

New Classics Manual



ORAC



The New Classics Manual is your designer's toolbox to timeless architectural elegance.

This book explores the foundational principles of classical design while offering practical tools to bring these concepts to life. From understanding spatial flow to selecting the perfect mouldings, each chapter provides expert insights, real-world applications and curated product combinations.

Whether you seek refined simplicity or grand architectural statements, this manual empowers you to create interiors that are as sophisticated as they are enduring.

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The designer's toolbox

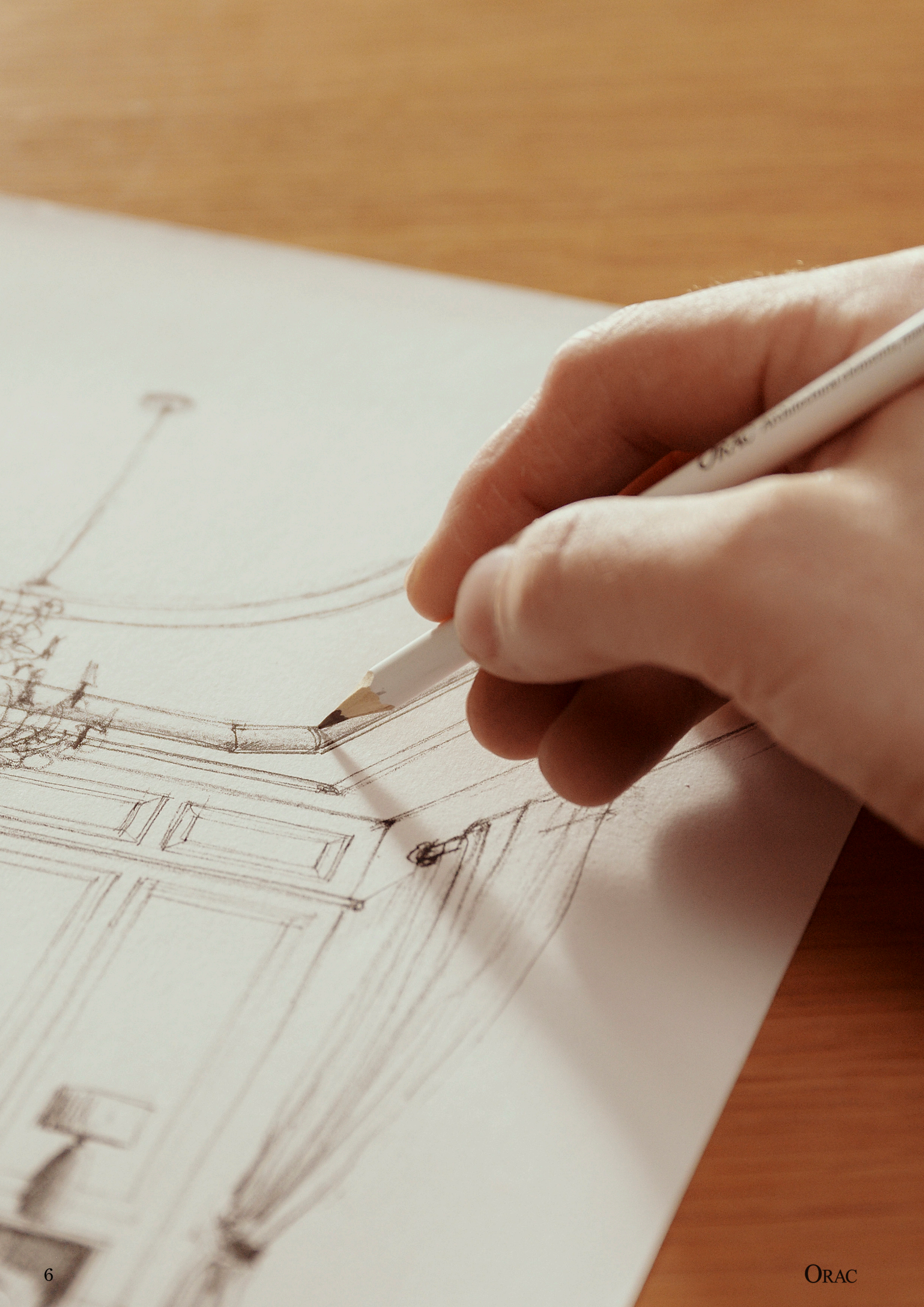
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Great design begins with a solid foundation. In the world of New Classics, that foundation is built on three essential principles: proportion, symmetry and harmony. These elements shape the way a space feels - how it flows, how it balances and ultimately, how effortlessly it stands the test of time.

But mastering these principles is not about following strict formulas. It's about understanding their power and using them to craft interiors that feel both structured and alive, grand yet inviting. This toolbox is designed to give you practical guidance, real-world examples and expert insights, so you can bring the New Classics to life with confidence.

The designer's toolbox

Where to start?



Before selecting mouldings or choosing colours, take a step back and define your vision. Classic interiors are not just about decoration - they tell a story. Whether you want a space that feels refined and harmonious or one that plays with contrast and surprise, the key to success lies in understanding the purpose of the room, the flow of spaces and the existing architecture.



Laying the foundation
for a timeless interior

Where to start?

Purpose & emotion

A well-designed room is more than a collection of architectural elements - it evokes a feeling. Before making design choices, consider what atmosphere to create. Should the space feel elegant and grand, with symmetrical panelling and rich mouldings? Or would you prefer a warm and inviting ambience, using softer contrasts and refined details? Maybe a bold, dramatic statement is more fitting, with dark colours and striking profiles.



EXERCISE

Write down three words that define your space:

By keeping these words in mind, you ensure that every design choice aligns with the emotion and character of the room.

Where to start?



The flow of spaces

A home is not just a series of separate rooms - it's a sequence of spaces that interact with each other. Before starting, decide whether you want a compelling room story, where each room seamlessly connects to the next or a disruptive room story, where every space has its own distinct personality.

A compelling room story creates visual bridges between spaces, ensuring a consistent and harmonious feel throughout the home. This can be achieved using the same type of architectural elements across multiple rooms, keeping profiles a single colour or maintaining a cohesive material palette. The result is a space that flows effortlessly, creating a sense of calm and balance.

