

MASTER PLAN

Innovative ideas to inspire your ideal bedroom design



Since we spend almost a third of our lives in our bedrooms, it makes sense to ensure that this is a well considered part of a project's design. Master bedrooms should be relaxing and calm; an en suite in at least one bedroom is considered the norm in the design of any new-build and more renovators are prepared to sacrifice a box bedroom to create the space to fit in a hotel-style suite.

Anyone starting from scratch, either with a self-build or an extension or loft conversion, will have more flexibility with the layout of a master suite and even perhaps the size. If you are renovating an existing room, you may

be able to pinch space from other areas. Perhaps an adjacent bedroom could be made smaller or an unused airing cupboard, storage space or even part of the landing might be incorporated to increase the size of the bedroom.

Add a bathroom

You don't need planning permission for an en-suite bathroom (unless it is part of an extension), but you will need Building Regulations approval.

While anything is possible, the existing plumbing will influence how complicated and expensive your project will be. The position of your en suite in relation to the nearest soil pipe is a

key factor; if the planned bathroom is on the other side of the house from any existing plumbing, you may run into difficulties. When it comes to feeding pipework to the new space, be prepared to have to chase out walls from rooms below or lift up floorboards.

'As an en suite is typically more private than other areas of the house, you can let your imagination run wild,' says Neil Curtis, senior designer at Ripples (ripplesbathrooms.com).

'There are so many ways that you can personalise the bathroom that I would start here, then take elements of the design and roll these out into the bedroom.'

↑ EXTRA LEVEL
A master bedroom has been built into the roof space of this custom-built prefabricated eco home by Dwelle (0161 225 4000; dwelle.co.uk). Prices for a small timber-framed house start from £50,000

← CLEAR CHOICE
Sliding glass doors allow natural light into the bedroom and bathroom spaces in this Victorian school refurbishment by Feix & Merlin Architects (07956 550 799; feixandmerlin.com). A similar project would cost from around £10,000

↓ OPEN UP
Folding doors between the en suite bathroom and bedroom in this newly built waterside penthouse in Sydney provide privacy when needed. The total refurbishment by Penman Brown (+61 414 278 220; penmanbrown.com) cost around AUS\$70,000 (\$43,700)



FULL VIEW
The bed in this Australian home by MG Design & Building (+61 3 5261 3304; mgdesignandbuilding.com.au) was positioned to take full advantage of the spectacular vista from the full-height window

Go open plan

An enduring trend, especially with hotel-style schemes, is to go for an open-plan layout. While this can look very impressive, it is important to take a few things into consideration during the planning stage. Think about who is going to be using the bathroom. Do you want it to be completely open? If so, you might want to position the WC behind a small privacy wall, or at least not in full view of the bed.

Another option is to have the bath positioned as a feature in the room with the other fixtures and fittings placed out of sight behind a screen. If you →

SECLUDED LAYOUT

This bright bedroom is sunk below a split-level terrace that provides views over London while retaining privacy from the surrounding buildings. It is part of a development of two four-bedroomed houses by Solidspace (020 7234 0222; solidspace.co.uk) and Stephen Taylor Architects (020 7729 1672; stephentaylorarchitects.co.uk). The construction cost for the development was £860,000



CREATIVE ZONING

The central fireplace in this Canadian project by Boxwood Architects (+1 416 656 3335; boxwood.ca) serves as a screen that delineates two separate areas within the suite, while maintaining a visual connection between them



PRIVATE SCHEME

Although part of the same room, the bathroom is positioned around a corner in this L-shaped layout and set on a different floor to define the zones. Napoli bath, from £2,825, Victoria + Albert (01952 221 100; vandabaths.co.uk)

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don't want to separate the en-suite facilities from the sleeping space, but would like to provide privacy, you can zone the areas with a discreet partition or even a half wall. A central column, with perhaps built-in wardrobes one side and basins the other, will define the zones and let in light, while still retaining an open-plan look. Placing the headboard against one side, so your bed is facing away from the bathroom is another option.

Create more space

A loft conversion is a great way of creating a master suite and it is often possible to do this with minimum impact on the floor below. Factor between £23,000 and £31,500 for an average loft conversion. Another option is to use part of the loft space above a bedroom to create a mezzanine level for a bathroom and/or dressing area. If you are looking to install a

mezzanine, a minimum head height of 2.1m is usually recommended for sleeping areas. 'The first step with a loft conversion is to ascertain whether planning permission or a Lawful Development Certificate is required,' says Steve Mills, founder of A1 Lofts and Extensions (0800 019 2678; a1pms.co.uk). 'You may generally increase loft space under permitted development rights by 50 cubic metres in detached and semi-detached houses, and by 40 cubic metres in a terraced property,' he says.

'Vaulted ceilings can be accommodated in 30 per cent of conversions, if there is sufficient height,' Mills continues. 'The best alternative is to have a dormer to the rear to create the required head height.'

Define zones

Do you want to mark separate areas within the room, or create a scheme

that naturally flows from the bedroom into the other spaces? You can achieve the former by opting for different materials and textures to separate the bedroom from the dressing area and bathroom. Choosing a continuous flooring scheme that runs throughout will give the different zones a more cohesive look.

Another option is to incorporate a split-level design; even a single step up or down will make you feel as though you are entering a different area. 'Remember to keep in mind the reasons behind your design,' says Kia Stanford, interior designer and founder of Kia Designs (07912 138 822; kiadesigns.co.uk). 'This will help you to eliminate options that may well look stunning, but that ultimately aren't adding anything to your design apart from cost. Think about practical solutions, such as storage. For example, if you have lots of shoes create a shoe

cupboard, but be realistic about how many more pairs you are going to store, and don't put in full length wardrobe hanging space if you don't use it.'

Consider lighting

Effective illumination is a key design feature in a room with multiple uses. In a suite you may want to read, dress, relax and watch TV as well as sleep, so lights wired on separate circuits for different activities are essential. Ensure there is good lighting in a dressing area and an option for soft lighting in the bathroom for use at night time. 'Lighting will make or break a room like this. Consider when each part of the room is going to be used and by whom,' Stanford continues. 'For example, if you like to read at bedtime, but your partner can't sleep with a table lamp on, then you could get round the problem by adding LED wall lights to the design.' **GD**



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