

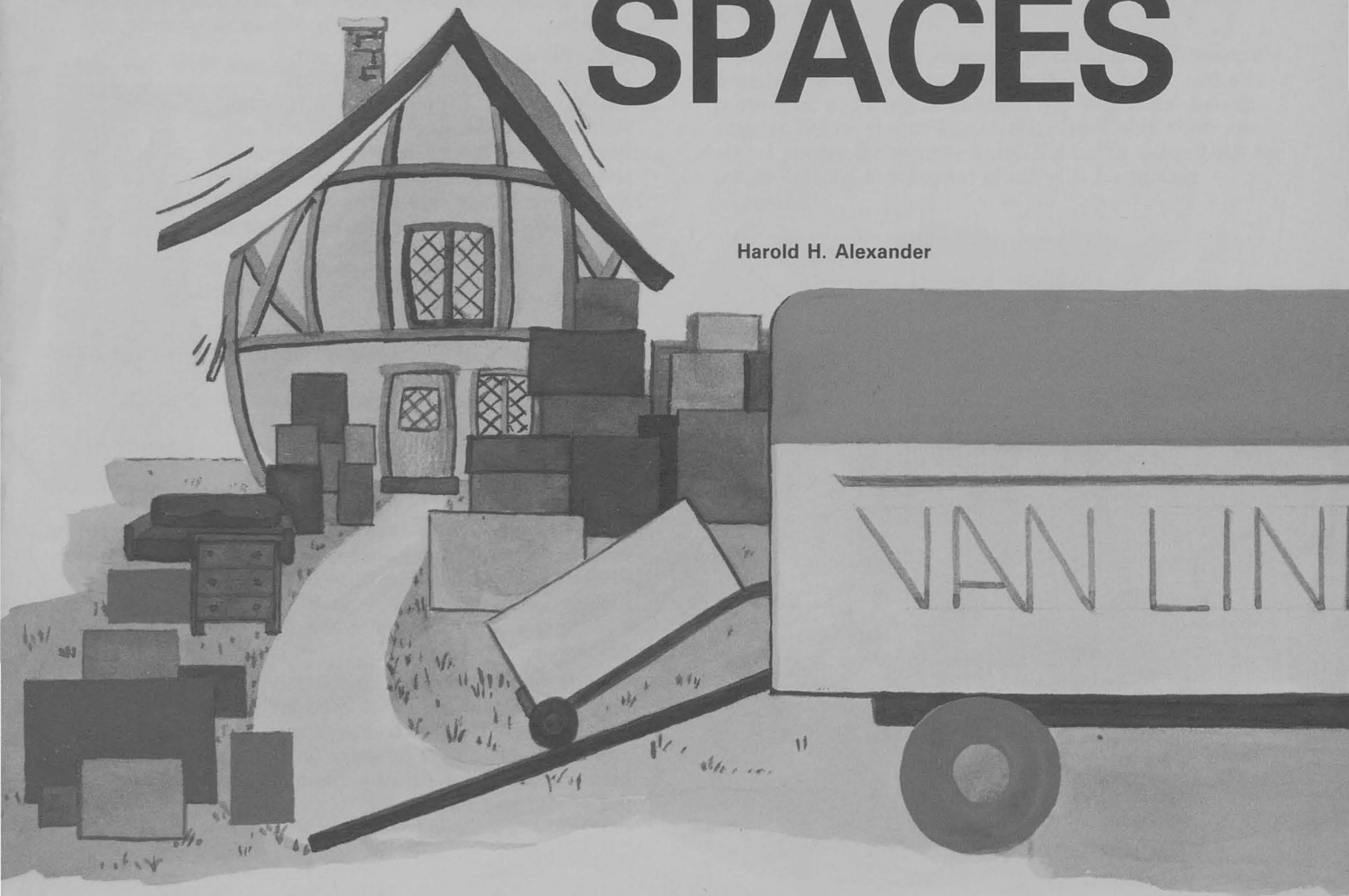
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LIVING IN SMALLER SPACES

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Until recently, most people thought they would always be changing to a larger house when they moved. Only when "empty nesters" moved from the family home to a retirement apartment or condominium did anyone really think of living in smaller spaces—and even then they hoped for a large space.

However, people are discovering that bigger is not always better. The "little house in the suburbs" with its surrounding yard and garden is no longer always considered the ideal, and may be a vanishing breed. Attached homes, condominiums, and apartment complexes are becoming increasingly common choices.

There are many reasons for living in smaller spaces. Housing and energy costs have been rising at unprecedented rates, and employment opportunities have been reduced. The rising cost of gasoline and automobiles, as well as time loss and frustration of commuting on crowded highways, have encouraged a trend toward living closer to work and other necessities.

