



Real Homes
CASE STUDY

HOTEL-STYLE STEAM ROOM

Sophie and Glenn Parker-Hodds' eye for detail led to a luxurious bathroom with spa-inspired features

WORDS AND STYLING JO MESSENGER PHOTOGRAPHS FRASER MARR

SLEEK DESIGN
Left The scheme was inspired by the Bisque etched-copper Arteplano radiator from Hot Interiors. Tanking kit, steam generator, wet tray, bronze bespoke glass panels, benches, Hansgrohe hand shower, Cifial Mini Vastus shower head and arm, all InStilDesign



THE OWNERS

Sophie Parker-Hodds (pictured) lives here with her husband Glenn and Ellie, their cocker spaniel. They are both retired.

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom detached 1950s house in Newbury, Berkshire

SOPHIE LOVES

Her statement radiator
Spa hotels
Copper finishes
Relaxing in the steam room
Streamlined storage
The colour blue

TOTAL PROJECT COST
£25,091

The home that Sophie and Glenn bought 30 years ago has changed dramatically over the years. When their two children came along they extended twice, giving them more living space and three double bedrooms. 'Our son and daughter have left home now they're in their 20s,' says Sophie. 'Glenn and I talked about possibly moving or even taking on a self-build, but we both decided that it would be difficult to beat living here; the house is in a quiet cul-de-sac with a beautiful south-facing garden and we have lots of friends nearby.'

In the end, the couple decided to stay put; but to update some of the rooms and refresh the decor. New units and appliances transformed the kitchen, but the bathroom needed a little more thought and planning. A two-storey extension some years before had increased the size of the ground floor by a significant amount and had also made their upstairs bathroom larger. Set in the centre of the house it protrudes out between two of the bedrooms. This gave them more space, but the long, fairly narrow room had a large window at one end, which meant they were restricted when it came to the layout. In recent years, both Sophie and Glenn tended to use one of the more modern showers they'd had installed in the two en suite bathrooms, so the family bathroom had become rather redundant.

The couple agreed that installing a shower and steam room would make the bathroom something rather special, and a space that would get a lot more use. 'Both of us love using the spa facilities in hotels that we stay in and decided to look into what was possible here,' explains Sophie. 'Glenn isn't keen on saunas, so that idea was quickly ruled out. We did consider a steam pod, but they just didn't seem big enough. We wanted a good-sized space and to be able to accommodate four people, so we could use it with friends and family when they're visiting, too.' >

A retired structural engineer, Glenn had already set about redesigning the layout and had asked a local glazing company to brick up the old window at the end and replace it with two side windows. 'This didn't require planning permission as the windows were far enough away from the boundaries either side and we had obscure glass fitted,' says Glenn. 'I wanted them installed as close to the main part of the house as possible, enabling us to have the biggest steam enclosure we could at the far end.'

Meanwhile, Sophie had already seen – and ordered – a striking etched copper-plated radiator, deciding that the whole scheme would be designed around it. 'I saw it in a showroom and fell in love with it,' she says. 'It was a little expensive but each one is slightly different. I told Glenn to think of it as a piece of modern art, not just a radiator.'

By chance, they discovered a neighbour was the financial director of a bathroom company that dealt with Swedish steam rooms, and agreed that the firm should have a look at the project. Martina Landhed, the design director, came to survey the room and explore the possibilities. 'She talked to us about what we wanted to achieve. While we would have liked to find space in there for a bath as well, I explained that it was proving difficult to fit one in,' says Glenn. 'We joked that we couldn't actually remember the last time either of us had a bath, as both Sophie and I prefer to shower. Martina persuaded us not to include one in the scheme at all, and focus on creating a luxurious and spacious shower and steam room instead.'

At 6' 3" Glenn wanted to be able to sit on a bench in the steam room and stretch his legs out along it. Martina

measured out the space and there was just enough room between the back wall and new windows to do this. Her design included benches either side of the space with smoked-glass panels and a door to seal it from the rest of the room. 'These curved benches are comfortable to sit on while their gentle sloping shape means that the water runs off them,' adds Sophie.

Local builder Kevin Robertson and his team were commissioned to undertake the installation. 'I have to say that the builders' eye for detail was phenomenal; in fact they did everything the way I would have done it myself,' says Glenn, who admits to being a 'stickler for detail'.

The copper tones of the radiator influenced the colour scheme in the room, with the dark wood cabinetry and mosaic tiles echoing the etched detailing. Martina knew that tailored storage was high on the couple's wish list, and recommended a mirrored cabinet with integrated lighting to make applying make-up easier for Sophie. Another request of Sophie's was to have somewhere to sit and dry herself. The long horizontal wall-hung unit houses all of the pipework and the steam generator, as well as providing storage for towels. 'It's strong enough to sit on and its design matches the rest of the furniture, too,' adds Sophie.

Another feature the couple are pleased with is the dehumidifier extractor fan that Martina installed. Sensitive to moisture, it automatically switches on and off after the shower or steam function has been in use and they don't have to wipe any of the surfaces down afterwards, including the glass. 'We just love being in here, it's such a relaxing space,' says Sophie. 'We don't miss the bath at all.' ●



BEFORE

STEAM ROOM

A large window at the end of the old bathroom (above) restricted the layout. Bricking it up and adding small windows on the side elevations created space for the bespoke steam room (left)



AFTER

'We wanted the steam room to accommodate four people so we could use it with friends and family'

NEW LAYOUT

Moving the window at the end of the room and losing the bath created space for a large shower and steam enclosure. The basin and WC have been positioned further along the wall to make room for additional storage

THE COSTS AND CONTACTS

Building work and installation
£8,000

Shower/steam enclosure
£7,280

Furniture
£3,122

Tiles
£2,082

Windows
£1,500

Radiator
£1,277

Sink and taps
£825

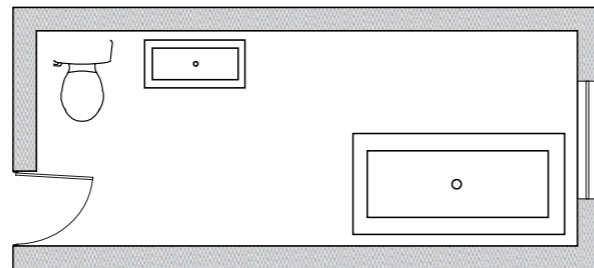
WC
£689

Underfloor heating
£316

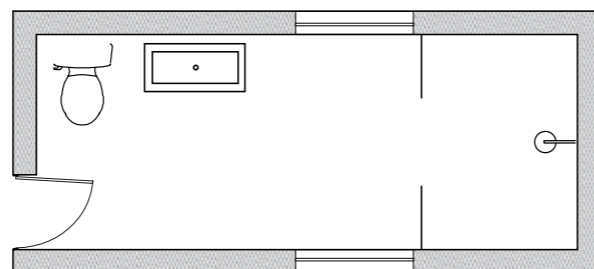
TOTAL
£25,091

Design and supply InStil Design, 0800 677 1040, instil-design.co.uk
Installation K Robertson, 0781 2093918
Radiator Hot Interiors
Windows Castle Windows

BEFORE



AFTER



ELEGANT FLOOR

Above Neutral tiles make the floor space feel larger. Saloni Dolomit porcelain wall and floor tiles; Waxman GL-044 Gomedra Jewel range gold-veined Bronze mosaic tiles; Thermonet Vario underfloor heating, all InStil Design

AMPLE STORAGE

Left The new windows were positioned high up, allowing the natural light to come in without taking up wall space. Strato Coffee furniture and Svedbergs mirror units with lights, all InStil Design