

Chevy Chase Village

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Life



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Architectural DESIGN

Master Bathroom Remodeling Projects Bring Luxury Home

By Bruce Wentworth, AIA

Bathrooms are a practical necessity, but that doesn't mean they have to be utilitarian spaces. In fact, today's homeowners are willing to spend big to get a master bathroom that is both functional and spa-like. In the last few years, our design/build team has seen an increase in the demand for larger, more luxurious master bathrooms to accommodate today's on-the-go lifestyles. Where standard 5-by-8 foot bathrooms might have sufficed in years past, clients today want two sinks, a large walk-in shower, an unobtrusively placed toilet and plenty of storage—not to mention custom extras such as makeup vanities, LED lighting strips, towel warmers, heated floors, freestanding tubs, or built-in shower niches for soap and shampoo.



Photo by Ron Blunt. The freestanding tub and wavy wall tiles in a Wentworth, Inc. bathroom make this area feel like a work of art.

are willing to sacrifice a master bathroom tub for more space. But for those homeowners who do want a tub, freestanding

Space for Freestanding Tubs

Master bathroom remodeling projects often involve space reconfiguration, particularly if a client doesn't already have a master bathroom. Our design team frequently integrates a vestibule, adjacent walk-in closet(s), and a bathroom to complete a master suite. If there is a tub located elsewhere in the house, many modern homeowners

soaking tubs are the most popular option and are frequently replacing maintenance-heavy whirlpool tubs. With their sculptural and graceful lines, freestanding tubs have the bonus benefit of feeling like a work of art. Freestanding tubs come in a variety of price points and manufacturers like British brand Victoria + Albert offer beautiful freestanding tubs that range in style from classic to ultra-modern.



Photo by Ron Blunt. This Wentworth-designed master bathroom includes a curb-less walk-in shower that is not completely enclosed in glass.

Walk-in Showers

While tubs are optional, showers are not. Today's master bathrooms often call for large, curbless walk-in showers. If space is available, our design team may suggest a shower that is not completely enclosed with glass. Hand-held showers are most commonly requested, though we often include water sprays or rain showerheads if space is available. Today's most practical and luxurious

shower stalls will feature built-in niches (sometimes sized for the homeowners' preferred products), as well as unobtrusive benches and grab bars for safety and ease. Linear floor drains that allow the shower floor to slope in one direction are more attractive and provide safety for homeowners looking to age-in-place.

Storage Solutions

Bathrooms are second in line to kitchens when it comes to lack of storage. Fortunately, options for storage have increased in recent years including pre-fabricated medicine cabinets available in a wide range of sizes, depths, shapes, materials, and finishes. Whether they are mounted or recessed, modern medicine cabinets often feature a mirror finish on the outside as well as the inside, glass shelving, interior lighting, and built-in electrical outlets for convenient hair dryer or electric toothbrush storage. For many homeowners, vanity cabinets must also feature plenty of storage. Floating vanities, which are mounted on the wall, give a sense of increased space and allow for an easy cleaning



An all-white bathroom with custom shower niches and curved vanity provide the homeowner with bonus luxuries.

process. Other popular vanity options for an up-to-date bathroom include retrofitted furniture or fine wood, painted or lacquered finishes.

Tile Options

While showers, toilets, sinks and tubs are necessities, our design team enjoys showing homeowners how a master bathroom can also be a space to let their personality show with tile and other accents to

suit any architectural period or style. Though most clients prefer a clean all-white design, our team often suggests accent walls in shower stalls or near the bathtub. Expensive glass tile can be used judiciously for an added layer of luxury while containing costs. Large format porcelain tiles in 12- by-24 inch size or larger are the most popular option for floor tiles. And floor-to-

ceiling tile is preferred over partial height tile installation. Natural stone products with sealer can help to give any bathroom a more textured and warm look.

Added Luxuries

Beyond tile, clients can personalize their bathroom in a variety of ways. Electric heat-mat radiant floors keep tile floors toasty and help to supplement general heating throughout the house. Minimalist designs for hot water heating radiators such as those made by Runtal are a great option for the modern bathroom. Well-placed lighting facilitates makeup preparation, shaving and other bathroom necessities, while the addition of sconces, pendants or strategically placed night lights lend a custom feel. Eco-friendly options such as dimmer switches and automatic fan switches are added bonuses in a time of rising energy costs.

A functional and serene master bathroom can serve as the perfect respite from a busy lifestyle. By smartly reconfiguring space and incorporating luxurious design details, a master bathroom remodel can help make any amount of bathroom time feel like a much-needed trip to the spa.

Bruce Wentworth, AIA, is a licensed architect and remodeling contractor in Maryland, Virginia and D.C. He is president of Wentworth, Inc., a residential design/build remodeling firm. To learn more about Wentworth's design/build services, visit www.wentworthstudio.com or call 240-395-0705 x100.



Photo by Geoffrey Hodgdon. This Wentworth bathroom includes a tub with built-in niches and an unobtrusive grab bar for safety and ease.



Photo by Geoffrey Hodgdon. Floating vanities, such as this one in a Wentworth bathroom, give a sense of increased space and allow for an easy cleaning process.