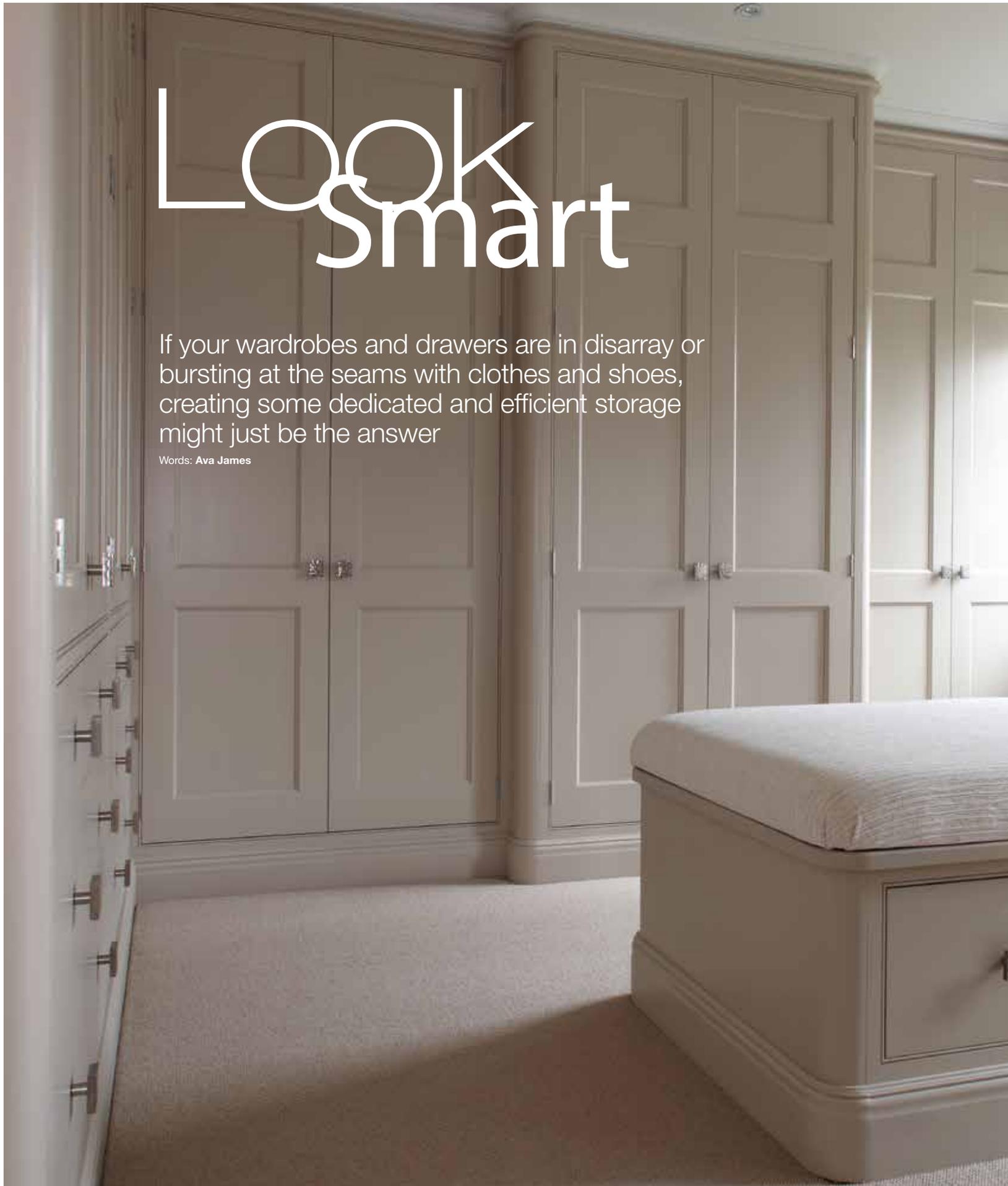


# Look Smart

If your wardrobes and drawers are in disarray or bursting at the seams with clothes and shoes, creating some dedicated and efficient storage might just be the answer

Words: **Ava James**





**Left:** The master suite in this Georgian-style property incorporates a dressing room off the master bedroom. The client asked Chamber Furniture for plenty of double-height and full-length hanging space, and pull-out shoe storage and shelves for jumpers and handbags. Internal mirrors hang on the tall doors and lights switch on when the wardrobe doors open, allowing good visibility. A similar bespoke solution by Chamber Furniture costs from £20,000.

