



PRACTICAL DESIGN

ONLINE COURSE

eBook Demo



01

The basics of design

We begin by teaching you the fundamental building blocks of good design. Together, we explore the basics of interior design and the interior's language that you must know, understand and speak. Giving you actionable tools to begin creating beautiful and functional spaces right away, this is your exclusive pass into the world of interior design.

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 81 information-filled pages available in Module 01.





M1.2 Elements and principles of design.



Photo by pexels.com

The Elements and Principles of design are essentially guidelines applied to create functional and visually successful spaces and designs. They are referred to as the language of design, and they are not only essential to create successful spaces or designs, but also used to describe those spaces.

A great way to understand this, is to think of the process of baking a cake! The Elements are like the ingredients, what the design or space is made up of, and the Principles are the cooking method, or what you do with those ingredients. Mixing the design elements in endlessly different ways allows us to creatively design the spaces we live and work in.

| Elements | Principle |
|----------|-----------|
| Line | Emphasis |
| Colour | Harmony |
| Shape | Scale |
| Space | Balance |
| Texture | Contrast |
| Pattern | Rhythm |



Pattern.

Pattern, like shape and texture is a powerful tool to create interest and add variety in design and it always seen to add movement to an environment.

- Pattern is generally a repetition of shapes, either organic or geometric.
- Pattern can be busy and bold through its use of form, colour and material, or it can be soft and calming.
- Repetition of the same or similar patterns in a space is a clever way to tie multiple spaces together to have a common theme, colour or material throughout.
- Pattern can be used in small or large amounts, but in general small punches of pattern can provide a big effect. IE. Patterned cushions on a block colour sofa, looks very different to a patterned sofa with block colours cushions.

Playing with patterns will help create different experiences within a space, adding character to this one and interest. Picture a highly patterned bathroom floor tile, compared to a matte mid grey tile that has no character or movement, the floor becomes the statement finish, the star of the show, with the tapware and accessories providing the supporting act.



The opposite of pattern is plain: you tell me which sounds more interesting.

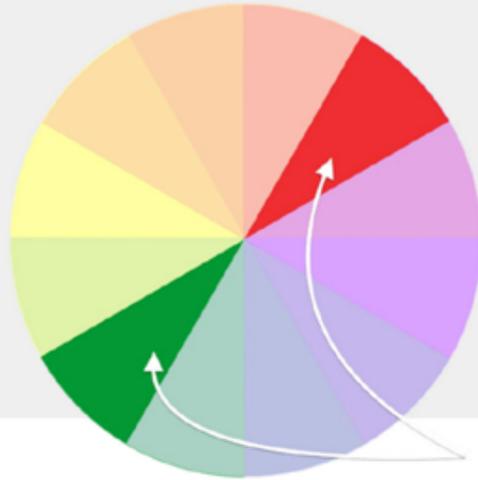
Tips

- Angular and linear patterns bring a structured feeling into a space, a masculine effect.
- Curvaceous patterns add an organic and softer appeal, a gentler feeling, a sense of feminine.

COMPLEMENTARY COLOUR SCHEMES

Complementary colours (or complementing) sit opposite each other on the colour wheel for example, red and green.

- Contrasting colours can be used to create both bold and subtle interior colour schemes.
- Examples of complementing colours are green & red, blue & orange and yellow and purple.

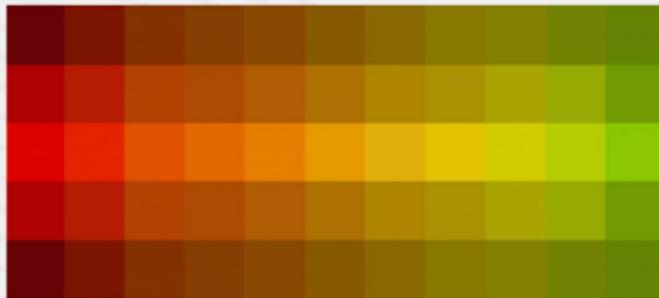


Note

As these colours are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel, they basically balance each other in intensity. That is why red headed people look so striking in green, as wearing the colour, balances their red hair and complexion. Interesting ha!

WARM COLOUR SCHEMES

Warm colours mostly include the various shades and tones of red, orange and yellow.



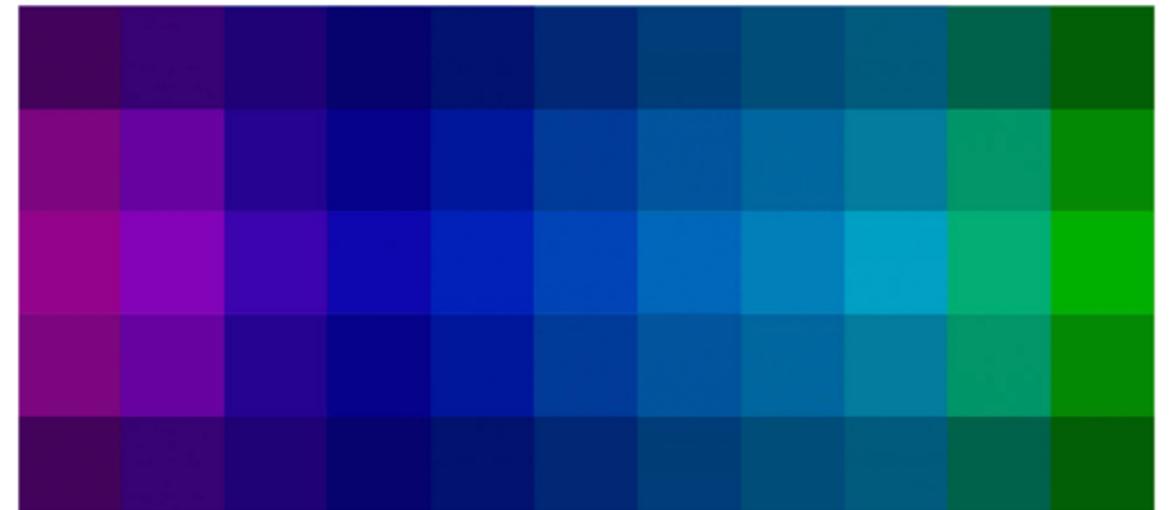
- Warmer colours tend to 'advance' into a space, meaning that they appear to move closer into a room and creating the sense that it is smaller or cosier.

- When warmer colours are used in an interior space, such as red or orange, the space tends to advance meaning that they tend to draw in a space, making it appear smaller, cosier and more intimate.
- Representing the colours of fire and the sun, warm colours also can influence emotions and stimulate feelings such as happiness, appetite or excitement.

COOL COLOUR SCHEMES

Cool colours mostly consist of various hues of blue, green and purple.

- Cooler colours tend to 'recede' from a space, meaning that they appear to move further away in a room, helping the sense of a larger space.
- Representing the natural tones of water and nature, cooler colours generally stimulate feelings of comfort, regeneration and relaxation.



The Queenslander 1840's to 1930's.

Originating in Queensland as the name suggests, the Queenslander style was built as a response to the varying climate conditions and requirements of the area and can also be found in Northern NSW due to similar conditions.

The Queenslander style is characterised by steeply pitched rooflines, timber (and now steel) construction methods and perhaps the most iconic feature of being raised above the ground. The steep roof pitch and larger roof cavities assist with temperature control and the often-unpredictable storms and rainfall of the area, whilst similarly being raised above the ground creates air flow that provides a natural cooling solution especially in the summer months.

This type of home was one of the first created specifically to relate to Australia's extreme climate, allowing wide verandas to shield the external walls of the home from the harsh Queensland sun, timber construction provided for light and ease of build, whilst allowing quick construction on both flat and sloping blocks.



Key characteristics include:

- Usually timber construction but can also be steel framed in modern construction.
- Houses are raised above the ground at a single or split level.
- Large verandas that often wrapped around the entire home, featuring decorative timberwork and balustrade detailing.
- External walls were almost always timber clad, with iron roofs not terracotta or concrete tiles.
- Pitched gable details were common especially over the entry area or front porch.
- Internally, Queenslander homes usually have quite a symmetrical layout with rooms connected through a central hallway.
- Internal walls and ceilings were often clad in vertical or horizontal timber board.

02

Documentation & Planning

Visualising how a space will work from a set of floorplans is an essential skill for any designer. Here, James will teach you how to transform a line drawing into a three-dimensional, successfully styled home. You'll learn how to conceptualise design possibilities, the documentation you need and how to control your budget, without the overwhelm.

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 183 information-filled pages available in Module 02.

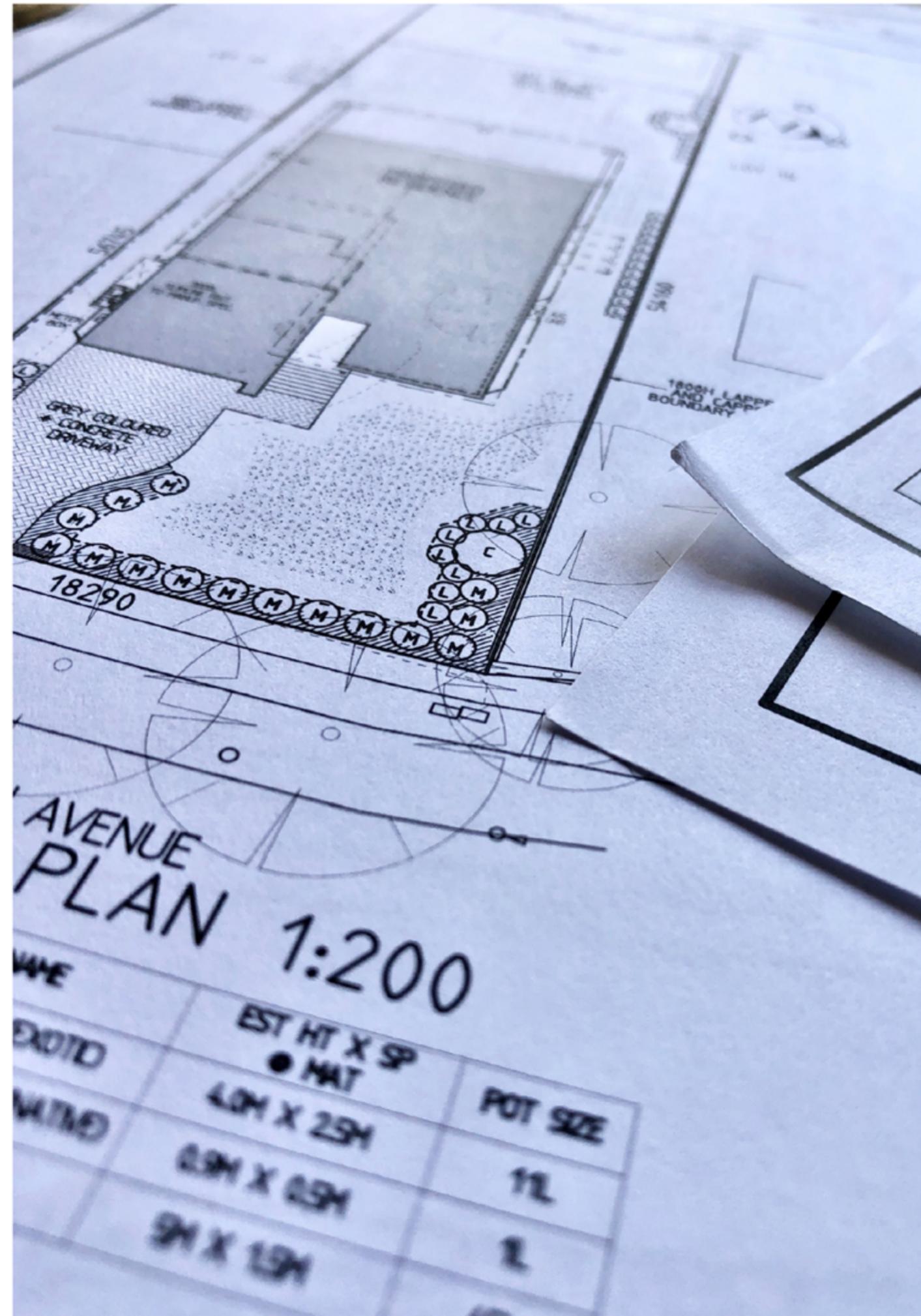
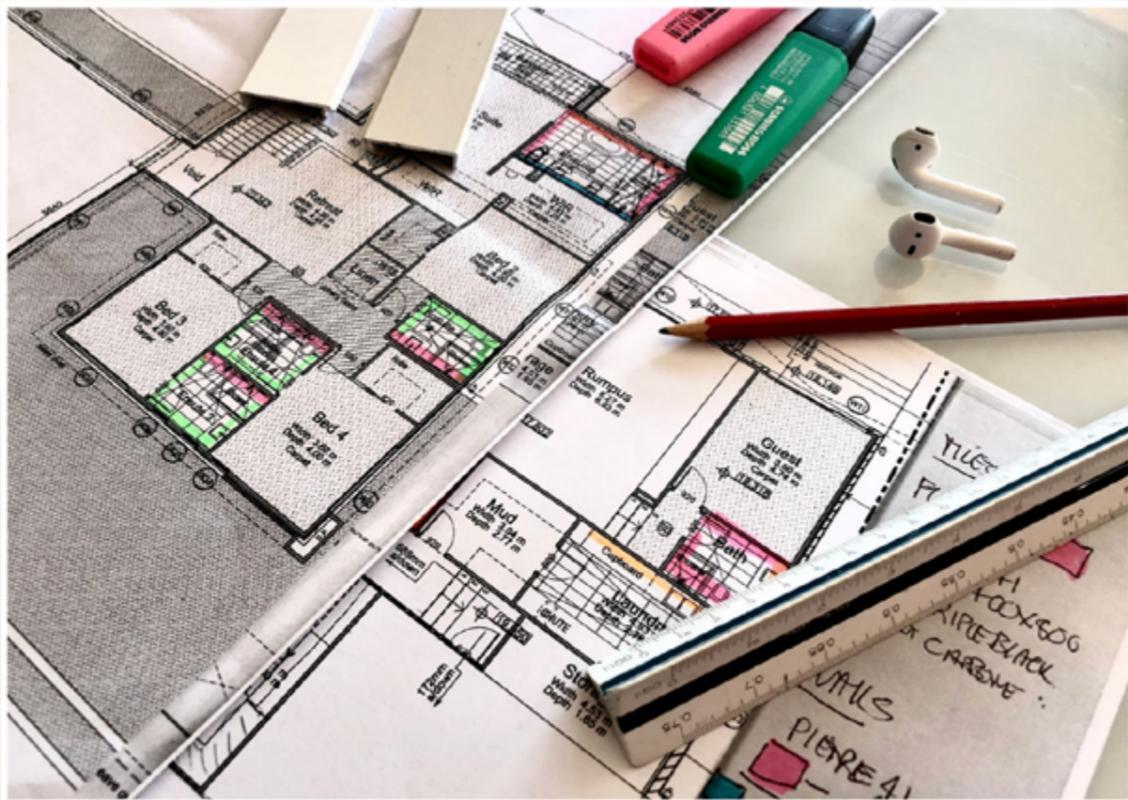


Understanding documentation.

