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Transform Lacklustre Halls into Welcoming Corridors

By Anita Wilkém

Photographs courtesy of Wiklém Design

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Anita Wiklém is the creative director and founding partner of Wiklém Design in Toronto. With 20 years of experience in the industry, she has built a reputation for timeless value, distinctive environments and trusted design solutions. She has won several awards internationally and in Canada for her interior design work. Visit www.wiklemdesign.com

The design of condominium corridors is a very important factor in the overall appearance and value of the building. It all depends on the style of the corridors, the finishes chosen, the light fixtures and whether they distribute light correctly, and the little finishing details that can make a building feel like home.

Choosing a distinctive style and using it throughout the entire building is essential to creating a unified, consistent look. Doing this will show that a lot of attention and thought has been given to every room. Traditional design is very elegant and can create a sophisticated feeling, but it can become outdated very quickly if classic and timeless finishes aren't chosen. Transitional design can include touches of traditional design along with more contemporary styles; this is a great look to feature throughout a building and for older buildings looking for a fresh new look. Modern design can be tricky to accomplish without sliding into a corporate feel, and modern and trendy finishes can become outdated very quickly. However, if done correctly, a modern design can be a fresh, clean style with an edge to it.

Corridors are a complex area to design, but having a clear design objective will help to narrow down the options. All of the finishes should work together to create a harmonious design that does not fight with the rest of the building's design, but should also be different or fresh enough to give the corridors the breath of life they most likely need.



CARPET

There are a lot of options when it comes to the finishes for your corridor. Starting with carpet, a few decisions need to be made. You can choose to have a custom carpet design that will take into account all of your corners, the location of the suite entries and elevator walk-off area. Another option for carpeting is to choose a great pattern from a standard running line and have it custom coloured to suit your colour palette. Another option is to use standard running-line broadloom or carpet tile to complement the design style.



GROUND-FLOOR

The ground-floor corridors, parking levels and elevator walk-offs get quite a bit more traffic than any other areas in the building. These are good areas in which to use tile flooring for a longer life cycle and easier maintenance. For a timeless look, granite is a good option for floor tiles and is more durable than other natural stone products. Porcelain is another tile option and is also very durable and easy to maintain. It has come a long way in the past few years and can look as elegant as natural stone, replicate the grain of wood or even simulate raw concrete. Patterns can be incorporated into your design to mix together granite and porcelain; stone look and wood grain porcelain; and can replicate the borders or design details in your carpet.



WALL

Wall finish is a key factor in your final design aesthetic. We strongly recommend vinyl wall covering instead of paint, because vinyl wall covering is more durable and easier to clean. It also adds another level of depth to the corridor and would seem flat without it. You can play with wall covering in a way that can't be done with paint. Accent wall coverings can be used at the elevator walk-off areas, at the suite entries and on an empty end wall. By adding an accent wall covering, you can introduce a different colour or larger pattern that ties into your carpet design. The main wall covering should be subtle enough that it will not become an eyesore day after day, but also have enough interest that it won't look like paint. Try something with a light to heavy embossing in a weave or texture.



LIGHTING

Lighting is a further extension of the corridor design, as well as being a functional feature. Lighting can be accomplished with overhead lights along the entire corridors or wall sconces at the elevator walk-offs or suite entries. The style of the fixture can further enhance the corridor design and can also help highlight key features, such as an accent wall covering or a detail at the suite entries.

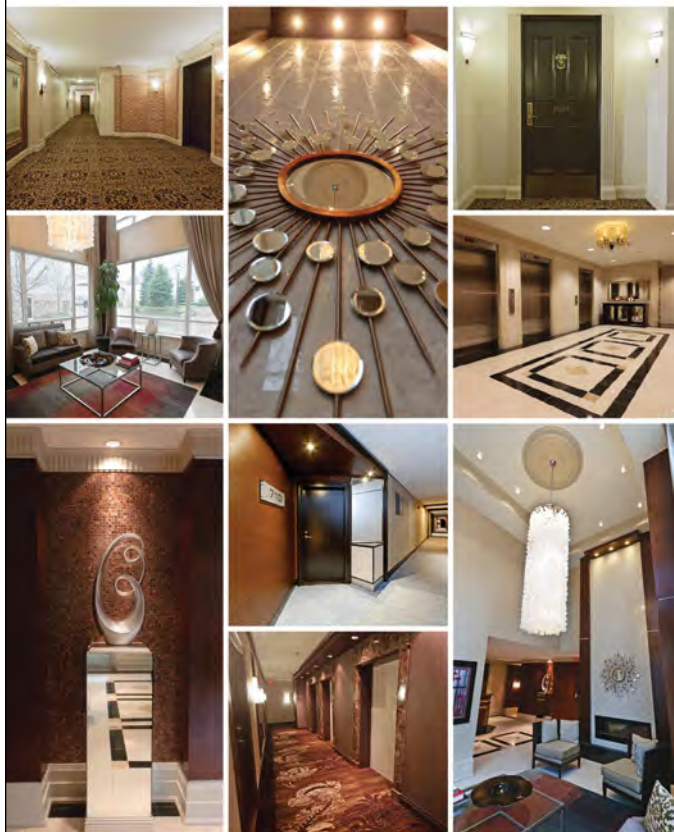


DETAILS

Details can range from adding wainscoting down the corridors, a side panel or decorative item next to the suite doors, or mirrors and art. Wainscoting will enhance a traditional decor and add a level of interest to the corridor. A small shelf next to the suite door is not only decorative, but also functional for the residents. The suite numbers can be listed to the side of the suite door, and can even be incorporated into the wall sconce design. Side panels are another idea to add detail to the suite entry. They can be in an accent or medium to dark paint colour, a specialty pattern wall covering, or a glass or acrylic panel with a design or image printed on it. Mirrors at the elevator walk-off add a residential touch to each floor. Art can also be installed at the elevator walk-off or at the end of the corridor if there is an empty wall as a way to further enhance a residential, personalized feeling.



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