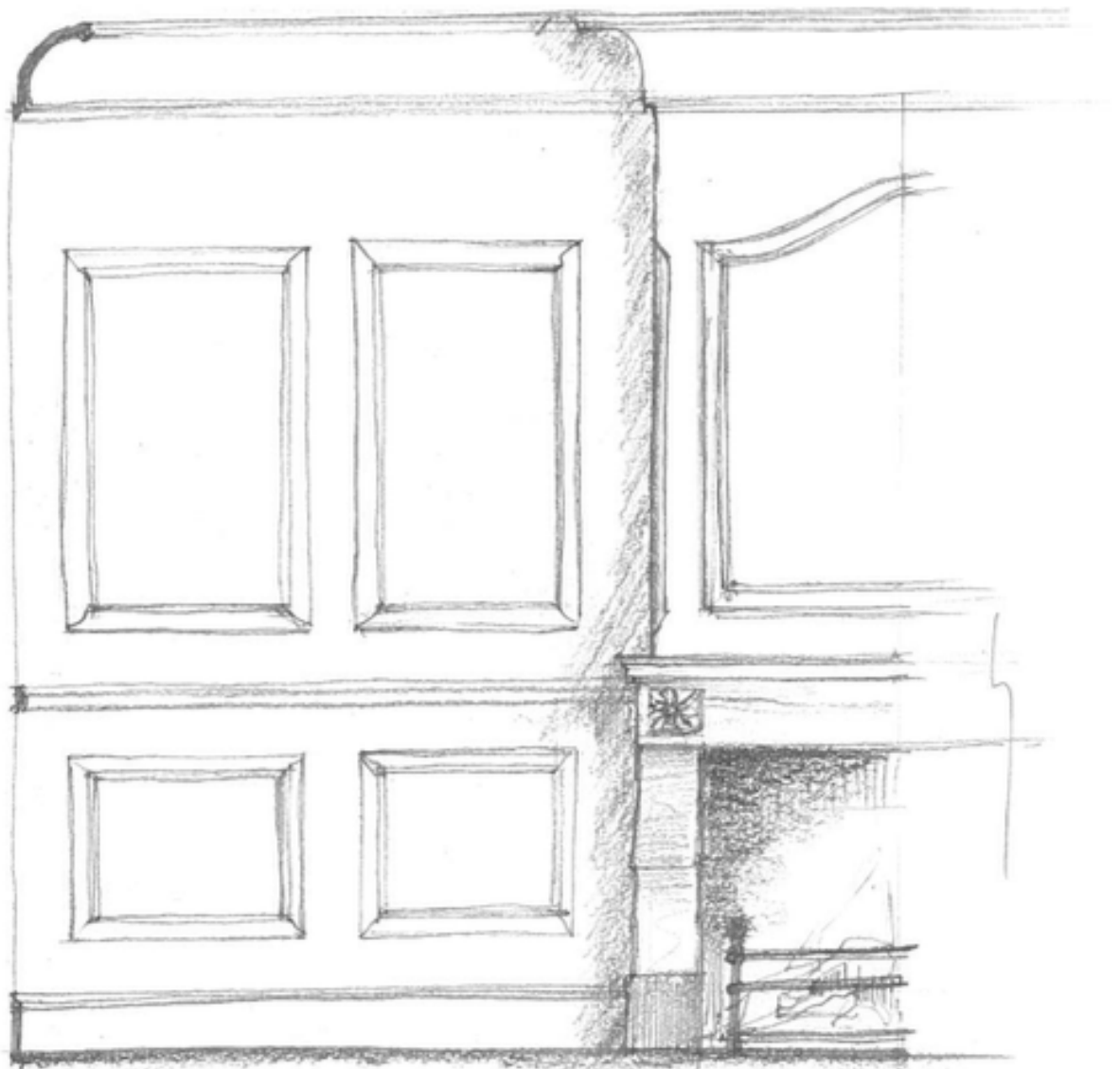


In contrast, a disruptive room story embraces individuality. Here, each room exudes a different mood, using varied moulding styles, contrasting colours or unexpected design choices. This approach is ideal for those who want to experiment with character and surprise, making each space a unique experience.

Where to start?

Understanding the existing architecture

Before making changes, it's important to analyze what's already there. Every space has its own proportions, structural elements and defining features. Working with, or around, these aspects is key to achieving a balanced design.



Start by making a list of elements you want to highlight or conceal. Do you have original architectural details, such as fireplaces, high ceilings or decorative mouldings that should take center stage? Or do you want to intervene to change the proportions of the room?

If you need to adjust the perception of space, architectural elements can play a transformative role. A room with a low ceiling can appear taller by extending the cornice onto the ceiling. A narrow space can feel wider with horizontal panelling or carefully placed chair rails. Darker colours and lower mouldings can create a more intimate, cozy atmosphere, while lighter tones and vertical elements can enhance openness.

To make informed choices, take accurate room measurements before selecting profiles. The height of the ceiling, the width of the walls and the placement of doors and windows will determine the ideal proportions for cornices, skirting and panels. Proportion is the foundation of classical design and small adjustments in scale can make a significant difference in the overall feel of a space.



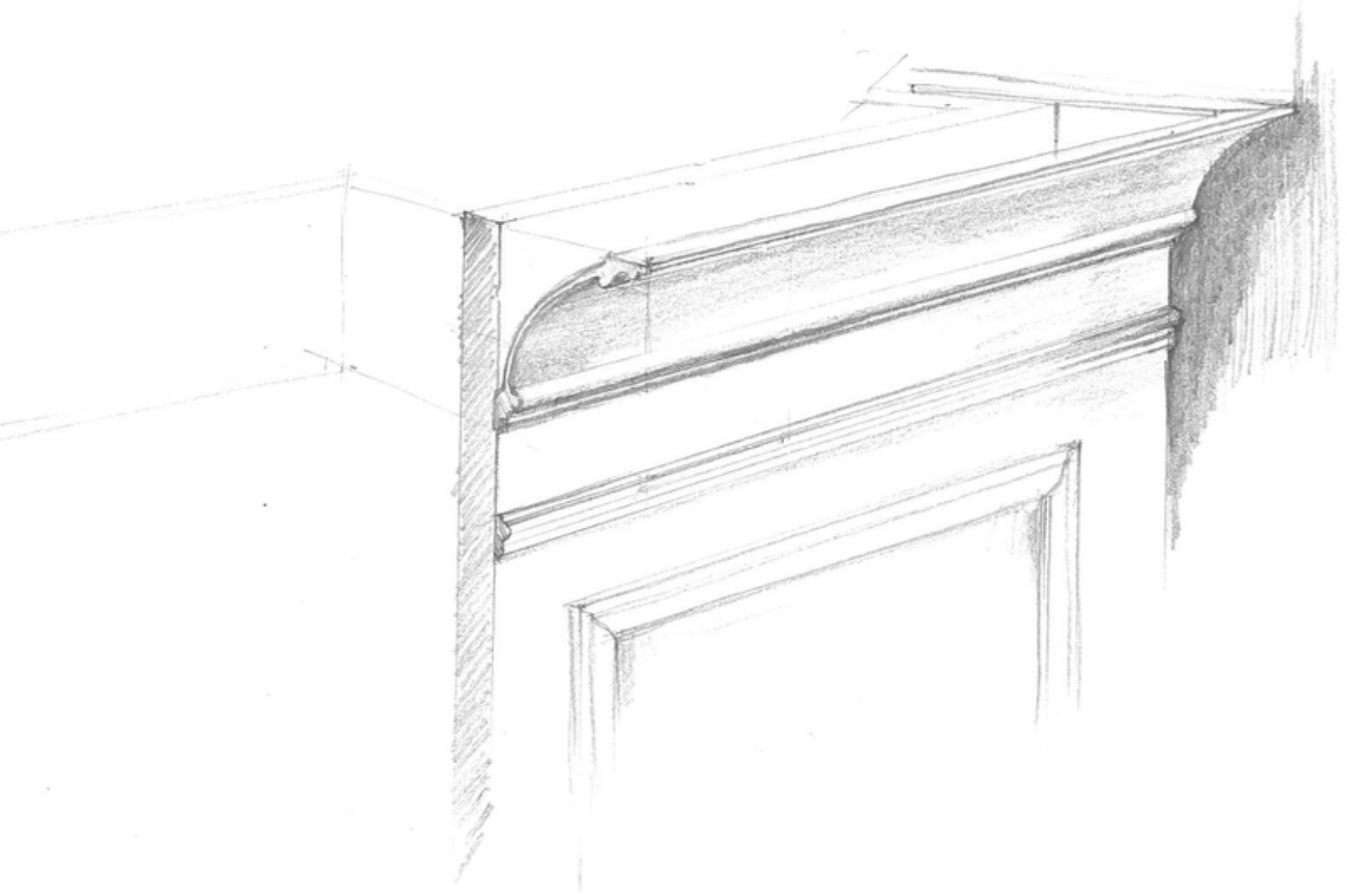
Each architectural element - cornices, skirting, panel mouldings, door frames and even ceiling mouldings - plays a role in shaping the proportion and symmetry of a space. Mastering their use allows you to create interiors that feel timeless, elegant and effortlessly balanced.

Architectural elements

Cornices

Cornices are one of the most defining elements of a classic interior.

They do more than just soften the transition between walls and ceilings.



The right cornice can have a big impact on the proportion of the room. It can make a ceiling appear higher, balance a room's proportions or even redefine the perception of space. Choosing the right one, however, requires an understanding of scale, style and placement.