Documentation covers three main points, the Planning, Storing and Communicating of information, and understanding the importance of each of these, will create the foundation blocks for you becoming an organised and practical designer. Also it will allow you to effectively communicate and catalogue all of the relevant information required for your project.

When you decide to make a cake, you don't get the mixing bowls out and turn the oven on first, right? You need to start by thinking of what cake you're going to make and how is it going to taste and look, then understand the correct process or method that you're going to follow, so that you can cook then decorate to create the best cake you can. Then you need to create a list of ingredients, go and purchase them before you get started. Similarly you should approach each of your projects.

All of the documents provided in this Module will provide you with the tools to help you first understand your existing property, and the steps you need to follow to successfully alter it to suit your needs in the most efficient and practical way.



The plumbing schedule.

A plumbing schedule, or plumbing fixtures schedule, is the document that offers all necessary information to satisfy the functional and practical plumbing requirements in a home design. It commonly includes two documents. The first being a list of all individual items, quantities, codes or details, their location and their costs. The second document is a copy of your floorplan which is accompanied by a legend, so that each icon or symbol used to represent the various PC items, such as the WC, the basin, the shower mixer, etc, can all be easily viewed and referenced.

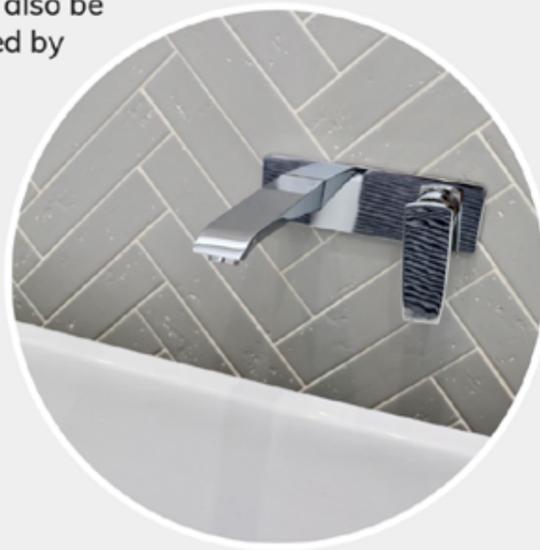
If renovating

A list should be compiled for each of the 'wet areas' to list what items are there, if they're staying or if being replaced, what new fixtures to be installed and all the plumbing items' details listed.

If building a new home

The plumbing schedule is the document you will have to prepare to inform the plumber and builder of any changes that are needed on the initial floorplans and a thorough list of all of the plumbing items.

Only once your information has been detailed, can the plumber and builder begin work on the house plumbing design. In fact, your layout decisions as well as your choice of fixtures must be discussed, planned and confirmed with both plumber and builder, well in advance of any physical work being done on site. For example, a wall mounted vanity can only be installed on a wall strong enough to support it, a wall mixer needs to have part of its fitting installed into the wall before it's tiled, and different WC designs come with different sewage-connections, some from the floor some from the wall. Be also aware that it is common for the gas requirements to also be included in your plumbing documentation, and carried by a qualified plumber.



Plumbing should be decided way before any wall is constructed.



The paint schedule.

Just like any other plan, the painting schedule is a collection of important information necessary to achieve the desired results. Creating a paint schedule helps to keep you organised and the trades well informed, especially when engaging in a complex project where you may need to keep track of multiple colours and finishes. The names and codes for the immense range of paint colours available can be confusing, but getting the word or code even slightly wrong will end up giving you a very unexpected looking house.

Even though the colours you wish to use don't have to be defined before the building starts, having an idea of your preferred colour directions will help you greatly when selecting the other finishes for the exterior and interior of your home. To help you focus on the looks of your home I encourage you to start collecting images or taking photographs of exteriors and interiors that you like right away. These will help you understand what you find attractive and why – more about this in Module 7, Creating Your Vision.

Just like every aspect of your project, painting too needs to be well planned and detailed to make sure you achieve the results you desire. The paint schedule is made of:

- A floorplan, where you must define and clearly mark which walls will be painted and in which colour, especially if selecting different colours for different rooms, and for the feature walls, for example.
- A separate document will include all of the important product and colour information, such as the paint supplier, the paint type (gloss, matte, satin) the colour name, and most importantly the colour's code. It will also include a written description of the exact location each colour is to be painted on.

I have prepared a form for you to download, and use for this purpose, and you will find it on the same online page that lets you download this Module. Please be aware that any of the forms provided with this online course are created from those that I use myself, but are offered as generic. In fact each home has a unique floorplan and every family has different expectations, so I encourage you to personalise my forms to suit your needs, just like I adapt them to the unique layout and requirements for each of my own clients.



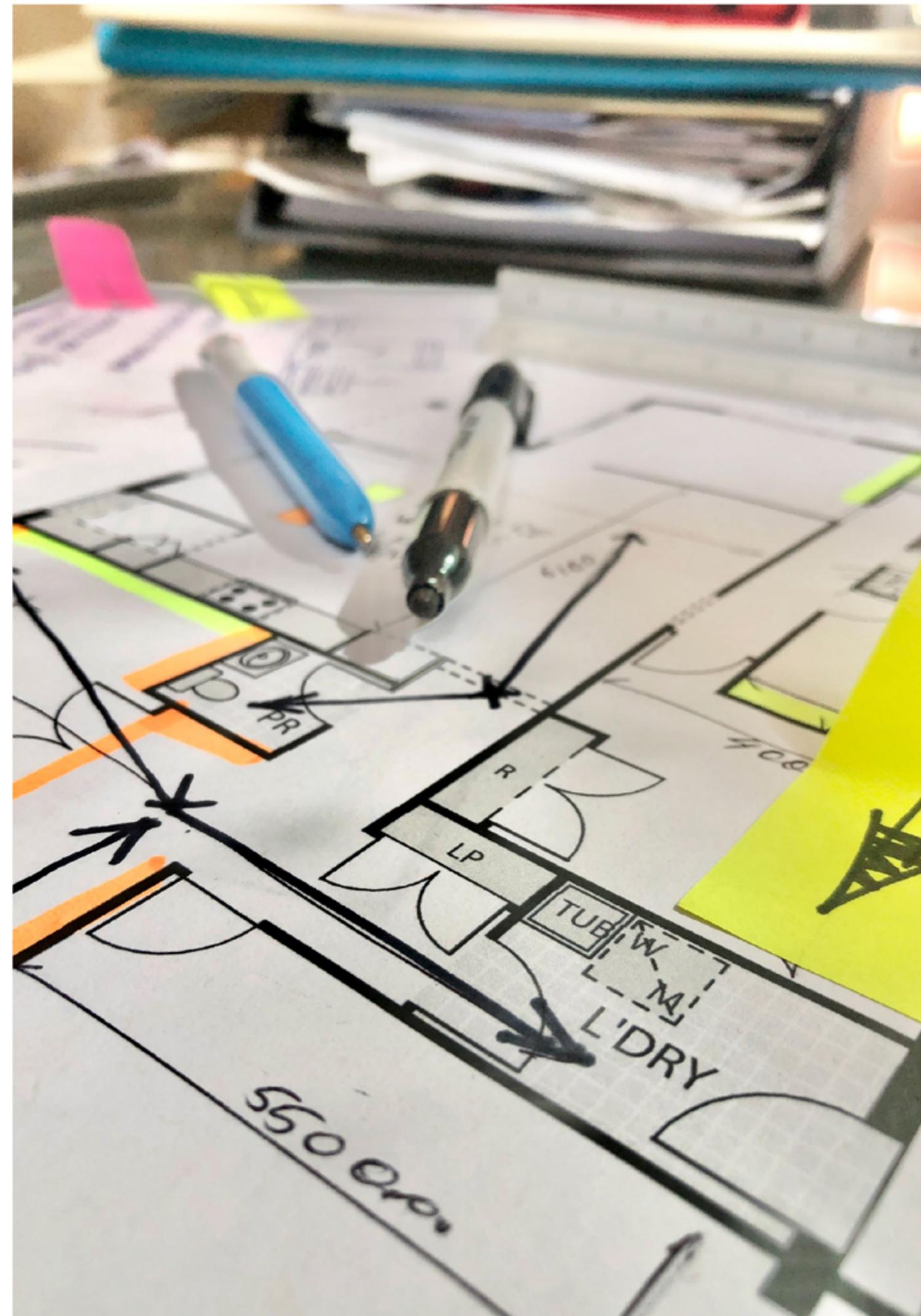
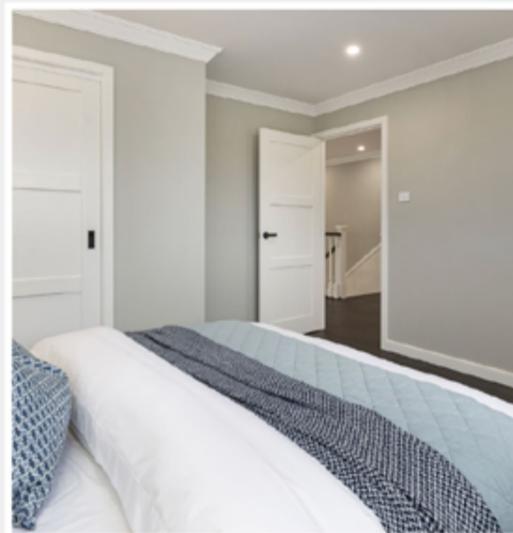
Tip
Remember that any of your schedules must be accurately detailed for the trades and the builder to use as a thorough reference of information, but it must also be easy to be read and interpreted by all those you give it to.

Considering eye-lines and key areas.

Using photocopies or scanned copies of the floorplans of your home, either the ones you've drawn yourself or a professionally made one, I suggest now you mark eye-lines and key areas. This will become the skeleton to build upon as we later add cabinetry, wall and flooring treatments, select the finishes and fittings and then finally the place the furniture, décor and window coverings.

Here is a quick explanation of how I quickly note the eye-lines and key areas for my client's homes. I admit being a little old school as I commonly get hard copies of client's floorplans printed, and I work on these with pencil, pen and highlighters. You may prefer to do this on a computer, but the thinking is the same. I usually keep one colour for key areas and a different colour for eye-lines, showing these with straight arrows as viewed from the entry point of the room and then also once I am inside the space.

- With the floorplan in front of me, I start at the front door, pretend to be standing there and imagine what I would look at first. Once satisfied, using a pencil I highlight the main eye-lines with short arrows, without covering the whole floor area.
- I repeat this process for every room as I imagine standing at the door.
- Recurring eyelines will be from the entry door towards any windows in the room and from the entry door towards strong features like a fireplace, for example.
- As I work through the home, I consider any obvious key areas, and mark these with a shape, usually being a circle or an oval.
- There may be several rooms accessed from the foyer, and in smaller rooms I might have less arrows, but in larger open plan spaces I'll have more.
- When I come to the rear of the home and any side external doors, I'll also consider the traffic through those doors to the outside.
- Once the ground floor is complete, I start with the obvious eyelines as I imagine standing at the bottom of the stairs and proceed upstairs, and then from the top of the staircase and the view I'd look at first.



03

Kitchen & Pantry

The central hub in any home, getting your kitchen design right the first time will save enormous stress, time and money. Teaching you about kitchen and pantry layout and how to design a kitchen that's both functional and good looking, you'll learn how to apply clever strategies to personalise your design for the people who live there.

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 169 information-filled pages available in Module 03.



M3.1

Introduction to kitchen and pantry.

The kitchen is possibly the most important room in any home, with its primary function being the place where we store our food and create our meals, but as we all know the kitchen is far more than that. It's a place where we gather as a family after a busy day, where we catch up with friends, and it's often the centre stage when it comes to entertaining. Both the kitchen and pantry require a lot of attention to ensure it suits our needs, whilst making the best use of the allocated space within our homes' floor plan.

The perfect kitchen is a hard thing to define, I've travelled to Milan for the International Fair of Interior Design many times and have fallen in love with plenty of amazing kitchens with high-end finishes, but that doesn't mean these designs would be the ones I'd have in my own home. Despite its looks, the right kitchen is the one that is tailored to satisfy the needs of each home. With this in mind, this module will cover all the fundamental elements of understanding and designing functional kitchens, including the finishes and surfaces options, the appliances, the layout and the style, so that you will be better informed when deciding which kitchen is in fact ideal for your project.



An overview of kitchen function and design.

Whilst the perfect kitchen differs in meaning to various people there are particular key features which should consistently be included to allow kitchens to be the practical and functional spaces they are supposed to be. Most importantly, a functioning kitchen requires three basic zones to operate, Food Storage, Cooking and Cleaning, and the successful connection between these has a big impact on how practical a kitchen design is. This functional connection is commonly called the Kitchen Triangle, and we'll talk about this in further detail soon. All kitchens include this in some form, but not all designs might perform to their best.

