



**DESIGN TIP**  
Waterproof tile backing board, such as Jackoboard, Wedi, or Marmox, is the perfect product for tanking the floor of a wet room and forming tiled shower enclosures, vanity units, seats, steps or bath panels

# ‘Our new bathroom layout is much more practical’

Catherine Barnes and John Jones redesigned their space, reusing any existing fittings and fixtures that they could to create a relaxed look

WORDS JO MESSENGER PHOTOGRAPHS FRASER MARR

## UPDATED ROOM

**Above** Teamed with the shower from the old scheme, the curved Kermi bespoke quadrant enclosure, from Ripples, is spacious and practical. Limestone tiles, also from Ripples, add a timeless feel

## FACT FILE

### THE OWNERS

Catherine Barnes (above), a company director, and her husband John Jones, who works as a business consultant, live here with Catherine's daughter Hazel, 12

### THE PROPERTY

A semi-detached, four-bedroom modern house, built in an Edwardian style

### THE LOCATION

Oxford, Oxfordshire

### WHAT THEY SPENT

The couple's bathroom project cost around £15,000

We loved the high ceilings and light, spacious rooms when we first viewed the house, back in 2011,' recalls Catherine. 'It has the style of an Edwardian property, but was built in 2006, so it has all the benefits of a modern home, such as good heating and insulation.'

'While the developer built the house to a very high standard, we believe that the fittings were chosen with the rental market in mind: quickly and cheaply,' she adds. 'The kitchen certainly wasn't of very good quality, and the main bathroom was a mix of high-end and budget fittings.'

In the bathroom, a smart countertop basin had been placed on a base cabinet and worktop left over from the kitchen installation. At normal kitchen cabinet height, the basin was too high to use comfortably. 'The bathroom layout was badly planned and awkward, with the shower on the right-hand side just as you walked in, and a washing machine in full

## BEFORE



### OLD LAYOUT

Left Awkward and uninviting, the space had a leaking shower, and a washing machine on show



view at the end of the room,' Catherine says. 'The bath jutted out from under the window, with a run of wasted space at the side. It hadn't been thought through.'

When the showers in the family's two bathrooms both started leaking at around the same time, Catherine and John decided that their planned kitchen refurbishment could wait a little while longer. Instead, it was time to

### RAISED BATH

**Above** The Bette Ocean bath fits into the recess, with Cifial Brookhaven bath mixer taps set into the ledge behind. Shell mosaic tiles by Finwood Designs make a feature of the steps



## DESIGN DETAIL

Right Builder Kevin suggested creating storage recesses in the false wall of the shower area. The existing shower fittings work well in the new scheme



## NEW FEATURE

Above The Bisque Orbit polished stainless-steel radiator from Ripples creates enough heat to keep the large room feeling cosy. The builder made the open shelving

## NATURAL FINISH

Left A teak Finwood Designs Origin vanity unit, bluestone worktop and teak mirror cabinet, all from Ripples, add colour and warmth

get straight to work on the bathrooms, revamping them both in one go.

Not only was the basin in top condition, but the WC and shower fittings were all as good as new, too, and the couple decided to reuse them in their new scheme. 'I believe in recycling and reusing products where possible,' says Catherine. 'There was nothing wrong with the bath, but it wouldn't fit into the new layout, and I was keen to avoid sending it to landfill, so passed it on to a local recycling scheme. I hope that someone is still using it today.'

Catherine and John had a good idea of what they wanted in their new space. They liked the concept of having the

washing machine upstairs, but wanted to conceal it. They also agreed on a large curved corner shower. 'John wanted an open, walk-in design, with plenty of space, but I find these chilly and exposed, and wanted an enclosure,' Catherine explains. 'The result is a compromise that works for both of us, and we like the way the curved glass flows round to the bath area, rather than having any sharp corners.'

