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Luxury retreat
A clever layout enabled Tessa and Samuel to include a freestanding bath and walk-in shower. The glass enclosure maximises the feeling of space

NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL

Classic fittings and botanical tiles help make Tessa and Samuel Saunders' new bathroom feel like a long-established part of their Victorian family home

Tessa and Samuel Saunders' first contact with Sophie Rogerson and her consultancy firm RFR was when the couple tasked her to find them a bigger family home in London. They had been searching for the right property for nearly a year before deciding to get help. 'In less than six months, RFR had found us everything we wanted – a dream location with views of a common, plus beautiful architecture and plenty of space for our growing brood (Oscar, now 7, Poppy and Ella, 5, Nathan, 3, and Orla, 18 months),' recalls Tessa. 'We got along with them and they understood our style and needs. When we realised they also had an interior design division, we asked them to help with redecorating.'

While not lacking in space, like many older properties, the Saunders' new home had only one main bathroom plus a small en suite to serve seven bedrooms across three storeys. Installing new bathrooms was essential to the smooth running of the household, particularly during the morning rush. As part of the process, Tessa and Samuel were keen to gain a private sanctuary away from busy family life. Two bedrooms on the first floor were destined to become a master suite, with the rear bedroom transformed into a spacious bathroom and dressing room. 'We were prepared to lose a guest bedroom in order to enjoy really spacious – and child-free – quarters,' says Tessa.

Project profile

THE OWNERS

Tessa Saunders and her husband Samuel, who both work in corporate law, and their children Oscar, 7, twins Poppy and Ella, 5, Nathan, 3, and 18-month-old Orla

bathroom, serving the master bedroom via a dressing room, in what was previously a guest bedroom

ROOM SIZE

3 x 4m

THEIR HOME

A semi-detached Victorian townhouse in southwest London

DESIGNER

Sophie Rogerson at RFR

BUDGET

Around £20,000

THE PROJECT

A newly-established

'ALIGNING THE BATH WITH THE WINDOW HELPS ACHIEVE A SYMMETRICAL LAYOUT AND LEAVES PLENTY OF ROOM FOR THE SHOWER'



Hidden assets

A pair of decorative mirrors fitted onto wall cabinets provide discreet storage and compensate for the lack of cupboard space under the vanity unit



Style on tap

Classic taps are an elegant pairing with the marble



The heat is on

Extra controls mean the shower can be turned on and brought to temperature from outside the enclosure

DESIGN SOLUTION

Designer Sophie Rogerson explains...

Was it a difficult process turning a bedroom into a bathroom?

It certainly helped that the room is at the back of the house, and so easy to connect to the external soil stack. Then it was simply a case of running new plumbing from the en-suite bathroom above. We were replacing most of the flooring throughout the house, and the walls all needed replastering anyway, so it didn't add much work to the overall upheaval.

How did you decide on the fittings?

Samuel is tall so he asked us to install the largest walk-in shower possible and a nice deep bath. We took him and Tessa to Drummonds' showroom, next to our studio – their products have a grandeur that works very well in period properties. Our challenge was to get everything in without affecting the calm ambience.

And the colour palette?

There's quite a lot of strong colour in the rest of the house so we could afford to make the bathroom and bedroom a little calmer – a haven from the pair's busy lives. We used Farrow & Ball's Elephant's Breath on furniture in the bedroom and dressing room, and took it one

degree lighter in the bathroom by painting the walls in Skimming Stone. The bath exterior is in Farrow & Ball's Dove Tail. All three shades share common purple tones but the overall feel is soft and muted. We had the feature tiles in the shower created to order – I love their rustic, earthy finish with absolutely no shine at all.

Tell us about the lighting

The original plan was for a big chandelier, which would have been expensive and tricky as building regulations stipulate that lighting positioned within 2.25m above a bath must have specialist enclosure protection. Our solution – an iron tealight holder designed for hanging on a garden tree – looks great, along with antique bronze wall sconces and spotlights. The lighting is on two circuits and both are dimmable.

What makes this bathroom special?

There's a great sense of flow between the bedroom, dressing room and bathroom, which are all connected by pocket doors that can be left open plan if desired. We also kept a lot of the room's architectural character, which helps it feel like a bathroom that's always belonged in the house rather than a new addition.

The details

SURFACES Wall paint, Skimming Stone estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Floor tiles, Plain cement, £75sq m; Rosiers patterned cement, £96sq m, both Emery & Cie at Retrouvius. For similar engineered-wood floors try Dinesen, from £106.80sq m

SANITARYWARE The Humber bath with overflow hole (painted), £4,980; The Eden low-level WC suite, £1,776, all Drummonds

SINKS AND TAPS Classic bath mixer tap, £1,500; Classic basin taps, £1,170; Carron shower controls, £3,114, all Drummonds

FINISHING TOUCHES Double Lowther vanity unit, £6,540; Towel rail, from £2,500, both Drummonds. Marco mitred wall mirrors, £225 each, Oka. Effies Jupiter hanging tealight chandelier, £54.99, Black Country Metalworks



Best dressed

Darker shades were chosen for the dressing room for a coordinated look that avoids being samey

PHOTOGRAPHY MATT CLAYTON