

SPECIAL ISSUE: HOMES OF THE YEAR

November 2018

# Homebuilding & RENOVATING

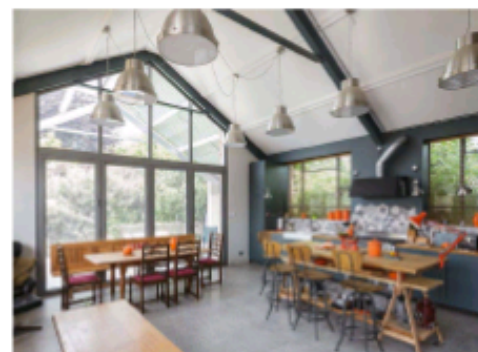
How to create your dream home

Britain's  
Best  
Selling  
Self-build  
Magazine

**HOME DESIGN  
HEAVEN**

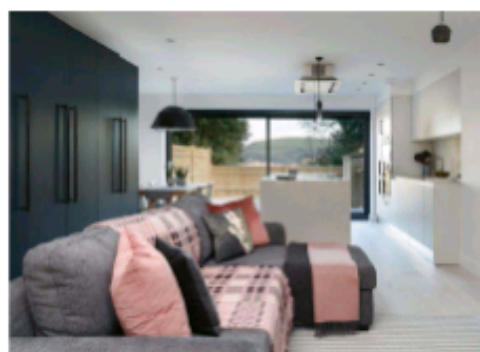
*Be Inspired by Britain's  
Best New Homes*


**Self Builds | Renovations | Extensions**



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The complete guide: from underfloor heating to the latest heating innovations
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- Expert building advice





HOW TO CREATE A

# WARM INTERIOR SCHEME

*It can be a challenge to make the interiors of new homes feel warm and characterful in the absence of original period details — our simple design tips will ensure your new home or extension feels anything but cold and clinical*

**Y**our home, be it a contemporary masterpiece or of a more classic design, should feel like a retreat, somewhere to recharge at the end of the day or congregate with loved ones.

There is a misnomer that sleek, clutter-free, minimalist interiors can't feel warm and welcoming. Likewise, fans of period homes will argue that even traditional-style new builds can never have the character of authentically old buildings.

While it is true that it tends to be more of a challenge to create warm and cosy spaces in new homes and extensions, all it really takes is forward-planning, and a few tried-and-tested tricks of the trade. Here we share our top design tips for creating characterful new interiors in your project.

### BUILD IN CHARACTER

The 'bones' of a building provide just as much in the way of character and warmth as final finishes such as paint and fabrics.

Of course what this means is that warm interiors are something you need to think about at the initial design stages, not just as an afterthought — simply painting a room a warm colour will not be as effective as planning in character from the off. There are a few ways to inject warmth during the planning stage:

**Room shape:** Avoid box-shaped rooms. Alcoves, chimney breasts, deep bay windows and partial room divides all add interest and dimension — so important for character.

**Ceiling heights:** Sloping, vaulted or dual-level ceilings offer so much more in the way of character and interest of form than a uniform ceiling.

**Floor levels:** A split-level layout is the ideal way

to introduce interest into a home — even a single room, such as a kitchen diner, can benefit.

**Expose the structure:** Keeping the inside of a house unwrapped, so to speak, is a sure-fire way to add character. Leaving certain structural elements exposed, such as timber beams, ceiling joists, or perhaps even electrical conduits in more industrial-style interiors, means plain walls or ceilings are broken up, avoiding a look that is too clinical.

### BE COLOUR CLEVER

The colours in a room will dramatically change its feel — but colour on the walls is not the only way to achieve this. While paint is undoubtedly one of the simplest and most economical ways of injecting a feeling of warmth to a room, there are lots of other elements within a space that can be used to provide cosy-feeling colours.

Flooring is a good example — warm, creamy tones of natural stone, earthy quarry tiles and rich-toned woods will instantly warm up a space, where as harsher pure white and glossy black tiles tend to look colder.

Colour is also a useful way to break up large, vacuous spaces (which should be avoided at all costs if you want your interiors to feel welcoming) — create cosy zones and corners using warm shades on certain walls.