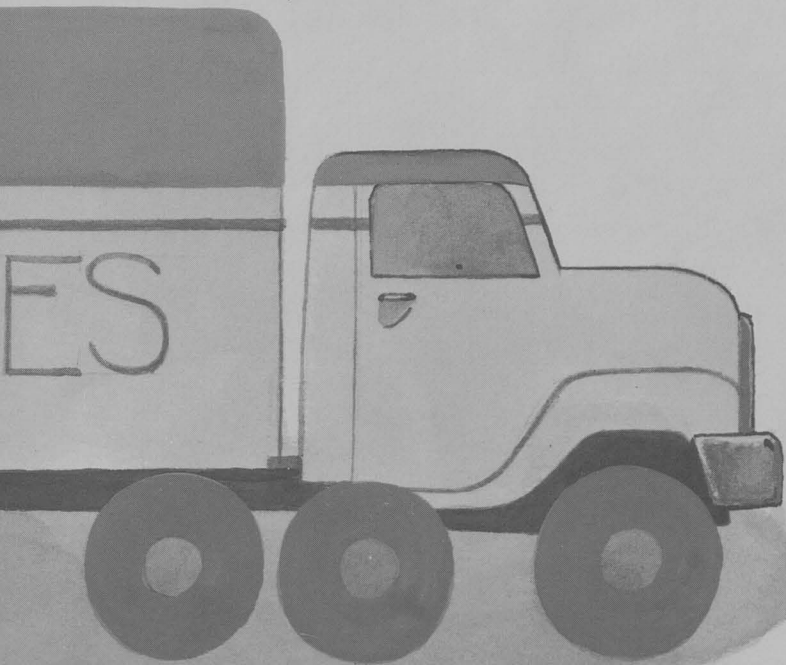
Land upon which to build a house is another problem. Since World War II populations have increased and suburbs have stretched far beyond the original limits of virtually every city. Thousands of acres of farmland, forests, and pastures have been covered with houses. There is simply not enough land within reasonable commuting distance to allow for the luxury of isolated houses.

Not only is the land around our houses diminishing, or vanishing entirely, but the interior space is being reduced as well. Room dimensions are less, ceilings are lower, and there is less storage space. And smaller does not always mean less expensive. With increased costs of construction, what was once considered "too small" is often now considered acceptable for expensive housing.

Accepting the fact that we may likely live in spaces smaller than we have been conditioned to, we will need to adjust our thinking and perhaps make compensations. Physical limitations of the space will need to be considered, and it may be necessary to reduce the number of objects we have acquired.

However, it is not always necessary to throw everything out of the window because of inadequate storage, or to discard most of our furniture to purchase smaller pieces. There are many ways to gain space and achieve a more spacious look without actually adding cubic footage.

Almost without exception, there is wasted space in any home that could be better used for storage—and for living. There are also techniques that can make a space appear larger than it actually is, make a space function better, and help the occupants feel more satisfied with the space they have.



How Can I Make The Rooms Look Larger?

One of the first comments often made when moving into smaller living quarters is "It looks smaller now with everything in it." Of course, considerable space is taken up with the furniture and accessories now in the rooms. However, there are many ways to create the illusion of more space without increasing a cubic inch. For example, colors can easily change visual distances. Mirrors, too, can visually enlarge space; they have been used since well before the eighteenth century to visually double room size. Some other illusionistic space stretchers are:

- Emphasize the horizontal. Horizontal lines tend to expand a space or object. These lines might be in the textures and patterns used in the room, but they could

- Whether a color is bright or dull also affects its spatial properties. A dull color will tend to recede while a bright color will advance. Consequently, dull or grayed colors will make a room appear larger.

- Use the same color scheme throughout the home. The various colors in a given combination may be varied in dominance, but the unified color scheme will tie the rooms together.

- Use small textures and patterns. Large textures and patterns advance and expand, giving the illusion that the patterned object is larger than it actually is.

- Any shiny or extremely smooth surface will help expand visual space.

- Any type of mural or painting with perspective will give the illusion that the wall is not exactly there. The larger the mural, the more clear the illusion.

- Have background surfaces of the same value and color. Walls and floors, if the same, visually expand the space, because the wall-floor and wall-ceiling surface direction change becomes less clearly defined.

- If light sources, either natural or artificial, come from unexpected places, there is a feeling of more open space. Indirect light flooding a ceiling with light will push the ceiling up visually.

- Low level light placement also heightens a room.

- When lights are dimmer, shadows appear, making spaces and objects less easily defined. Low intensity, "ambient" lighting with localized areas of brighter "task" lighting not only expands the space, but also conserves energy.