1. Storage

Dry foods are usually stored in the pantry, which requires easy accessibility, whilst fresh and frozen food is stored in the fridge and freezer. As the fridge is generally accessed more often, it is important to have it closer at hand.

2. Cooking

The cooking zone includes the cooktop and oven and depending upon the kitchen's design, the specific size style and amounts of these will differ according to the house size location and budget. They are usually located near each other for convenience with the rangehood always placed above the cooktop.

3. Cleaning

The sink forms the cleaning zone of a kitchen and depending upon the design this might be centrally located to provide easy access whilst performing all other tasks. The bin is usually best included within this area.

Cabinetry hardware tips.

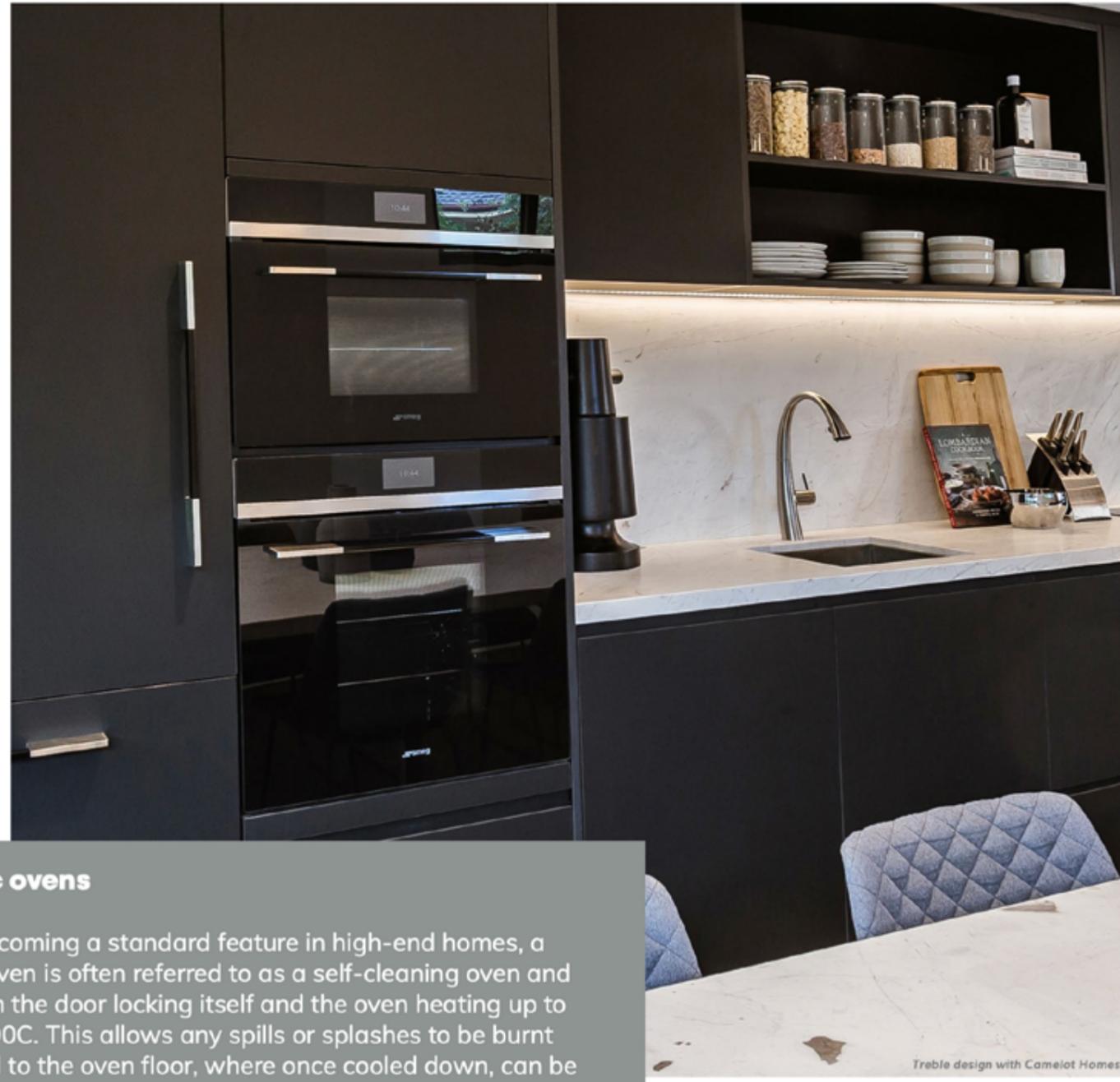
- Handles should be functional and have clean lines, the simpler the better.
- Handles and tapware should match for a clean look.
- If you don't like the reflective and shiny nature of polished chrome, try a brushed finish, which has a similar feel to stainless steel.
- I suggest placing all handles horizontally as it helps elongate the design, making the space appear wider.
- Horizontal placing of handles is more practical for base cabinetry.
- One of the easiest ways to modernise an older kitchen is to update the handles (remember to measure the existing screw holes to ensure the new handles will fit).
- For a clean modern look but still practical, I often include handles to the base cabinets, and leave the overhead cabinets hardware free, making them either push-to-open, or pull-to-open by allowing the wall cabinet doors to overhang.
- In a period kitchen or the popular Hamptons style, I normally suggest installing knobs to all doors but handles to all drawers providing easy to open function, as well as visual interest with two different looking hardware choices.



Oven sizes and placement.

Depending upon the brand of appliances selected, there is a range of sizes available providing great opportunity to customise the kitchen design as well as the character of the home and suit the individual needs. Each of these have pros and cons depending upon the style of cooking and number of people you're catering for.

- The two most common standard oven sizes are 600mm and 900mm, with some brands offering 700mm & 800mm models, as well as other unusual dimensions.
- Single freestanding 600mm cooker (with oven and cooktop in one)
- 900mm wide freestanding cooker with larger units also being available in sizes such as, 1100mm, 1200mm and 1500mm.
- Single wall oven - 600mm or 900mm
- 1 ½ wall oven - 600mm (being an oven and separate grill)
- Double wall oven - 600mm (being two ovens in one unit)
- Steam/convection ovens are the same width as traditional ovens but vary in height



Oven tips.

- Some cabinetry manufacturers will not install wall ovens larger than 600mm wide, so if the plan is to install a 700 model or larger, weight or cabinetry issues must be confirmed.
- Some brands have unusual dimensions such as 700mm or 760mm wide, this may provide a wider internal space than a standard 600mm oven, without going too large in scale.
- Some oven brands have hung doors in lieu of the standard pull down door, this may work well for access to the oven without having to reach over the door.
- In larger homes I often suggest installing two separate ovens or a double oven as a functional feature in a home. This allows a 600mm oven for day to day cooking and an extra oven when it comes time to entertain. This saves the energy of heating up a larger oven for only a few people whilst providing the ability of cooking items at different temperatures.
- Where possible I would always advise including wall mounted ovens instead of under bench or freestanding because they are far easier to access being at waist height.
- If installing multiple ovens in one kitchen design, and room permitting, placing them at waist height in a row, provides easy access as well as a great design statement.



Pyrolytic ovens

Quickly becoming a standard feature in high-end homes, a pyrolytic oven is often referred to as a self-cleaning oven and works with the door locking itself and the oven heating up to approx. 500C. This allows any spills or splashes to be burnt off and fall to the oven floor, where once cooled down, can be simply wiped clean. There is still however some manual work involved in cleaning these ovens as most models require shelves, trays and side racks to be removed and washed independently.

Kitchen lighting tips.

- If the kitchen design includes an island bench, placing pendant lights above is a great choice as it creates a statement and adds the wow factor to the space. If the island is about 3 meters long, then 3 lights will work well. For any island smaller than 2 meters I'd suggest opting for two fittings or perhaps one simple linear light instead of separate pendant fittings, as this will also add to the feeling of width in the space.
- Installing under cabinet or under bench lighting can add drama to a space and can be used functionally as mood lighting at night when the kitchen isn't in use.
- Over the bench downlights are a common feature in many kitchens, but LED strip lighting has become very popular.
- If opting for strip lighting to the wall mounted cabinets, these should be at least 350mm deep (in lieu of the standard 300mm) to allow the strip lighting to continue above the rangehood. The strip cannot be applied to the rangehood and will leave a darker area there, making it look like part of it isn't functioning.
- If adding internal cabinet lighting in the kitchen or pantry cabinetry, internal glass shelves must be used to let the light flow through the whole cabinet, instead of stopping on the first solid shelf.
- Depending upon the style of your kitchen, LED strip lighting can also be used effectively for accent lighting, placed under the base cabinets or at the island to light up the kickplate, adding a floating effect to your design.
- With a splashback window, it's worth including feature lighting on the outside wall as it allows you to illuminate the garden/plants/wall adding a great mood feature to the kitchen.

For a positive vibe into our homes, selecting light coloured surfaces may be the best way to enhance even the smallest amount of natural light.



04

Bathrooms, Laundry & Mudroom

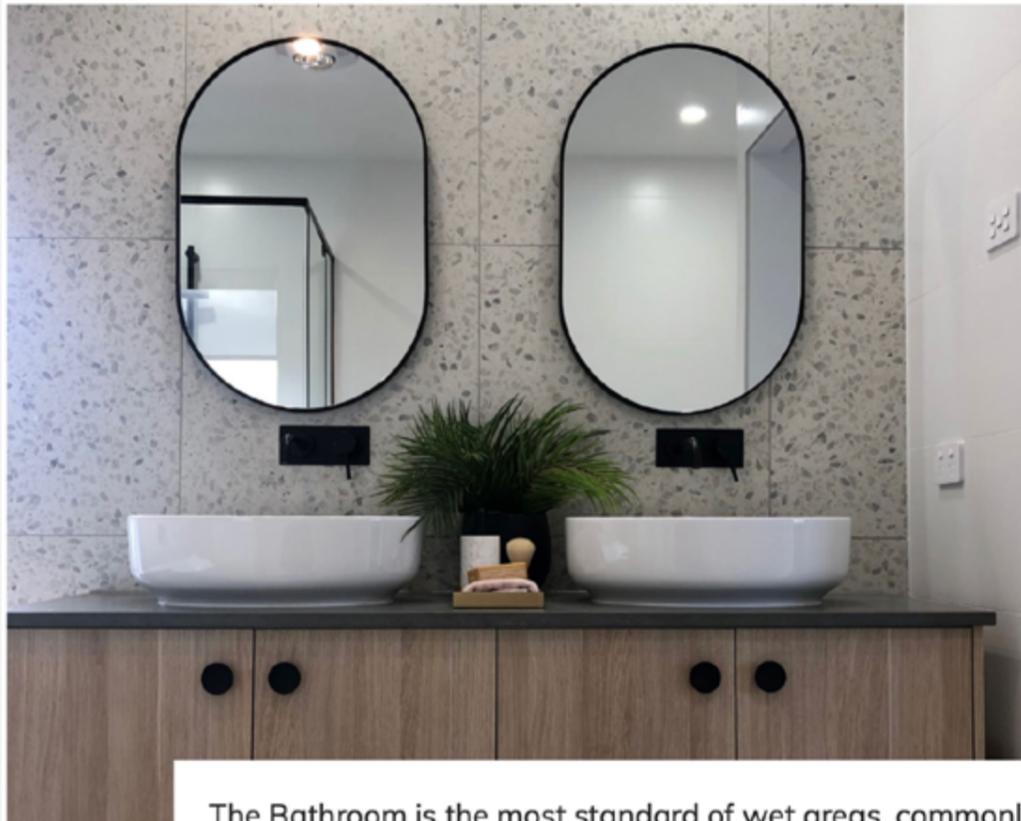
Bathroom and laundry design must be functional and safe as well as beautiful. Here, James will break down how to incorporate smart design into different bathroom layouts. Whether you're designing a new build, renovation or cosmetic revamp, you'll get access to James' insider secrets, including how to add hotel-style luxury without stepping outside your budget.

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 151 information-filled pages available in Module 04.



Bathroom, ensuite and powder room.

To design a great bathroom layout, it's important to consider how this is used. A simple example of this is the amount of floor area and bench space needed in a powder room compared to a family bathroom which is used by the children. The location of the room and the amount of people using each bathroom and the products that must be available as more than one person or child uses the room, often at the same time, must be taken into consideration. Storage capabilities also differ with the traffic each bathroom is destined for. So, let's look at each room in more detail, to help you understand the design process.



The Bathroom is the most standard of wet areas, commonly containing a toilet, a basin, a vanity with mirror, a shower and/or bathtub. In a home with only one bathroom, this room requires a vanity design with enough storage, possible drawers and bench space to cater for every family member, and it's not unusual for it to cater for more than one person to access it at once. If there are other bathrooms in the home, this room is usually placed nearby the bedrooms becoming the Family Bathroom to define it as the one used by most people in the family.

The Ensuite (from the French word meaning 'following' or 'after' or 'connected') is attached to a bedroom, sometimes to more than one but usually the master bedroom and is designed to be used only by the people who occupy that bedroom. Depending on space and budget, this bathroom should try to include two basins and in some cases two showers, able to be used at the same time, whilst a bath is an added luxury addition, helping create that hotel room feel. The ensuite can be separated by a door or it may become an open-plan part of the bedroom.



The Powder Room is a practical room always including a toilet and basin, and in some cases, it may also have a shower, allowing it to be not only a guests' WC, but also a space used continuously by the whole family. In double storey homes the powder room is commonly found on the ground floor being easily accessed from the dining and living areas. Whilst often simple in its design, the choice of finishes and vanity design may, depending on the budget and floorspace be elevated resulting in a room set to impress your visitors.



Tiles tips.

