

PAST TO PRESENT

With a bathroom that felt out of place compared to the rest of their Victorian terraced house in north Kensington, it was Sarah and Lee McGuffie's vision to bring a touch of the property's heritage back into a new design

Words: Yvette Murrell Photography: Paul Craig

You may be surprised to know that, when the couple updating this London home came to work on their bathroom, they wanted it to look less modern. But dog walker Sarah and digital and content strategy director Lee had exactly this goal. Wanting it to reflect their own style and give a nod to the building's Victorian roots, they enlisted the help of Ripples bathroom designer Annabel Williams to create a new bathroom blending seamlessly with the design scheme of the rest of the house, with a classic-contemporary look with accents of blue. Here, Sarah explains how it all came together...

What was the driving force behind the project?

"We bought the house with the intention of opening up the ground floor with a side-return extension and didn't initially think about changing the bathroom, as it was in good condition. Instead, we focused on the other tasks at hand, namely the downstairs extension and renovation. But as it was all coming together, the bathroom started to stand out with its grey, ultra-contemporary appearance – so we found every excuse under the sun to justify ripping it out."

Tell us about your priorities for the bathroom?

Lee and I were keen on having a traditional-style bathroom that was still in keeping with a modern home – a timeless look. I wanted to avoid shiny chrome fixtures and had my heart set on brass from the very beginning. Top of our wishlist was a big freestanding tub, although neither of us particularly like clawfoot baths, so Annabel helped us choose the roll-top one – it has no feet and sits on a plinth instead. Lee has never been a fan of enclosed showers either, so we knew a wetroom-style zone would suit us better.

What did you find most useful when starting this project?

Pinterest was a great source of inspiration – although we had to do our research, as we kept finding things we wanted but couldn't buy in England. Many of the ideas on there are from the US and not readily available in the UK, particularly fixtures and fittings we came across that weren't in a standard chrome finish. So once we got our initial thoughts together, we brought these to Ripples and Annabel helped us source pieces that would suit our new scheme.

Were there any changes to the layout?

Lots, actually. We had more flexibility, as the bathroom project ended up becoming part of our overall home renovation. We liked the ▶



Sarah and Lee McGuffie wanted to create a bathroom space that tied in with the look of the rest of their Victorian house. **Shower system**, Bagnodesign; **bath**, BC Designs; **floor tiles**, British Ceramic Tile.

THE FACTS

Who? Sarah and Lee McGuffie, along with their Boston terrier Norma

What? Bathroom renovation

Where? North Kensington, west London

Cost? £12,500

Time? Four weeks

→ The introduction of large wall tiles, industrial-style lighting, and matt black finishes gave this bathroom an on-trend appearance while still maintaining a traditional look. **Towel rail**, for similar, try Wayfair; **taps**, for similar, try Victorian Plumbing.

↓ In order to cover the wastepipe, the interior wall was built out which in turn created a handy shelf. **WC**, Bagnodesign.



idea of having the bath centred in the room and opposite the door, so as you enter there is a clear focal point to the space. We wanted to separate the new scheme into distinct areas – for example the back of the bathroom is now a wet zone, where the bath and shower are positioned. At the front is the vanity unit, and we hid the WC behind the door, which was moved from one side of the room to the other. It means someone can be in the shower and will not be disturbed by the other person if they need to come in to brush their teeth. But by doing this, we then had to be creative when it came to covering up the wastepipe. The internal wall behind the WC has been built out, which created two useful recessed shelves in the shower. The wastepipe now passes through a cavity between the bathroom and kitchen below, and we also moved a ventilation pipe up and out through an old chimneybreast that's no longer in use.

How did you decide on the finished look?

I had discovered and ordered the floor tiles from British Ceramic Tile when planning the rest of the house and before we even visited the Ripples showroom in London, so the design scheme had to fit around them. With these, the brass fixtures I liked, and our layout requirements, Annabel helped piece everything together. She suggested tying the shower screen frame and the towel rail in with the floor by making them matt black for a more up-to-date finish, and recommended bringing in the blue with the vanity unit and bath as this shade features elsewhere in our home. It was easy to make our final decisions when we had samples together in front of us in the showroom, as it gave us the confidence to go ahead with the design. Annabel also helped us choose the handles we have on the vanity unit – a small change that made a difference to its look and gave it more individuality than if we had gone with the standard option. Similarly, we had the bath made in a bespoke shade of blue to match the floor tiles.