Can I Use My Old Furniture?

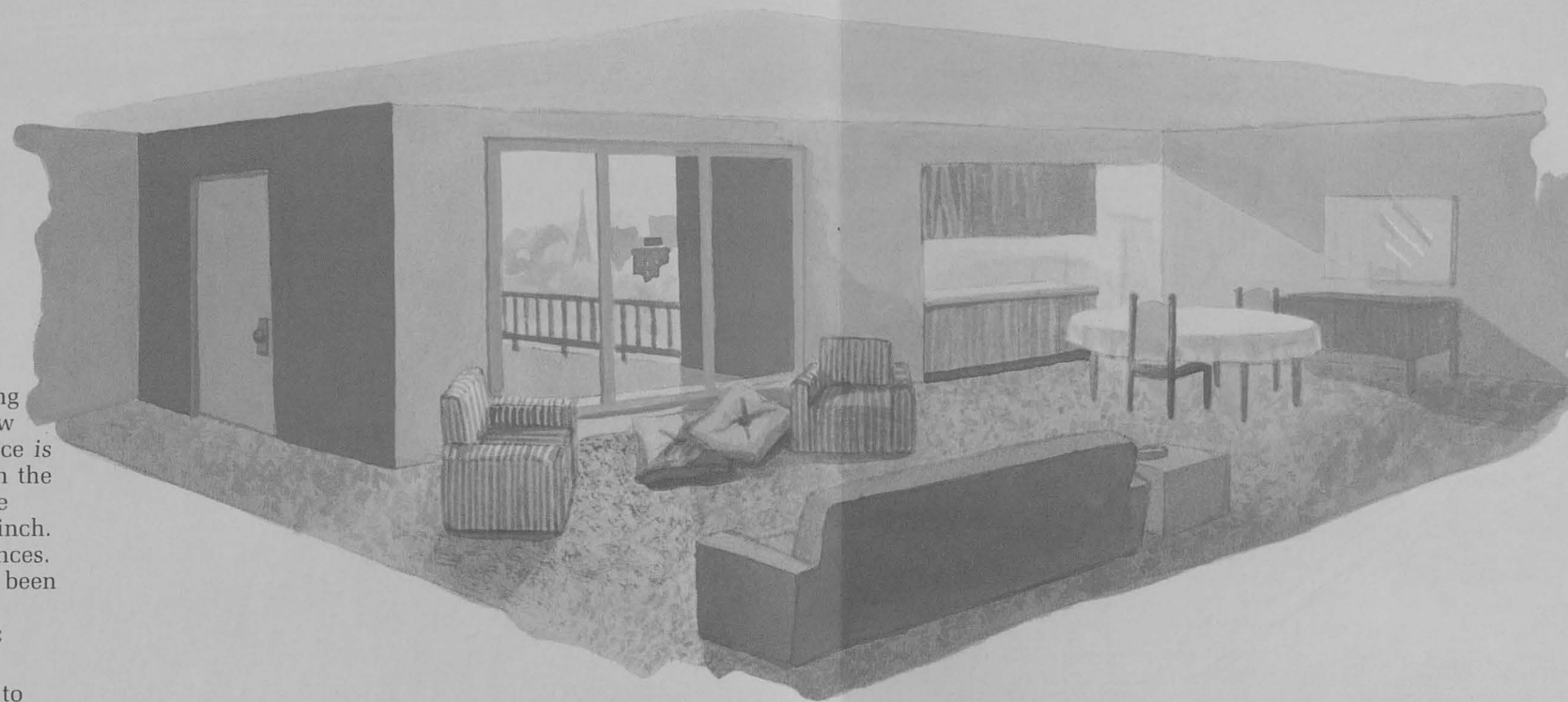
Why not! Of course all the furniture from a large home cannot be accommodated in smaller quarters, but there are ways to use more than perhaps seems possible at first. Scale, proportion, color, and pattern can affect the visual size of your furniture. Here are several ways to adapt and use your present or new furniture and accessories, or make the most of new purchases:

- Use smaller furniture. This is a matter of scale and proportion—the smaller the object, the larger its environment.

- Use padded or thinly upholstered furniture instead of "overstuffed." Over-padded furniture takes up more room. Comfort is not always big and soft.

- Use low furniture. If more space can be gained above furniture, the ceiling will look higher, especially when the occupants of the room are seated.

- Use less furniture. This is simply common sense—the more distance between objects, the less crowded they look.



- Let the furniture blend with the background. When there is little or no contrast between objects and their surroundings, they tend to blur together, visually disappearing as separate objects.