The couple visited their local Ripples bathroom showroom for ideas and got on so well with the designer that they sourced everything they needed from there. 'She knew instinctively what we wanted. I explained that we didn't like

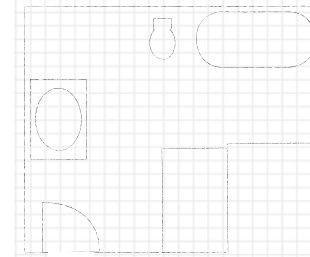
hard, shiny ceramic tiles and she pulled out samples of limestone, and beautiful shell mosaic tiles,' Catherine says. 'We then worked on the layout.'

It was agreed that the bath should be sited under the window on a platform with steps up to it, so anyone bathing could enjoy a view of the garden. The shower was relocated into the corner and the washing machine built in a newly constructed utility cupboard in its place. There was room next to it for a second cupboard, to house the vacuum cleaner, and shelves for general household items. 'The bathroom might not be an obvious place for utility cupboards, but these provide space for towels, DIY kit and even suitcases,' says Catherine. 'In a modern house with no alcoves, storage can be a problem, so this was a good solution.'

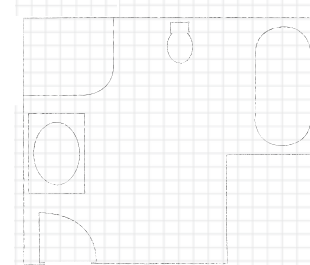
The designer recommended local builder Kevin Robertson for the work. The WC and basin were to stay in the same place, so no major plumbing work needed to be done. Boxing in the pipework with a false wall enabled Kevin to create recesses in the shower area for storage, and LED spotlights give ambient lighting at night. Catherine was keen to have natural surfaces, and didn't want a modern vanity unit, so she chose a teak one with a stone worktop for the original basin. 'The top of the basin is around 85cm from the floor. It's much more practical.'

## THE PLANS

### BEFORE



### AFTER



The bath has been rearranged to fit the space beneath the window, and a shower moved to where there used to be a washing machine (now in a cupboard). The basin and WC are in the same place as before

## THE CONTACTS

Bathroom design, shower enclosure, bath and tiles Ripples, 0800 107 0700, ripples.ltd.uk  
Installation K Robertson General Builders, 07812 093918

## THE COSTS

Building work	£5,200
Shower	£2,400
Furniture	£2,379
Tiles	£2,181
Brassware	£1,016
Radiator	£893
Bath	£828
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£14,897</b>

The couple's plan was to create a contemporary bathroom with a classic edge that would last for years, and the neutral palette has given it a timeless feel. 'We reused what we could, spent money on good-quality fixtures and fittings, and the results have paid off,' says Catherine. 'It is such a calm and elegant room.'

## Project notes



Catherine Barnes shares her tips to help you with your own project

### My best buy

'The shell mosaic tiles (right) seemed like only a little touch, but they've made a huge difference to the final design. The limestone that we used for much of the room was beautiful, but pale, and needed a contrast. Although I originally thought of glass, we wanted to use natural materials, and liked the shimmering effect of these tiles. They add an accent colour to the shower recesses, splashback and steps to the bath.'

### What I've learnt

'Listen to the professionals and ask them for ideas – they work on similar projects all the time. Kevin, our builder, suggested making recesses for toiletries in the shower, using the false wall that he built to hide the pipework. He included mood lighting in them, as well as in the steps up to the bath. We'd never have thought of these features, but they make a big difference.'

### If I did it all again...

'...I probably wouldn't install underfloor heating. The house is so warm that we never use it, and the towel radiator (below right) generates plenty of heat.'

### My favourite spot

'Having the floor raised with steps up to the bath (above right) has turned it into a focal point, and we can now make the most of the view. It's a lovely place to relax in at the end of a long day, looking out over the trees.'

### My go-to store

'John and I were so pleased with the design that Ripples put together for us that we bought whatever we needed for the bathroom design from there – the team interpreted our ideas, and seemed to know the kind of things we were looking for. Sourcing it all from one supplier also meant that we didn't have to chase companies for deliveries.'

