

parts of the room, but that does not necessarily mean the centre of the mantelpiece.

Ashtrays: The rule for most households is to have plenty of ashtrays, to place them within reach of all chairs, and to choose types which are easily kept clean. Moulded plastic with no inaccessible corners is particularly suitable. Novelty and ornamental ashtrays are usually of poor design and seldom worth the price asked for them.

Vases, if too highly decorated, will divert attention from the flowers they contain. As considerable variety in shapes, sizes, and colours is needed for different flower arrangements, the best plan is usually to keep most of the vases in a cupboard and to leave out, as well as those in use, only one or two which because of their shape or colouring are particularly attractive even when empty.

Screens are not usual, but they can be very useful—to keep a corner cosy and draughtless, to give privacy, to hide the back of a piano. They are not for small rooms, and even in large ones must be kept clear of traffic lanes. Design and colour should harmonise with the rest of the room, but may be vivid or subdued, depending on whether the screen is meant to be decorative or inconspicuous.

Ornaments may range from cheap and amusing trifles to rare and precious pieces of china, metal work, and sculpture. As they are ornaments, chosen for their decorative qualities as the finishing touches in the furnishing plan, there is plenty of scope for originality in selection and arrangement. Use a few at a time, and change them often; they will then be appreciated much more by those who look at them as well as by those who dust them. Group things together instead of scattering them individually.

Mirrors can be used to lighten a dark corner, to reflect part of the room or the view, to give an illusion of greater window space, or as alternatives to pictures. Frameless mirrors are fashionable now and look well in modern rooms, but if the furnishings are of an older type, a mirror with a simple wooden or metal frame is more appropriate.

Treatment of Pictures

Good pictures deserve to be looked at with care and attention, so they need unobtrusive frames and clear wall space around. Many different types of pictures are available which will fit in with personal tastes and a variety of decorative schemes. Some people like to use a special picture as a main point of interest in the room, either by hanging it in a place of honour above the fireplace or in the centre of the main wall, or by basing the colours used in the room on those in the picture.

Pictures look best if they are in scale with the size of the room and if they have an atmosphere and character similar to their surroundings. Battle scenes and storms, for instance, do not fit in with the idea of peaceful sleep.

Correct framing and hanging are important in creating a pleasing effect. Pictures should be hung flat against the wall, with the fixings concealed entirely, or, if a picture rail is used, with two hangers so that the wire forms a rectangle and not a triangle. If cords or wire and hooks are used, they must be as inconspicuous as possible—the same colour as the wall background.

Level with the eyes of an average person standing up is about the right height, but if the ceiling is high, the room may look better with the pictures a little further up. In a modern room with low furniture and ceiling they may be lowered to the eye level of a seated person. Small pictures which are similar in size and subject may be framed in the same way and hung together in a line or block.

Simple frames should always be used, especially with modern furniture. A plain wooden beading in a matching colour is suitable for photographs and unpretentious pictures; wider wooden frames, gold and silver, are used with larger, heavier, or more sophisticated pictures. Mounts of cream, white, or a neutral tone may be used as well as a frame with all kinds of pictures except oil paintings; they are necessary if the picture is hung against a patterned wallpaper.

It is obvious that the number of small things which can be included in a room is considerable, and the list given is by no means exhaustive, for where are the fire irons, the cigarette boxes, the waste paper basket, and the family photographs? A room without accessories is barren, lacking in individuality and home-like qualities: A room with too many is fussy and oppressive.

Photograph in heading by Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd.

Renovation and Desecration

I RENOVATED a room recently and quite enjoyed seeing the fruits of my thrifty labours. It is wonderful what a few lengths of material and some tacks and a bit of paint will do, isn't it? But really, I often wonder if it is worth it just now, as children don't seem to get any respect for furniture and carpets and things until well after the age of six or so, do they? And some of my best things are smeared and scratched and, worst of all, have names scribbled on them in odd corners (why do they like to burst into print at such an early age?), yet I do try to train my infants in the way they should go. Still, just when I feel wrathful at some really frightful bit of desecration, one or other of the older children suddenly does something for me and I am thrilled (in the true sense of the word) and forget the other part. I hope life doesn't rush by too quickly for me during this busy period of bringing up the bairnies so that I find later on what I heard one Nana say: "I am enjoying my gradchildren far better than my own children—I was always too busy for all their little ways and sayings."—**"L." Auckland.**



In many homes accessories are not chosen carefully but just accumulate.