Pro tip:
Create a seamless, harmonious look by integrating our curtain profiles.
They elegantly conceal curtain rails while uniting your ceiling design.

Cornices

Choosing the right cornice for your space

The first consideration when selecting a cornice is ceiling height. A large, sculptural cornice can bring grandeur to a high-ceilinged space, but in a smaller room, it may feel overpowering. Conversely, a narrow, understated profile might work well in contemporary settings but could feel underwhelming in a large, classically inspired room.

A good rule of thumb is that the cornice should always be larger than the skirting to maintain balanced proportions. If the skirting is too high or the cornice too small, the room risks feeling visually bottom-heavy.

The freedom to break rules

Rules exist to guide, not restrict. While proportions, symmetry and harmony provide a roadmap, the most inspiring spaces are those that bend the rules to express personality.



Cornices



The role of cornices in a space's perception

Beyond aesthetics, cornices play a crucial role in shaping the way a room feels. Their placement and design influence how we perceive height, width and overall balance.

- ① To make a room feel taller:
extend the largest part of the cornice onto the ceiling rather than keeping it fully on the wall. This creates an optical illusion of height, drawing the eye upward.
- ② To make a room feel wider:
choose a wide, linear cornice that runs parallel to the ceiling, subtly expanding the visual breadth of the space.
- ③ To lower an overly high ceiling:
use a deeper cornice that projects further down the wall. A heavier cornice helps visually anchor the ceiling, preventing the space from feeling cavernous.
- ④ To add grandeur in a subtle way:
consider layering multiple cornices together for a composed look. This technique is often used in stately homes and classical architecture.

Cornices



Ornamented cornices

Rich in detail, these are perfect for classical interiors inspired by baroque, Rococo or Neoclassical styles. Their sculptural reliefs add depth and historical character.



Organic cornices

Featuring softer, flowing curves, these profiles suit romantic or art nouveau-inspired interiors, where movement and fluidity are key.

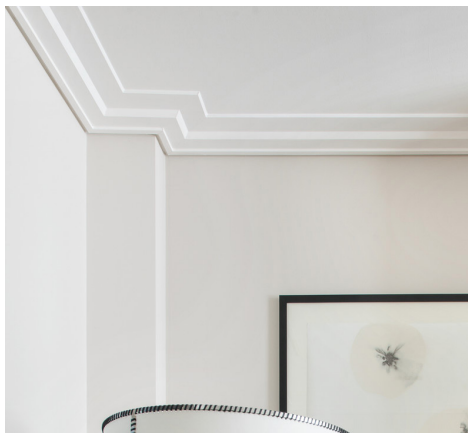
Types of cornices and their effects

Not all cornices serve the same purpose. Each style brings a unique character to a room, so selecting the right one is essential to achieving the desired effect.



Composed cornices

By layering multiple profiles, composed cornices create depth and grandeur - ideally for spaces that need a bold, architectural statement.



Linear cornices

Clean and simple, these profiles work well in modern-classic interiors, where the focus is on refined elegance rather than ornamentation.



Fragmented cornices

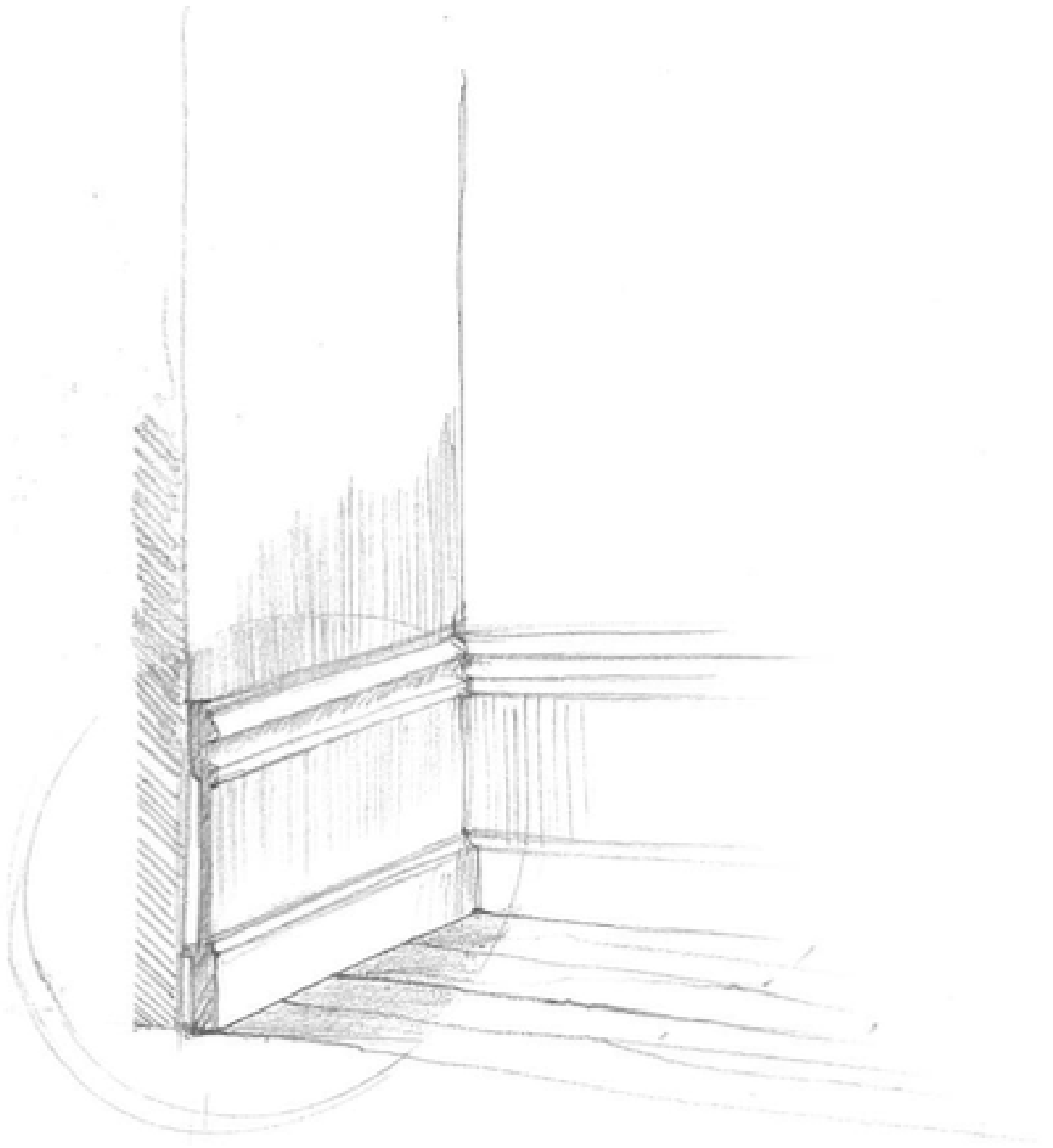
With asymmetric or unexpected elements, these profiles add architectural interest and depth, making them a great choice for contemporary reinterpretations of classic design.

Skirting

Skirting boards may seem like a small detail, but they play a vital role in shaping a well-balanced interior. Beyond their practical function of protecting walls, they frame the space, create a structured base and bring cohesion to the overall design.

Enhance your design with these skirting techniques:

- ① To create a more grounded look, opt for a skirting board in a shade at least three tones darker than your walls. The contrast will add depth, making the space above feel lighter and more open.
- ② Want to make a small room appear larger? Use the same color for both the walls and skirting boards to create a seamless visual flow that expands the space.
- ③ During renovations, if your skirting board doesn't align perfectly with the existing door frame, consider adding a decorative block at the junction. This small detail helps blend the two elements for a polished, cohesive finish.



Skirting

Elevated skirting

Standard skirting, available in both rigid and flexible versions for straight or curved walls, is perfect for concealing cables and creating a seamless floor-to-wall transition.

