The effect, character or atmosphere of an interior is the most ephemeral challenge for the designer to draw. Unlike scale and proportion, which are both quantitative and measured, effect is qualitative and subjective. Effect can be fleeting, such as a particular light quality, or mobile, such as in the case of furniture and surface – rich in nuance but weak in character, its power should not be underestimated. The character of a space remains in the mind far longer than the more formal qualities, memory distorting the relationship between actual and perceived space.

Effect can be influenced by many different factors. In this section we look at light, colour, pattern, texture and illusion and give examples of how some architects and designers have chosen to represent them. There are no conventions in the same sense that there are for orthogonal or perspective projection and the examples shown differ greatly.

The drawings can be divided into two main categories: design drawings that experiment and test the effect and construction drawings that describe how the effect is built and experienced. The first category tends to contain spatial drawings often incorporating colour and material, and the second tends to focus on the detail.