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MAKE PROPERTIES



# Practical uses for that unused formal living room

BY ELAINE WILLIAMSON

If you are like most homeowners, your formal living room is useful for one primary thing: accumulating dust.

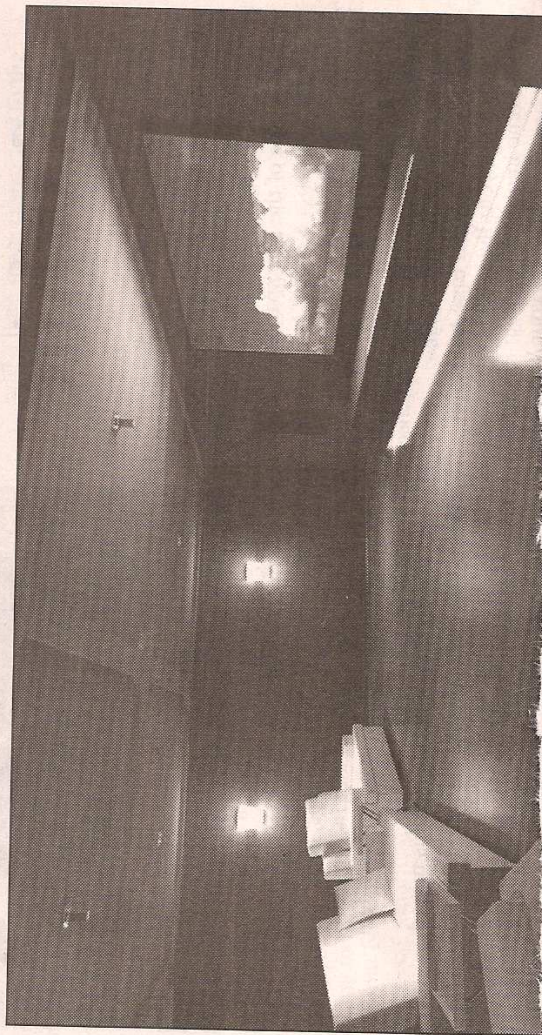
Originally, formal living rooms were spaces in which special guests were entertained.

However, as modern-day life has become more casual, so have our living spaces. Friends come in through the front door and are escorted to the family room, bypassing the formal living room all together.

That leaves you with a wasted space that can cost a mint to decorate. There are an endless number of ways to use this room that would increase its value to your family — and your home's value overall.

Your options depend primarily on this room's loca-

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tion in your home.

If the living room is directly in front of the front door, the formal living room would be well-suited to convert into a library or a reading den.

In addition to reclaiming the functionality of the room, you would have a place to store your family's books that tend to accumulate and clutter shelves all over the house.

You might also consider turning it into a music lounge, where residents and guests alike might go to listen to, and play, music.

In each of these situations, the room's aesthetic and functionality would still be suitable for its prominent location in the house, while

also increasing its utility.

Another popular idea is to use the larger living room space, which often has a majestic fireplace and windows, as the formal dining room, with a larger and more elegant table, sideboard or butler and other appropriate furnishings.

The smaller formal dining space can then be utilized as a cozy and intimate reading den or sitting room where you can still have coffee or tea with special visitors.

This smaller dining space can also be converted into a functional home office.

Your number of options expand greatly the less the formal living room is visible. It can be trans-

formed into a media or theater room, which has become incredibly popular, a billiard room and bar,

a children's play room or even an exercise or craft room.

The best room to convert into a media room would have doors and very few windows. Of course, if your house has an open floor plan, you can easily add doors and use heavy window coverings to block out the light.

For the other usage alternatives, you would likely want to add doors to preserve the room's privacy or hide its clutter.

Adding doors is an easy alteration that would also greatly increase the options available for the room — and

the room's resale potential at large. Today, a "living room" is what a homeowner makes of it. The days of formal living in one's own home and wasted square footage have predominantly passed.

Whichever option you choose, rejoice in your reclaimed living space!

*Luxury interiors expert Elaine Williamson is the principal of Elaine Williamson Designs — a full-service, award-winning firm specializing in high-end custom interior design for luxury residences, high-rise properties and commercial establishments. She may be reached online at [www.ElaineWilliamsonDesigns.com](http://www.ElaineWilliamsonDesigns.com).*