But what if you want to take your design a step further?

Elevated skirting, or raised skirting, is a technique that layers multiple decorative elements to achieve a more refined and sophisticated look.

While it may appear to be a high-end feature, it doesn't have to come with a hefty price tag. By creatively combining different types of wall mouldings, you can achieve a similar effect without exceeding your budget.

Experiment with materials by pairing classic skirting boards with wall panel moulding to create a striking base that extends up to one-fifth of the wall height. Then, unify the elements with a contrasting paint color to make the design pop.

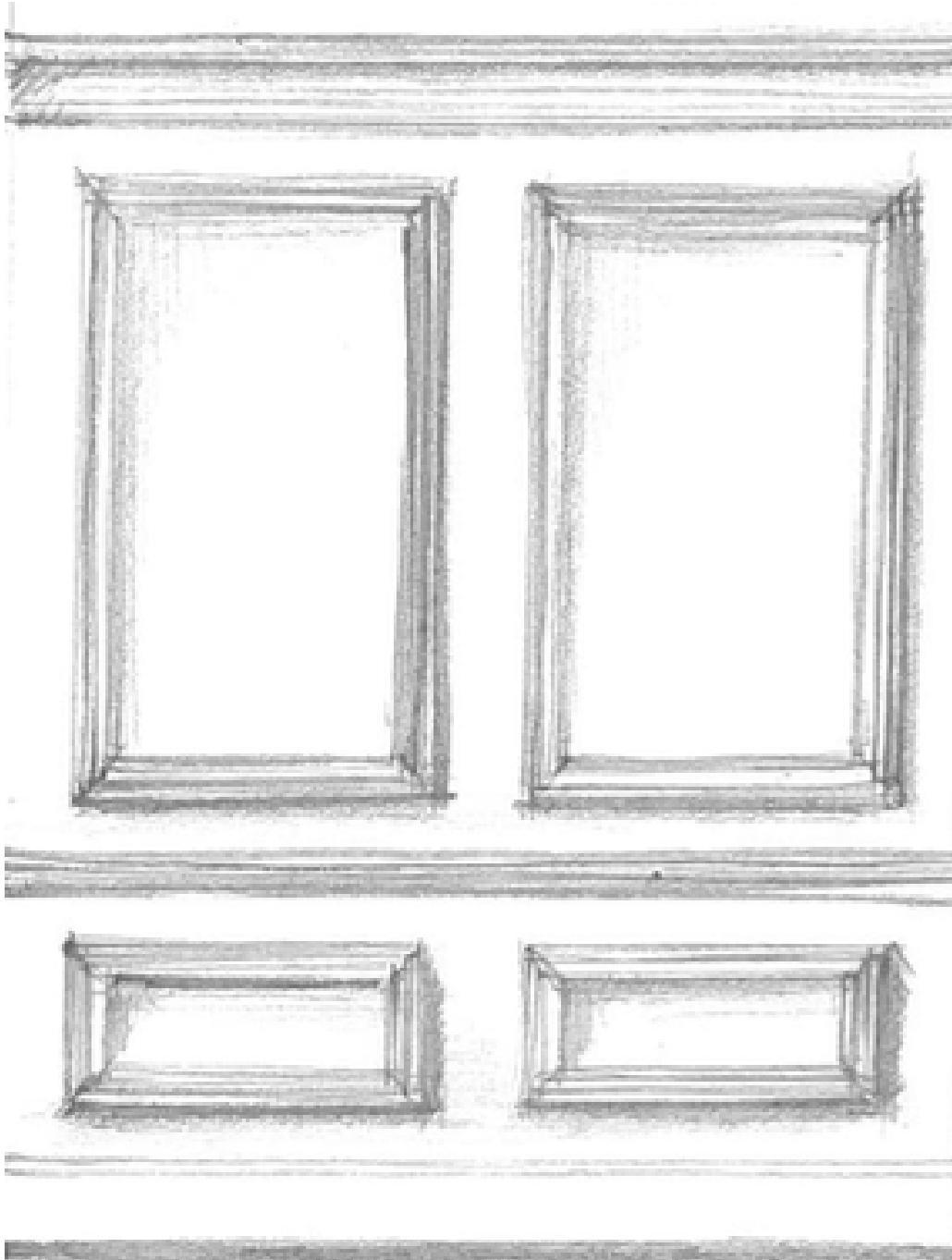
And just like that, your space gains an unexpected touch of elegance.



Wallscaping

In classical interiors, walls were never left bare; they were carefully structured with panel mouldings, chair rails and picture rails to create balance and depth. This practice, known as wallscaping, transforms flat walls into elegant compositions, enhancing the overall proportion of a room.

Wallscaping follows a simple yet powerful principle: by dividing a wall into sections, you introduce a natural rhythm that makes a space feel more structured and visually engaging. The key to success lies in proportion and symmetry - ensuring that each element complements the room's dimensions and existing architectural features.



Pro tip:
The key to elegant wallscaping
is consistent spacing.

Wallscaping



Chair rails

A chair rail is one of the simplest yet most effective ways to introduce proportions into a room. Originally designed to protect walls from furniture damage, chair rails now serve as architectural guides, dividing walls into well-balanced sections.

How to place a chair rail correctly:

- ① The ideal height for a chair rail is 25-33% of the total wall height (typically 80-90cm from the floor).
- ② Better too low than too high. If placed too high, they disrupt the room's balance and makes ceilings feel lower.
- ③ Chair rails should align with other architectural features like door frames, window sills or skirting transitions to create visual continuity.

Wallscaping

Picture rails

Beyond chair rails, picture rails add the finishing touch to a well-structured wall. Historically, picture rails were used to hang artwork without damaging walls, but today they serve as architectural divider that guides the eye.



Pro tip:
Consider integrating a picture rail with indirect uplighting -
this creates a warm, atmospheric glow.



Where to place a picture rail:

- Typically placed 30-50 cm below the ceiling for a balanced transition.
- For lower ceilings, align the picture rail with the top of the door frames to create a natural flow.
- In high ceilings, picture rails should sit midway between the top of door frames and the ceiling to maintain proportion.

Wallscaping

Wall panelling

Wall panelling is the essence of classic wallscaping. By using panel mouldings, you create a structured framework that adds depth and elegance to otherwise plain walls.



Golden rules for wall panelling:

- Maintain consistent spacing
Keep a 3-7 cm gap around each panel for a refined, balanced look. Skirting should be higher than this free space and cornices should be taller than the skirting.
- Enhance proportions
Use vertical panels to make walls feel taller and horizontal panels to create width. Align panels with doors, windows or furniture for a harmonious composition.
- Perfect chair rail placement
Position chair rails at 25-33% of the ceiling height (typically 80-90 cm) to create a well-proportioned design.
- Layer mouldings for depth
Combine elements like picture rails, chair rails and skirting to add structure and richness to the space.

Wallscaping

Adjusting panel placement for non-standard wall lengths

When the length of your wall is not an exact multiple of the fixed panel dimensions, there are two ways to achieve a seamless installation:

Extend around a corner

If possible, continue the paneling onto an adjacent wall to maintain visual continuity and avoid unnecessary cuts.

Trim a panel vertically

If extending around a corner isn't an option, you can cut the last panel to fit. However, ensure the remaining width is at least 20 cm for a balanced and aesthetically pleasing result.

By carefully considering these adjustments, you can achieve a polished and harmonious wall design.

Levels of wallscaping

Depending on the desired ambience and level of formality, wallscaping can range from subtle elegance to full architectural richness.



Elegant

Subtle and timeless, with refined panelling that adds soft architectural depth without overpowering the space.



Majestic

Bold and structured, featuring large-scale panelling and deep cornices for a stately, grand effect.



Prestige

Rich in detailing, with sculpted mouldings and framed panelling that bring sophistication and heritage craftsmanship.



