



HOMEWORK
DESIGN STUDIO

Randall Waddell
CID, ASID
Principal Interior Designer
HomeWork Design Studio

THE 5TH WALL.



Randall Waddell

Did you know that every room in your house has five walls? If you don't believe it, just look up! Interior Designers are taught to consider the ceiling as the 5th wall. It is as important as any wall in a room or maybe even more so, because it allows so much opportunity to add character, mood and depth to a space.

The ceiling can be as simple or complicated as the architecture of the home requires and there are a host of treatments to consider when thinking of the finish you wish to achieve. Because mood is so important in a room it may help to think "top-down". Consider the architectural character of the space and then define what the ceiling needs to "say" with that in mind. For example, if your home is minimalist you may literally have a flat ceiling with absolutely no decoration whatsoever, or if your home is traditional or even transitional, you may consider a coffered ceiling with a grid of wood to take the boring out of the typical expanse of bare planes. Certainly, nominal finishing like crown mouldings or recessed "trays" within the ceiling can create depth and dimension and would add a sense of character and richness to the ceiling design.

Materials like bead-board, worn floorboards, wooden beams, even upholstered panels can all be used on a ceiling and can create very imaginative designs. These can greatly enhance the décor of a room

and be used to reference the other material used in the overall space, whether it be on the floor or walls or even the furnishings. It goes to show that there is a very wide gamut of applications that would be suitable for ceiling designs.

As the theme of the magazine this month is dining spaces, you may want to consider options for both formal and informal dining rooms. There's something romantic about a formal dining room. Perhaps it's the thought of having a room completely devoted to eating and entertaining, or the idea of enjoying a sit-down dinner with family and friends. Formal dining rooms can occasionally feel stiff and cold usually because they are in a separate room and typically not used unless for special occasions or for when entertaining guests. However, that does not mean it needs to be boring, and bold colour is a cheering anecdote, so don't be afraid to use that boldness on the ceiling. Balance it with a magnificent crystal chandelier to bring tons of light to the space and reflection back on to the ceiling. In this situation you could be as bold as an all-black ceiling or other bold dense colours like navy or hunter green or maroon. For a more glamorous vibe, a metallic or pearlescent effect can be achieved by applying certain glazes on your ceiling. Of course the design of the relevant furnishings such as your dining table and chairs as well as drapes, dining accessories, floor coverings and upholstery will all respectfully be in tandem with the

choices for the surrounding infrastructure.

An informal dining room is used every day by the entire family for all meals and also serves when entertaining or otherwise. It's an all-purpose room and although most designers today keep this in mind, it does not mean that it should lack some formal trimmings to amp up the splendour a little. But typically it's the more casual approach to living that drives this informal design aesthetic. The ceilings in this space may simply have recessed lighting or simple pendant lighting in the centre as a more informal lighting style than say a crystal chandelier. The ceiling could also have less work in the architectural detail to reflect the casual feel of the room, but both paint colour or even papered ceilings (using wall-paper) can add some character and fun to the space. Crown mouldings and recessed trays with simple lines and design can be very effective for an informal space. To add a level of sophistication to your space, paint any ceiling trim, moulding or other architectural details a different shade to accentuate them.

Either way, formal or informal, make sure and take advantage of the 5th wall in your dining room or otherwise. Your ceiling has real potential - consider it a blank canvas of creative opportunity. Decorating your ceiling can help you elevate a simple room to a masterful design. There is so much to gain and nothing to lose; it can be the one "wall" in the room that inspires a most interesting dinner conversation.