**B**efore you dismiss the idea of a walk-in wardrobe because of a lack of finances and/or space, do some research. You might be surprised to learn walk-ins range from affordable to astronomical and can be created from larger spaces, such as a spare room, or even smaller spaces, such as an alcove.

As Rachal Hutcheson, a bedroom design specialist at Sharps, explains, “A bespoke fitted wardrobe will offer a completely tailored solution, even if it is a small room. With single and double hanging space options available, the internal storage solutions can be constructed to your exact needs and the space you have.”

Options for large spaces include partitioning off a section of room using a stud wall with a door opening. In small spaces, maximise an awkward alcove or the dead space under eaves. L-shaped corners can also be incorporated into a walk-in configuration.

“While it might seem like a walk-in wardrobe may compromise on bedroom space,” continues Rachal, “you will no longer need freestanding pieces such as a set of drawers in the main bedroom, so it will remain clutter-free.”

How much space do you actually need for your walk-in wardrobe? The definition of a walk-in wardrobe, according to Jason Munslow of Brilliant Project, is to step through doors rather than just reach in. Thus the minimum space needed is about 2m-wide x 1.2m-deep x 1.8m-high to accommodate the average user.

If space isn’t an issue, consider a luxurious dressing room complete with vanity table and somewhere to relax. To make this a reality, you may have to sacrifice a spare bedroom – crucially one adjacent to, and accessed via, your bedroom or ensuite bathroom.

“Dead space on a large landing may be better used by incorporating wardrobes to create a dressing room facility,” suggests Brian Pontin at Neville Johnson. “Installing this space may also add to the value of your property.”

### Fit for purpose

Having established a space to create a walk-in wardrobe or dressing room, the next step is to furnish it. “I don’t think any particular mix of storage is a must, as it is up to the individual,” adds Jason Munslow, “but do think carefully about how you want to use the space. This will impact on the types of storage used and the positioning of them. Choose a wardrobe that can adapt with your needs, so that as your work/family life changes so too can the way your wardrobe functions.”

Start by assessing your clothing collection to decide the kind of storage you need. For example, if you have a lot of bulky seasonal clothing, solve it with deep shelving. Or if you like to fold items, ensure you have enough shelves and drawers in your scheme. Do you need shoe storage? If so, how much do you ►

“Roll-out shoe trays provide an excellent visual display and make pairs easy to view and sort. Baise-lined trinket drawers are elegant storage for jewellery, watches and cufflinks. Full-height mirrors can be incorporated on the inside of a door to save space. And an adjustable clothes hanging facility is a must if you want to future-proof.”

**BRIAN PONTIN** NEVILLE JOHNSON

need? It is often a good idea to keep shoes separate from clothes. Finally, if you are sharing your walk-in wardrobe, do you want personalised areas to prevent arguments over space?

“Many people underestimate the total amount of hanging space required and don’t allow enough height for double hanging, which is a great space saver,” suggests Brian Pontin. “Note that 2070mm of internal height is recommended for this.”

### Money matters

You cannot kit out your walk-in wardrobe or dressing room without deciding upon your budget, but fortunately there are options at all prices. Sharps is more affordable and quotes a starting price of £1800 for a fully fitted bedroom that includes design, manufacture, delivery and installation. A bedroom design expert will evaluate a customer’s lifestyle and tailor the doors and storage solutions. You can also buy affordable storage solutions online. For added peace of mind, though, look for web stockists that offer telephone support and have a UK-based address, and always check the returns policy.

If you can splash more cash, you will find innovative storage systems by brands such as Lema, Riva 1920, Poliform and Molteni & C. Check the retailer has an in-house design team who will work with you to create a suitable walk-in solution. At the top end of the spectrum, meanwhile, are furniture makers offering a bespoke service. Off-the-shelf solutions are limited, but when something is made specifically for your space it will fit perfectly and last a lifetime, so expect to pay big bucks. [KBB](#)





## Exception to the rule

Pascoe Interiors offers an alternative solution to fitted furniture.

While small walk-in wardrobes benefit from fitted furniture to maximise space, larger dressing rooms can accommodate freestanding pieces. Clare Pascoe, of Pascoe Interiors, sourced 1950s furniture for this dressing room, remaining sympathetic to the style of the house. Key pieces include the mid-century Carl Malmsten sofa and a vintage walnut wardrobe. The vintage dressmaker's dummy is a quirky addition. This dressing room would cost in the region of £10,000, which is largely down to the calibre of the furniture used.