COLOUR TIP

Repeating the same tile choice for both floor and walls results in a calm space that feels easy to live with. This works particularly well for natural stones (or natural stone inspired porcelain tiles) where the natural veins and character within the tile provide the personality, without the need for any added contrast. Selecting a tile that is mid to deep in tone will allow the crisp white of the basin, bath and WC to stand out.

GROUT TIP

A great way to avoid the grout lines from standing out in the first place, is to match its colour to the tile colour as close as possible. This means the tiles become a feature and not the grout.

TILES TIP

If dealing with a range of same sized tiles but different in batch, colour or type it is important to know that these will commonly not line up. Due to the manufacturing process, tiles are always slightly different in size, so whilst they may be sold as a 300x600mm tile, they may in fact be 299.93x6.005mm. For this reason, the tiler will usually off-set the tile joint, so that any discrepancies in the joins will not be noticeable. When laying same tiles from the same batch this should not be an issue.

WALL TILES TIP

I commonly select 300x600mm wall tiles and place them horizontally, because it assists in the room seeming larger. In a home with low ceilings,

I may choose to place the same sized tile vertically instead, and provide a subtle vertical line helping to make ceilings seem higher.

TILE SHAPE TIP

Selecting unusual tile shapes such as small penny rounds and hexagons, or creating a pattern such as herringbone, may incur in extra installation costs and this is worth discussing this with the tiler.

BUDGET TIP

A dramatic effect can still be achieved without having to spend your valuable budget on upgrading the whole room to expensive tiles only on the floor, or one of the walls as a feature.

LAYOUT TIP

The design and placement of tiled feature walls can have a big effect on a room because darker tiles will make that wall seem closer and lighter walls will instead seem to recede. The colour and placement of feature tiles can be used to highlight the floors or the walls, whilst visually affecting the shape of a room by optically making walls feel closer or farther away.





Laundry tiles tips.

- The tile skirting will usually be the same tile used for the floor, as it's such a small area that there is no need to pick an additional finish or colour here.
- 300x300mm floor tiles these can easily be used for the skirting too, but I often have the tiler cut down to about 150mm high, as it still provides a functional and easy to mop edging without adding a clinical look.
- If the main floors are tiled continuing the same floor tiles, size and finish into this room will provide a feel of continuity whilst making the entire home seem larger.
- Adding a lay feature to the laundry splashback such as a herringbone pattern or a subway tile, will cost more for the particular laying but this is a small area and the cost should be reasonable and possibly worthy.
- Depending upon the value and location of the new home or renovation project, it may be worth using the same stone of the laundry benchtop for the splashback, providing an elegant and high-end design statement.
- Designing the laundry to continue the choices used in the kitchen or the bathrooms, will add continuity to the home increasing its beauty as well as its market value.
- Just like with the tiles around the overflow drain in bathroom floors, a great way to avoid the cuts in the tiles from standing out, is to match the grout colour to the tile colour as close as possible.

For very practical reasons, the flooring in this room should be non-slip and resistant to water spillages.

An introduction to bathroom and laundry accessories.

The accessories in a bathroom are all those practical and fixed elements that allow the room to be functional, like towel rails, toilet roll holders, shelves and hooks. The range of bathroom accessories available is quite extensive and they come in various sizes, colours and styles, to be included within our designs and to suit almost any style.



Prefer accessories that are easy to keep clean.

Towel rails.

The towel rails are not only to hang a towel so that it is in easy reach, but also allows the towel to be hung open, enabling it to dry after every use. A single towel rail is perfect for a small powder room or smaller bathroom and work especially well where space may be tight. A double towel rail is a good choice for a family bathroom or the ensuite, to hold more than just one towel. Where additional towels are required, like in a bathroom for a large family, an extra double towel rail may be added or a towel ladder, which can provide more hanging options in one only element.

Ideally a towel rail should always be installed in the most functional position that's within reach of the basin, shower or bath, and needs to be positioned at a height easy to grab. A towel that is too far away to reach creates not only a practical issue but also a safety issue, as there may be an increased risk of slipping due to water on the tiled floor.



General tips

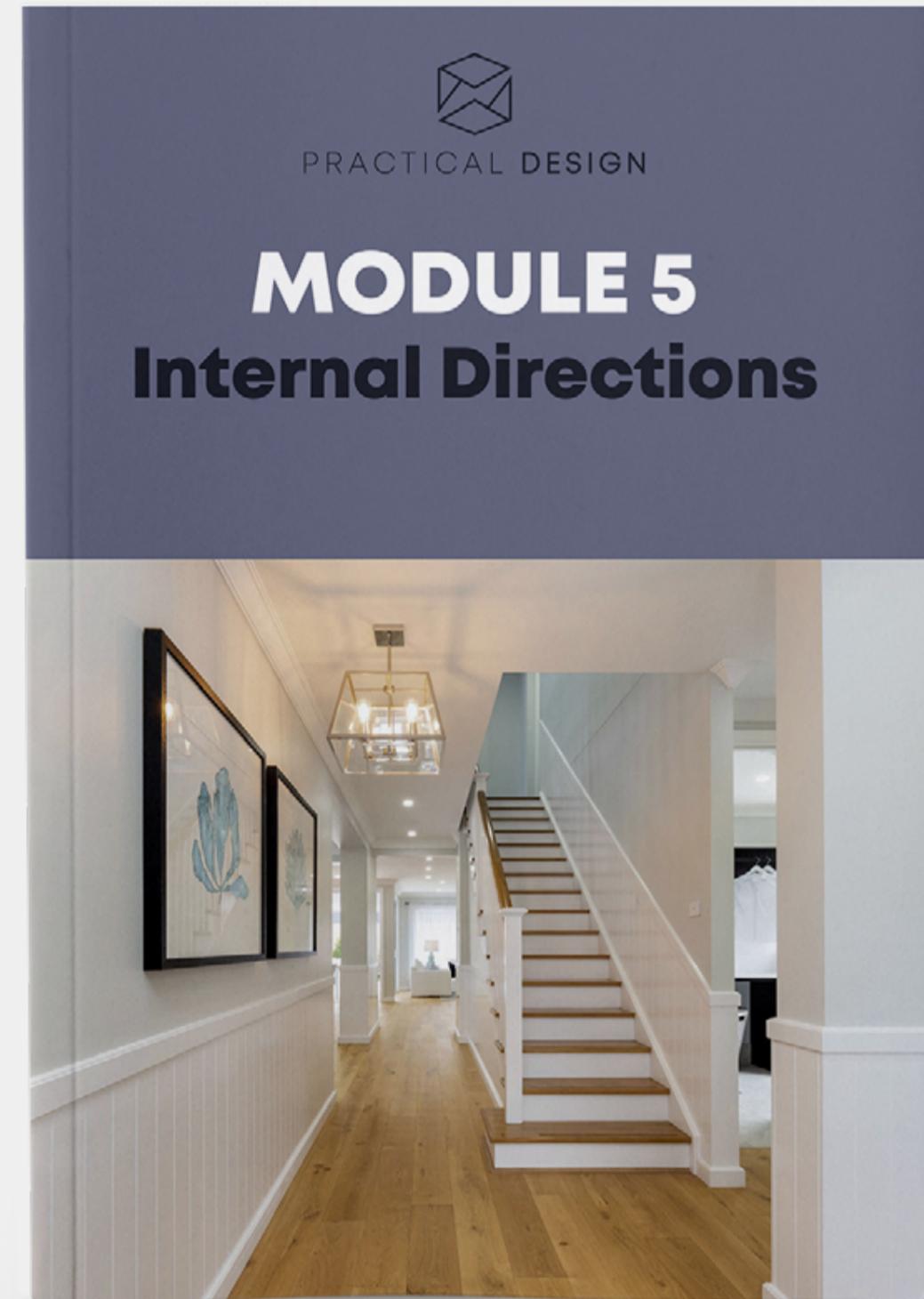
- Some designs have the long hanging rail separate from the wall mounting pieces on either end, which allows for the rod to be cut shorter to fit in the desired position even in a smaller space.
- If there is not enough well-located wall space to install the towel rails, a towel or robe hook can be positioned on a wall closer to the shower.
- A double towel rail is my preferred option when it comes to styling a bathroom as it provides more space to get creative with how you hang your towels.

05

Internal Directions

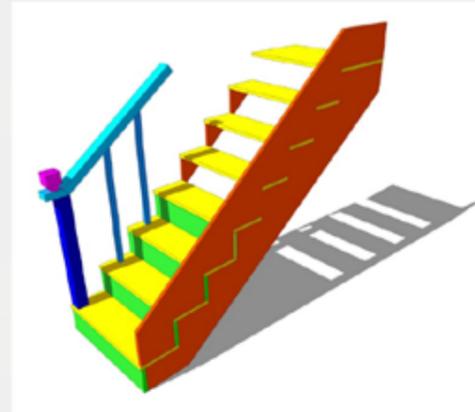
Giving you the confidence to enhance internal flow and functionality, in this module you'll learn why continuity is key and how to achieve it. From the entry hall through to bedrooms, living areas, cabinetry and stairs, discover how to analyse your floorplan and make simple adjustments to achieve instant and stunning results – all within budget.

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 179 information-filled pages available in Module 05.



The basics of staircase design.

There are set components found in every staircase design no matter what the look or budget, and within each of these there is a range of finishes and designs, enabling a huge range of possible staircase designs to suit every home style.



TREADS, also called Goings, are the part of the staircase you tread on, walking up and down between floors or levels. Depending upon the builder or the age of the home, standard designs may be constructed from either MDF or pine, and suitable for a carpet finish or possibly a laminate of engineered timber floor finish placed over the top. Another option is to upgrade the treads to solid timber, which can then be stained in a range of finishes to highlight the natural timber grain, and work with other timber elements in the design like the front door or timber flooring.

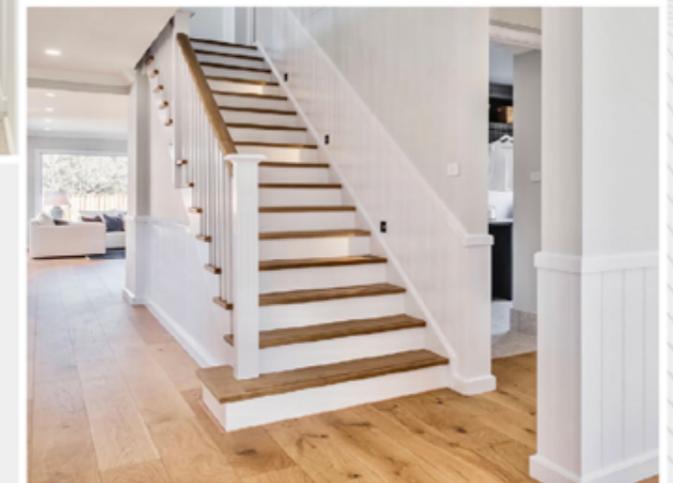
RISERS, also called Rises, are placed vertically between each tread, and like with the treads, standard finishes include pine and MDF, but if the treads have become solid timber, it's common to select the same finish on your risers creating a cohesive look. Open Risers refers to the space between the treads when left open and you can see through, allowing light flow and the almost uninterrupted view of the space the staircase is in.



STRINGERS are the part of the staircase that holds the tread and risers in place. In a standard staircase design these are found on the sides of the treads sitting against the wall or on the outer side of your staircase, if open. A standard stringer will be in Pine, which is a structurally suitable timber but due to its looks will usually remain in a painted finish, often matching your skirting and architrave in colour.

CUT STRINGER is the one that's cut to allow the timber tread to be visible from the side, often with the tread overhanging by a few millimetres. This is a cost effective upgrade providing a very different look in a simple way.

MONO STRING is the staircase design where the side stringers have been replaced by a single one, located underneath and in the middle of the treads. This provides a modern sculptural design allowing the treads to appear floating, whilst allowing the maximum amount of natural light and vision through and around the staircase design.



POSTS or NEWEL POSTS are the vertical components of the staircase design holding up the balusters and handrail, so being a structural component of the staircase design these need to be strong to provide the obvious safety benefits that a handrail requires. These are the main vertical posts found at the bottom of the staircase handrail or at the turn.

POST CAP is the detail found on top of a newel post, and although this has no structural benefit, it greatly alters the look of the overall design, and is an important decision. Modern post tops tend to be simpler in design, while ornate character staircases may have oversized statement caps to further enhance the look of the design.



Wardrobe fit-out options.

SINGLE HANGING

The most basic of wardrobes will have one single top shelf running the length of the wardrobe, with a single rail underneath, providing obvious hanging space. Whilst a single hanging rail works well for long dresses and men's suits, it also allows for the space underneath to be used in different ways.

DOUBLE HANGING

With the inclusion of a second hanging rail positioned directly underneath you now have double hanging, essentially doubling the amount of hanging space in a robe. This is a big value adding feature and an easy item to add if you are renovating, as it can easily be retro fitted, but will stop the above rail from serving for long dresses and coats.

OPEN SHELVES

These provide the functional location for items which should be folded, like shorts and jumpers or shoes, handbags and other odd shaped items. They work best if placed in mid to high sections of the robe, easy to access and where all items are easily visible. Open shelves are perfect to place shoes and handbags allowing them to all be on show like in a store, and sloping the base of the shelves will allow the shoes to present beautifully, again elevating the overall effect of the robe design.

DRAWERS

These provide easy access to store small and loose items, as well as lingerie, underwear and socks, but are just as useful for folded items. Drawers are easy to access in the middle section of the robe, and the bottom section, as we look inside them from above.

SPECIALTY DRAWERS

There is a range of need specific drawer options available to help being super organised, such as drawer inserts for belts and scarves and lined drawers for jewellery and watches. A practical addition to elevate the robe fit out is to include a glass top, to the top drawer which allows you to view your items before sliding the drawer out.

