beautiful landscape, hide a troublesome view, or act as barriers to heat or cold. You can choose from mini-blinds,



Window treatments can make the same window appear taller or shorter, and they can hide troublesome views.

**SUBSCRIBE NOW!**

Don't miss the next eight issues of *Council Notes*. Once you're on our subscription list, we'll send you our newest publications as soon as they're printed. Publications are issued quarterly. To place an order, call:

**1-800-336-0616**

Visa and Mastercard accepted.



roller shades, balloon shades, shutters, insulated draperies, sheers, and more.

Use immovable objects to their best advantage. A fireplace can be a dramatic focal point. Group furnishings or prints around the fireplace to create a unified effect. Built-in bookcases can also be furnished to be a center of interest. Although they are not fixed objects, a grouping of photographs, plants, or products of a hobby can also provide a similar effect.

#### **COORDINATE FURNITURE STYLES**

The quality and style of the furniture in a home says a great deal about the people who live there. Are you formal or casual? Do you like formal suites, antiques, or furniture that's casual and easy to clean?

First-time homeowners usually do not have enough furniture to have a complete set in every room, and the cost of refurbishing a whole room is too great for many budgets.

Don't sacrifice quality to buy a complete grouping. Purchase the most needed and versatile pieces first. A bed and a dresser are obvious first pieces. A table can also double as a desk if money and space are tight.

Because you may never purchase the whole set, select a style that will stay stylish even if trends change. Choose a style that fits with other pieces and carries the overall atmosphere of the home.

If you are buying new furniture to match antiques or other styles, select

pieces that will complement the features of the furniture you already own. Analyze the form, scale, and character to see if the pieces work well together.

Families move more today than they have in the past. This can be an important consideration when buying furniture. If you know you may be moving often, do not commit to a furniture style that only looks good in a certain style house. The pieces you select should be able to adapt well to many different settings.

The type of atmosphere you want to create will affect the kind of furniture you buy. Traditional, classical furniture is very formal; simple wood furniture is "homey;" contemporary is sleek and exciting.

The furniture style and function should fulfill the needs and activities of the people using it. If there are children or pets, the furniture should not be elaborate or excessive, but durable.

Easy maintenance is another important factor to consider when selecting furniture. It is important to know if the material is going to require extra care or just regular cleaning. With today's lifestyles, maintenance is something that should not be overlooked.

Most of all, the furniture should function well in the space. It should be efficient, attractive, and livable. Quality furniture will be around for a long time and, if it is chosen properly, it can be a worthwhile and beautiful investment.

© 1990 by The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois

Material in this publication by:

Professor Joy Potthoff, with Julie Stoner, Nancy Auth, Heather Toman, Jim Campbell, Jill Matson, Julie Marchiando

Editor: Marylee MacDonald

Graphic Arts: Selah Peterson, Mary Leonard-Cravens, Sheila McCarthy

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher. Published by the Building Research Council, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, One East Saint Mary's Road, Champaign, Illinois 61820. This publication is one of a series written for the homeowner. Write us for a complete list of publications, or call (800) 336-0616.