High Class

The most luxurious approach, with full-height panelling, intricate layering and a fully immersive architectural feel.

Wallscaping

Elegant wallscaping

Elegant wallscaping is all about balance, subtlety and timeless proportions. It enhances a space without overwhelming it, making it perfect for interiors that embrace understated sophistication. By using clean panelling, refined chair rails and well-placed mouldings, this style adds structure and depth while maintaining a light, airy feel.

- ① Composed cornice: by combining one cornice with one or two panel mouldings, you create a stronger architectural transition between the wall and ceiling. But never place a composed cornice lower than the top of the doordrume. Here we used Orac products C237, P4024 and P8030.
- ② Composed skirting: by combining a skirting board with one or more panel mouldings, you can optically extend its height for a more refined, grand effect. The total skirting should not exceed 1/5th of the wall height to maintain balance. To create this elevated skirting, we used Orac products SX191, PX175 and DX174.

1/5 wall
< 55 cm



1

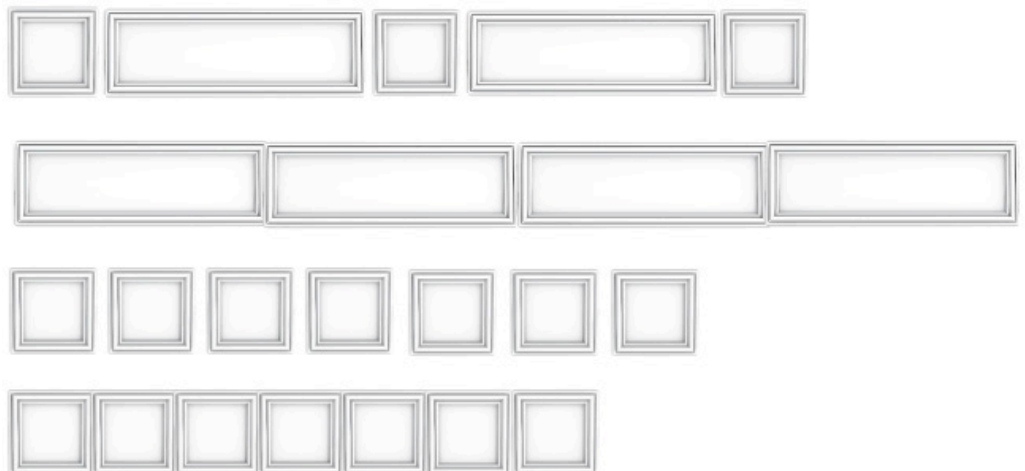
2

Wallscaping

Majestic wallscaping

In this design, we have maintained the cornice while introducing a low wainscoting effect, bringing depth and structure to the lower part of the wall. The wainscoting is framed with a chair rail, which acts as a natural finishing element.

- ① The chair rail should align approximately with the height of a chair, but never exceed 1/3rd of the total wall height. It's always better to position it slightly lower rather than too high.
- ② There are various ways to design consistent, structured wainscoting options:



1/3 wall
80-90cm



①

②

Wallscaping

Prestige wallscaping

The prestige wall is all about structured elegance with larger panel mouldings. To achieve this look, it's essential to align the panelling with existing architectural lines and axes such as doors, windows or room divisions.



Place skirting, wall panels and picture rail directly against each other for a seamless high-end effect.



Leave even spacing around panels to create a rhythmic, classic composition.

2/3 wall
160-180cm



Wallscaping

High class wallscaping

This High Class wall is designed for complete architectural integration, where mouldings extend across the full height of the wall, leaving an empty space below the ceiling for a refined finishing touch. The space is elegantly framed with a picture rail, ensuring a visually structured and proportionate composition.

The placement of the picture rail will depend on your ceiling height:

- For lower ceilings, align the picture rail with the top of the door frame to maintain proportion.
- For higher ceilings, place it between the top of the door and the ceiling, ensuring a balanced visual flow.
- Often the chair rail is positioned between 30 - 50 cm below the ceiling, taken into account the tips above.



Full wall
30 - 50cm
from
ceiling

Seamless transitions

A well-designed interior is more than just individual elements - it's about how those elements connect and interact to create a cohesive space. Each architectural element should feel like they belong together. Let's explore how to seamlessly integrate it all together.

The secret to timeless interiors lies in the details. True elegance is found not in individual elements, but in how they connect and interact.



Seamless transitions

Connection with doors

A common challenge is skirting that is wider than the door frame, which can create an awkward break in continuity. To solve this, install a “foot” at the bottom of the door frame that acts as a transition piece.



If a chair rail or dado rail is larger than the door frame, it should never interrupt or touch the door frame directly, as this can create an unbalanced look. Instead, mitre the chair rail at the end keeping a distance of 10-15cm from the door frame (but keep the symmetry with your wall panelling).



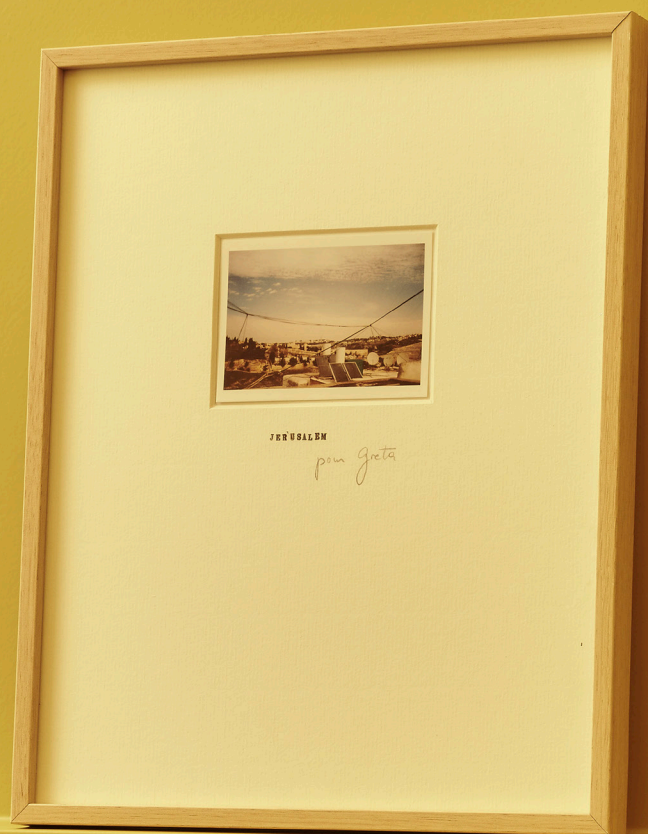
Seamless transitions

Colour as a silent architect

Harmony is found in the details. The way light dances on a glossy cornice or how a chalky wall softens a space. A single colour can stretch a ceiling higher, while contrast defines character. Matte textures ground, gloss catches the eye and together, they shape a room's atmosphere with subtle elegance.

Skirting, cornices and panels play a key role in this balance. Painting them in complementary shades ties a space together, while varied finishes add dimension. The interplay between them creates a refined, cohesive design.





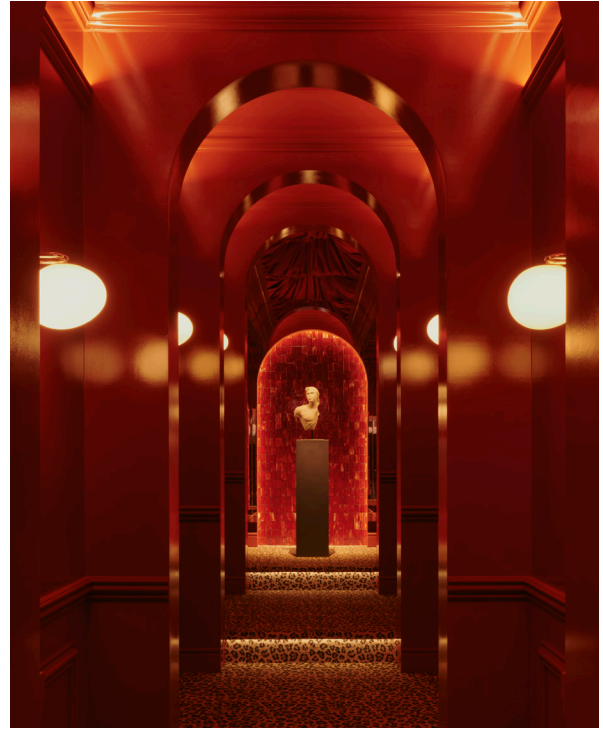
In this chapter, we explore nine expertly curated product combinations, specifically designed to capture the essence of Autoire, Heritage and Burlington styles.

