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# INSPIRING LIVING SPACES

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# 10 ways to add light and space

These homes have been designed to be bright, open and streamlined, regardless of their size or shape

WORDS EMILY BROOKS

The quality of a space can be more important than its square footage. Layouts that flow well, have a good connection between inside and out, an abundance of natural light and aspects such as double-height ceilings make for wonderful homes. Interior features can then back these up – internal glazing, open-tread stairs, lots of concealed storage and a simple palette of materials that help to unify the whole house.



**1 ADAPTABLE SPACE** Indoor-outdoor living and a flexible approach to room and furniture layouts, were part of the brief supplied by the owners of this home in Perth, Australia. Craig Steere Architects ([craigsteerearchitects.com.au](http://craigsteerearchitects.com.au)) designed the 400-sqm house, which takes the form of a glass box on the ground floor with a simplified cantilevered box hovering above. A series of spaces are designed to expand and divide to accommodate visiting family and the living room can be opened up entirely to the surrounding courtyard thanks to sliding glass doors. The flush threshold and use of matching flooring materials help to amplify the indoor-outdoor experience.





## COURTYARD LAYOUT

This Amsterdam loft suffered from a lack of daylight because it had too few windows. Standard Studio ([standardstudio.nl](http://standardstudio.nl)) installed a courtyard into the heart of the 370sqm property to provide some outside space, as well as bring in light. The space acts as the main focal point, with all the rooms leading off it. Six additional rooflights, placed where they will be most useful – above the bed, for example, and over the large kitchen island – ensure there are no dark corners further inside. The scarcity of vertical glazing makes the house feel very enclosed and private.



**3 SMART GLAZING** Jonathan Abdilla bought a run-down bungalow in Sennen Cove, Cornwall, knocked it down and built this modern replacement further down the hill, close to the sea. Local architecture practice Laurence Associates (01872 225 259; [laurenceassociates.co.uk](http://laurenceassociates.co.uk)) employed the visual trick of using wide-open views to make the inside feel more spacious. The house features a lightbox-like hallway, with glazing on every side, and an angled glazed roof. From there, the eye is drawn to the open-plan living space, which opens up to magnificent scenery: sliding doors, fixed rooflights and exterior glass balustrades all contribute to the sense of being at one with the elements. The bedrooms are downstairs so that the living space has the best views. The build cost £800,000.



Pale materials and clean lines help to maximise the sense of light and open space in this narrow build

#### NARROW PLOT

Despite being less than 5m wide and sitting on a 60m-long site, this Vancouver house has none of the cramped, dark feeling associated with, say, a Victorian property with the same narrow footprint. In this collaborative project between Randy Bens Architecture ([rb-architect.com](http://rb-architect.com)) and interior design firm Falken Reynolds ([falkenreynolds.com](http://falkenreynolds.com)), pale materials and clean lines help to maximise the sense of light and open space. An impressive 11 skylights flood the interior with natural light. >>





**5 STORAGE MASTERCLASS** Reflective materials plus a creative approach to streamlined storage are key to the success of this Fulham home refurbishment. Its owners brought in bespoke furniture designers Barbara Genda (020 7978 2349; barbara-genda.com) to make the most of every inch. This includes under-stairs cupboards, basement wine racks and integrated joinery in all the bedrooms. In the open-plan kitchen/diner, glazed steel doors break up the space while allowing the light to flow through, and the pale surfaces amplify the daylight further still.



**6 HIGH IDEALS** The owner of this Covent Garden penthouse, a jeweller who divides her time between London and Hong Kong, wanted bright rooms and a beautifully crafted interior. The apartment, refurbished by Studio Ulanowski (020 7183 3095; studioulanowski.com), features an arched doorway that has been taken up to the full height of the room – providing a striking design feature, and allowing more daylight to flow into the hallway beyond. Taking advantage of the penthouse's high, sloping ceilings, the master bedroom overlooks this living area, borrowing additional light via green steel-frame windows. Fitting in a full bathroom was tricky – the basin area sits separately behind slatted doors, which can be opened when needed, but is otherwise concealed as a flush piece of joinery. The project cost £660,000. >>





## 7 REWORKED LAYOUT

This project by Amos Goldreich Architecture (020 7272 6592; agarchitecture.net) shows how reconfiguring a layout can make a property more efficient to use – and more enjoyable to live in. The 60sqm, two-bedroom flat in North London was remodelled so that the kitchen is now open to the living-dining area; an internal window pulls further daylight into the space and makes it feel less enclosed. The architects also managed to create a new guest loo as part of the remodelling, with a high-level slot window that borrows light from the adjacent bedroom. The project cost £150,000.



**8 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL** The owners of this 230sqm Shoreditch loft wanted to retain and enhance the industrial past of the building, keeping the airy, open-plan feel that is synonymous with loft conversions. Milan-based Nomade Architettura (nomadearchitettura.com) inserted an open-tread steel staircase, and opaque safety glass balustrades for the mezzanine sleeping area – keeping the urban look, but retaining some openness. White gloss worksurfaces and pale walls help reflect light back into the kitchen. >>



## 9 A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

This Victorian building was once a school, before being converted into a home in the 1970s. Architecture studio McLaren Excell (020 3598 0673; mclarenexcell.com) was tasked with opening up the layout, which had been heavily divided up, without making any significant changes to the exterior. By using previously wasted voids below the floor and above the ceiling, the practice has created an impressively airy home that is a generous 3m high. It has further added to the useable space with an upper floor level containing a bedroom. This sleeping area has been suspended from the roof structure, so there are no supporting walls or columns below to interrupt the sightlines on the ground floor, giving the living area tucked away beneath it a cosy feel.



## 10 A SUITE RENOVATION

LLI Design (020 8348 4800; llidesign.co.uk) remodelled a four-storey 1970s townhouse in North London from top to toe. The property had good room sizes but cramped and dark circulation spaces, so internal walls were removed and the staircase was replaced with a glass and steel model that allows the light to flow vertically. On the top floor, the main bedroom was reconfigured from a series of separate rooms into one large area that incorporates the bathroom; a new rooflight enables the daylight to make a real focal point of the sculptural, freestanding bath. **GD**