

# BATHROOM PLANNING

**The bathroom is an important room in any home (they are also one of the most awkward rooms to design). Most are small and require careful planning to make them workable. The renovation process can be very disruptive and, unlike cosmetic redecoration, if a mistake is made it is not easy to change.**

Another major problem is the hidden and unexpected problems which can arise from removing and replacing existing bathroomware. Because the room is a wet area, undetected and severe water damage may have been occurring for years under showers, baths, toilets and vanity units and when you remove the units you may be faced with unexpected and costly structural rebuilds. Sometimes the damage is impossible to detect – as with all your major renovation projects, you should seek the advice of a building professional before you decide on a bathroom renovation.

## Tapware

In an otherwise plain bathroom, tapware can spruce up the effect. If the cabinets are sound, replacing tapware and handles can have a dramatic effect. Good tapware is crucial both as a working element and to complete the style of a bathroom. Some taps do not work with existing plumbing arrangements – before making the final purchase, you should ensure your tapware choice is compatible.

## Bathroom heating and ventilation

Being a high moisture area effective heating and adequate ventilation are essential. Modern homes are particularly vulnerable to mould in damp areas (because they are draft free), so ensure you factor these into your design. A simple and cost effective installation of a Showerdome can make a huge difference to many bathrooms!

## Creating the final effect

Once you have decided the changes you wish to make and the type of products you want, create

a 'Colour Board' such as interior designers use. You should cut out magazine pictures of all the ideas and colour choices you want for the room and stick them onto a board (many companies supply small samples free of charge of the materials to be used). Even if you use a professional to design the area – you should spend the time deciding on the effect you wish to achieve. Place your final design board in the bathroom for at least a few days so you can visualise the final effect.

## Updating Existing Bathrooms

### Removing clutter

Most bathrooms seem to collect clutter (shampoo soldiers, almost empty makeup or hygiene products, back scratchers that Aunt Mary gave as a Xmas present etc.).

The best way is to remove everything from drawers, countertops and inside the vanity. Then start with a plan to place frequently used items in the most convenient place.

Review the storage options and purchase some appropriate storage solutions such as drawer dividers, see-through bins, hooks, trays, and decorative containers for the countertop.

Inside a vanity or cupboard is the perfect place to install some of the storage products available (clear plastic drawer units, large round turntables, see-thru boxes, and bins of all sorts).

### Towel Rails

Install extra towel rails (on the end of a cabinet, behind or on the back of a door) anywhere that won't interfere with cabinets or heating vents. Hooks are ideal to hang a robe or extra towel (behind the door, next to the shower, near the sink). Towels hanging on rails or hooks look neater than draping them over the bath or shower stall.

### Furnishings

Larger bathrooms can benefit by using furniture. A small chest or wall cupboard may fit into an empty corner or along an unused wall. Furniture can add both storage and style, and warm up the space.

### Flooring

If the bathroom floor has seen better days (and finances are limited) covering it with a large cut-to-fit bathroom rug, vinyl tiles or even purpose designed paint are some options.

### Add colour

Replace or update the towels – buy new towels in colours to coordinate with a new window treatment or shower curtain. If the towels are fine, then simply add a few smaller accessory towels in coordinating colours.

## Replace the handles

If the drawers and cabinets are sound – new hardware is effective without breaking the budget. Make sure all the knobs or handles match for continuity.

## Update towel rails

For some reason many bathrooms have a variety of towel rail styles (in older homes they may have been there for years). Replace old towel rails with something new and stylish.

## Replace the mirror

Moisture affects many bathroom mirrors (especially the older style). Replace old mirrors (the bigger the better providing they are in scale with the rest of the room).

## Containers

Hide essential items inside decorative containers (cotton balls in a ceramic jar, cotton buds in a metal box, facecloths rolled up on a pottery tray, liquid soap in a ceramic container, eyeliner pencils in an earthenware mug, or cosmetic items inside a lidded basket).

## Accessories

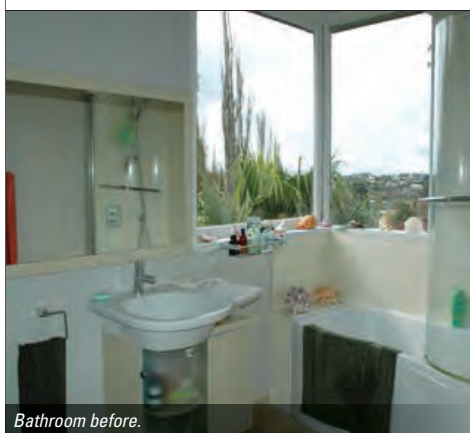
Unusual accessories can be quite effective in bathrooms (A wine rack for rolled up towels, attractive vases can be layered with sand and shells or moss and twigs for an inexpensive decorative feature, ceramic planter pots for toilet rolls or as a wastebasket).

## Shelving

Depending on the size of the room a small bookcase could be useful for towels or a shelf to hang over the toilet suite. (Don't clutter the window sills – it is easier to open a window for ventilation or clean the surfaces if you don't have to move a whole lot of ornaments).

## Artwork

Plain bathroom walls can be enhanced with some framed prints (although I don't suggest using any precious art as the moisture will ultimately cause damage). ■



Bathroom before.



Bathroom after.

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