What do you like most about the space now?

Other people's reactions when they see it for the first time. It's quite a bold space and we love it for that reason. In addition, day to day we can both be in there at once and not get under each other's feet, thanks to the improved layout."



Ripples bathroom designer Annabel Williams suggested changing the handles on the vanity unit for a more personalised look. **Cabinetry and mirror**, Ripples; **lighting**, for similar, try Holloways of Ludlow; **mirror**, for similar, try Soak.com; **radiator**, Vogue UK; **wall tiles**, Ca'Pietra.



Annabel Williams, designer: project lowdown

"Sarah and Lee were a dream to work with. After our initial meetings, we finalised the design in one sitting which isn't always possible. Plus, there were no changes later down the line and the installation ran smoothly. They wanted to inject some personality into their home while staying true to its Victorian roots. In the bathroom, we chose items typically featured in more traditional spaces but added a slightly modern twist. For example, the subway wall tiles are a matt velvet and larger than the normal 40 x 10 cm. By using a traditional style but unusual size, they kept a close link to the property's past but in a cleaner, fresher way. The couple both had an affinity for the edgier industrial style, so we brought this into the scheme with matt black detailing. To do something similar, start the base of your design with a colour you like or have used somewhere else in your home, and make sure to include it on key pieces such as a vanity unit or tiles. Then contrast it with striking brassware for a more distinctive look. If you're not keen on brass, try copper or matt black for the fittings. Have fun with it, and if you're feeling nervous use colour on the walls through paint – that way you can alter/recover it if you ever tire of it." ▶

DESIGN EDIT



1 Coloured glass bathroom pendant in white, £445, Holloways of Ludlow. hollowaysofludlow.com **2** Leawood floorstanding bath and shower mixer in brushed nickel, £2934, Drummonds. drummonds-uk.com **3** Clarissa radiator in Anthracite, £269, Pure Bathroom Collection. purebathroomcollection.co.uk **4** Ledbury patterned tile in Marina Blue, £34.95 per sq m, Walls and Floors. wallsandfloors.co.uk **5** Imperium Bateau plinth bath in blue, from £2194, The Albion Bath Company. albionbathco.com



↑ A wetroom zone was created to offer a more open shower experience, with recessed shelving to store bottles. **Shower door**, [theshowerlab](http://theshowerlab.com); **bath and shower mixer**, Bagnodesign.

SOURCE BOOK

Designer Annabel Williams, Ripples 0800 107 0700, ripplesbathrooms.com

Brassware Bagnodesign (bagnodesignlondon.com), available at Ripples, as before

Bath BC Designs (bcdesigns.co.uk), available at Ripples, as before

Vanity unit Ripples, as before

WC Bagnodesign available at Ripples, as before

Floor tiles British Ceramic Tile 01626 834774, britishceramictile.com

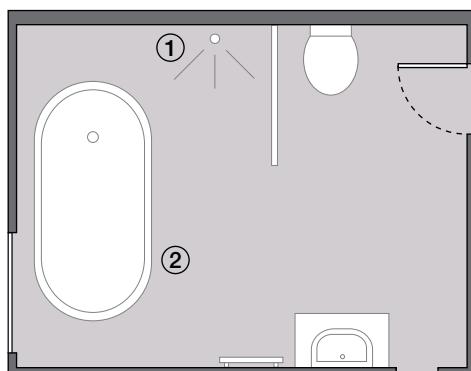
Wall tiles Ca'Pietra (capietra.com), available at Ripples, as before

Towel radiator Vogue UK 01902 387000, vogueuk.co.uk

For full stockist information, see page 154

THE PLANS

Before renovations took place, the original bath sat where the vanity unit is now, with the shower right by the door. By moving these, the layout has become more practical and the room feels more spacious.



1 Internal wall Built out to hide unsightly pipework, it also created the opportunity for recessed shelving by the shower.

2 Bathtub Central to the design is a freestanding roll-top bath, the focal point of the space. This sits at the back of the bathroom next to the shower, creating a wet zone. **KBB**