



For:

From:

Your Bathroom Specialist

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Date:

Regarding:

**Bathroom Dreams to Bathroom Reality
by your Bathroom Specialist**

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Comments:

Bathroom Dreams to Bathroom Reality
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Ideally, the bathroom is a place where you can feel relaxed and at peace. Far too often, it is the smallest, darkest and coldest room in the house! With a little forethought and minimal cash expenditure, you can transform any bathroom into the sanctuary it should be.

You may be lucky enough to be designing a new house or adding an extension on an existing home. In either case, you can greatly influence the size and layout of the bathroom.

If you are remodeling an existing bathroom, let yourself think “outside of the box”. You can reposition your bathroom suite, add or remove walls, doors and windows or perhaps even use another room.

In this report, you will find plenty of ideas, suggestions and tips to help you in your bathroom endeavor. It is intended to help you with the actual planning and may not be practical in all situations. As is the case with many things in life - when in doubt, keep it simple.

Renovation Strategy

There are some basic stages in planning a bathroom:

1. Write a wish List.

Jot down all of the fundamental items you would like in your new bathroom. Most likely you will want to include:

- bath and/or shower
- hand basin
- toilet and/or bidet
- flooring preferences
- lighting

Is the room also being used as a laundry room and if so, do you need to consider a washer and dryer into this bathroom. Consider featuring as well.

Other features you may want for your bathroom:

- mirror (with light overhead?)
- electric shave point
- extractor fan
- bathroom cabinet
- medicine chest
- built in hamper?
- shelves

2. Establish your budget.

What is the amount of money you have to spend on this room? Does your wish list reflect this budget and if not, what are you willing to compromise? It's the toughest part but being aware of the budget will save you a lot of grief!

3. Measure.

Take all measurements of your room. Measure the heights of the windows from the floor in addition to the window sizes. Measure the locations of doors and include the frame size. For accuracy, measure the room size at floor level and then at about 900mm from the floor and use the smaller measurement for your floor plan. The walls are very rarely square to the floor so work it into your plan.

4. Floor Plan.

Using graph paper, transfer your information onto a scale plan; include the walls, windows, doors, existing services for electrical points, water, drains and any extractor vents in the walls. Cut out paper or card scale footprints for each of the fixtures you want to include and write the names of the units on the footprint. (There is a range of sizes available so take into consideration if you want a size that is above standard).

Try various layouts with your floor plan and footprints. Remember to consider the working space required around each unit as well as additional furniture you might include in the bathroom (e.g. laundry hamper, stool, towel rack)

Think of how you can rearrange the bathroom to make it easier to use. Consider moving any services, doors or windows to accommodate your desired design. While it may cost more money and time, it is possible to move electrical outlets, plumbing fixtures and even to move/add/remove doors and windows.

If you have a lot of space, consider perhaps separating the toilet and sink from the bathing area with a partition wall.

5. Choosing Flooring

Your options here are extensive. You will want to consider the flooring in the rest of the house. Should you carry hardwood/laminate through into the bathroom or perhaps you would prefer to break up the flooring and use tile/vinyl in the bathroom. Consider the benefits of a heated floor. What is it like to step out of the shower onto a tile floor on a cold, winter morning?

6. Choosing Fixtures

Think twice before selecting exotic shapes. Fashions change – it is expensive and time consuming to continually update your bathroom so choose products that are likely to have a longer lifespan.

Take into account the feeling of the rest of your home. If you have a traditional style running through your house, perhaps a chrome and slate bathroom is not the best choice.

Consider your flooring choice and color tone. If you have a slate floor, you might like to have a similar look for your counter space.

7. Color

Bathrooms do not have to be white and clinical. Again, take into account the feeling of the rest of your home and try to maintain some consistency in color tone.

Consider the natural light. You do not want the room to be too dark or too cold.

If you would like a touch of boldness, consider introducing some color with tiles, paint, wallpaper and linens. Remember to select higher gloss paints or wipe clean wall papers as the walls will have to stand up to the ever-present condensation.

When in doubt, choose a neutral color and add colors with towels, candles and accessories.

8. Dressing the room.

This is the fun part! This is where you get to add your personality to this room which will become one of the most intimate rooms in your house. Have fun with the detail and let it really be a reflection of the feeling you would like to exude. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Add a simple detail, such as a shelf along one wall, to display framed prints or small collectibles like perfume bottles.
- Fill antique bowls or shaving mugs with pretty toiletries, such as soaps or bath salts.
- If you have room, consider adding a piece of outdoor furniture like a wicker chair or table.
- Add accent lighting like a low-voltage strip of lights around the top edge of the wall tile.
- Draw attention to the ceiling with decorative wood beams.
- Line an entire wall with mirrored cabinets. They will make the room look significantly more open.
- Color wash wood cabinets.
- Instead of paint, try a colored stain to revive wood cabinets or a vanity.
- Mix and match colors by using a light-colored stain for the background and then applying a brighter color to some of the drawers.
- Add fresh flowers or flowering plants to the room. Bathroom remodeling is not only about concrete and mortar!
- Seek out unusual vessels, such as wall vases, old watering cans or window boxes to hold your favorite flora.
- If your bathroom has a linen closet with a door, replace the door with a framed trellis or a reproduction of a Victorian screen door.
- Attach a beveled mirror to the wall over the sink and frame it with tiles. You can use a selection of mix-and-match tiles or try some colorful mosaics.

