



by Catherine Fantauzzi
First Impressions Decor

Entrances & foyers

Question: *How can I divide and decorate the entrance/foyer in my open concept home design from the rest of the living space, but still maintain design continuity?*

First impressions are more powerful than people realize. The main entrance and foyer of a home set the tone for the remainder of the house, and decorative schemes should be personal, reflecting individual tastes aimed at being visually pleasing and comfortable. Entrances should make people feel welcome and introduce them to the personality that reflects the people who live within.



New open concept home designs today lack any division of an entrance/foyer space from the rest of the first floor design, the first visible room most likely being the living room. In some new home designs, a low knee-wall topped with architectural columns separates these two spaces.

Defining the entry and "separating" it from another room can be achieved in a few different ways. First, choose a wall treatment that differs from the rest of the main floor. When selecting paint or wallpaper, choose a colour that coordinates and is complementary with colours found in the nearest visible room, to create colour continuity. If there is no wall separation at all and the space is totally open, you may want to use a room divider such as a screen that faces the door, or a glass wall, or wood latticework or even a series of plants. Define the floor space as well, by selecting a different floor treatment than that of the living area.

The basic decorating elements of an entrance are: a closet (in which to hang coats), a table top surface (to place items such as mail, keys, shopping bags, briefcase, purse); a mirror (adds to the perception of



light and space); some form of seating (for putting on and removing footwear); a place for footwear; and some form of wall treatment. How you decorate the entrance depends on its size and shape, and the creation of a scheme that harmonizes with the adjoining rooms. A simple decorating scheme would entail picking up particular elements from these adjoining rooms and combining them in the entrance decoration.

Every entry must have adequate lighting, and most lack natural light. You can redefine the space by using lighting and related design techniques. To guarantee sufficient lighting for safe passage, as well as providing visual accents, try to avoid the common error of relying on only one source of entrance lighting, such as a chandelier. Accent lighting should be part of the overall design; for instance, adding wall sconces may help to adequately illuminate the space. Use spotlighting to highlight a dramatic painting or sculpture. Illuminated stairways in an entrance also make the area seem larger.

Most entrances today are tiled in ceramic or a natural stone such as granite. To soften and warm up this appearance, an Oriental or Aubusson-style rug in a tapestry design can be laid. Furnishing this space with a chest of drawers creates a more dramatic statement than does the usual console table. If your entrance is small, you may be able to give the appearance of a larger space by using mirrors



or glass, making sure that the frame and style is in keeping with the scheme you have in mind. Place the mirror above the chest of drawers. If the chest is too high, then place the mirror on the opposite wall. Hanging extraordinary art or framed pictures on an entrance wall illuminated at night dramatizes the space even further.

If space permits, comfortable seating in the form of a chair or bench should be added for putting on or removing footwear. And the addition of a shelf to showcase an interesting collection will personalize an entrance.

One more small item, but a very important one, is to add "fragrance". Lighting scented candles or filling a glass vase or bowl with potpourri helps to eliminate stale odours trapped within the house.

And, to complete and complement the rest of the elements, let's not forget about live greenery.

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