Each of these Signature Walls has been meticulously developed to ensure balance, proportion and timeless elegance. Whether you prefer the classical richness of Heritage, the refined symmetry of Burlington or the expressive depth of Autoire, these combinations serve as a blueprint for creating breathtaking interiors.

Recreate signature walls

Signature Walls

New Classics is more than a style - it's a philosophy that reimagines timeless design for today. Our Signature Walls - Autoire, Heritage and Burlington - are three distinct moods of this vision, each with its own character and architectural language.



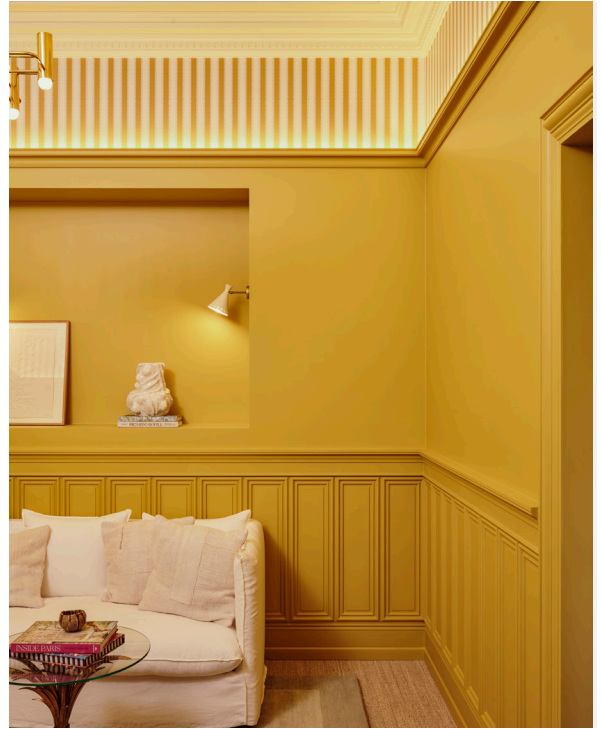
Autoire

Where timeless elegance meets bold modernity. Characterized by deep panelling, grand compositions and dynamic rhythm.



Heritage

A refined fusion of French sophistication and classic architectural balance. Defined by graceful proportions and rich ornamentation.



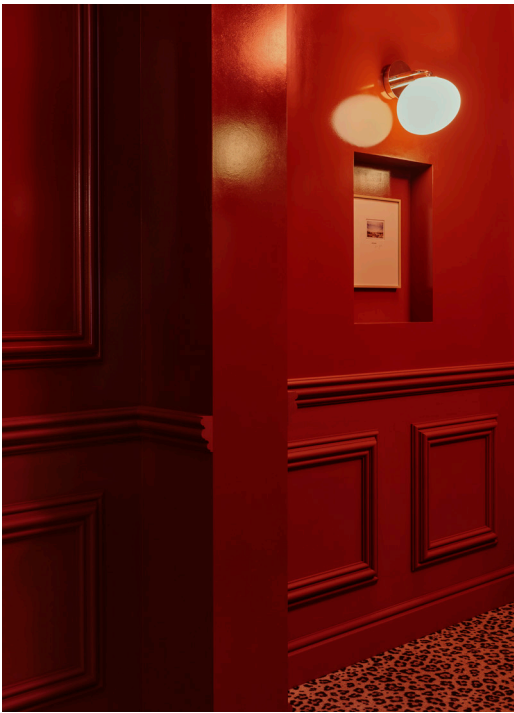
Burlington

A legacy of British grace, where subtle grandeur meets understated refinement. Known for its clean lines, symmetry and structured wall compositions.

To bring these styles effortlessly into your home, we have curated pre-designed product combinations, ensuring perfect proportion, symmetry and refinement.

Autoire

Autoire is for those who dare to make a statement. Rooted in classical architecture, this style reinterprets depth and proportion with bold panelling, structured layering and rhythmic compositions. Instead of simply decorating the walls, Autoire turns them into architectural elements. Create a space that feels both timeless and strikingly modern.



Autoire

Essence kit

The Essence Kit captures the foundation of Autoire’s aesthetic, using clean, structured panelling to establish rhythm and proportion. It introduces depth without overpowering the space, making it an ideal choice for those who seek a refined yet subtl architectural backdrop.

Cornice	1x C217
Panel moulding	1x P4025
3D wall covering	3x W121
Skirting	1x SX137

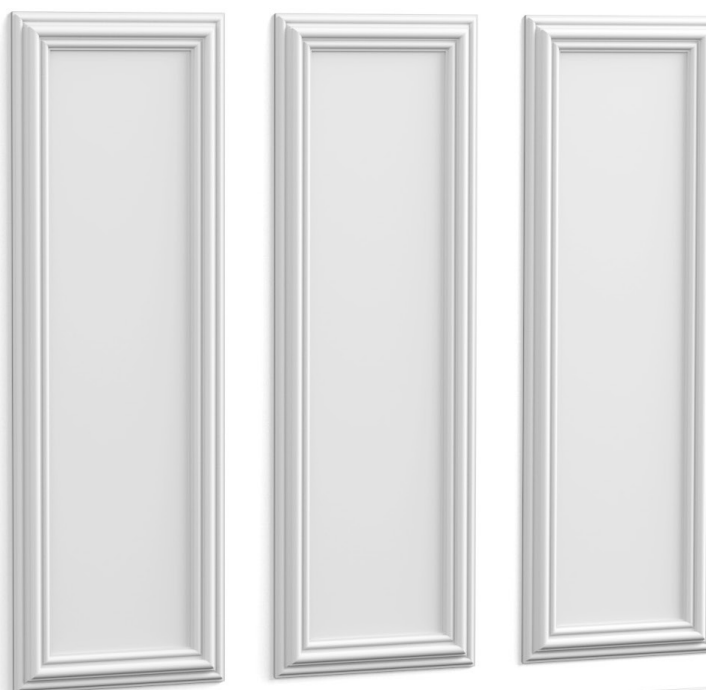


Autoire

Refined kit

The Refined Kit elevates Autoire’s look with deeper panelling, enhanced symmetry and contrasting sections. This kit brings more structure to the space, reinforcing the wall’s role as a defining architectural feature.

