



The Power of Good Design: Richard Angel & Will Watson on transforming homes & adding value

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WW: When it comes to property, the power of good design should never be underestimated. As buying agents in Prime Central London and the countryside, we view beautiful homes all the time and see first-hand the difference a great interior can make – both to the saleability and value of a property.

A great example of this is a three-bedroom townhouse in Chelsea we acquired for a family of four in the second half of 2021.

While the house was lovely, the décor was tired and outdated, and the family were keen to put their mark on it.

So, we recommended interior design studio Angel O'Donnell. The team got to know the family, share ideas, develop schemes and breathe new life into every room in the house.

Following an extensive three-month refurbishment, I am confident that this property would sell for more than what our clients purchased for – including the cost of all the new FF&E. In a market where stock levels are low, and in particular refurbished properties, demand would be high for houses such as this.



Will Watson is head of London at acquisition firm The Buying Solution



Richard Angel co-founded interior design studio Angel O'Donnell

RA: This was a classic case of a house having great curb appeal – classic stucco front, beautiful dimensions, cracking location – but a lacklustre interior. The family agreed and immediately tasked us with creating a quintessentially British pied-à-terre, drawing inspiration from the colourful, print-filled boutique hotels of London.

Over the course of three months, we treated each room to a mix of intricately patterned fabrics, handcrafted furniture, quality window treatments, textured wallcoverings, carefully curated artwork – the lot. The transformation was startling.



WW: The change Angel O'Donnell brought about proves just how crucial interior design is in enabling buyers to realise the full potential of a property.

While we view some of the most stunning homes on and off the market, we also see real estate in desperate need of a facelift. Clients can sometimes struggle to see beyond the bland or unsightly decoration. As such, they can't imagine living in the space and making it a home.



RA: In these cases, thoughtful space-planning coupled with standout designs can elevate a property and attract buyers. As soon as you kit out a space, it makes it easier for people to mentally move in.

We've also seen a shift in buyers' design preferences. People have tired of subtle shades of grey. They're seeking bolder, more impactful aesthetics. They want colour, texture, vibrancy and, most pressingly, they want a look that's personal to them. One size fits all no longer cuts it. Championing individuality is something our studio is very passionate about. We're not interested in imposing a signature style. We want to create homes that embody our clients' unique wants and needs. That way we can give each one something truly own-able, unlike anything else we've done before.



How to add value and attract buyers

Be smart with art

You don't have to fill a house with original Hockneys to make an impression. We favour a mix of artists, some local, some further afield. The key is to experiment with different media. Sculptures, ceramics, acrylics, collages – they keep things interesting by adding depth and texture to a space. The more eclectic your artwork, the more authentic it'll appear, like it's been carefully assembled over many years.

Colour up

Greige is gone. And neutral is neither here nor there. People want colour in their lives. So be brave and explore an array of rich hues. Earthy terracottas, dark teals, verdant greens – you'll be amazed how warm and sophisticated they can make a place look.

Make room

Space is a valuable commodity, so you must make the most of every square foot you have. Declutter rooms that have become dumping grounds. Replace bulky furniture with pieces that are proportionate to the space. And furnish any areas that are empty. Contrary to popular belief, bare rooms look smaller than furnished ones. Even a poky corner can be brought to life with good lighting, an architectural plant, smart storage or banquette seating. With a little thought and care, good design will help prospective buyers see the full potential of your property.

Prioritise

Whether you're looking to add value or pull in a crowd, you must always think of your bottom line. That means not wasting money on parts of the house that are already fit for purpose. You must address the critical areas first: things that are immediately off-putting, like garish wallpaper or a threadbare carpet. Once these issues are sorted, you can then focus your attention on the finishing touches, like window treatments, eye-catching accessories and a few pieces of statement furniture. But tackle the big stuff first.

RA: Our Chelsea project proves two key points: good design can make a house feel like a home, a place that's impossible not to fall in love with. And it can add significant monetary value. Our clients are thrilled with their new London pad, even more so that it's gone up in value. Win-win.

WW: There's also a lot to be said for trusted collaborations. As a buying agent, our job doesn't stop after the negotiations and purchase of a property. Clients will always ask to be put in touch with various trades and services. Anyone we recommend becomes an extension of ourselves and the service we provide. So trust is paramount. We knew Angel O'Donnell would do a great job – and they did.