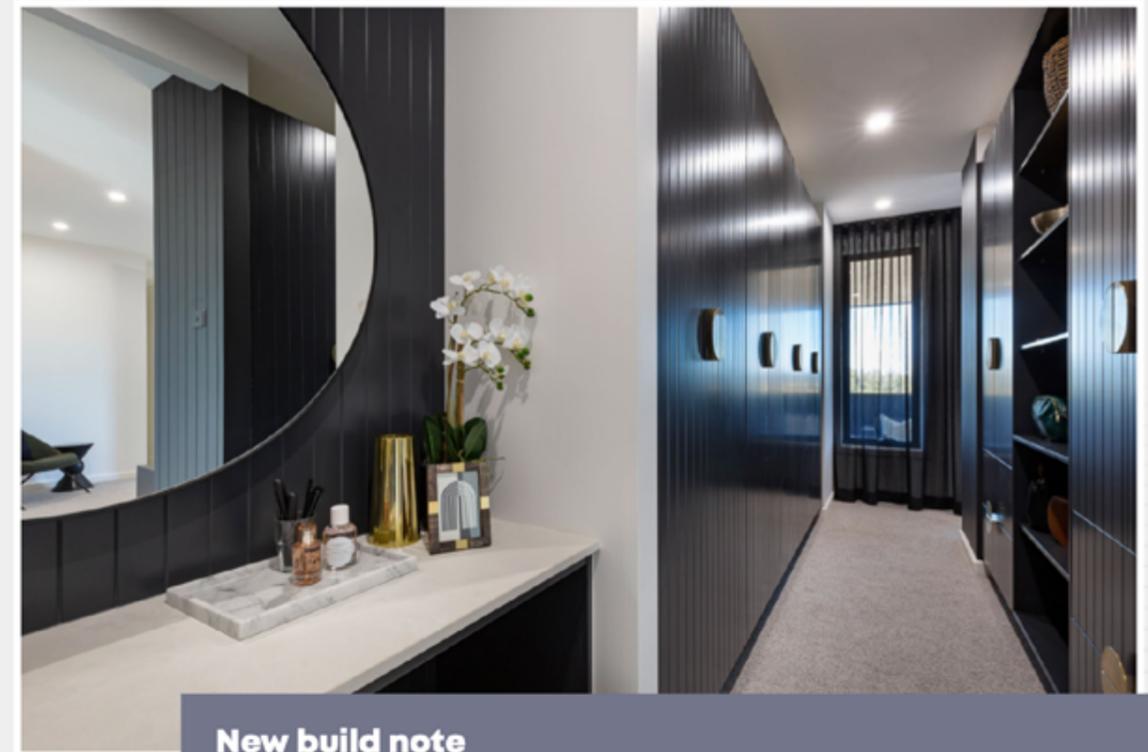
TOP SHELF

Depending on specific needs and taste, it may be tempting to build the shelving up to the ceiling instead of the top and wide shelf. However the wider space this provides up there might be in fact the perfect solution to store larger boxes containing items we store away for longer periods.



Renovation notes

- The simplest addition of double hanging to an existing robe fit outs, will not only elevate the function of the robe in each bedroom and help every family member become more organised, but it will also increase the overall value of your home.
- Including a set of open shelves or even better a mix of open shelves and drawers adds even more function to the space. To make sure the drawers can fully slide out it is often worth installing these to the centre of the robe and include double hanging or shelves on either side.



New build note

- When building a new home, it's common to hide the air-con ducting and service inside the wardrobes, which may eat into the floor space of your storage so it's worth being aware of these prior to finalising the cabinetry fit out. (Look to your home floor-plans for those boxes with the hatched crosses in them).
- Having the wardrobe doors lining up in height with the entry door to the room is a good design touch, but it's definitely worth raising the wardrobe doors as much as needed to allow easy access to the top shelf.

M5.5

Flooring directions.

Choosing the right type of flooring for your home can be completely overwhelming, as there are so many options available, but the primary issue you must remember, is how practical your choice is going to be, how cost effective it is, and does it work for the home's character and expectations.

Timber, carpet, tiles and stone are the popular options, but within each of these there are so many possibilities in different materials, finishes, textures and colours, so relax, and let me help you become an overnight expert in flooring. Well, maybe not an expert just yet, but at least you'll know what trades and suppliers are talking about, and feel confident in making choices when it comes to the flooring of your own project.



Where to start.

Selecting the best flooring finish can be an overwhelming experience as there are so many options on the market to choose from. With this in mind whether you're building a brand-new home or updating an existing one, there are reasons why one flooring type may be better than another.

To start you in the right direction and ensure you can make the best educated decision and the most practical selection, following are some important questions to consider:

- What style of house am I creating, and which flooring choice best suits that style?
- Considering the amount of traffic, the space will encounter (i.e. main hallway or guest bedroom) which flooring type will be the most appropriate?
- If renovating, what height can the new flooring be, can it be installed over the top of the existing floors or does the old floor need to be removed?
- For bedrooms, do I wish to carpet these rooms for warmth and comfort, or is timber the better option?
- If installing tiles as the main floor, what size should they be and can they continue into the bathrooms and wet areas creating a seamless look?
- Selecting the right colour is a big decision, should I go for a darker or lighter floor?
- Will there be a change in floor height, and will this affect any internal doors, stair treads or create small trip-steps when entering other rooms?
- What finish do I prefer for the floors? Gloss, matt or textured?
- What size and shape of flooring will work best, for example large format, rectangular or herringbone tiles, or maybe wide timber floorboards?

When it comes to flooring it's not a 'one size fits all' scenario, as there are many options to consider, well before we get anywhere near the colour, finish or price. The following module has been written to list the basic knowledge necessary to understand the flooring options available and the right questions to ask when selecting and confirming the flooring finishes.

Lighting suggestions room by room.

Foyer and halls.

Ambient lighting

- Confirming the ceiling height first, if it's 2400mm high then all fittings better be snug to the ceiling, like downlights or oyster fittings.
- If the ceiling is taller than 2400mm or has a void above, a feature pendant light in the foyer may be worth considering.

Task lighting

- There are not many tasks taking place in the foyer, but if needed wall lighting or sconces might be a solution.

Accent lighting

- A table lamp on a console may be the perfect accent light so a powerpoint should be included there.
- A feature pendant or wall lights may be a great addition to a foyer, keeping that small console table clutter free.
- Considering the size of the room, and remembering scale, smaller fittings will look better and be more practical in tighter spaces.
- Wall lights above the artwork help turn these usually narrow spaces into elegant rooms.

Only one ceiling fitting is rarely enough to light a whole room, and it's rarely practical.

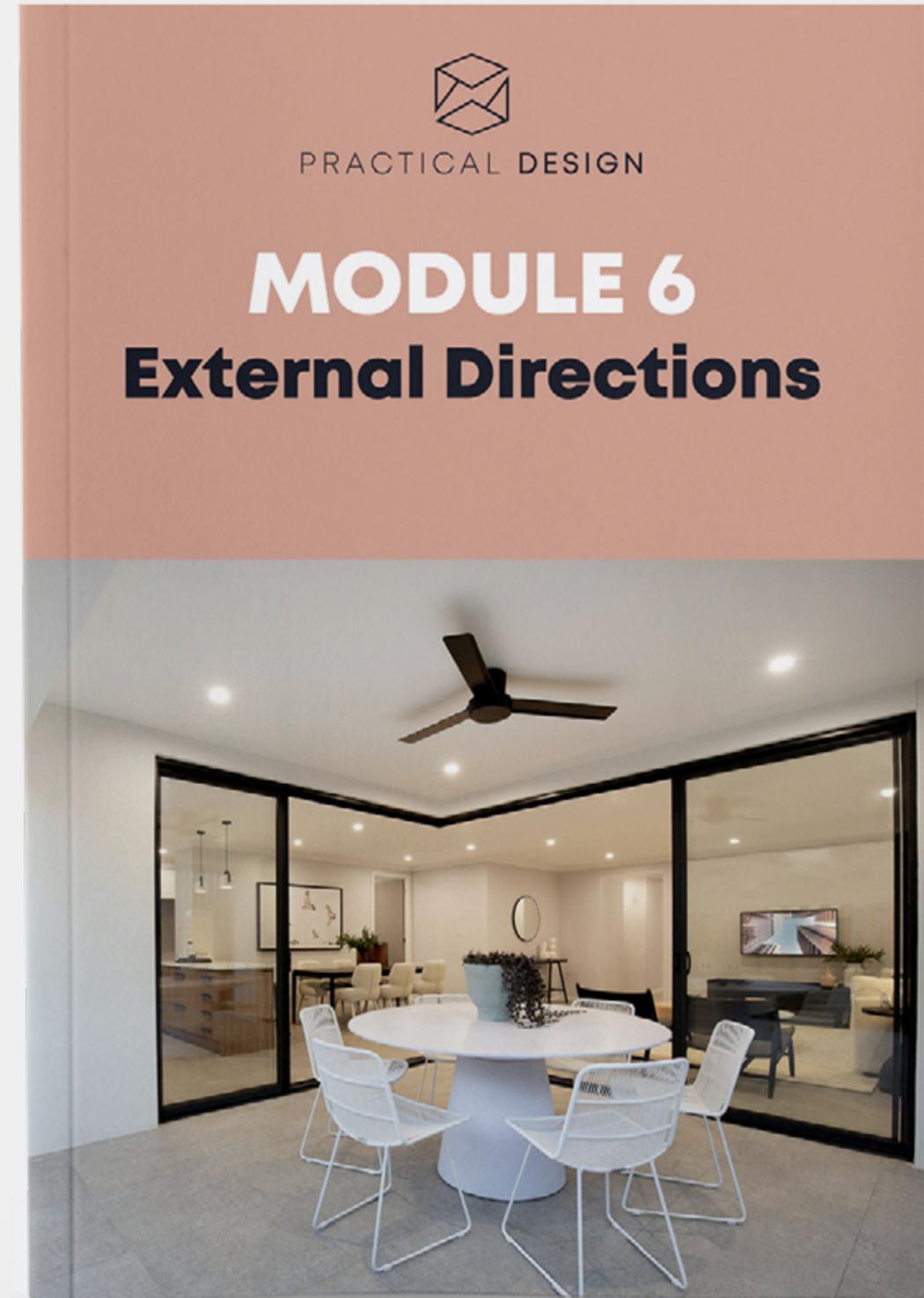


06

External Directions

This is where we delve into external finishes and the impact they have on the overall appeal and market value of a home. And, of course, a true Australian home is not complete without an outdoor entertaining area. Here, you'll learn how to extend the home into the backyard and optimise outdoor space by embracing natural light, airflow and lifestyle.

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 157 information-filled pages available in Module 06.



M6.1

Understanding façades.

When working creating a brand-new home with my clients, it's the front façade that I start with. Confirmation of the external design and finishes is required for Council lodgement to gain building approval either with Council or private certifier. When meeting with clients who are renovating however, the process is often reversed, because the reason for renovating is usually based on internal issues such as a lack of space, outdated kitchen and bathrooms, or a badly functioning floor plan. For this reason, it's also common for renovators to direct a great deal of time and most of their budget to address the internal issues, with the exterior of the home often being left to the very last.



I like to pay great attention to the façade, as it's the first part of the home we see, creating the very first impression. The word façade derives from the same Latin word that gives us the word face, helping us to appreciate how this characterises our home and gives an impression of the interiors. As I drive around the streets, I'm always looking at homes and tend to make judgements, based upon the façade, and I can't help myself, by thinking 'If you just painted that garage door, added frames to those windows or placed some breeze-blocks to the side and front of those front sliding doors you'll have an amazing looking house.'

Paying the right attention to the façade of a property allows it to improve its attractiveness from the street, which in turn adds value. This is known as street appeal.

Using elements such as colour, texture and contrast, any home can tell a different story from the one you purchased or the one you've allowed it to become over time. By improving its character, the home will increase its street appeal and create a 'design story' that is targeted, when needed, to attract a specific audience of buyers.

