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IDEAS TO TRANSFORM YOUR HOME IN 2016



27 Build a smart garden room
Add a contemporary studio in your garden to create an extra room outdoors. This Atelier Studios building costs from £19,200.

29 SOURCE CLASSIC KITCHEN CARPENTRY

'Start by collecting images of kitchens you like from magazines and the internet, plus kitchen showrooms,' advises interior designer Nicola Steer. 'Take the style of the rest of your furnishings and décor, and the period of your house into consideration when you start to narrow down your choices, and don't be tempted by fashion and fads. A Shaker-style kitchen, for example, looks wonderful in

a period property, but out of place in a contemporary extension, where a sleeker design would be better suited; equally, modern cabinetry is always the best choice for post-1950s house. As for the cabinetry's finish and colour, avoid high gloss, which dates quickly and shows off every smudge, and choose a neutral tone or natural finish, saving bright colours for walls and accessories.'

CASE STUDY

28 Use a rich colour scheme to create a warm and welcoming space

'This 120-square-metre flat in south-west London hadn't been decorated for 13 years when we were asked to transform it into an "urban oasis",' says interior designer Keira Townsend. 'We made some alterations to the layout, removing the partition wall between the kitchen and living room to open up the space and make the kitchen an integral part of the entertaining area.'

'The south-facing living room has ample natural light flooding in through glazed sliding doors opening onto the balcony. This is perfect lighting for using rich, dark tones, as they look lively and luscious in daylight, and luxurious and comforting at night when complemented by various types of mood lighting.'

'The trick to using colour confidently in a relatively small space is not to have too many contrasts or palette juxtapositions. There should be an overall dominant background colour scheme and, if different materials and textures from the same palette are used, it adds a calming and luxurious feel. In the bedroom, for example, oak in a tobacco finish has been used for the headboard frame, side tables and the wardrobes, which also feature leather detailing. The headboard is in charcoal grey velvet. Wall light shades and bespoke cushions in bronze tones add an injection of colour to the space.'

'The master en suite bathroom features a bespoke graphite-colour sink in recycled glass, lit from within by LED lighting, fitted with bespoke chrome and black onyx taps above a black lacquered vanity unit. The wall behind the washbasin is clad with bespoke, carved wooden panels with Art Deco detail. Textured grey/black mosaic tiles in the shower complement the grey silver floor tiles.'



CASE STUDY

BEFORE



18 Rethink the layout to create space in a small apartment

'This flat in west London is only 40 square metres, and is in a typical Victorian mansion block conversion,' says interior designer Keira Townsend. 'The client's brief was to create a hotel look using a relaxing colour palette. We started by knocking walls down to create an open-plan kitchen/dining/living room.'

To give a visual perception of space, surfaces are finished in light, neutral tones in a variety of materials, such as polished plaster,

which reflects light, with kitchen splashbacks in antiqued bronze mirror glass. Throughout the flat, the floor is tiled in textured ceramic that looks and feels like wood.

'In the shower room, LED lighting dramatically illuminates the basin, which is made from recycled glass. Wall tiles are glass-backed with real silver leaf with bronze tinting,' adds Keira. 'Monochromes and a variety of textures and finishes have again been used to create a feeling of space in the relatively small but luxurious bedroom with en suite bathroom. Every inch of space has been cleverly utilised to maximise storage, too.'

AFTER



19 Add a driveway

If you live in a built-up area where competition for parking is fierce, it's well worth investigating whether you can fit a driveway in your front garden – both for

your convenience and for the positive effect it might have on the value of your home. To do so, you will need planning permission for both changing the garden into a driveway and for having the kerb

outside lowered – make sure you budget for these costs. 'Ensure, too, that the hardstanding is a permeable type that allows rainwater to drain into the ground,' says estate agent Jeremy Leaf.