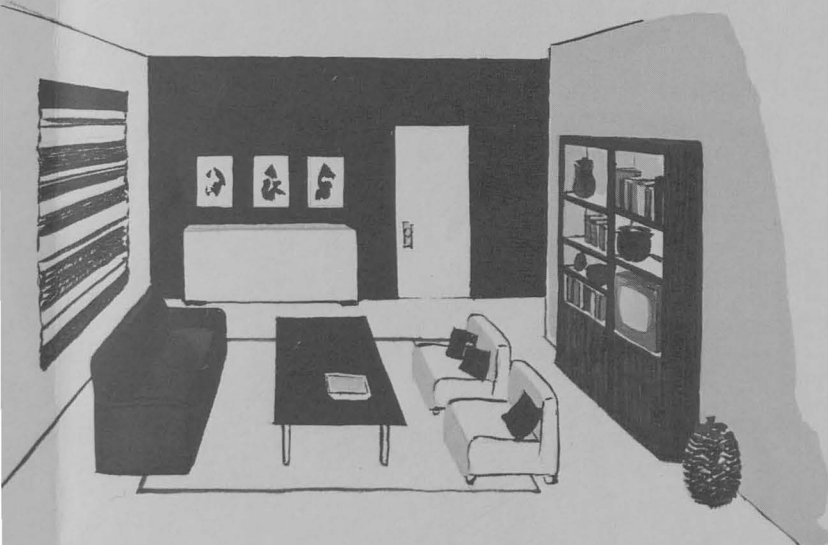
- Use multi-purpose and convertible furniture. This is especially useful for furniture that is used only part of each day, such as bed-sofa, table-desk combinations.

- Transparent furniture and mirrored furniture virtually disappear, creating more visual space.

- Keep furniture and accessory forms simple. The more complex the forms, the more visual space they seem to occupy.

- Remember, the use of mirrors will double the space. However, try not to place mirrors so that you can see yourself all the time; this is very distracting.

- Frank Lloyd Wright, the architect, used a space expanding device that is relatively easy to copy. He placed a row of mirrors above high bookshelves or cabinets next to the ceiling, making the ceiling appear to go beyond the actual wall. This device creates the impression that the room is larger than it physically is; the bookshelf or cabinet seems to be just a room divider.



also be in the lines created by the horizontal surfaces of the furniture.

- Use light colors. Light colors recede while dark colors tend to advance. If everything is light colored, a room will appear larger than if some objects are darker.

- Similarly, receding hues such as blues, blue-greens, greens, and violets (turquoise, cobalt, ultramarine, and celery are examples) expand space. Advancing hues such as beiges, tans, browns, reds, and magentas will diminish space.



Where Can I Store Everything?

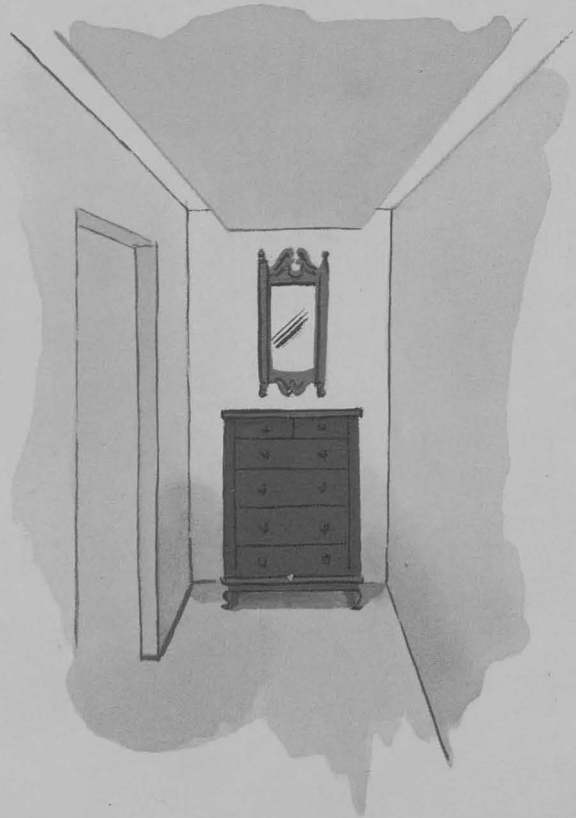
In every home, regardless of size, considerable space is wasted that can be used for additional storage, frequently without adding visual clutter. For example, a series of simple shallow cabinets stretching across a wall, painted or papered to match the wall surfaces, will take up little, if any, visual space. And yet, even if no more than 10 or 12 inches deep, they will accommodate a large number of stored items. If seldom used or seasonal articles are stored in the cabinets, the arrangement and function of furniture may not even be affected. Other space stretching ideas are:

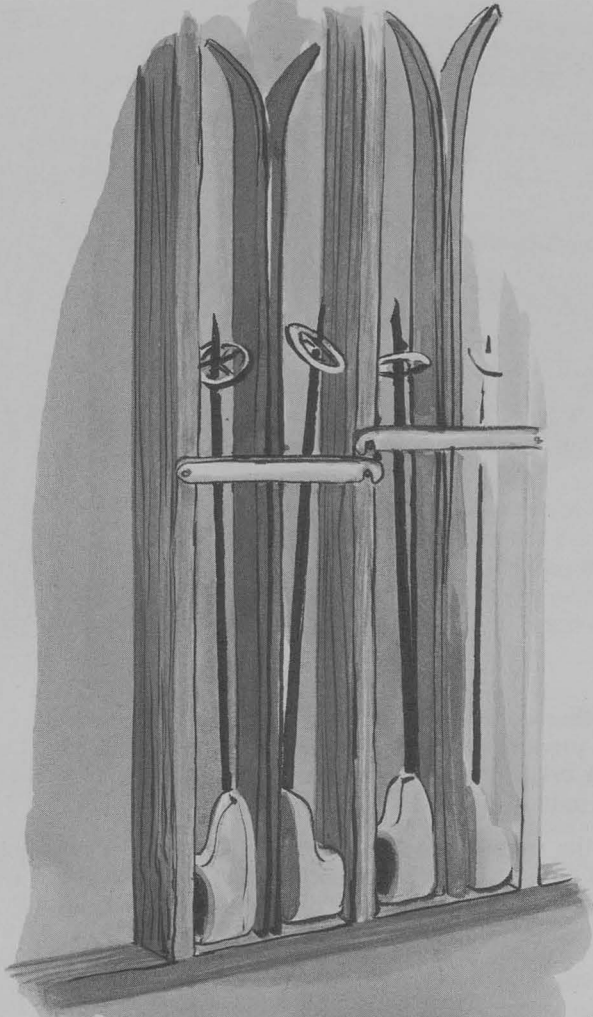
- If possible, have multi-purpose rooms. This gives a larger space, not divided with walls, without affecting activities. The familiar dining space within the living space is an example of this.
- Check the space behind doors. Doors usually don't open right next to a wall, there may be almost a foot of space between a wall and the door opening that could provide usable storage.
- High level storage should not be ignored. Cabinets and storage units can be utilized over desks and other furniture where one does not need "head space."
- Analyze the space in your closets. If similar clothing lengths are hung together, (e.g. pants together, shirts and jackets together), additional storage can be found below the shorter clothing.
- Hangers that hold more than one garment, such as multiple skirt or pants hangers, also conserve space.
- Don't store your seldom-used suitcases away empty. Use them to hold out-of-season clothes and equipment.
- Organize storage under the bed. Dust proof boxes can be used to create convenient storage and also simplify cleaning.

How Can I Stretch The Structure?

When building a new place to live or when remodeling an older home, actual and visual space can frequently be considerably increased with little or no additional expense. By carefully analyzing the proposed plans while considering your spatial needs, you can often discover easily adapted "dead" space that can be utilized. Sometimes a relatively small change in the plans can also create more space.

- Windows open up spaces. Window walls—windows that are to, or almost to, the floor—are especially effective. The outside becomes part of the inside.
- Frank Lloyd Wright used corner windows to expand space. He placed walls where windows usually are and windows where walls usually are. Windows placed in the corner virtually eliminate the defining corners.
- Wright also used varied ceiling heights. A slightly lower or higher ceiling will sometimes visually alter the space.
- If major structural changes in ceiling heights are not possible, or are impractical, stretching fabric across a portion of a ceiling or suspending horizontal panels slightly below the ceiling surface will also affect the visual space. If the panels are lighter in value than the actual ceiling, the spatial effect will be further increased.





- Storage walls provide approximately one-third more actual storage space than do walk-in closets. This space is usually more efficiently used, and easier to get to.
- In a new home or while you are remodeling, take advantage of the space between the interior wall surfaces (insulation should always fill the exterior wall spaces). Shelves and flat items can easily fit in the 3½"-4" deep space behind doors. Incidentally, this is a good place to store skis.
- Often there is still enough headroom to have narrow shelves suspended below the upper stair treads in a stairway. A wonderful place for extra canned goods is above the basement stairs.
- Considerable storage space for less frequently used equipment and dishes can be gained if the soffit is eliminated above wall cabinets. Fill the space above standard wall cabinets with matching doors.

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