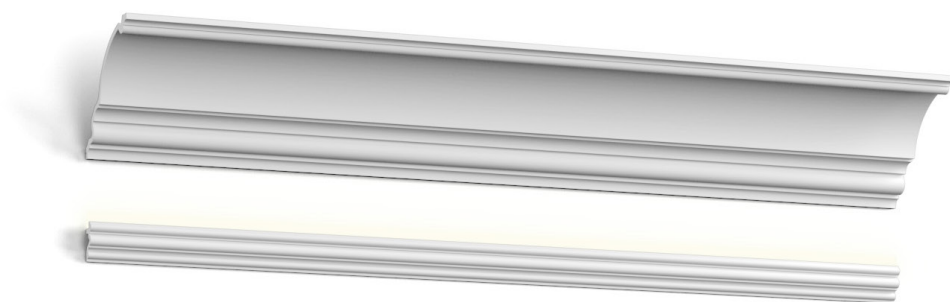
Cornice	1x C324
3D wall covering	3x W120
Skirting	1x SX138



Grandeur kit

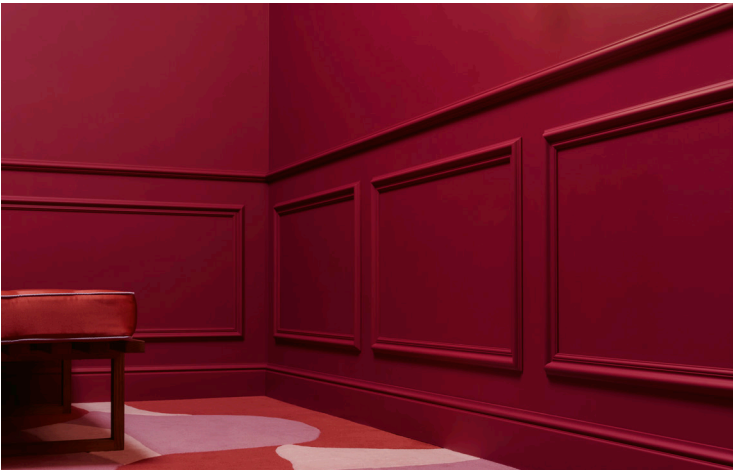
The Grandeur Kit is the ultimate expression of Autoire's bold aesthetic, featuring full-height wall panelling, sculptural details and multi-depth framing. It's designed to transform walls into grand architectural compositions.

Cornice	1x C336
Indirect lighting	1x C324
Panel moulding	1x P4025
3D wall covering	4x W120
3D wall covering	4x W121
Skirting	1x SX19



Heritage

Heritage embodies the refined beauty of French interiors, where symmetry, proportion and ornamental detailing create an atmosphere of effortless sophistication. This style balances delicate framing, sculptural depth and architectural harmony, making it ideal for spaces that seek understated luxury with timeless feel.

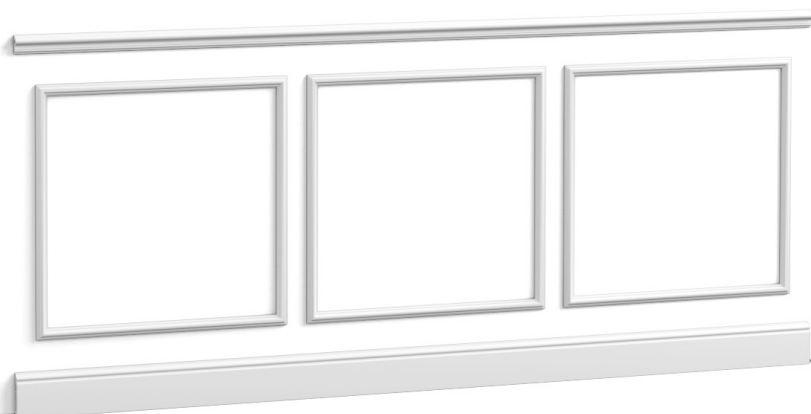


Heritage

Essence kit

The Essence Kit introduces the foundation of the Heritage aesthetic, offering clean and balanced panelling with timeless simplicity. It enhances wall proportions without overpowering the space, making it ideal for those who want a light yet structured look.

Cornice	1x C341
Panel moulding	1x P8030
Panel moulding	4x PX103
Skirting	1x SX173

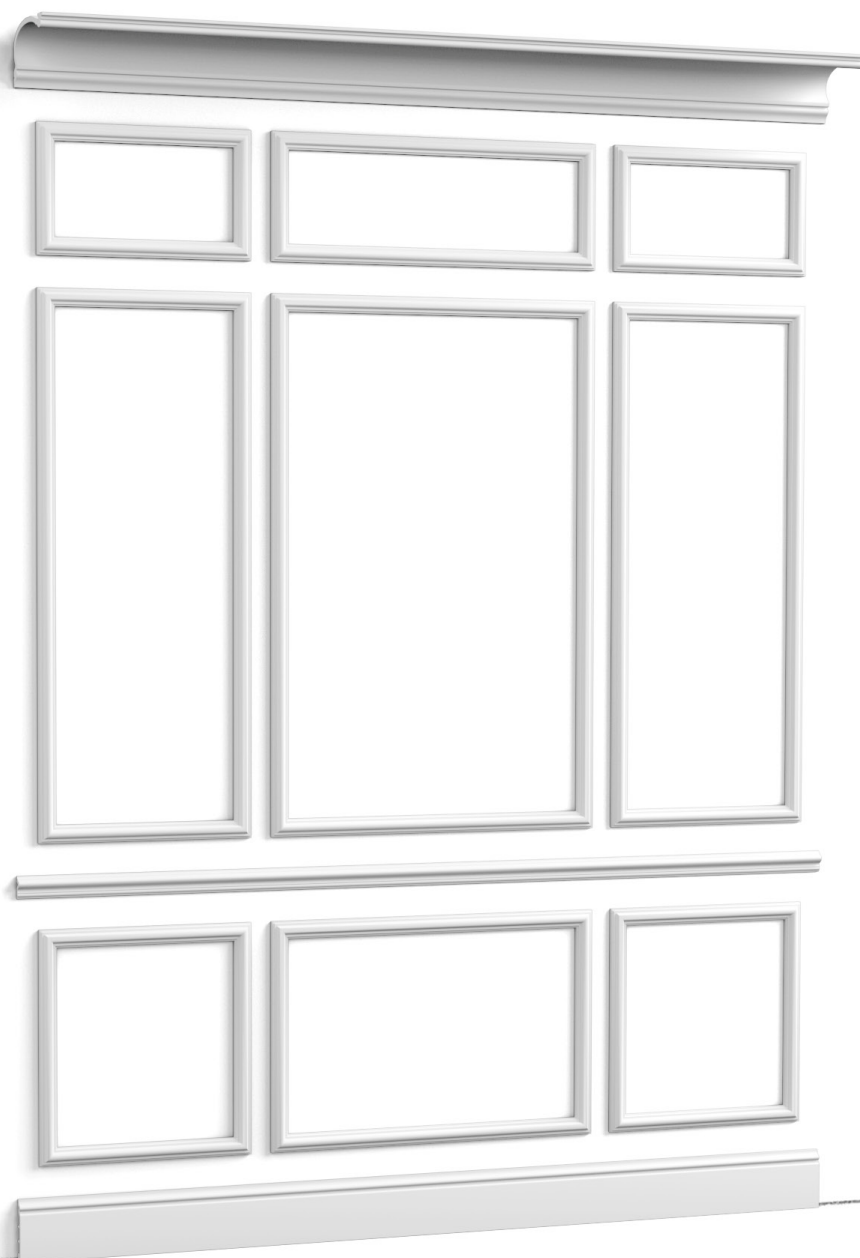


Heritage

Refined kit

The Refined Kit enhances the Heritage look with layered mouldings, structure panelling and subtle contrasts. It adds richness and depth, making walls feel architectural rather than decorative.