**Top left:** Emma Hooton was asked to create a classic-contemporary dressing room for this new-build house. Grey linen panels from Mark Alexander Fabrics were inserted into the bespoke cupboard doors, while Silver Star crystal knobs from Chloe Alberry were specified for handles. All joinery is finished in Farrow & Ball Pavilion Grey paint. The bespoke banquette seat in deep aubergine velvet by Swaffer is a fabulous finishing touch. Expect to pay between £30,000 and £40,000 for a similar scheme.

**Left:** The owners of this apartment in Canada wanted a feminine walk-in wardrobe with a mix of visible and concealed bespoke storage. Designed by Robert A M Stern with interiors by Taylor Hannah Architect, glass doors and accents of black inlays are reminiscent of Coco Chanel. Stand-out features include a custom-made silk grey rug, upholstered Lucite bench sourced from Paris, and Niermann Weeks's Monaco chandelier.

## Take three... Big players

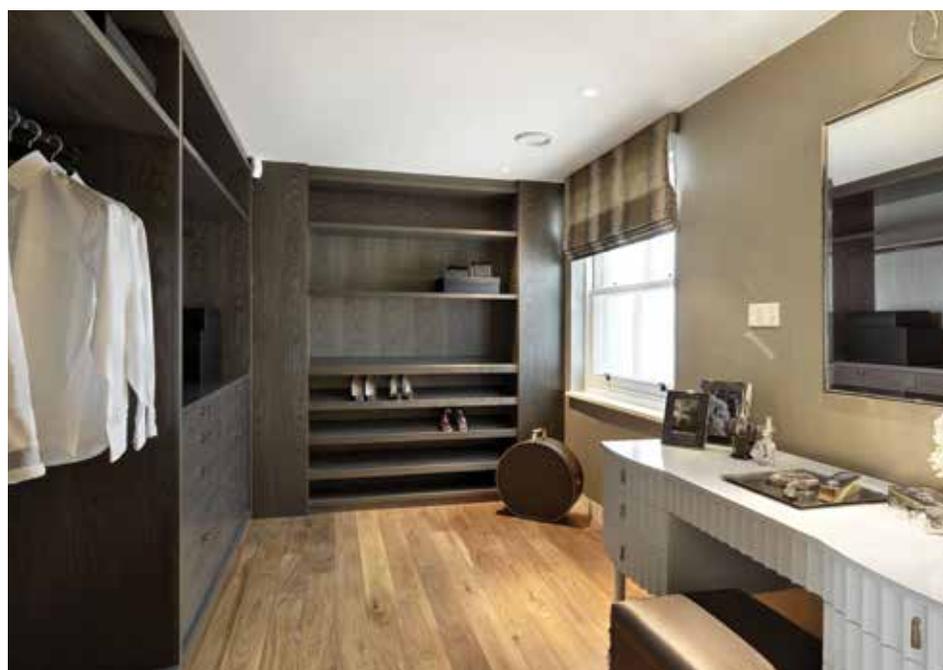
Familiarise yourself with a few key names in storage solutions.



**Above:** In lieu of the fact many dressing rooms are created by dividing larger spaces using stud walling, Lema's Hangar wardrobe system is designed to be self-supporting, so they are perfect for rooms without solid masonry walls. Hangar can be seen at DesignSpaceLondon, with prices starting from £5000 for a full walk-in dressing room.

**Above:** "Walk-in wardrobes are much more accessible these days," says Kiran Noonan of John Lewis of Hungerford. "We go into homes and convert spare rooms and small spaces. Good storage can really add value to your home and it's a big trend at the moment." A walk-in wardrobe from John Lewis of Hungerford is priced from £6600.

**Right:** Lida Cucina's Rossetto Cabine range is available in an infinite number of configurations. Seen here in a dark grey linen-effect finish, expect to pay from £10,000 to £15,000 for a similar wardrobe system.



"A mix of double and long hanging is essential for everyone. Always include a full-length mirror. If you have a small walkin it can be fixed to the reverse of the door."

**JASON MUNSLOW** BRILLIANT PROJECT



**Above:** This dressing room and bespoke shoe carousel designed by Blanca Sanchez of Halo Design Interiors is made of a combination of spray-lacquered MDF and mirror. The tailor-made shoe display features round acrylic shelves encircling a back-lit opaque acrylic tube and holds up to 20 pairs. An upholstered padded velvet panel softens the feel of the room and serves to hide a services manifold behind. Contact Halo Interiors for further details.

