

TILES

Matching wall and floor tiles in a pale, neutral shade creates a seamless finish and allows feature pieces to really stand out

TAPS

Wall-mounted fillers are ideal for a bath without tap holes

VANITY UNIT

Complete with a tall tap and a sit-on basin, the look is elegant and contemporary



HOUSE BEAUTIFUL SAYS...

‘Rich colours, not the obvious choice for a bathroom, work brilliantly here. The bronze glass shower enclosure adds a glamorous 1970s feel.’

What was wrong with the original layout?

At one end of the first floor we had a small double and a single bedroom and two small bathrooms, and the space felt cramped. We weren't really bothered about having an ensuite. With two young children, we decided it was much more important to have one large bathroom that we could all use and then have a good-sized bedroom each instead.

You agreed to lose a bedroom. That was a big decision

As this is our 'forever' home, we didn't feel under pressure to make it saleable for future potential buyers. We only need four bedrooms and wanted them to be spacious. Sacrificing a single bedroom and tiny bathroom was definitely the right decision for us.

Finding a good designer was key to the scheme...

This was our first major project and we found it quite difficult to visualise the space when the building work was being done. We had an idea of what we liked but weren't confident about turning it into a practical design and were concerned about making expensive mistakes. Karen Beecroft of Instil Design, an Oxford-based bathroom company, helped us. She was used to dealing with large rooms and assisted us with both the layout and the design, as well as recommending our fitter, Simon Hubert. It was reassuring to know that they'd collaborated on previous projects.

Tell us about the shower area

The sloping ceiling meant there was only one place we could put the shower. Though I was keen to have a large, walk-in model, I didn't want it to feel open and exposed. We liked the idea of a dark,

cocoon-like setting that was still part of the room, but would feel like a separate space. The dark tiles with their shimmer, slightly metallic surface really appealed to us and influenced our choices for the rest of the scheme, so when Karen suggested having smoky glass shower panels in a coordinating shade, we agreed.

What were your design priorities?

A statement bath was a must and we decided to keep the rest of the scheme relatively understated. Our feeling was that having too many design features would create a clash and they'd lose their impact. The bath and limestone tiles took up a large part of our budget so we cut back on things such as the brassware, choosing simple designs. This is where working with a designer really helped. Anyone can choose a bath but it takes specialist knowledge to get the balance and dimensions of all the other elements right.

How did you manage without a bathroom?

We have a downstairs loo and both of our workplaces have showers so Jeremy and I managed with these. Our neighbours also very kindly offered the use of their bathrooms – one of the advantages of living in a small village is the feeling of being part of a real community.

Did it take long?

There were a few hiccups. We discovered that one of the walls that was going to be taken down was a supporting wall, so we had to have a steel beam put in, which delayed us a little. Also, the floor tiles took a couple of weeks to dry so we had to wait for that. It took around six weeks from start to finish, but we just saw it as a few weeks of inconvenience for a long-term gain.

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