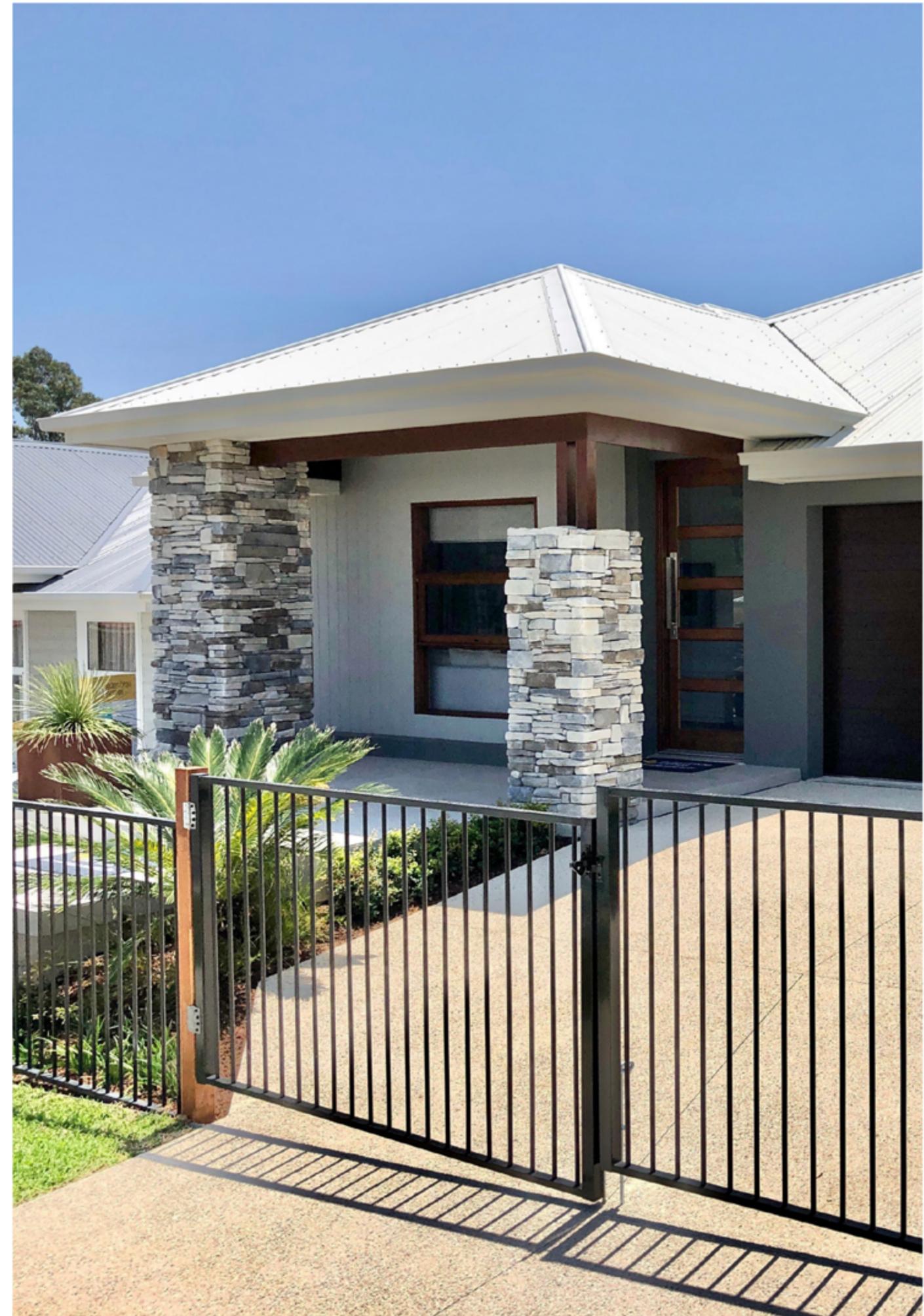
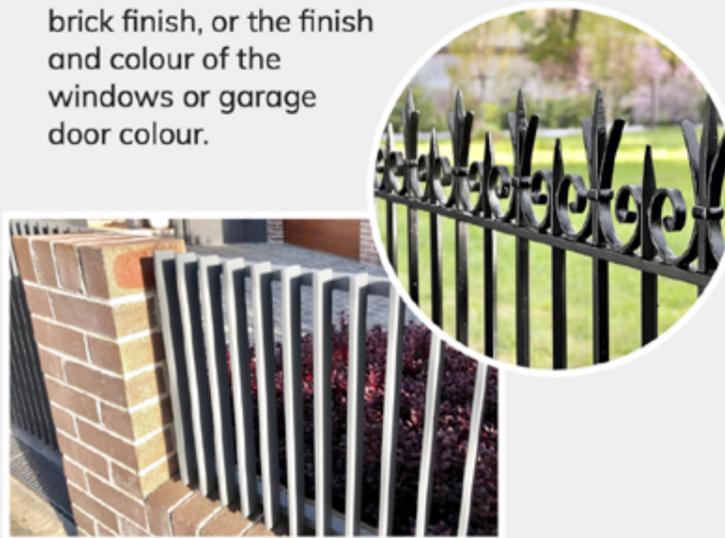


Fencing.

One important rule when designing the gardens and outdoor spaces, is to define the borders. This simply means allowing a visible border or 'break' in the landscape so that the property's perimeter is clear. This may be as direct as a row of trees along a fence line or a low, ground level garden bed, but it might also be as structured as a high timber or aluminium fencing, or even a rendered wall.

The design and finishes of the fencing will be determined by its location, the house type and style, as well as what fencing may be commonly found in the street or neighbourhood. The wish is for any property to look the best it can, but always be suburb appropriate. Of course, the condition of an existing fence as well as the budget allowance will also affect what is spent on fencing.

- As a general rule higher fencing is suggested for the rear and side boundaries where they become a security issue as well as practical for privacy. Taking note of the most common types of fencing in the area, will assist you with this decision.
- A lower front fence allows the house to relate to the street, as well as allowing it to be visible which is great for security, but also for aesthetics as high fencing all around can make the home feel 'closed in' and isolated from its surrounds.
- If however the house is on a busier road, or the view is not an asset, then perhaps a higher fence may be a better option, if allowed by Council.
- If renovating, and the existing fence is in good condition, altering its colour might be the simplest way to make it match the new looking home.
- A fence doesn't always have to be a solid structure, it can be a softer option created with a hedge or a row of structured planting.
- If you are making a big transformation, then respraying either a timber or aluminium fence may be a great way to allow different fencing materials to appear as one.
- The choice of colour for the front fence should be based upon the exterior finishes of the house, of course, which could be its brick finish, or the finish and colour of the windows or garage door colour.



Louvre windows.

The glass pane is separated into narrow and individual horizontal panels, which can tilt down or up thanks to a tracking mechanism located at the side. The tilting of the glass panels will open or close the window throughout the pane. Creating a holiday look that suits many house styles, this type works especially well in humid areas thanks to the large amount of air flow it allows, even with a narrow window and for this reason, louvre windows are ideal for hallways, narrow stair landings and can become a practical feature next to front doors.



Sliding windows.

Two panels of glass, and one or both panels slide sideways to allow a vertical opening which can be as narrow as a slither or as wide as half of the whole window. They perform well over time as they have simple design, and although they are also available in timber, they are most common in aluminium, rising in popularity from the construction boom of homes in the 1950's and 60's and still very popular today.



PRO

The horizontal glass slats allow the whole window pane to open at once allowing great airflow on any level because they open as narrow gaps, and because the glass panels flip to sit flat, they allow for easy cleaning of both inside and outside faces.

CON

Because the glass panels open inwards and outwards, they will require a tailored type of flyscreens if you choose to add them to these windows.

PRO

The simple design and sliding motion, means they are cost-effective and easy to clean. The vertical opening allows for good airflow, so they are practical for most rooms in the house, and the fly screen is fitted to the outside of the window.

CON

On an upper floor, due to safety requirements they will not be able to slide open wider than 125mm, and although the vertical nature of the opening will assist with good air flow, it won't be able to slide open as widely as on the ground floor.

8 steps to creating an external colour scheme.

Now that we have a general understanding of the basic elements and tools that make a façade, let's have an idea of how we direct the choice of colours. Even though we are not ready to create your own façade, just yet, I am going to share a modified version of what I was taught over twenty years ago.

Here is my '8 step colour scheme process' the thinking process that I go through when creating an external palette and scheme, and as you will see there is a reasoning behind it, which aims to make this very important process one that's practical and easy for you to follow.

People say I make it look easy, but it took me thirty years to learn how to make some selections in ten minutes.



Photos by James Treble for The Taubman's House

Here are the general steps to create the colour scheme for a façade:

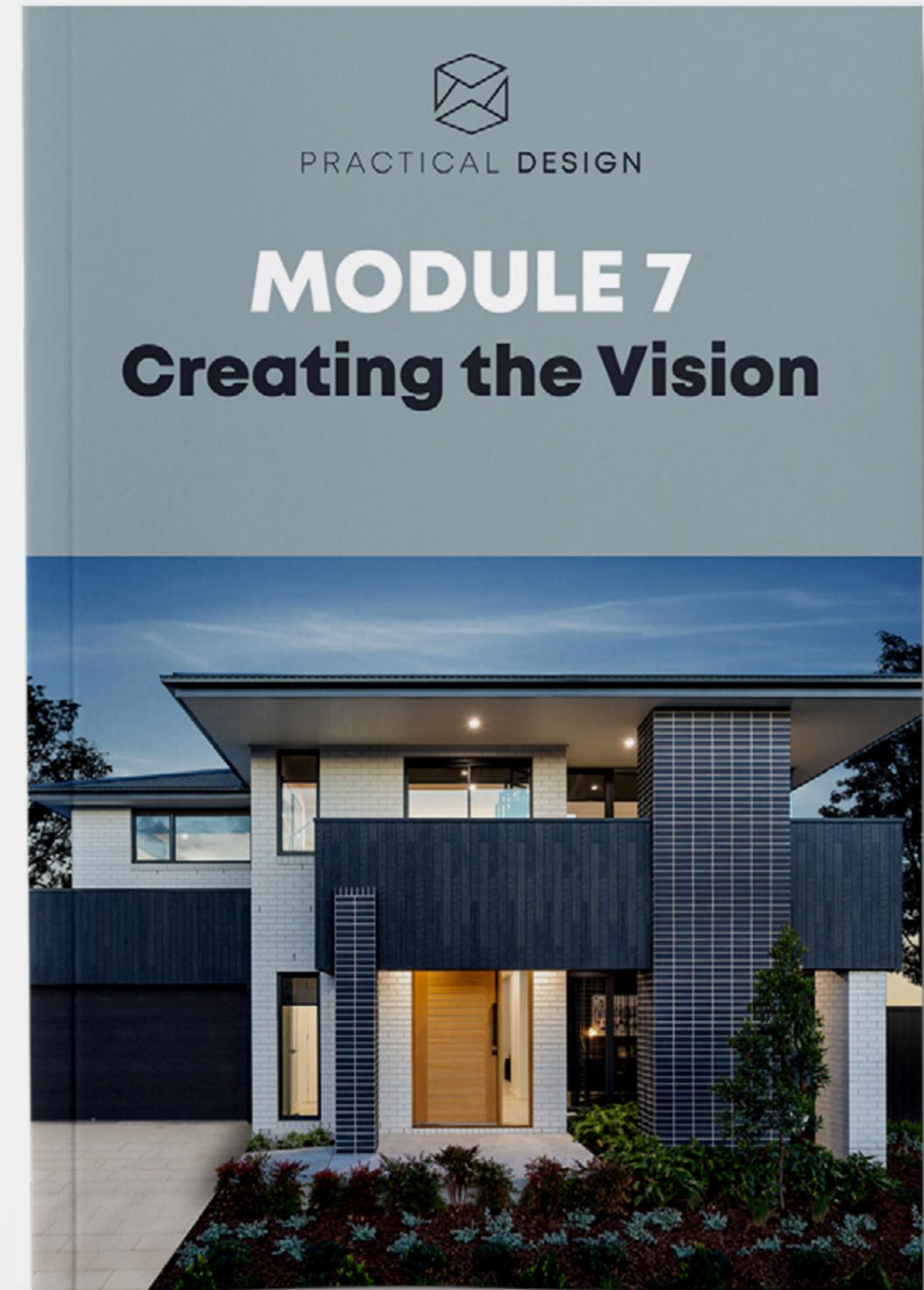
1. Start with what you've got
2. Create the direction for the scheme
3. Select the trim and highlight colour
4. Choose one main colour
5. Choose a complementary second colour
6. Choose a feature colour
7. Edit the external scheme
8. Confirm the colours on site

07

Creating The Vision

Here, we deep-dive into your property's design destination and develop the dream. Guided by James, you'll gather the images and samples needed to transform your vision into a successful home. Giving you a moment to catch your breath, James will take you through the process of dreaming through the possibilities, then refining these to form a distinct design direction.

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 173 information-filled pages available in Module 07.



M7.1

Selecting the right look for your home.

Congratulations! You've been studying hard, learning all about kitchen and bathroom design, and interiors' finishes, like flooring, staircases, and storage solutions. All of this knowledge can now be utilised to create your own dream home, or a stunning one for your client. It is indeed time to start creating the framework for your renovation or new build. But where do we start?



The first question that I get asked all the time by my clients is What look should I go for? Let's face it, it's a logical question but one that can stump most people because we are spoilt for choice, and with so many interior design styles to choose from, it can be overwhelming.

I like to relate this question with another, What clothes should you wear? Sure, there are plenty of styles to choose from, so many colours and patterns, and it's all very exciting, but even with clothing, you would have gained some idea on what looks best on your body shape and complexion! It's the same for your home. An amazing interior style you love so much can look great in some houses, but does it work for your home? and does it work for how your family actually lives? The house's character and its location? In the same way one dress looks amazing on one person and not-so-right on another, so do different interior styles work or don't for a home. For example: a striking coastal inspired home, with an all-white interior looks beautiful online or in a magazine, but how practical is it, really? How long are those white finishes going to stay looking like that, and how hard are they to maintain, for a busy young family?

With this Module we are going to use all the reporting documents you collected and created in Module 2 and understand:

- the functions you expect your home to feature,
- your taste,
- how your home can satisfy your demands.

To start this process, we must start from reviewing some of the most popular interior design styles, highlight their framework and the basics of what defines each of them.

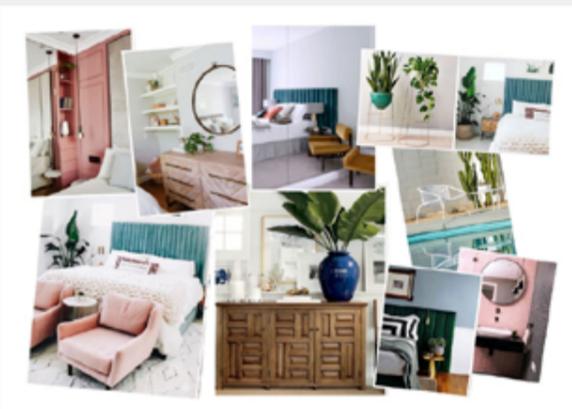
One important note to make here, is that most homes are not 100% one style. Real homes tend to be a fusion of styles as most are created over time, telling the story of who we are, where we come from and how we live. So, whilst we give names to interior design styles, we are actually doing this based upon the main key features of each style. So, don't stress if you're feeling stretched between one or more. Start with feeling which style seems to define you the best and then you can include some other elements, to make your home or renovation truly your own.

Every family is unique, and each home should be tailored to the needs and habits of those that will live there.

Create a mood board.

- Take or collect photos of homes you like, based on its architectural style or external colours and finishes.
- Visit a brickyard and explore their options, take photos or better, pick up a sample of your favourites.
- Visit a display village and walk through the brand new homes for inspiration, take note of the choice of flooring, the tapware, the cabinetry and benchtop combinations, the placement of furniture that capture your attention.
- Visit a well-furnished flooring showroom, discuss your wishes, once again take photos and if possible collect images or perhaps request samples.
- Visit bathroom and kitchen showrooms, see what you like and what you don't and take photos.
- Collect all your images so you can see them together, like in a scrapbook or in a tablet or uploaded in a Pinterest board.
- Also, collect samples of fabrics you love, and samples for benchtop or cabinetry materials as well as colour swatches from furniture and hardware stores.