In addition to the logistics of renovating a bathroom, you may also want to consider the current trends in the bathroom. Trends give a room its stamp or snapshot in time. Incorporate current fashions into a room but when in doubt, opt for the simpler and subdued version of the trend you want to embody.

Top trends in bathrooms:

1. Free Style

We're spending more and more time in our bathrooms and there is a move away from the all-or-nothing "fitted" look of continuous counters. Look for more freestanding pieces of furniture or features with furniture-like qualities. This can transfer a cold utilitarian bathroom into a warm and cozy space that is truly meant for living in.

2. Artistic Upgrades

You can easily add personality to functionary items. Cupboard doors can be replaced with accent doors. Want a new backsplash? How about incorporating a mosaic backsplash or if your feeling less adventurous, you can simply incorporate a mosaic hanging. You can go from dull to dramatic, tired to trendy, in just a few minutes.

3. Asian Fusion

With international style so popular at home, it's no wonder that the Asian influence is still going in the bathroom, where there is nothing like Zen comforts to help us unwind. Look for calming touches such as a deep soaking tub, a waterfall in the shower, and unique sinks with sleek hardware.

4. Going Green

Eco-friendly products are here to stay. And now there are more ways that you can go green in the bathroom from energy-efficient, low flush toilets (inquire into rebates for converting) to environmentally sound flooring options made of reclaimed wood.

5. Organic

Forget straight lines and right angles. From egg-shaped bathtubs to round bathroom bowls, organic shapes are in. Not only are the shapes pleasing, they also encourage a more natural circular traffic flow. Imagine never bumping into a sharp corner again.

6. High Tech

Advances in technology continue to offer us out-of-this-world options. How about having a TV embedded in a bathroom mirror? If your budget allows you can also have the toilet seat rise when it sees you coming and clean the shower when you're not around. The option of having your tub radiate heat to keep the water warm is coming soon.

7. Glass Acts

Glass is everywhere in today's bathrooms, from recycled and Depression-era glass tiles to opaque glass. Glass mosaic tiles, Venetian glass light fixtures, translucent glass sinks—they all add light and drama.

8. Bathroom as Refuge

Yes, we are doing more in our bathrooms these days than just brushing our teeth. Watch for showers that offer aromatherapy, hydrotherapy and color therapy, and refrigerated vanity drawers for storing those refreshing tub-side beverages. With heated towel racks, suede or leather drawer pulls and stereo surround sound, the bathroom is truly a sanctuary for the senses.

Hiring Out

The amount of decisions and work involved in a bathroom renovation can be daunting. You may prefer to hire a designer to help discover the possibilities, narrow down the decisions and flush out the look you want to portray. You should also consider hiring a plumber, electrician and/or carpenter. But where do you start? Where can you find such people? How do you know if you can trust them? What is a reasonable rate of pay?

First decide which parts of the renovation you can do for yourself and which you would like to contract out. Even if you do hire out for the entire renovation, it's still a good idea to surf the net, thumb through magazines or watch some home improvement shows. Stores such as Home Depot and Rona have department specialists and can give you useful advice, whether it's in store or on the company web page.

When it comes to resourcing the skills you would like to hire, networking is the most valuable approach. You can certainly flip through the phone book and pick the ad that is the most visually appealing but this method of choice involves the most risk. Instead ask friends who have had recent renovations, who their trade's people were, ask at home renovation stores, local construction associations or even contact the Better Business Bureau.

Before meeting with potential contractors (it is recommended that you use only ticketed, qualified trades' people) consider how much of your budget you are willing to spend on hired help. All trades people work on an hourly fee.

When it comes to negotiating the contracts, there are two basic types of agreements. "Cost plus" is the cost of materials plus the cost of labor. On the other hand, "fixed cost" is a set cost for the entire contract, which includes labor and materials.

You can either go with a general contractor to oversee the whole project or you could hire out individual trades. The following is an average based on the industry standard. This is just an average however prices vary from region to region (e.g. city will be more expensive than rural).

Designer	there is a wide range: \$50-\$250/hr.
Carpenter	\$35-\$85/hr.
Electrician	\$35-\$85/hr.
Plumber	\$35-\$85/hr.
Painter	\$30-\$65/hr.

You should have a list of questions prepared before meeting with potential contractors.

- How many years of experience does this company/person have?
- Do they have a portfolio or photos of work they have completed?
- Do they work with other specific contractors?
- What is the estimated cost?
- How long will the job take? When is the projected start time?
- Are they covered under a worker's compensation agreement?
- Are they insured/bonded?
- Do they have references?

Once you have hired your contractor, keep the lines of communication open and consistent. Stay in contact as much as possible, from the commencement right through to the completion of their contract. Ask questions and request regular progress reports.

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