

A New Bathroom for Your Home



Home Remodeling

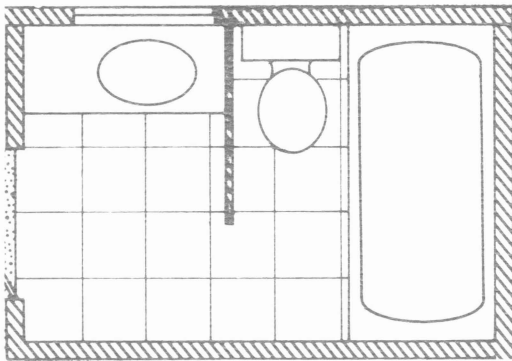
A NEW BATHROOM FOR YOUR HOME

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Thinking of a new bathroom for your home? You may find, as many families have, two basic questions need to be answered before getting into the nuts and bolts of the project itself.

1. What are your family's needs?

Existing bathroom facilities may not be adequate for the morning rush hour so common in many homes. The situation may be improved by adding a lavatory or by partitioning off the toilet area so that two people may use the bathroom simultaneously. Perhaps only a new bathroom will provide the solution. Families with many outdoor activities and heavy indoor/outdoor traffic may find a bathroom near one of the entrance doors useful. A powder room for guests may be a welcome addition for the family that entertains frequently.



A partition separating bathroom fixtures allows two people to use the bathroom facilities during rush hours.

2. Can the cost be recovered if the house is sold?

While meeting the family's needs has top priority, most people must deal with the dollar and cents aspect, also. Will the addition increase the value of the house such that the cost can be recovered if, and when, the house is sold? Most home improvements cost more than if built into the house during original construction.

The cost of a second bath can usually be recovered when the house is sold, but the third or fourth bath rarely adds more than 50 percent of the cost to the value of the house.

Location

Existing space within a house where a bathroom can be located may be a walk-in closet, a pantry, a space in an overly large bedroom (should be at least 16 feet in one dimension), the attic, part of a back porch or at the end of a hall. Adding a structure onto the house for a bathroom is seldom a good solution because it is difficult to design access from a hallway. Entry through another room is usually not satisfactory. (The exception is the entrance to the master bath from that bedroom.)

It may be advantageous to make a small bedroom into a bath and add on another bedroom.

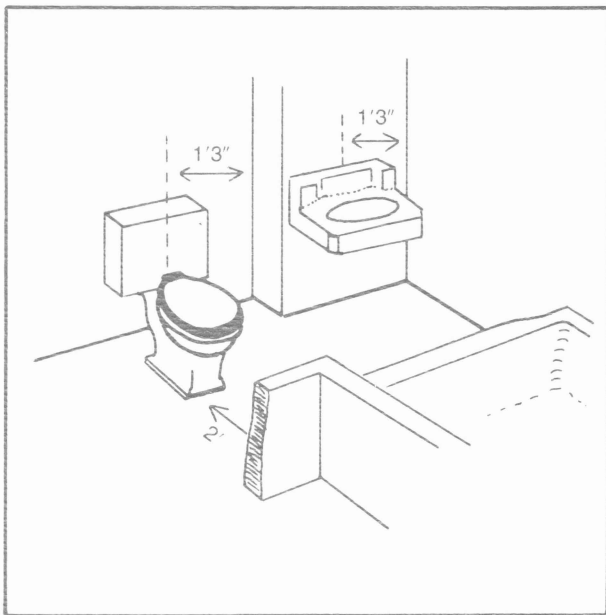
Evaluate the location in relation to the bathroom's use. If the bathroom serves several bedrooms, access to it from the bedrooms should be located out of view from the living areas of the house. When a bath is located between bedrooms and doors open directly into these adjoining bedrooms, noise and light from the bath may be annoying. Forgetting to unlock the adjoining door when leaving locks out other users.

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Whether converting an existing area into a bathroom or adding to a house, the bathroom should look like an integral part of the house and not something "tacked" on.

Arrangement

When deciding upon a bathroom arrangement, it is helpful to draw a scale model of the area for placement of each of the permanent fixtures. Plumbing costs for replacing fixtures in an existing bathroom will be lower if they are replaced in the original position. Changing toilet location involves considerable expense. When placing fixtures, 2 feet in front of any fixture and a wall or second fixture is minimal. The center of the toilet bowl should not be less than 15 inches from the side wall. A partition for privacy between the basin and toilet is desirable. The minimum size for a full bath (tub, basin and toilet) is 5 feet \times 7 feet. While a bathroom with more square feet may be desirable, a well-designed room can be more satisfactory than a larger one that is poorly designed.



