

# The right angle

Refurbishing a bathroom that ended in an awkward dogleg required its designers to take a truly tangential approach

Report: Greg Cook Photography: Bruce Hemming Styling: Angie Herzberg Illustration: Peter Davies



Space at the awkward end of the room has been maximised by cutting niches and an alcove into either side of the partition wall



**Above:** The chrome, heated towel rail works in conjunction with underfloor heating to keep the bathroom warm. A black walnut footstool, which acts as a step to the bath, was made especially for the scheme by carpenter Robert Carter **Centre:** The chrome taps, thermostatic controls and wall spout are all from Dornbracht's Tara range **Right:** Mosaics in varying subtle tones, with a slight metallic sheen, line the oval wall of the bath

There can't be many disadvantages to living in a light, spacious and beautifully appointed Victorian flat in the heart of London's Little Venice. But unfortunately there are a few, as Jocelyn Abbey and Tom Carney discovered when it came to giving their bathroom a much-needed overhaul.

"At the front of these flats we have large, wonderfully proportioned rooms with high ceilings and bay windows, the rooms that would have been used a hundred years ago by the occupying family," explains Jocelyn. "However as you move to the rear things change dramatically into a rabbit's warren of narrow, twisting corridors and odd shaped little spaces, because

this would have originally been the servants' quarters."

Along with eccentric Victorian plumbing, this is where the couple's bathroom was located, and where it was going to stay.

"It had some good, usable space as you first entered it, but it finished with this ridiculous little L-shape with a mitred corner



## Q&amp;A: HOMEOWNER

**How would you describe your bathroom's overall look?**

"I like to think of it as 'contemporary classic'. We wanted something modern and sophisticated but we didn't want something too minimalist or aching trendy with a limited shelf life."

**How long did this project take?**

"In total, fifteen months. Ten of those were spent in planning and research, the refit itself was completed in five months."

**What are you most pleased with in here?**

"Definitely the oval bath area because it has made a triumph out of a potentially disastrous space. It also works superbly for a shower, without the need for an unsightly curtain."

**Is there anything you would like to change or do differently?**

"Only the tiniest detail of changing the halogen downlight fittings for ones that don't need replacing entirely when they go."

**To what do you attribute the success of this room?**

"Quite simply, working together with designer and contractor in a collaborative and interactive way."

**Right:** The floor and ceiling in the main bathroom area have been clad with Persian travertine in a honey-coloured shade. The couple chose travertine over limestone for its durability and stain resistance **Below:** The large mirror-door bathroom cabinet hides day-to-day items, as well as blocking out two internal windows, and is gently illuminated from just inside the wengewood frame





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that was no good for anything," Jocelyn explains.

The couple took a pragmatic approach to their predicament, starting by putting together a very detailed brief for potential designers. "Because Tom and I both work in PR and advertising roles, I think we probably knew better than most people that you only get back something that's as good as your initial brief," says Jocelyn. The couple created their own mood boards to help clarify what they were looking for visually.

"The second important thing we did was to stipulate that in the badly angled corner of the bathroom we wanted 'a feature made out of a necessity'. We wanted that ineffectual area given a deliberate 'Wow' factor rather than just skirted over," Jocelyn continues.

Using the couple's clear description of what they wanted, a selection of architectural practices, sourced by the couple from the RIBA website, put together design concepts for the new room. The company that won through was west-London based firm Fletcher Roger Associates. "Because they delivered the brief," says Jocelyn, "a contemporary but timeless space that's sophisticated and indulgent, plus they'd gone the extra mile with their idea for the difficult corner, and we loved it."

The solution creates a sub-room at the end of the main bathroom area. This has been positioned diagonally to cleverly avoid the mitred corner, while maximising space, allowing enough room for an oval shaped, whirlpool bath that's big enough for two.

Tiled mosaics with a subtle iridescent finish, handy alcoves cut into the curved wall and mellow uplighting concealed within the oval ceiling: the whole design is contrived to make you feel as if you are bathing in your own exotic, subterranean grotto.

This has been enhanced by cladding the walls and ceiling in the rest of the room in beautiful, honey-coloured travertine stone. A bespoke vanity

**COST**

A similar bathroom would cost around £40,000

**CONTACTS**

**DESIGN**

Fletcher Roger Associates  
(020 7637 1244)

**BATHROOM**

**Walls and flooring** Persian travertine, Mica Schist (020 7602 8915 or [www.micaschist.co.uk](http://www.micaschist.co.uk))

**Mosaics** Caesar Ceramics (020 7224 9671 or [www.caesarceramics.co.uk](http://www.caesarceramics.co.uk))

**Bespoke bath** PH Pool Services Ltd (01483 813181)

**Basins** Jacob Delafon, West One Bathrooms Ltd (020 8870 2121 or [www.westonebathrooms.com](http://www.westonebathrooms.com))

**WC and bidet** Philippe Starck, West One Bathrooms, as before

**Taps** Tara, West One Bathrooms, as before

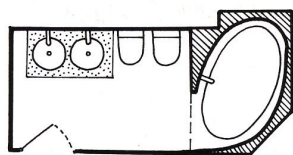
**Heated chrome towel rail** West One Bathrooms, as before

**Footstool in black walnut** bespoke by Robert Carter, Queens Park, London, NW6 6DU

**Accessories** Towels, fragrant roots ball, round candle holder, Descamps (020 7235 7165 or [www.descamps.com](http://www.descamps.com)); Molton Brown products, candles and soap, The Conran Shop (020 7589 7401 or [www.conran.com](http://www.conran.com))

cabinet with two freestanding basins, "an essential requirement in the morning" and a mirrored cabinet finished with a wood trim complete the bathroom's look.

For this bathroom, Tom and Jocelyn have done their homework, even going as far as Paris to peruse the Delafon showroom to enhance their knowledge. "All in the name of research of course," laughs Jocelyn. "We're delighted with what has been done, this bathroom has been cleverly thought out and professionally executed, and I think it goes to prove that you can get exactly what you ask for!" ■



Two basins were an essential requirement for the couple, so that they could use the room simultaneously in the mornings