

In the zone

The FACTS

Who? A professional couple with two young children

What? Modernisation of an ensuite and bedroom in a Victorian terraced house

Where? Clapham South, south west London

Cost? £75,000

Time? Three months

The large **bath**, from Victoria + Albert, is the focal point of the ensuite. Its matt white finish adds another texture into the large space and pairs perfectly with the brushed-steel **brassware**, from Fantini. **Lights**, Mullan; **flooring**, Domus.

With the help of two stud walls, this grand suite has been cleverly divided with each zone as practical as it is beautiful, making the most of the high ceilings and period features

Words: **Rebecca Shepherd** Photography: **Darren Chung**

When a professional couple with two young children bought their Victorian terraced house in Clapham South, London, they always knew they would redo their ensuite, so when the time came, they called in some help. “The existing scheme seemed a little rushed,” explains Sokum Hyland-Smith, creative director at luxury interior design company Five Sextillion, who was hired to redesign the bathroom and bedroom. “The ensuite didn’t match up to the rest of the house.” The space measures 3.5m x 3.5m with high ceilings and beautiful period cornicing. “It’s effectively the size of two bathrooms in one,” Sokum says. “But the previous layout didn’t utilise the large space properly. Among many other things, there was no focal point – everything was dotted around the room and the shower tray was too small for the large enclosure.”

The busy couple tasked her with creating a turnkey ensuite bathroom and bedroom that was ‘grown-up’, filled with quality, but low-key, fixtures and fittings that took into consideration the period features. After assessing the space, drawing seven different layouts and refining the design with two stud walls, Sokum created a bathroom and bedroom that are filled with elegant touches and high-spec finishes. Here’s how she accomplished it...



Honed large-format porcelain and small glazed tiles, from Domus, were used to create a feature wall without being too dramatic. **Shower, Fantini.**

The shower zone

Before, there was only a small standard tray but now the floor is completely tanked, which means it’s waterproof. Underfloor heating was embedded in the adhesive, so splashes evaporate quicker. Design wise, I wanted to create a feature wall to keep things interesting without being too dramatic. I went for beige large-format honed porcelain and thin, glossy brick-like tiles. It took a long time to complete – but it was worth it. A stud wall separates the shower from the WC, but I left a 45cm gap between it and the ceiling, so light can flow through. It also meant we didn’t have to cut into the beautiful cornicing, which was to be retained.



The WC area

Initially, the toilet was facing you when you walked into the room. The soil stack runs out from that corner, so I kept the WC as close to its original place as the layout would allow – but turned it around. I did have to include a little bit of shallow boxing out, but its new positioning gives you an extra layer of privacy, seeing as there is no actual door to the bathroom – it’s just an opening. ➤

The **WC**, from West One Bathrooms, was kept close to the soil stack, but positioned around the wall to give added privacy. **Flush plate, Fantini.**



The brushed white **basins** from Victoria + Albert were chosen to match the bath's material. **Taps**, Fantini.

The basin area

A double basin is quite common in a master ensuite, especially if you've got the space to have one, and this bathroom definitely did. As there's a significant height difference between the couple, we had to think about how we positioned the two round basin mirrors, which light up. If I placed them too high, it would be central to one of their faces, whereas the other wouldn't be able to see. But it would also look odd if I arranged them at different heights. In the end, we found a level that both felt comfortable with.

The storage

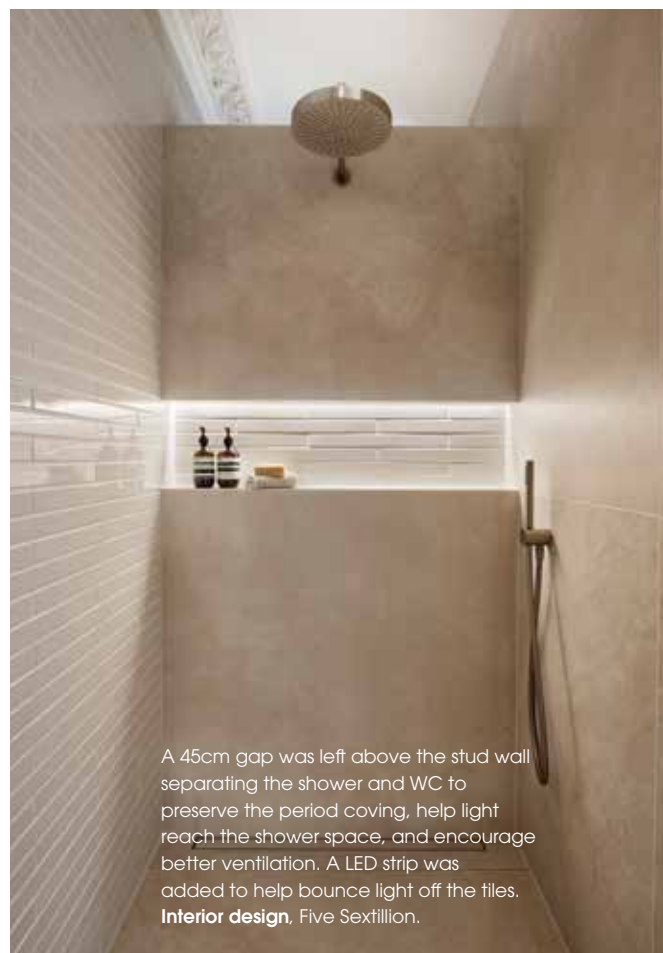
One of the original bathroom's flaws was that it had very little space to keep things. I installed a new vanity unit which provides both ledge space for decorative pieces and drawers for toiletries. There are cupboards above the WC and in a corner of the bathroom, plus a ledge in the shower and above the bath. With a freestanding tub you have nowhere to put anything, so it was really important that when I created the large alcove for the mirror, I also designed somewhere to put candles, a glass of wine, or soap.

