

'My bathroom is now the perfect luxurious retreat'

Denise Evans has turned her dated en suite bathroom in her period home into a stylish contemporary space by remodelling the layout and restoring the original features

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BEFORE

Left The en suite looked very dated and the bath was on the back wall away from the window, which obscured the views of the garden

FACT FILE

THE OWNER

Denise Evans, a local magistrate and grandmother of four

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom Grade II listed house dating from the 13th century

THE LOCATION

Reigate, Surrey

WHAT SHE SPENT

It cost around £15,000 to remodel the space

THE PROBLEM

'I didn't like my existing blue and white bathroom because it was old and the fixtures reminded me of kitchen units. There was a bidet and WC along a partition wall, while the bath was at the back, a long way from the lovely view of the garden. It just wasn't the sort of place where I'd want to spend time relaxing in the bath.'

WHAT I DID

'It was hard to know where to start with this project because of the constraints involved in renovating period houses that still have their original features.

'All the fittings had to come out though, so the first step was to gut the entire room, which revealed a false ceiling. That too had to go – and you can imagine my delight when I found lovely old oak beams underneath. They

had been painted black and made the room very dark, so I had them stripped back to the original oak.

'I wanted the fittings to work around the period features rather than obscure them, so I started looking for a simple style shower and found the perfect one at Matki. It has a deluge shower head, which delivers good pressure and a full spray. I then chose a Philippe Starck vanity unit to go with a state-of-the-art Starck bath and floor-standing taps.

'I thought this combination of contemporary and period features



DESIGN TIP

A double-height vaulted ceiling makes a great design feature above a first floor room. Unless the rafters are very deep, you'll need to insulate beneath and between them, using rigid urethane board (such as Celotex, from Wickes). Many people add reclaimed rafters or purlins beneath the insulated ceiling to add character



'I wanted the fittings to work around the period features, rather than obscure them, so I chose simple modern styles'

worked really well – but at first I wasn't quite sure where to position everything, so once I had decided on the fixtures I spent an evening in the bathroom planning everything, using chairs and a piece of old plywood as it was the right length for the bath. It turned out that I didn't have much choice because of the beams and size constraints. I ended up opting to have the WC and

bidet on the back wall, with the shower to one side and the bath near the window, so I could enjoy the view.

'I called in a local plumbing firm, Cowleys, to re-lay all the pipework, then an electrician came to install new wiring. The shower was the biggest challenge – like all showers, it needed to be level to drain properly and the tray had to be embedded in sand and

waterproofed all round with a special membrane, which took some time. When the beams prevented the shower screen from fitting flush against the wall, I had to commission bespoke brackets to support the glass.

'After the initial plumbing work was done, I had the floor laid with reclaimed oak floorboards, which had to be cleaned and waxed. I then chose a

Above Reclaimed oak floorboards from Vincent Reed complement the walls painted in Dulux Jasmine White. The stylish Starck bath and headrest is available from Duravit, while the Axor Starck bath and shower mixer is from Hansgrohe



'I chose a hardwearing Travertine tile for the wet area to match the overall scheme'

Above The minimalist EFC 1500 EauZone Matki shower doesn't obscure the beautiful antique beams, while the Starck conical vanity unit in Macassar makes a statement piece in the room

hardwearing Travertine tile from Simply Tiles for the wet area as it matched the overall colour scheme and would be easy to keep clean.

'When it came to the vanity unit (which doesn't just make a great focal point, it also provides lots of storage space), I went for a brown colour to complement the oak beams. I chose Dulux's Jasmine White for the walls as I knew from using it elsewhere in my house that it would show the beams out to their best advantage.

'Last but not least, the windows in the bathroom were restored by Cheam

Leaded Lights and dressed with a crewelwork fabric from a local supplier; I completed the look with a feature stainless steel radiator by Raffles.

'The project turned out to be quite a headache at times and took a few months to complete, but I'm absolutely delighted with my new en suite. Now it is finished there is nothing I would change about it.

'These days, when I'm lying back in the bath and enjoying the lovely views of the garden, I really do feel quite pampered, which is exactly what I had set out to achieve.' 🏠

PLANS

Before



After



The en suite bathroom has been remodelled with new pipework and contemporary fixtures and fittings while still making the most of the original oak beams

COSTS

Labour £4,000
Fixtures and fittings £10,146
Walls and flooring £651

Fixtures and fittings: Heated Bisque Cobra-Therm towel rail, £993, supplied by Raffles. Royal mirror cabinet 35, £809, Starck 1 cistern floor-standing WC in white, £346; Starck 1 floor-standing bidet in white, £318; Starck 1 series furniture washbasin in white £241; Starck Series vanity unit, 600x560 in Macassar (952024), £1,440; Starck 1800 bath, £1,997; Axor Starck single-lever basin mixer tap in chrome £334; Axor Starck twin-handle bath mixer tap in chrome, £886, all supplied by Lewis Charles. EFC 1500 EauZone Matki shower, £2,812, including deluge shower head, Matki

Walls and flooring: Travertine Kremna tiles, £60 per m², Simply Tiles. Wall paint Dulux's Jasmine White, £25.50 for 5 litres, Dulux

TOTAL £14,797

🏠 For stockist information, see page 137



1 INSTALL THIS... OVERHEAD RAIN SHOWER

If you're looking to create a stylish statement within a shower room or bathroom, an overhead rain shower head is ideal. Position the head as either wall-mounted or ceiling-mounted, or as a complete package integrated into the shower enclosure column. The fixture can be bought as a separate unit or as part of an enclosure kit. Try Roman Showers for its wide range of rain shower heads.

2 DO THIS... SEAL WOOD FLOORS PROPERLY

If you choose antique flooring for your space, make sure that it is properly treated first for woodworm. It should then be waxed or sealed, otherwise the wood may rot. Waxing also gives it a smooth finish, makes it harder wearing and easier to maintain.



Design details

Team contemporary fixtures with neutral colours and textures to create the perfect room scheme



3

3 FIT THIS... RAISED PLATFORM

To create the contemporary walk-in shower enclosure that Denise had always dreamed of, the plumber needed to make a raised area to create the necessary fall for the waste water to flow away. The alternative would be to run the waste pipe between the joists and then box it in at ceiling level in the room below. Then all the platform needs is tiling to complement the scheme.

3 OF THE LATEST... VANITY UNITS

Create a stylish focal point with one of these modern designs

Sphere MDF floor-standing cabinet with granite top and ceramic basin. (H)69x(W)66x(D)53cm, £560, Hudson Reed



Mondo high gloss vanity unit, including ceramic basin (H)83x(W)55x(D)55cm, £999, World of Baths



Circular vanity unit, made from FSC wood. (H)70x(W)55x(D)51cm, £130, B&Q

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