Recommended dimensions for fixture spacing.

Fixtures

Bathtubs and Showers

The majority of bathtubs are made of cast iron coated with enamel. The better tubs have acid resisting enamel (most color tubs are acid resistant types). All fixtures of a given color should come from the same manufacturer to assure perfect color match. Fiberglass reinforced plastic does not chip, is light in weight and can be cast in one piece in conjunction with the wall, making it easier to clean. Yet fiberglass

is more susceptible to scratches and surface damage than is an enamel tub. Steel tubs covered with enamel are used to a lesser extent. They are less expensive, but more likely to crack. When buying fixtures, look for the name of the manufacturer stamped on each fixture; the absence of the manufacturer's name may indicate that the fixture is a second or of the lowest grade.

Generally, a combination tub with shower is preferred over a shower stall. Yet when space is limited, a family may choose a stall because of a 36 inch \times 36 inch size. The most common tub size is 2½ feet \times 5 feet.

Lavatories

Most lavatories are cast iron coated with enamel. A vitreous china lavatory costs more, but stays good looking longer and is impervious to stains and pitting.

The most satisfactory way to install a basin is to set it in a vanity counter. Soil collection may be a problem in basins that have a self rim or a metal ring to hold them in place. A lavatory that is an integral part of the counter top, such as those made of fiberglass, reinforced plastic or simulated marble, are easier to clean. At least 12 to 18 inches of counter top on each side of the lavatory is recommended for cosmetics and appliances. A lavatory 38 inches high (instead of 36 inches) makes washing hair and laundry easier.



The counter top should be easy to clean and large enough to hold cosmetics and appliances.

Fittings

The best quality faucets are made of solid brass plated with nickel or copper and given a finish of chrome. The more elaborate ones are coated with gold or polished brass. Low grades are made of zinc

or aluminum. When buying fixtures, you may request other faucets as they are interchangeable.

Single control faucets which include the single level and push/pull dial control have fewer maintenance problems than the compression type. Quality shower heads are self cleaning and do not clog. An automatic diverter control that switches the flow of water back to the tub after the shower is desirable so the next user will not get wet or scalded accidentally.

Toilets

The reverse trap bowl is the most frequently purchased toilet design today. A siphon action is created when the toilet is flushed. While the self cleaning characteristics and flushing action are satisfactory, it is rather noisy. A reverse trap bowl is priced between the less satisfactory wash-down type and the quieter, less-subject-to-clogging, siphon jet toilet. The self cleaning properties are poor and flushing action noisy in the wash-down type.

Wall hung toilets (siphon jet) make for easy cleaning. The wall studs on which the bowl is fastened must be specially braced; they also require a metal chain carrier installed inside the wall for support. The most luxurious toilets are the one-piece-low profile siphon action. Toilets with a water saver tank use one-third less water. Toilet seats that can be removed for cleaning by pushing out a pin are also available.

Ventilation

Many people like the light and ventilation that a window provides. The best ventilation comes from an airtight double hung window that can be opened from both top and bottom. If the window is properly placed, a draft over the tub can be avoided.

The design of some houses prevents use of a bathroom window. In such cases a mechanical ventilation fan for air conditioned houses is necessary. The fan should have the capacity to change the air at least 15 times an hour. When mechanical ventilation is used, an intake vent is needed; this can be provided by cutting an inch off the bottom of the door. Windowless bathrooms leave more wall space for storage, and shades or curtains are not required.

Other Considerations

For easy maintenance. Wall finishes and floor coverings should be able to withstand moisture, be resistant to mildew and be easy to clean.

For storage. Ideally, linen storage should be available, as well as a place for toilet articles and cosmetics. Do not overlook the space over the toilet for storage. Also, space for a clothes hamper is needed.

For convenience. Place the bathroom near laundry facilities. Install shutoff valves on water supply pipes so you will not have to turn off the water to the entire house when repairing faucets or in the event of an emergency.

For safety. A door with an emergency device will allow you to open the door from the outside should a child be locked inside or someone become ill. Grab bars are desirable. Make sure they are mounted to wall studs.

For lighting. A ceiling light and strip lighting at the mirror are desirable. Luminous ceilings with fluorescent strip lighting concealed by plastic shields are popular.

For economy. A central plumbing core saves money. Place the bathroom back to back with an existing bathroom, utility room and/or near the kitchen.

For comfort. Supplementary heat, preferably fan-forced or radiant heat installed in the ceiling, is desirable. If gas or electric wall heaters are used, be sure the heater is placed away from towels.

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