But yours doesn't have to be a literal board, like the ones I build for builders or clients. Just as I do in my initial stages, you can easily create a mood-board, or more than one, on the computer by collecting photos from lifestyle magazines or off the internet. I often start by placing all my images and info together in a Word file and keep it handy for further additions and scrutiny. Give yourself time before focussing on one look: our choices feel and look different when going back to them even just a few days later. Try to pinpoint the elements, the colours and finishes that attract your attention and ask yourself why and what you like in that particular image or setting. Take notes.



Images I collated from the web



Tip

Don't be afraid to take images or samples away from this collection, when you see they obviously don't fit.

Images I have taken myself



Item 3 - the cooktop.

The cooktop is up next because it is an essential item among the basic functions of a kitchen.

- Allow benchspace on either side of the cooktop, with 300mm as an absolute minimum to allow a dinner plate to be placed there to serve to and from.
- If possible, the more benchspace you have the better, so a 700-1200mm benchspace on either side is more common.
- The ideal location of your cooktop needs to allow for safety space to move around and easy access to the sink, the fridge and perhaps the pantry (remember the Kitchen Triangle).
- Depending on family habits, a 900mm wide cooktop is very practical as the majority of cooking is usually stove cooking and opting for the widest cooktop possible offers plenty of space for different sized saucepans and pots to be on the cooktop at once.
- I rarely install a 600mm wide cooktop because I commonly design kitchens for larger homes, but if your kitchen is quite small, a 600mm wide appliance may be the perfectly proportioned choice.

The rangehood is always located directly above the cooktop, so including them both in your preliminary design layout makes sense. Selecting a wall mounted canopy rangehood or an undermount model installed inside a cabinet will be confirmed based upon your overall renovation theme or style. A cooktop and rangehood which are in view from the rest of the home, will affect your decision whether to make the rangehood blend in with the cabinetry or to stand out as a feature.

Tip

I always try to select a cooktop model with the knobs located to the front rather than the side, not only because these are easier and safer to operate without reaching across the hotplate or gas burner. Also, if the knobs are located to one side, your 900mm wide cooktop actually becomes more like an 780mm wide, taking away practical cooking width.



Mudroom: the layout.

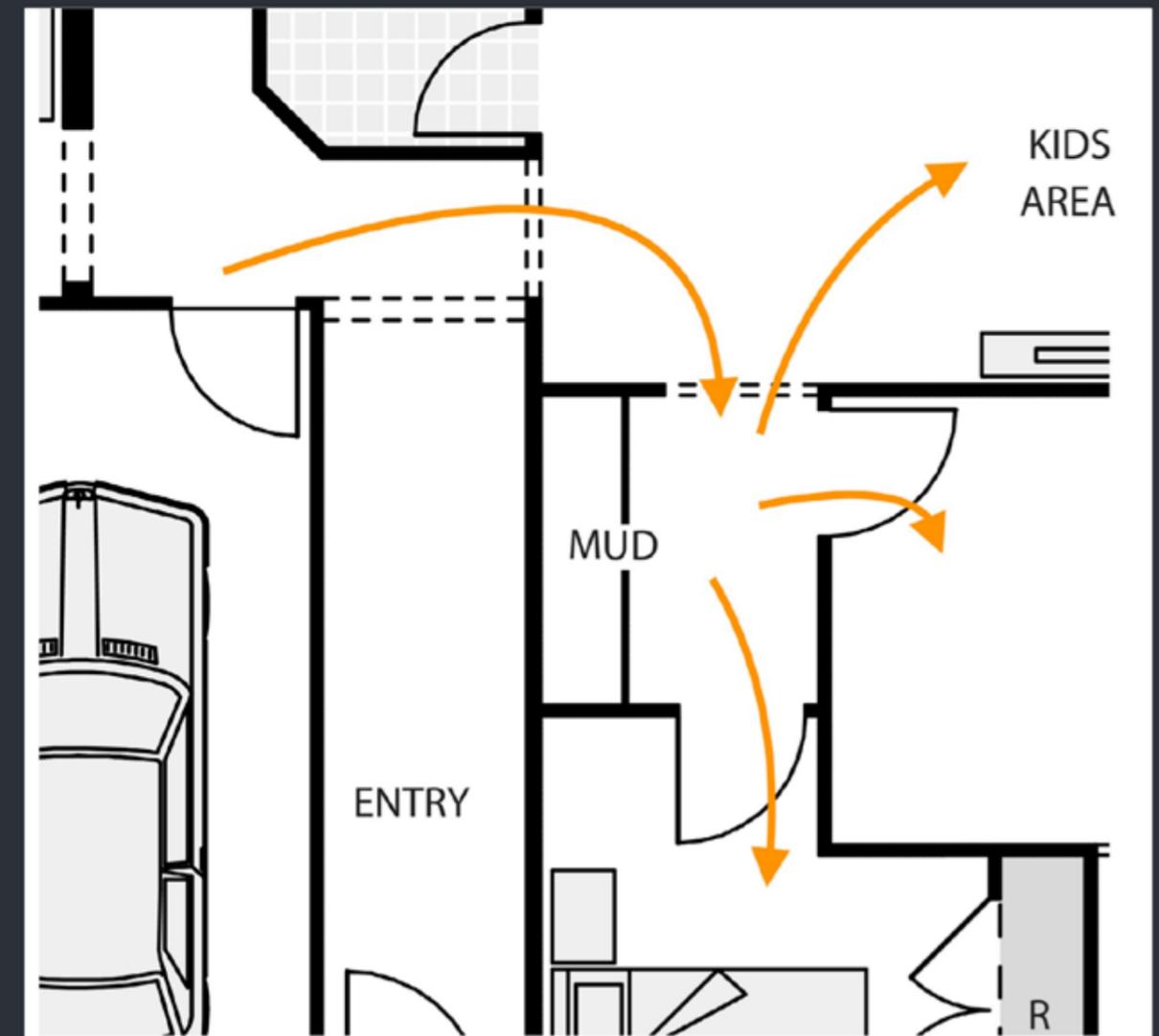
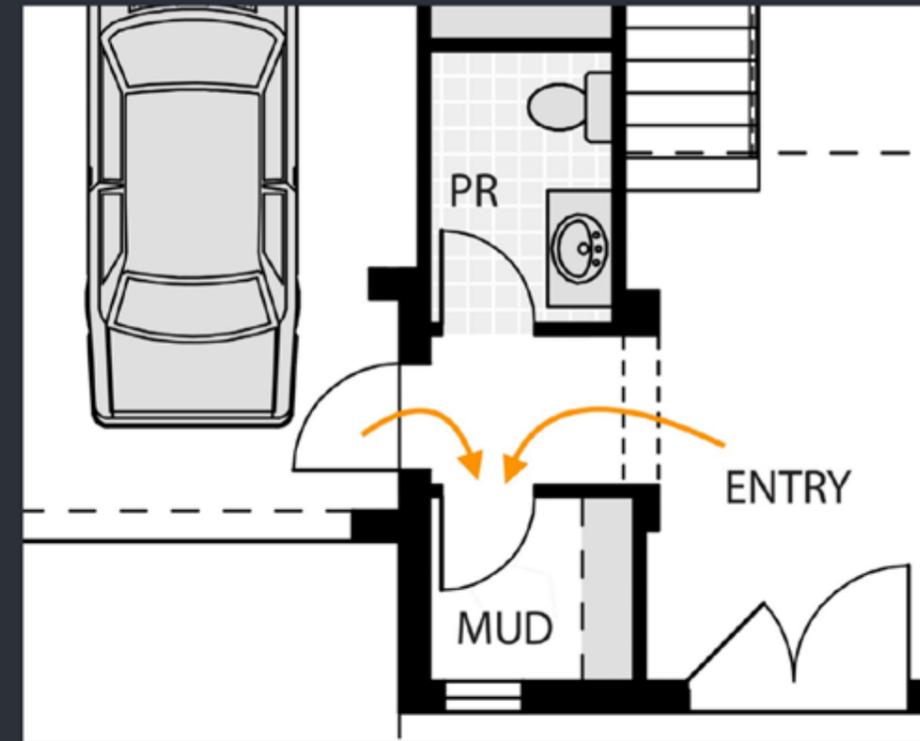
A mudroom is that transition space where to drop bags or take off layers as you enter the home, and differently from what its name suggests, it doesn't actually require a whole room. Traditional mudrooms like those in country or farm houses, may be a large room, but in a suburban or inner-city location the requirements for this room may in fact not needed to deal with any mud.

- Ideally a mudroom should be located near an entry point to the home, rather than eating too deeply into the floor plan.
- Practical locations for a mudroom are near the internal garage entry, to the side of our front door or near the laundry, especially if this has external access.
- Including a mudroom within in a larger room like an overly wide hallway or the laundry, may be a clever use of space.
- A nook under the staircase or an underutilised space near the bedrooms, may work just as well to provide a space to drop school bags, shoes, hats and hang coats.
- A large existing linen or robe may be opened up to provide the perfect place for a practical and good-looking mudroom.

Action

As you familiarise yourself with the floorplan, you'll discover a few practical locations where a mudroom can be added. Consider how it affects visually the rooms around it and how it fits within the overall home's traffic, then pen your decision down.

If you want the kids to use it, make it easy to be used by kids. Accessible hooks, comfortable seats, shelves and drawers to chuck things in. Think practically!

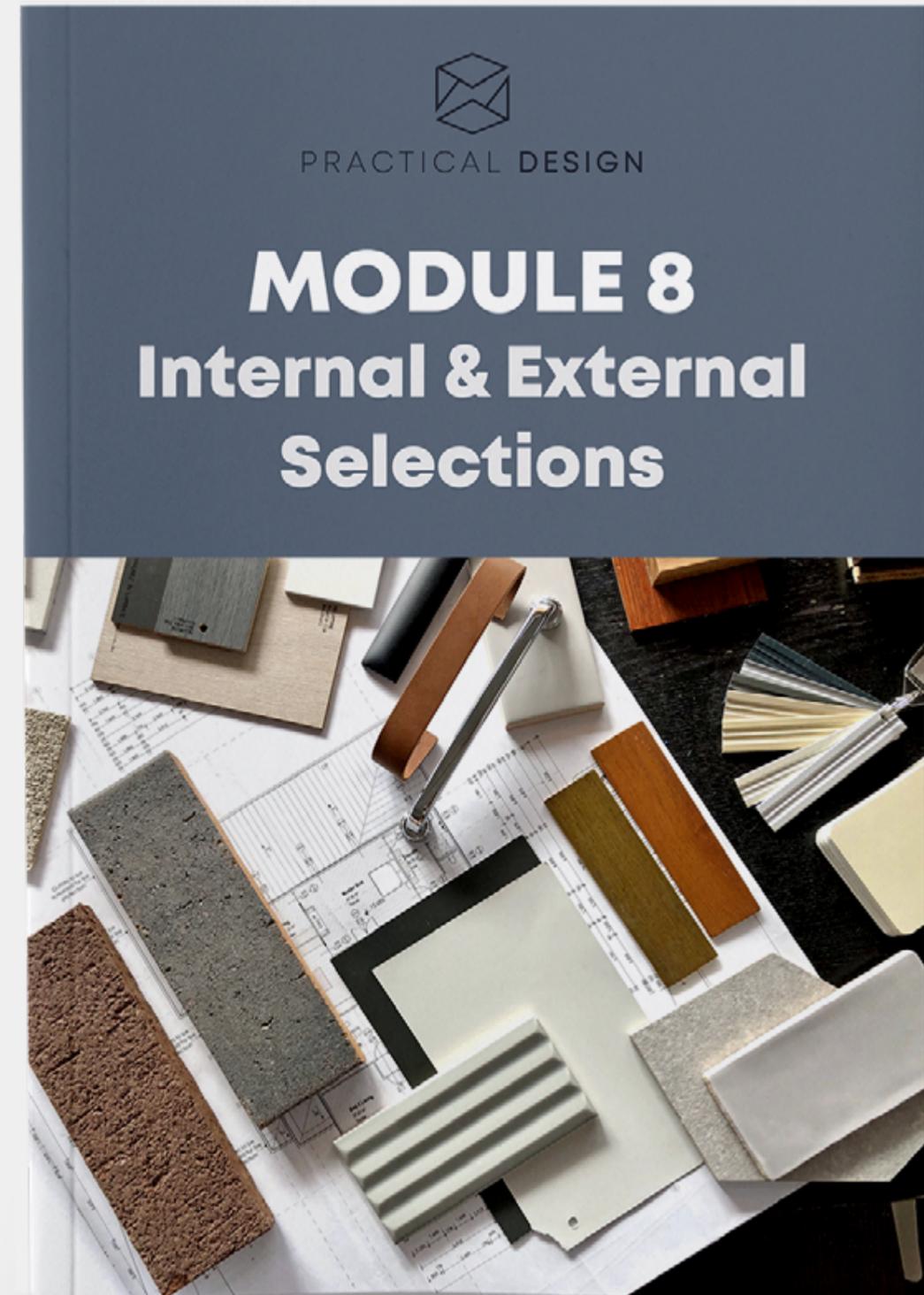


08

Internal & External Selections

Let's put all you've learned into practice! Working through each room, you'll learn how to analyse its function, visualise the desired look and confirm the finishes and selections. You'll get James' exclusive tips on how to personalise a project with storage solutions and lighting. Plus, you'll become accomplished in creating a consistent style (paramount to all good design).

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 265 information-filled pages available in Module 08.





M8.1 Your specific project.

