Find me a property with... Storage

Jo Eccles, an ex-banker and property PR professional, set up her property search company Sourcing Property in June 2006. Sourcing Property, which specialises in central London, acts for time-poor buyers and tenants, offering a comprehensive search service designed to eliminate the time and stress associated with finding dream a property.
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As a property search consultant, I get asked all sorts of requests, most of them quite standard - a house or flat with a certain number of rooms, in a specific location, near good transport links and so on, but occasionally, some requests are somewhat trickier than others...

Recently, I had a client who lived alone, he was divorced and his children had moved away which usually constitutes a request for a smaller property. However, in this case, we were called upon to find him a larger property - he was up-sizing to accommodate his vast and growing collection of books. Our brief was that he didn't care how many bedrooms there were, as long as there was sufficient vertical wall space for his bookshelves, specifically the space required was 100 ft wide by 7'6" high - exact to the inch! So, with each viewing I would have to measure all available wall space (excluding any walls with radiators or angled walls in the eaves), and ensure that there was adequate wall space for his furniture, as well as the bookshelves. Needless to say, it was a fairly challenging task!

Obviously not all requests are this specific, but what it did highlight was the importance of storage solutions. It's amazing how many properties lack sufficient storage, yet it's high on the priority list of many of our clients, and could make the difference between someone buying or renting your property or not. A lot of tenants will turn down a property that doesn't have good storage or where a bedroom is used as a 'dumping' ground - I've had clients who have been immediately turned off by a bedroom which has been used for storage as they get the sense that there isn't sufficient storage space elsewhere, and find it hard to visualise the space offered in that extra bedroom because it isn't being utilised. So, bear in mind that good, fitted storage can be a major selling point in your property.

STUCK FOR SPACE?

When looking to rent or sell your property, it should be as clutter free as possible. Interior designers can make amazing bespoke storage space for you and will identify your exact storage needs, down to the smallest details - do you roll up belts in drawers or do you prefer to hang them? If you do not want to enlist the help of an interior designer however, there are all sorts of accessories and furniture available that allows for versatility and flexibility to help make most of the space available.

CUTTING CORNERS?

Where possible, it's important not to scrimp and save when it comes to installing storage solutions, particularly if you aim to sell or let at a premium price – it could de-value your property. For example, if a potential tenant or purchaser opens beautiful heavy walnut wardrobe doors to find shiny white plastic shelves or wire basket drawers inside, it may make them suspicious about the quality of the rest of the flat. This can be the same with a kitchen which looks great at first glance, but if drawers are on cheap rollers as opposed to self-closing drawers for example, the look and feel is cheapened.

TIPS FOR STORAGE

- Bathroom units and cabinets are great for storing away bathroom accessories and giving a minimalist look
- Bookcases and armoires are great for storing things from clothes to books to files to entertainment centres
- Instead of heavy, bulky chairs, you can use ottomans with a storage area underneath or a bar stool set that can be stacked in the corner when not in use
- Tables and dressers with slide-in drawers or shelves can give more space to keep magazines, newspapers and other accessories
- Vertical slide-in shelves in the kitchen can be used to hang pots and pans
- Shelves and drawers can be installed inside fitted wardrobes for shoes, belts and accessories