The waterproof blue **wallpaper**, from Arte Wall Coverings, adds some personality into the bathroom without being overly dramatic, while the **vanity**, from Duravit, provides ample hidden storage for the couple.



The bath

There was nothing particularly wrong with the old tub – it was a freestanding glossy bath. The couple liked the idea of a different type of material, such as a matt or satin. We suggested Victoria + Albert's Barcelona design, which they chose in a matt finish. It is much more tactile and pairs beautifully with the brushed-steel brassware, adding a soft and welcoming vibe. The bath gives a much more spacious feel to the room and provides a luxurious focal point. One of the main challenges was the 1.9m x 1.9m mirror placed in the stud wall that hides the WC and shower area. The ceiling isn't level, but we couldn't replaster because of the period cornicing and mouldings. So we decided to make the mirror unlevel instead, because if you had it completely square with the top border you'd notice it.



A 45cm gap was left above the stud wall separating the shower and WC to preserve the period coving, help light reach the shower space, and encourage better ventilation. A LED strip was added to help bounce light off the tiles.
Interior design, Five Sextillion.

design edit

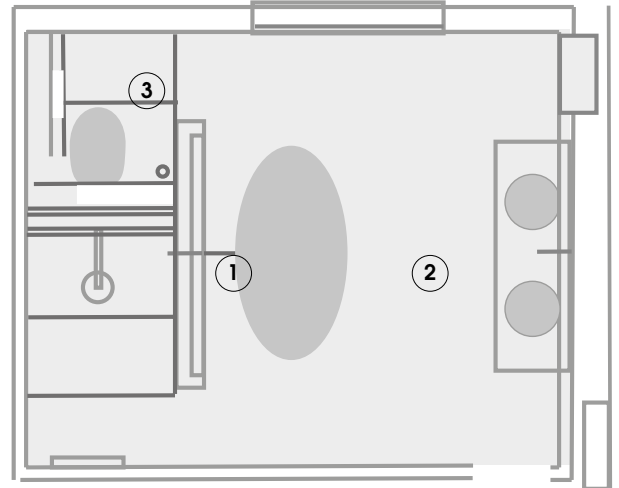
1 Countrywide mushroom wall tiles, £36.96 per sq m, Porcelain Superstore. porcelainsuperstore.co.uk 2 Islington freestanding bath, £689.99, Bathroom Mountain. bathroommountain.co.uk 3 Rouen five-light pendant, £360, Där Lighting. darlighting.co.uk 4 Squirrel blue wood paint, £18, Thorndown Paints. thorndown.co.uk



The PLANS

Sokum added two stud walls to the large bathroom, creating three separate zones in the ensuite.

- 1 Bath** Taking centre stage in the room, the freestanding matt white tub creates a focal point.
- 2 Vanity** The unit opposite the bath is home to two double basins and has plenty of storage.
- 3 WC** Placing it around the corner of the stud wall provided some privacy without the need to move the plumbing.



Heavy floor-length linen **curtains**, from The Bradley Collection, were added to create a dramatic look.

The bedroom

The previous curtains were purple and ended just below the windowsill. Plus, the poles were spindly war-time rods that looked puny in proportion to the space. I installed glider poles, which are quite chunky, and the end cylinders reflected the styles of the handles of the catch attached. I went for quite heavy linen curtains which are full height and dramatic. I did this because they block out the light but really dress the space. The homeowners wanted to keep the bed, because it was relatively new when they moved in and very comfortable. However, I added a rug to the ground the space and to really position where the bed is. We also kept the beautiful warm and wooden flooring. The couple actually agreed the bathroom and bedroom shouldn't be too matchy-matchy. They wanted the two spaces to work in harmony, but not be so try-hard. **KBB**

SOURCEBOOK

Design Five Sextillion

020 3286 2780 fivesextillion.com

Tiles Domus 020 84819500

domusgroup.com

Bath Victoria + Albert 020 3837

5900 vandabaths.com

Vanity Duravit

01908 286680 duravit.co.uk

Tap Fantini 020 8190 0360

italian-bathrooms.co.uk

WC West One Bathrooms 01892

548 111 westonebathrooms.com

Lighting Mullan 02034882868


mullanlighting.com

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A muted colour palette was added to the room, with injections of navy blue and lots of different textures. **Curtains**, The Bradley Collection; **rug**, Crucial Trading.