



YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

INTERIOR DESIGNER, PROPERTY GURU AND CITY DWELLER MAGAZINE COLUMNIST CHRISTINE YORATH TELLS US HOW IMPORTANT COMMUNAL AREAS ARE TO APARTMENT BUILDINGS



How fabulous to see more new apartment schemes starting up in Leeds, I just hope that the developers will be paying attention to the communal areas which are so important and yet can be overlooked in the development stage.

When I owned the management company 'Flats in Leeds', I saw the interiors of most of the city centre apartment buildings and they varied enormously in appearance

and maintenance. The best sales values and the best rents are achieved where the apartment entrance halls are immaculate, well designed and welcoming.

Over 15 years ago I built 18 luxury apartments at 19 Wellington Street and installed expensive and beautiful light fittings and a bespoke carpet to all the hallways with the grand staircase having a bordered carpet and although I would probably select differently today I am pleased to say the quality is still apparent and the elegance of the building remains unlike so many apartment buildings which have communals looking like a cross between a hospital and an office block.

I was also careful not to sacrifice space and convert so much of the floor space to saleable square footage that the

access to each apartment would have only been served by a corridor.

The buildings with good management and a concierge service usually have a higher quality of appearance but even then can be sterile and impersonal. One of the best examples I have seen locally in recent times is the entrance to The Residence apartments in York where the ground floor hallway is akin to a 5 star hotel lounge.

Conversely, a couple of years ago I broke my ribs on a broken staircase handrail in a small Leeds development on Central Road where the maintenance was so neglected it was dangerous, the same building usually had mountains of post in the doorway due to the lack of a proper postal system for rentals.

It is such a waste when developers overlook the obvious and miss out on such an opportunity. I did the interiors including all the communals for Biba House in York a couple of years ago and it is no coincidence that we achieved higher prices per square foot in sales and higher rentals than had been achieved generally in York city centre before that time.

I hope in the future the discerning buyers and tenants will become more demanding about their expectations for the communal areas of apartment buildings and not only their personal interiors.

For more advice go to www.christineyorath.com or get in touch by emailing christine@yorathgroup.com or ringing 07836 737300.