Cornice	1x C342
Panel moulding	1x PX175
Panel moulding	12x PX120
Skirting	1x SX118

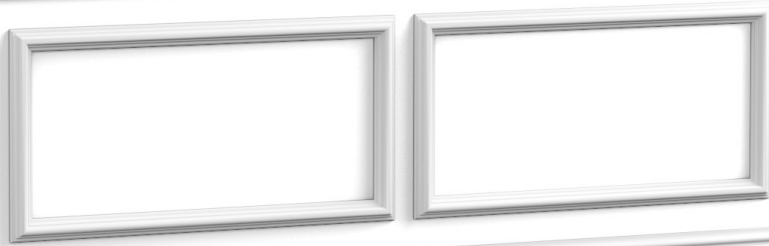
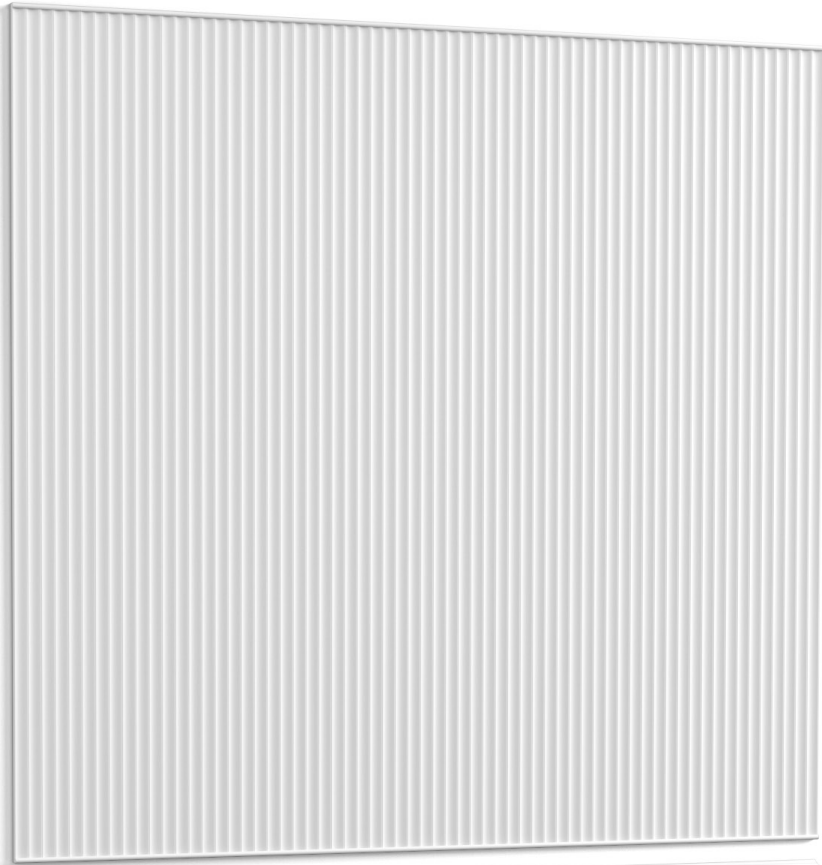


Heritage

Grandeur kit

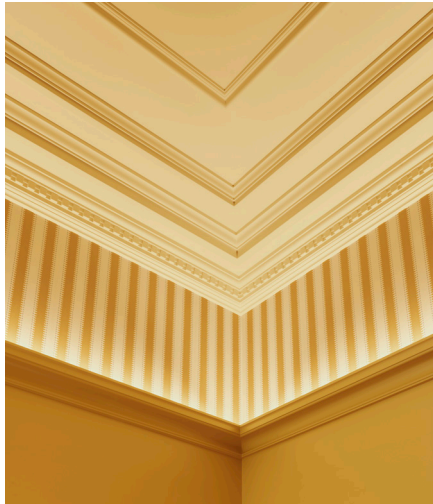
The Grandeur Kit is the ultimate expression of Heritage wallscaping, featuring intricate framing, full-height mouldings and rich detailing. This kit transforms walls into fully immersive architectural compositions, making a space feel as if it belongs in a Parisian townhouse or a historic estate.

Cornice	1x C343
Panel moulding	3x P4020
Panel moulding	1x P8020
3D wall covering	8x W109
Skirting	1x SX206



Burlington

Burlington is a celebration of British classicism, where proportion, symmetry and understated elegance define the space. Inspired by Georgian and Regency interiors, this style embraces clean panelling, restrained detailing and a structured approach to wall design. Burlington is perfect for those who seek a balanced and sophisticated look, where every element feels harmonious and intentional.



Burlington

Essence kit

The Essence kit is the foundation of Burlington’s timeless aesthetic. It introduces clean, structured panelling with a focus on symmetry and proportion, making it ideal for those who want a quiet yet sophisticated architectural backdrop.

Cornice	1x C211
Cornice	1x C323
Panel moulding	1x P6020
Skirting	1x SX155

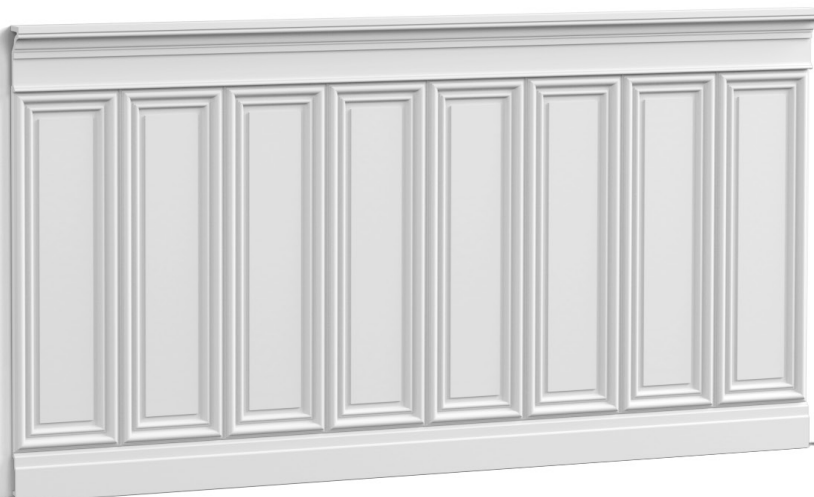


Burlington

Refined kit

The Refined kit builds upon Burlington's structured foundation by introducing more defined panelling, deeper framing and an enhanced sense of proportion. The additional layering provides a richer, more architectural feel while maintaining Burlington's clean, timeless elegance.

Cornice	1x C422
Indirect lighting	1x C328
Panel moulding	1x P4000
3D wall covering	3x W124
Skirting	1x SX155

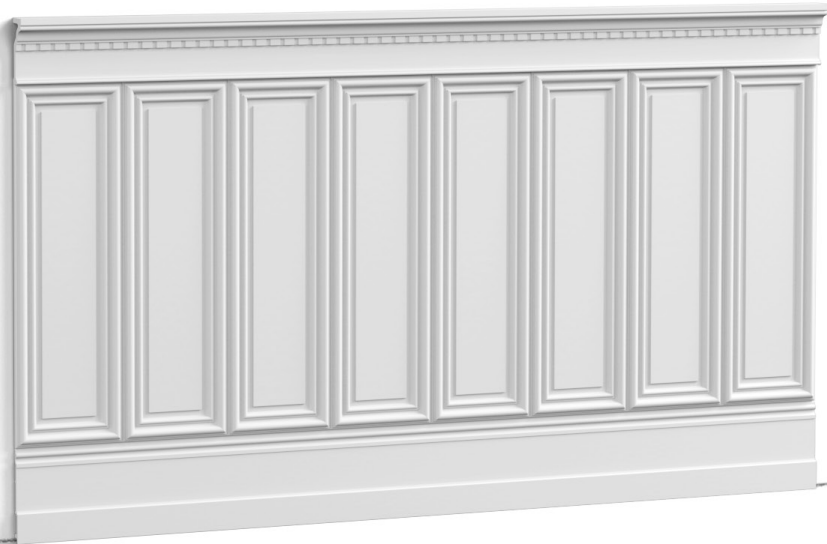


Burlington

Grandeur kit

The Grandeur kit represents the most refined and immersive version of Burlington wallscaping, incorporating larger-scale panelling, deeper mouldings and strong framing elements. This kit amplifies symmetry and structure, transforming walls into architectural centerpieces.

Cornice	1x C422 + C305
Indirect lighting	1x C328
Panel moulding	1x P4010
3D wall covering	3x W124
Skirting	1x SX191



Get inspired

Discover over 100 pages of expert tips, tricks and inspiration to create stunning New Classic interiors.

Request your copy of our printed guidebook via www.oracdecor.com or contact your Orac representative.

