



stylish living

1 FOCAL POINT

"A fireplace is a must-have focal point, so if there is an existing fire there, open it up, improve it if necessary and use it. And if there isn't, put one in – I particularly like contemporary gas styles or modern wood-burning stoves, but if you want a more traditional style, chesneys.co.uk makes new surrounds based on classic Georgian, Victorian or Edwardian designs, so you have a traditional style with all the benefits of a new fire."

w&h Style tip

Good lighting is essential in a kitchen. A combination of spotlights over preparation areas and stylish pendant lighting works well. Good places to try for affordable lighting are thelightingcentre.co.uk and mr-resistor.co.uk

2 LET THERE BE LIGHT

"Space and natural light are so important, so I try to add both wherever I can by opening up entrances such as the double doors into the garden, or using skylights where necessary. These days, people want their work and living spaces close to each other, so in my house, the dining area flows from the kitchen and the whole space is open plan."



3 KITCHEN ISLAND

"It's always worth including an island unit if you have space. They can be expensive to install, but undoubtedly increase the value of your home. When planning a kitchen, make sure all appliances are within easy reach of the food preparation area, and buy the best you can afford. It really is a false economy to buy cheap – good-quality appliances are a strong selling point." >>

7 ways to add value to YOUR HOME

Property developer Sian Stonehill shares her experience and shows you the best ways to improve your own home

Sian Stonehill became a property developer after two decades of moving every few years with her husband. "His business took him all over the world, so the children and I went with him, moving from country to country," she explains. "There was always a new house to decorate and improve, so when I came back to the UK, it carried on and became my career."

Sian, who is now divorced and shares her home with her four grown-up children, says her current house was a real find. "It's an early Victorian Gothic house, which hadn't been touched for 50 years," she says. "But I could see it had huge potential. I've reworked it entirely for today's modern lifestyle – what we all want now is open-plan, airy living."





Creating one large room out of two has given the bedroom a large and airy feel, which appeals to people looking to buy

w&h
Style tip

Love Sian's headboard? For tall headboards, try thewhitecompany.com and featherandblack.com, especially if you don't want the expense of buying a bespoke one

w&h
Style tip

Demister mirrors are a great buy for a bathroom. We all have problems with condensation, but no matter how steamy it is in the bathroom, the mirror stays clear, so you can still do your make-up! Find these at demista.co.uk

6 LUXURY BATHROOM

"Again, I sacrificed two small bathrooms to make one large one, and I made it en suite. People expect their bathroom to be in close proximity to their bedroom. Also, if you have the space, it's worth including two basins, as this has instant appeal for couples or families. Storage is essential, so always build it in wherever possible."



7 LOFT CONVERSION

"Converting an attic into a self-contained apartment definitely adds value to a property. It's a very versatile area and has a number of uses. It's a great space for a home office, visiting relatives, or an older

child – with children staying at home longer today, this offers a separate area under one roof. My son Archie uses it at the moment, as he is at university and comes home the most. A smart shelf unit acts as a clever room divider." **w&h**

5 GIVE YOURSELF SOME SPACE

"Originally, my bedroom was two smaller rooms. It might seem foolish to lose a bedroom if you're thinking of selling on, but people always want larger rooms where they don't feel too cramped. The house also has to work for you while you're living in it and I find, if it works for me, other people seem to like it too. Even if you live in a smaller house or a cottage, try to keep your bedrooms uncluttered to give yourself a similar sense of space and sanctuary."

WORDS VICTORIA METCALF PHOTOGRAPHS LOGAN MACDOUGALL POPE



4 MODERN DESIGN

"I installed a modern staircase that is different to the original, existing one. I believe buyers are looking for individuality, so don't be afraid of mixing antique with contemporary – the contrast works really well. With accessories, always group them in odd numbers – it's a trick that interior designers and stylists use."