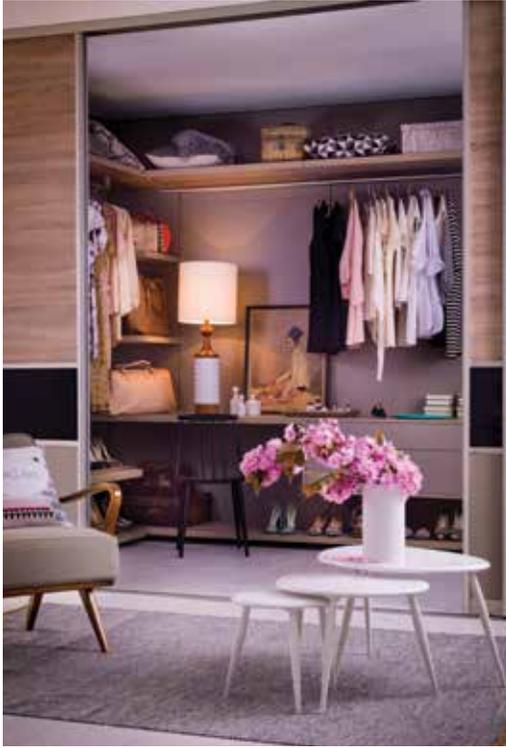
**Right:** Clients of TG Studio specified a neutral palette for their home with the furniture and artwork adding accents of colour. The dressing room reflects this neutral scheme with bespoke shelving in oak veneer designed to fit the space. Open shelves make it easy to see what is stored and there is plenty of hanging space for longer garments. The carefully placed window ensures the room is lit naturally and the clever use of mirror adds light and depth to the room as well as providing a useful function. Priced £8125.

**Opposite page, bottom:** The Lancasters is a duplex apartment in the Lancaster Gate development overlooking London's Hyde Park. The brief was to create a neutral, warm and welcoming space that was neither too masculine nor feminine. "We used a lot of wood which immediately adds warmth and texture to the room," says interior designer Katharine Pooley. "We kept the wardrobes open so the space doesn't feel too heavy and so that everything is easily accessible. We also incorporated a dressing table to allow for a seamless and easy dressing experience." Expect to spend around £24,000 for a similar scheme.



## Take three... Affordable solutions

Save money but don't sacrifice style.



**Above:** Online retailer Brilliant Project manufactures mix-and-match storage solutions including aluminium-framed sliding doors, frameless sliding doors, wall storage systems, open stanchion systems and freestanding furniture options. This configuration retails at around £3850.

**Top right:** The Vista interior system from John Lewis offers single or double hanging, shelving options and a floor-to-ceiling shoe rack. With prices from £2500, including fitting, all John Lewis fitted bedrooms come with a 10-year guarantee at no extra cost.

**Right:** The new range of walk-in wardrobes from Sharps is designed to suit all manner of bedrooms. Prices for a fully fitted Sharps bedroom start from £1800, including design, manufacture, delivery and installation.



## SourceBook

BRILLIANT PROJECT 0800 145 5858 or [www.brilliantproject.com](http://www.brilliantproject.com)  
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NEXT MONTH...

How to make a bedroom with a floor plan the size of a postage stamp feel palatial.



**Above:** "Fitting bespoke joinery around beams has its challenges and will take longer to install," says interior designer Emma Hooton of this dressing room in a converted Mill House. "However, it maximises usable storage in older properties, looks beautiful and is sympathetic to the fabric of these buildings when carried out by an experienced joiner." The client required a dressing table, which was built into the dormer window to capitalise on natural light. A similar dressing room by Emma would cost between £15,000 and £20,000.

**Left:** Neville Johnson offers a bespoke walk-in wardrobe service, enabling customers to choose what they want depending on the size of their room. Fitted wardrobes, shelving, dressing tables, island drawers and clever storage ideas can be requested by the customer and Neville Johnson is able to work with any size of room and awkward spaces. Prices start from £3000 upwards.



"Popular internal storage solutions for the walk-in wardrobe are shoe racks, jewellery drawers and trouser rails. These options are a really useful way to organise your belongings, making it easy to lay your hands on anything you need."

**RACHAL HUTCHESON SHARPS**