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CASE STUDY

The focal point of the room is a freestanding cast-iron roll-top Usk bath with a floor-standing tap and handspray



Compact conversion

Clever design features have transformed this townhouse loft into a bright and open master suite **Words Rachel Ogden**

PROJECT PROFILE

Location West London

Style of property Semi-detached 1910 townhouse

Length of project Three months

What they did Turned a standard loft conversion into a master suite with hidden shower and feature freestanding bath

Size 29.2sqm

Cost Usk bath, £5,340; Dalby shower, from £2,580; Classic basin mixer, £1,014; Four-bar towel rail, from £2,502; Rother WC suite, £1,494, Drummonds (020 7376 4499; drummonds-uk.com)

Limited head height in most attic spaces means that some smart solutions are needed for a successful conversion. Presented with a loft with multiple roof pitches, Drummonds designer James Lentaigne knew he had his work cut out. The house belongs to a creative professional couple with two young children who were keen to create a light-filled master bedroom with an en suite. Lentaigne's brief included not only a shower area, but also a freestanding bath, so the couple could relax at the end of the day or use it to bathe the children.

Architect Stephen Green at Holland & Green suggested adding a mansard roof at the back to create a spacious open-plan area with a run of built-in cupboards along one wall. That allowed Lentaigne to devote the other side of the room to the en suite, but it was clear that including a bath would make the bathroom area too large. The solution was to place the tub within the bedroom itself; by the large

panoramic window seemed to be the perfect location. 'The window has both drop-down and roller blinds, which gives the option of partial or total privacy when bathing, as well as a beautiful view,' explains Lentaigne. 'The bath transforms the space. Its polished silver finish contrasts with the engineered oak floor, which gives warmth to the room.'

The rest of the en suite has been concealed in the return above the stairs. Green recommended that the stairs be on the right of the room and low enough to retain sufficient head height above to fit in the shower area comfortably. A door constructed from plain glass, cut to size with chrome hinges, prevents water from splashing into the bedroom area when the shower is in use. At the opposite end, a wall-hung WC has been tucked neatly under the pitch of the ceiling. 'The head height obviously isn't an issue when you are sitting,' says Lentaigne. 'This arrangement keeps the WC hidden and makes use of the

SMART SOLUTION

Illuminated mirror area

If you don't have space for a mirrored cabinet with built-in lighting, you can recreate the look with this simple idea. Take a piece of plain mirror and choose a pair of wall lights to sit either side. Heathfield & Co at Houseology (0141 280 2047; houseology.com) has a good selection, from £96.50 each. Try Dunelm (0345 165 6565; dunelm.com) for a plain mirror with pre-drilled holes, from £5.99.



A low-level wall along the stairs maintains the room's open, airy feel while providing privacy for the bath

tight space next to the radiator.'

A compact trough-style basin has been paired with wall-mounted taps so that the ledge behind the sink is available to display toiletries. Above, a simple unframed mirror is flanked by slim wall lamps, plus a pair of spotlights above the shower provide direct illumination for the room. The large heated towel rail keeps the space cosy and dry, while a strong wall extractor mounted above whisks away any excess moisture. 'There's also ventilation available from a small window halfway up the stairs and the panoramic window: opening both creates a through flow,' explains Lentaigne.

As with any project, there were a few unforeseen costs, largely related to keeping the space snug. The window by the bath had to be replaced with a triple-glazed pane for strength and insulation, plus the shower area also needed to be reinsulated.

Storage was a key issue for the compact

en suite and has been provided in multiple ways. A recessed tiled shelf in the shower creates a spot for bottles of shower gel and shampoo and a bespoke vanity has been built around the basin. There are also cupboards behind the bed frame under the eaves that are within easy reach of the bathroom. These can be used to store toiletries and clean towels.

The finished en suite manages to exude hotel-style chic at the same time as being a functional and practical space for the couple. **GD**

» Drummonds' bathroom design service is offered free of charge, available online and from its Notting Hill showroom (020 7376 4499; drummonds-uk.com).

Loft conversion by Holland & Green (020 8099 6112; hollandgreen.co.uk)

Simple white tiles cover the walls of the compact shower space