### INTRODUCE TEXTURES

The overall feeling in a room is hugely influenced by the textures within that space. This doesn't just translate into cushions and throws — the walls, ceilings, flooring and fixtures and fittings can all play their part. ➤

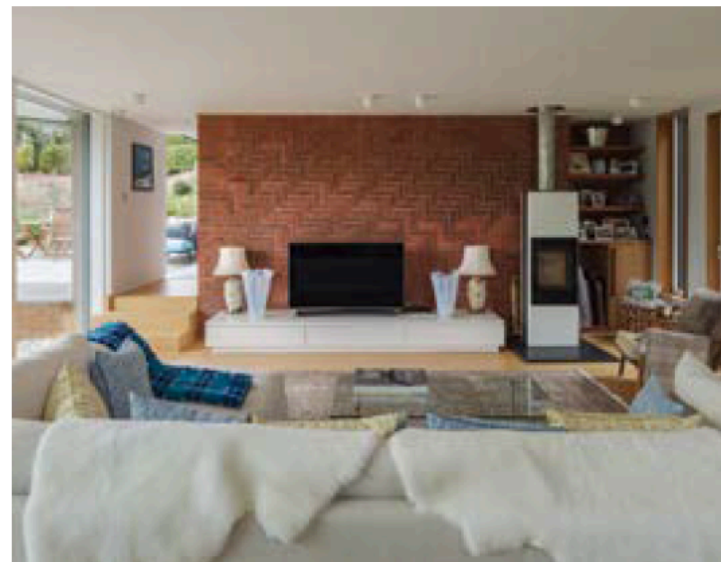
## *“Warmer colours visually advance”*



**JO HAMILTON, creative director at London-based Hamilton Interiors ([johamilton.co.uk](http://johamilton.co.uk))**

There are many ways to bring warmth to a scheme, but colour selection is the most obvious. Cooler colours such as blues, greens and violets are calming and serene, whilst warmer colours — reds, oranges and yellows — are vibrant, alive and fun. These warmer tones visually advance and make the space feel cosier, so are an excellent way to add that homely touch.

Use natural materials, such as warm-toned woods and metallics. Choose a range of fabrics and textures that work well together without being too matchy-matchy, and layer. An uncontrived mix of hand-woven linens, plush velvets and softly patterned prints in differing scales, adds a soft feel to your space.



### Combine Materials and Textures

Rather than sticking to just one type of wall covering throughout a space, mix up the materials you use to add interest and a more intimate feel. Here, timber cladding sits alongside stone, plaster finishes and slate tiles, for a look that complements the mid-century modern-style furniture from Walter Knoll ([walterknoll.de/en](http://walterknoll.de/en)).



Although a painted finish is the most common choice for walls, you might instead consider timber cladding, a textured plaster, fabric wallpaper or a more unusual final finish such as orientated strand board. Take a look at combining different textures in a room too, such as a section of wool carpet set into a timber floor.

### INSIST ON GOOD LIGHTING

Lighting is so often overlooked as a source of visual warmth despite the huge effect it can have on a space. People are realising that a single, central pendant will do nothing in the way of bringing a room to life, but it is surprising how often lighting opportunities are missed. A good lighting scheme can create a cosy glow in a subtle way.

The key to creating a warming lighting scheme is to layer up. This means combining ambient (or general) lighting such as that provided by recessed downlights or wall lights, with other sources, such as a selection of side lamps at various heights, hidden LEDs for a glow behind shelving or picture lights.

Set each 'layer' of light on a separate circuit so that you can pick and choose according to the mood required. Dimmers are also a must.

### CREATE SOCIABLE SPACES

Homes which encourage the people in them to congregate and converse are much more welcoming than those with vast open planes of emptiness.

There is certainly a place for cosy corners meant for one, and wide open corridors free of obstructions, but they need to be interspersed with crowd-friendly areas in order for a house to feel inviting.

Good examples include seating arranged in such a way that people come together — with sofas and chairs facing one another, around a central coffee table. Kitchen islands with seating are another good example. ➤

## *“Don't ‘over light’ your home”*



**JIM LAWRENCE, Jim Lawrence Lighting**  
([jim-lawrence.co.uk](http://jim-lawrence.co.uk))

The key is to find a healthy balance. You don't want to 'over light' an area and make it feel artificial. Where it might be difficult to install overhead lighting, wall lights are a foolproof go-to. Otherwise, a mixture of table and floor lamps with dimmers are ideal for altering the atmosphere according to the setting, for example in a living or dining room. We suggest pendants in these spaces too, to bring another layer of light when necessary, and for adding a main point of interest to your home décor.

In bedrooms, to retain the warm atmosphere, use low level outlets such as picture lights, reading lamps or wall sconces for a softer look.