

# MANSION GLOBAL

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## The Art of Adding Classical Details to a New Home

Wood flooring, custom trim and symmetrical design can transform a cookie-cutter house into a timeless interior

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A new house might feature amenities aplenty yet be short on what some home buyers desire most: character.

Thankfully, with a little bit of artistry and expertise, a space lacking historical details can be reimagined. Integrating neoclassical style—also sometimes called “classical”—can transform a cookie-cutter house into a residence brimming with personality.

Although embracing neoclassical details sounds simple enough, there's an art to revamping the overall aesthetic of a contemporary home with hopes of stirring up charm and even a bit of history.

# Highlight Custom Trim



Photo: Dustin Peck Photography

If there's one detail that can transform a cookie-cutter room into one with character and soul, it's trim. Layering moldings, baseboards, pilasters and paneling adds a whole new dimension to the plainest of spaces.

"To make a home feel more architecturally interesting in a traditional or neoclassical way, it is all about millwork and casings," said designer Caroline Brackett in Greenville, South Carolina. "It makes a room feel more bespoke and custom; richer and more thought-out."

Cased openings—especially deeper, paneled doorways—bring tons of panache to an interior, as do higher archways. "Another way is raising doorways and cased openings to their maximum possible height," Ms. Brackett suggested. "This makes any foyer or room feel larger and more impressive."

While chair rails are featured in some neoclassical interiors, Ms. Brackett and her team aren't fans of this trim piece alone. "If there is chair rail, we like to see paneling or wainscoting under it rather than drywall so that there isn't a break in the flow of the wall treatment or color," she said.

Introducing crown molding brings yet another layer to a room, but Ms. Brackett says to bear scale in mind when determining the size trim. Tall crowns should be in proportion to the ceiling height. "Typically, the higher the ceiling, the taller the crown," she emphasized. "The same is true for base molding. It should be more substantial for taller ceilings."

Regardless of ceiling height, casing size matters when trying to weave in neoclassicism. Consider scrapping the narrow door and window trim if you dream of a stunning classical room, and go wider instead. "Door and window casings should be beefier and more detailed, no less than four inches, no matter the size of the room," she explained.

And an entire room swathed in paneling—be it paint-grade poplar dressed in creamy white linen for a great room or dark-stained mahogany enveloping a masculine library—could be the ultimate expression of classical design.