



**FACT FILE**

**THE OWNERS**

Ruth Bowers lives here with her husband Wayne, an investment manager, and their four children Megs, 17, Joe, 15, Gus, 12, and Amelia, eight

**THE PROPERTY**

A six-bedroom, Victorian detached house

**THE LOCATION**

Abingdon, Oxfordshire

**WHAT THEY SPENT**

The couple's bathroom project cost around £27,000

**BEFORE**



**Above** Lacking character, the original bathroom was uninspiring and failed to maximise the available space and light

**Below** A feeling of luxury was created with a freestanding Eclipse bath as a focal point. Luna walnut vanity units provide a base for a pair of Solo basins with Hansgrohe Metris mixers, all from Ripples

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**A made-to-measure glass splashback from Ripples adds vibrancy to a classic colour palette. The bath features a Technovation chrome deck shower set. The shutters from Hillarys are easy to clean. The Marengo floor and wall tiles are also from Ripples**

# 'Modern touches add character to our en suite'

By reorganising the layout and using a contemporary colour scheme, Ruth and Wayne Bowers have transformed an old bathroom space

FEATURE **JO MESSENGER** PHOTOGRAPHS **FRASER MARR**

'I knew the house was going to be perfect for us when my husband Wayne and I moved in a year ago,' says Ruth. 'Built on different levels, it's an interesting and unconventional layout, and as we have

four children and two dogs, there's enough space for us to feel that we are not getting under each other's feet.'

Set in a Conservation Area, the property is near to town and next to a park, so the

family can cycle almost everywhere, which immediately appealed to Ruth and Wayne when they came to view it.

'The house has two separate staircases, which was a little confusing at first but

really adds to its character. The teenagers' rooms are on the top floor, so they have loads of space,' explains Ruth. 'Apart from cosmetic work, the property was in pretty good condition when we bought it.'

When they moved in, the first job for the Bowers was to improve the dark and dated décor, so they painted the interior white to make it feel light and airy and add a real sense of space. Six months later, the couple felt the time was right to refurbish the master bathroom.

Part of the bedroom suite, along with a separate dressing room, the space is accessed through double doors leading off the main landing. As the children have their own bathroom positioned on the top floor near their bedrooms, the couple

adopted this one as their own private space. 'Although it's a lovely big area, it desperately needed to be refurbished,' says Ruth. 'When we moved in, it had a stained carpet, dated wallpaper and looked like a bathroom suite fitted in a bedroom.'

The couple browsed local showrooms for ideas and inspiration for their project. While they were fortunate to have such a big bathroom, they were also conscious that it was a large area to fill and wanted a design that would use the whole space. 'I had an idea of what I wanted and spotted exactly what I was after in a Ripples showroom,' says Ruth. 'I asked Martina Landhed, an interior designer specialising in bathrooms, to come to the house to look at the space and she really

listened to what I wanted. Her design was spot on – I didn't need to change a thing.'

Ruth asked Martina to create a modern space that would be easy to clean, with a freestanding bath and double shower area. 'I also asked for underfloor heating, a double basin with storage, mood lighting and muted colours, with a bold blue accent shade,' explains Ruth.

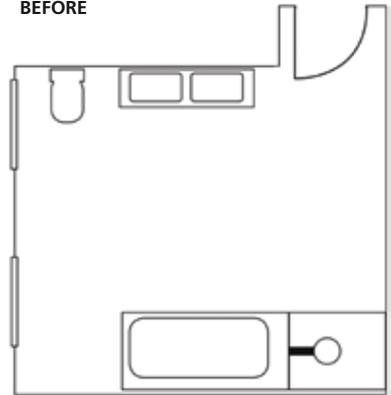
With the design approved, work started around a month later. Kevin Robertson, a local builder recommended by Martina, was hired to do the work. 'The bathroom had a high ceiling, but due to the pitch of the roof, the two windows were initially fitted low on the wall and looked out of proportion,' says Ruth. 'To rectify the problem, Martina recommended lowering



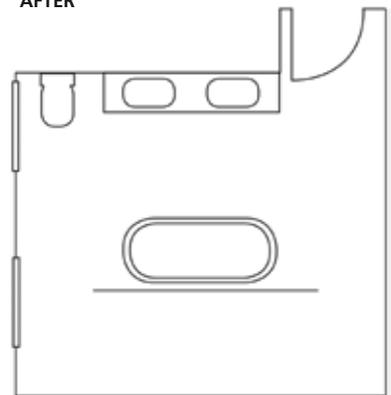
Chrome Vastus ceiling showerheads, from Ripples, are mixed with a Deluce Spettro LED light system with four interchangeable coloured lights. The Techno handheld shower is also from Ripples. The shower floor has been fitted with Dukkaboard double wet trays

## THE PLANS

BEFORE



AFTER



The original layout featured a boxed-in shower enclosure next to a bath, both tucked away in a corner, leaving a large wasted area of floor space. The new layout was achieved by making the bath the centrepiece of the design

## ‘I wanted our new bathroom space to feel contemporary and streamlined’

the ceiling and adding some interesting lights to create an intimate and cosy feel.’

While there weren’t any major problems to overcome, each of the three bathrooms in the house previously had pumps fitted to improve the water pressure. To reduce the noise produced by the pumps, Kevin suggested removing them and instead installing two hot water cylinders and two accumulators for storing cold water at mains pressure. To create a streamlined design, the plumbing and waste pipes were lowered and positioned between the floor joists. ‘The old shower enclosure had a raised tray and the waste pipe to the WC had been boxed in,’ explains Ruth. ‘I wanted our bathroom to feel spacious, contemporary and streamlined.’

Ruth wanted the freestanding bath to be positioned in the centre of the room,

but she was concerned it would simply look like it had just been placed there for the sake of it with little thought. To resolve this potential problem, Martina suggested incorporating it into the design for the glass shower screen, positioning the bath against the low-level studwork wall, which makes up the lower part of the screen. This design choice has made the bath feel like the centre of the scheme, with the double shower sheltered behind, so it feels less open and exposed. The low wall also includes integrated shelving, providing storage for toiletries, and mood lighting, to create atmosphere in the room.

‘There is nothing nicer than having your own bathroom space,’ says Ruth. ‘The kids have the family bathroom, but this is a wonderful, calming zone that is tailored to meet our needs and taste exactly.’

## THE COSTS

|                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Furniture and accessories      | <b>£7,365</b> |
| Upgrade of hot water system    | <b>£6,000</b> |
| Fixtures and fittings          | <b>£5,596</b> |
| Building work and installation | <b>£5,500</b> |
| Wall and floor tiles           | <b>£1,655</b> |
| Lighting                       | <b>£900</b>   |

**TOTAL £27,016**

## THE CONTACTS

**Bathroom design:** Martina Landhed, Instil Design, 07788 477645  
**Fixtures and fittings:** Ripples, 0800 107 0700, Ripples.ltd.uk  
**Construction:** K Robertson General Builders, 07812 093918  
**Shutters:** Hillarys