

MAXIMISE YOUR BATHROOM DESIGN

An extra washing facility doesn't just add value to your home – it's also a great way to make a new extension more functional and family-friendly

↑ ORDERLY OPEN-PLAN

Zone a family bathroom into three areas (bathing, washing and sanitary) to correspond to where the drainage pipes are and allow a space for each function. Mirror frame; vanity washbasin unit and shelves in solid wood; oval bathtub, basin in xcril with mixer and freestanding bath mixer, total from £6,000, Welchome (020 7610 9108; welchome.co.uk)

Extensions mean more space, but if you're planning a bigger or new bathroom, how you use the space is just as important as how much you're adding. Whether it's an en-suite, wet room, double-duty utility and bathroom or a room conversion as part of a project, every centimetre counts. Planning ahead and clever design can often be the difference between a scheme that's rarely used and a room that adds visual and practical appeal.

Maximising your extension potential

Renovating an old bathroom usually dictates a similar layout, but there's

more freedom with an extension as to what you can include and where it can be sited. You may be able to free up space for a walk-in shower or create a room that suits multiple users. Ask yourself what you'd like the new bathroom to contain, what purpose it's most likely to serve and who'll be using it. Consider what facilities your property already has – for example, if your main bathroom has a bath, do you need to put one in the extension?

Establish your wish list in plenty of time before building commences. 'More often than not an extension will have to be adapted to get the best possible layout, use of space and the most practical access for

pipings,' explains Martin Nealon, creative director at Angel Martin Interiors (07931 525 913; angelmartin.org). 'This means that every element of the design can be agreed in advance and the drawings passed to the builder so they can build accordingly, saving both time and money.'

Capitalising on the space

Having decided what your new bathroom should include, it's time to think about your layout. At this stage, formulate as many ideas as possible. Creating a new space means you can be more open-minded with your



IN FOCUS

MANAGING YOUR BUDGET

- ❖ Visit several showrooms to gauge the quality of sanitaryware and get a better understanding of pricing.
- ❖ Ensure you get multiple quotes from builders and bathroom designers and always ask what each includes.
- ❖ Remember to budget for additional plumbing or electrical work if it's not included in your extension build and allow for a contingency of 10 per cent.
- ❖ Try not to let your budget dictate your design. It may mean shopping around to find the right products at the best price, but will result in a hard-working bathroom scheme that will last.
- ❖ Invest in the key items such as your shower, but try to save on the finishing touches, which may involve opting for more cost-effective tiles.

← DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Mixing and matching finishes and materials is crucial for a narrow bathroom extension, to prevent it from having a corridor feel. This example by Sonnemann Toon Architects features a wall-mounted basin and WC pan by Duravit, a Raindance shower by Hansgrohe and Silestone shelving (020 7580 8881; st-arch.co.uk)

↓ TROUBLE-FREE TUB

The beauty of a bath is that it can fit almost anywhere without the need for standing room. Try tucking one under the eaves of a loft conversion. BetteLoft built-in bath in glazed steel, from £1,756, Bette (0844 800 0547; bette.co.uk)

design. You may come up with concepts that can be adapted, such as sliding doors or making the most of alcoves or boxed-in spaces.

Next, think about which rooms the extension connects to and how this will impact the layout, the position of windows and doors, and potential floor space. 'A well-planned en-suite will take up very little space in an extension but still add value,' says Sam Ball, marketing services manager at Utopia Bathrooms (01902 406 402; utopiagroup.com). 'Space will still be at a premium, though, so you may need to take into account reduced-depth furniture and space-saving sanitaryware. Fitted furniture is >





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the perfect choice if your room is awkwardly shaped or you have pipes and structural features to disguise.'

A good starting point for the design is the WC, as you'll need to incorporate a soil pipe. This can be costly, but worthwhile if it results in a more practical layout. Try to avoid placing a WC directly in view of the door and instead tuck it around a corner or conceal it with furniture. Next, think about what you would like as the focal point, whether that's a bath, shower or vanity unit. In larger rooms you may find that zoning each area pays dividends, by creating clearly defined areas for bathing, personal items and practical

storage. This will help prevent a disjointed feeling, as well as keep related items together – for example, locate towel rails next to a bath or shower rather than put them on the other side of the room.

Consider how the space will be lit and heated, how much clearance doors or drawers need to open, whether you need bespoke items made (and how long this will take) and how you'll move around the room. 'Many people want to take their future needs into account,' says Michael Gray, product manager at Grohe UK (0871 200 3414; grohe.co.uk). 'If you're planning a bathroom for the future, the layout should avoid



← SEAMLESS SHOWERING

If your head height is limited, don't squander the space by installing a step up – opt for a walk-in shower instead. This bathroom uses bespoke-cut Moleanos white honed limestone tiles with a low-profile, wetroom-style shower tray. A similar design would cost around £7,500 at JLB Property Developments (020 3176 4618; jlbpropertydevelopments.com)

→ SPACE SOLUTION

Make the most of loft space with smart design solutions. By placing twin showers at the highest point and waterproofing the walls and floor, you can create an inviting wetroom. Richmond bath, from £1,635, Victoria + Albert Baths (01952 221 100; vandabaths.com)

↓ SMART STORAGE

Opt for a wall-mounted unit to add plenty of storage options and help preserve a feeling of space. 1200mm Pursuit wall-hung unit in gloss light grey with Cell vessel basins, £1,558; Reveal illuminated mirror, £442, both available at Roper Rhodes (01225 303 900; roperrhodes.co.uk)



narrow access ways, with basins and WCs in accessible spots.'

Plumbing and practicalities

Once you have a rough layout in mind, think about services. Wiring and the position of water, waste and soil stacks may impact the locations of different features, as there are restrictions that determine how they can be placed in your bathroom. It may be easy to move waste pipes on some projects, and harder for others. Waste pipes should ideally be connected into an existing soil and vent stack, but if the distance is too great or the route impractical, a new

soil and vent stack or a macerator can be added. 'Hot and cold water feeds are easy to run through the building using floor voids, loft space or cavity walls but waste pipes are a larger section and require a fall from end to end,' says Martin Nealon. 'Your designer may need to stud walls out to hide pipes, or raise floor levels.'

Another issue is an increased demand for water and pressure, with some modern showers emptying a standard water tank in minutes. In this instance, you may need to replace or modify your system so that it can supply the amount of water required at the correct pressure. In addition, long routes of pipework

can cause a delay in hot water supply, so a pump may be necessary.

Ceiling heights in a side return or loft extension can be an issue, so use design tricks to work around it. In a loft, for example, place tall items such as a shower at the apex, and use the lower parts of the room for storage, a bathtub or a WC (ensuring there's enough headroom to stand in front). If space is an issue, consider turning the whole room into a wet room, and swap radiators for underfloor heating to preserve wall space. In all cases, ensure the space is well-lit with a roof window or lighting, and ventilated by an extractor so it's dry, warm and welcoming. **GD**

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