Whilst working through the last Modules, you've learned to understand Interiors and how to create a functional floor plan for your own home. You should by now have a pretty good concept of your kitchen and pantry layout, as well as your bathrooms, laundry and if you have included one, the mudroom. You have also created a design direction through your moodboards displaying the overall looks of your project. With your up-to-date floor plans ready, which include all elevations as well as the internal layout and measurements, it's finally time to select all finishes and materials. To some, this step is confusing and overwhelming because the number of options is immense.

Every home should be unique.



To help you with this, I will share my selection process and the way I guide my clients to ensure each selection appointment is in a logical order, as one item often affects another. For example, the kitchen benchtops are affected by the finish of the cabinets, which must complement the floor... you get it, right?

Before we proceed, however, we must acknowledge that the process of choosing finishes might differ if renovating an existing home or building a new one from scratch. Whilst most of the information in this course is practical and relates to both, I must now point out specific directions for each.

Brick.

If renovating and the existing home is brick, consider if its colour and finish work with your proposed scheme, and if so, pressure cleaning it and dealing with any damaged bricks or mortar is your next step. If not:

- Rendering your brickwork will provide a dramatic change with a new smooth surface and an instant modern update of your home's façade.
- Painting the existing brickwork will retain the texture of the bricks whilst allowing you to achieve the wall colour you want.

If selecting a new brick type, you should always refer to your initial concept, and all of that valuable preparation work. You will by now have a drawing of the façade, and a direction for your exteriors based upon many inspirational images, which will help you make the right choice. Here is what you should already know:

- What portion of the façade will be in brick, will it cover most of your external walls or have a smaller impact, perhaps becoming a feature on part of your façade?
- Are you creating a contemporary crisp finish or perhaps you're looking for a more natural softer edge, maybe even a repurposed/recycled brick look?
- Does your colour scheme require a dramatic dark brick, or a lighter finish instead?



Tip
Choose the brick by imagining the impact its colour and texture will have as a large surface on your façade, and then of course how successfully it will sit among the other elements of your façade.



Front door.

The front door is one of those key items in a home that you must spend time considering, not only because of easy access but also because it is the main entry point for your home, setting the stage for how the rest of the home will look and feel.

- When defining the look of your façade (Module 7) you will have confirmed the location and dimensions of your front door and you will have an idea of which door style is most appropriate for your home.
- Depending on the dimension of your door, you would also have already decided its configuration, if preferring a one panel for example, two panels, or one panel with side light.
- Whether choosing a new door or revamping the one you have, its design, size and finish need to complement the exterior finishes and complement the interiors, as it links both spaces.
- Before visiting your door supplier, take a look at their range online and take note of the dimensions available for each specific design. This will help you narrow down your specific door model based upon your chosen style and the dimensions of the available space.
- Remember, if choosing a double front door, that one of these will usually remain locked most of the time so having double doors is more a visual feature than one that's used all the time.
- Selecting a door with glass panels will allow natural light inside but a highlight window, or a vertical sidelight to one or both sides of the door, may also be able to open, allowing airflow.

To confirm the colour you should first refer to the other finishes on the façade like the windows, gutters and garage door for a cohesive look but adding a punch of colour here will certainly distinguish your façade.



Tip

Front doors provide a very functional task, that of opening and closing. They must therefore be very practical to use, so consider how wide the actual opening will be and how easy the handle and locking mechanisms are to operate.





It's important to note that when adding new flooring over the top of an existing one will result in raised floor heights. This can create small 'trip steps' at doorways or where two different flooring types meet. It can also provide additional work in adjusting the height of any doors, as well as your skirting, which may need to be removed and replaced to prevent existing skirting becoming very small. Do consider the time and costs involved if electing this option.

Flooring renovation.

Your flooring choices will be strongly influenced by the existing finishes in your home, impacting what you can update and retain, and what will need to be replaced or covered.

- If you have existing timber floorboards in good condition, then sanding and staining these may provide a money saving solution to suit your new interior's theme.
- If you have two different timber types, then staining them in a darker colour will help unify their look, providing that all important cohesive feature in successful interiors.
- Timber also provides a warm natural feel to a home and is relatively quick to install making it a very practical choice when renovating.
- If your existing home is built on a concrete slab, laying new tiles will be a great option to dramatically update the flooring.
- If the existing tiles are in good condition but dated in colour and size, it is possible to tile over the top of existing tiles, allowing you to dramatically change the colour and overall feel of the home.
- Tiling over existing timber floors can also be done, but may require more preparation to prevent any movement and cracking.
- Carpet is also a quick to install flooring option in a renovation, that particularly in older homes, can easily hide damaged or mismatched flooring finishes.
- Perfect for bedrooms as well as living areas, the wide range of carpet type, textures and colours, provides options for every interior style.



09

Styling & Presentation

Taking you beyond the insta-perfect interior, in our final module James will unlock even more practical design tips, giving you the confidence to achieve the perfect balance between beauty and function. You'll learn the intricacies of styling and decorating, with James guiding you through the selection of each piece of furniture to ensure it's practical as well as good looking.

To give you a taste of what's available in the Practical Design Online Course, here is a small sample taken directly from the 189 information-filled pages available in Module 09.



M9.1

The importance of presentation.



Presentation Is Everything!

The concept of presentation is essential to any kind of success, and this of course also applies to your home. From the colour combination on your façade, the design of your staircase, right down to your choice of light switches and kitchen door handles. Every item you have selected for your home needs to successfully work with the next, resulting in a cohesive space that feels welcoming and is as functional and practical as it should be.

A functional house is the one that offers the basic functions you expect from it, like a roof to protect your family, a kitchen for cooking, a bathroom to wash in and a bed to sleep on. A practical house, however, is one where the kitchen works to satisfy the cooking habits of a busy family, the bathroom is near the bedrooms and easy to be used by more than one person at the time, when needed. Practicality goes one step further than basic functionality and makes the house into the home you desire. I am confident you have learned lots about Practical Design through the past Modules of this course.

The concept of presentation however, is about highlighting somebody or something's best qualities and about creating desire and getting your message across. Whether you're going to live in this home or you're planning to sell or rent, presentation is how the character of the property becomes alive and helps others appreciate your vision and buy into your dream. Through this Module we'll be discussing the style of your furniture and décor items as well as their placement, because each of these decisions strongly affects the overall look and feel of your home.





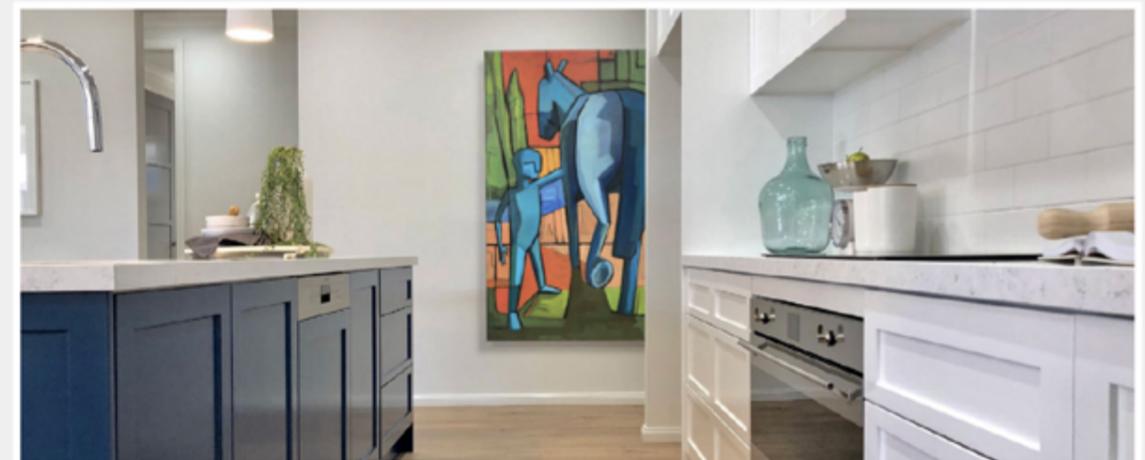
Creating a focal point.

When creating a room and working out your furniture and décor choices, an important consideration is including one key item that catches the eye when you enter the room, called a 'focal point'. The concept behind this technique is about creating an immediate strong impression, by directing the eye to one interior's element or location and raising emotions. It's setting the mood through first impressions.

- Placing a strong artwork on the end wall of a hallway is the perfect way to add a sense of depth and attract you into the space.
- Allowing a great view to be clearly visible through the windows is a good way to add a sense of calm and of space to a room.
- A claw footed free-standing bath tub, given plenty of space around is bound to immediately raise a strong sense of self-indulging luxury.

A focal point is also useful to physically aim people's attention towards a specific direction and maybe away from areas you don't want to be noticed. From there the attention will span to the area immediately around it and then open to the rest of the room.

- A focal point is created by using colour, pattern, size or finish, for example, like a striking art work on the wall in the living room, the textural cushions on the bed, the gold and marble floor lamp or a stand out kitchen tap in the middle of the kitchen island.
- The focal point is usually positioned away from the entry door attracting you inside the space.
- The focal point intends to visually attract people, drawing their attention and making them look where you want them too.



Hanging curtains tips.

There is a range of ways to hang curtains, each adding a slightly different effect to the room. Some have a strong classical appeal, some help make your windows seem larger, but all affect the appearance of the whole room. Here are a few suggestions:

- Double or triple pleats in curtains is a traditional way of hanging curtains, working well for period homes but looking slightly dated in contemporary interiors.
- 'S-wave' hanging of curtains offers a simpler and more modern look, working well in contemporary interiors.
- The 'grommet' look works well for a more relaxed interior, like Coastal or Country styles.
- Two different sized windows in the same room, can be made to seem the same by choosing an identical size and installation for their curtains.
- Curtains that hang from ceiling to the floor help make your window seem larger and the room feel taller.
- To increase the apparent width of narrow windows, installing a curtain track or rod that is 20-40cm wider than the window allows the curtain to disguise the edge of the window frame making it seem wider than it is.
- A rod that is wider than the window allows you to gather the curtains open over the side walls without sacrificing the opening of the window.
- Curtains that are directly attached to the window architraves or just above the window make these seem smaller and the hanging puny.
- The folds of the fabric help your windows seem taller as well as adding a softer character to the room.
- Unless opting for the specific 'puddling' look, the bottom of the curtains should just touch the ground, which is known as 'kissing the floor'. This allows the curtains to easily move and flow with the wind without showing any wall or skirting underneath, resulting in an elegant look.
- Short curtains that are just barely big enough to cover the window might work to protect from light and give you privacy, but will add a puny, cheap and dated look to your interiors.
- Always measure your curtains after the rod or rail has been installed because curtains that are too short look as awkward as trousers of a wrong length.



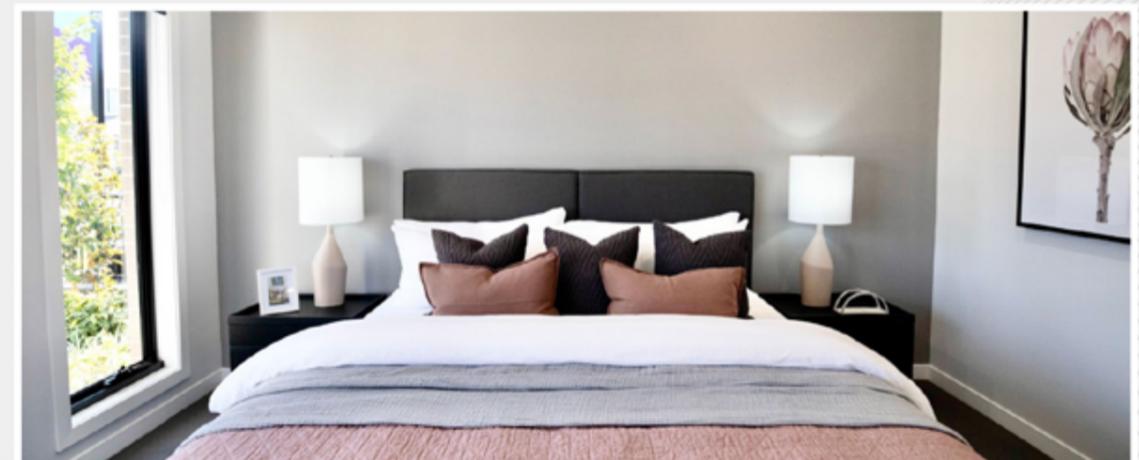


Buy smart.

Avoid purchasing cheap furniture. It'll soon break, end up in a pile of rubbish on the footpath and force you to spend more to buy new pieces. Many popular furniture stores offer 'affordable' pieces that will look great for maybe a few months, but easily scratch, chip and wobble. Quality furniture instead, lasts longer and can be upcycled or sold back to help you finance your new purchases.

'Cheap' should sometimes be called 'cheap and nasty'. Here are just some of my 'pet hates' when it comes to furniture that is not made to last:

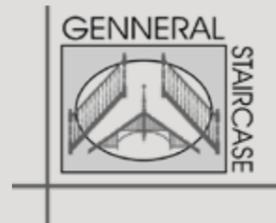
- Cheap coffee tables from flatpack stores. They are cheap for a reason and that surface is so thin, they're not covered in laminate or even melamine. Its surface is actually known as a 'foil' and the moment you hit those edges or drop something on the top, the table is irreversibly damaged and possibly thrown out.
- Super affordable sofas. The fabrics are not designed to perform well over time and the frames are usually made from thin pieces of pine and not meant to last. If you or your kids plunge into your sofa, you're likely to hear a crack as the timber frame splits, breaks, and it's time to go get a new one.
- Glossy finishes for the horizontal surface of cabinets, dining and coffee tables. It easily scratches when items are dropped or dragged across the surface and so cheaply made that these pieces are not worth fixing and end up in the rubbish.
- Cheap dining tables and chairs. Have you asked yourself why they're seen so often on the footpaths during council collections?





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I know you liked the look and feel of this short sample from the 1800+ pages of the complete course. So, what are you waiting for? Come join the family of Practical Design and join me at the next exclusive Online Workshop.

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