

Re-creating an Arts and Crafts Bathroom

Sometimes you just have to tear it all back to bare studs and joists to get it right

BY PETE AND CONNIE DI GIROLAMO



Six years ago, when we decided to quit fighting traffic and move closer to the city, we combined our move with an old hankering to live in a bungalow-style house. The home we chose is a two-story Craftsman built in 1919 with much of its character still intact. We knew that it needed work, roof replacement, refurbishment of windows and new paint inside and out. But we had no idea that we would end up rebuilding our primary bathroom and the kitchen.

A leak becomes an opportunity

Shortly after moving into the house, we had it reroofed and hired Rurik Kallis, a restoration specialist, to refurbish the 45 operable windows in the house. It was then that we discovered a wet ceiling over our laundry porch, directly under the upstairs bath. We were on our way out of town for a vacation and decided to leave the problem in the capable hands of an old acquaintance, Glen Stewart, a Craftsman carpenter and contractor, while Rurik continued with the windows. When we got back, our leaky ceiling had revealed itself as the tip of a remodeling iceberg.

Old deteriorated galvanized plumbing had caused the leak, but we were also concerned about a large crack in the tile floor. Glen tore into the floor and found that the mortar bed had been poured on a weird base of joists, ledgers and blocking—no sheathing. The floor crack had formed at the weakened point above one of the joists, proving that old craftsmen didn't always do better work. After finding weak plaster and more funky plumbing, it was clear that we needed to take

Tile meets furniture. Tile wainscoting slips in and out of the shower, maintaining its exacting layout. Photo taken at A on floor plan.



Claw-foot tub. Removing a cabinet made room for it. Photo taken at B on floor plan.

the room back down to the studs and joists to do it right. The result: The budget doubled.

Sticking to the plumbing layout

Glen doubled the floor joists and overlaid them with glued and screwed heavy $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood sheathing. A new, proprietary modified-mortar reinforced setting bed was used to minimize floor thickness and to keep the tile flush with the floor in the adjacent room (sidebar, bottom right).

We kept fairly close to the original floor plan, but the shower was enlarged (drawing below). We also removed an ineffective built-in cabinet, and a new claw-foot tub was installed 90° to the original tub position

in the new space (photo left). New tilework on the floors, walls and shower gives the bathroom an old-style flavor. We especially wanted to include those corner-tile trim details you don't see much anymore.

The tile wainscot is banded both top and bottom with an accent color carried into the shower (photo facing page). We also added diamond-shaped accent tiles in both the wainscot and the floor. Jeff Stewart, our tile contractor, carried out our detailed layout.

The shower opening and ceiling were arched similar to the original shower, but a contemporary departure was taken in the form of a new unframed glass door with an arched top to match the opening.

We designed a mission-style medicine cabinet as well as a freestanding piece for the foot of the tub. Glen, a world-class furnituremaker, executed both pieces masterfully from quartersawn oak with mortise-and-tenon construction (photo right). With our new bath in use and a houseful of newly operable windows and screens, we were hoping to take a breather from home-restoration projects. But it wasn't long before our refurbishing successes had us exploring kitchen thoughts (pp. 92-95) with Glen. □

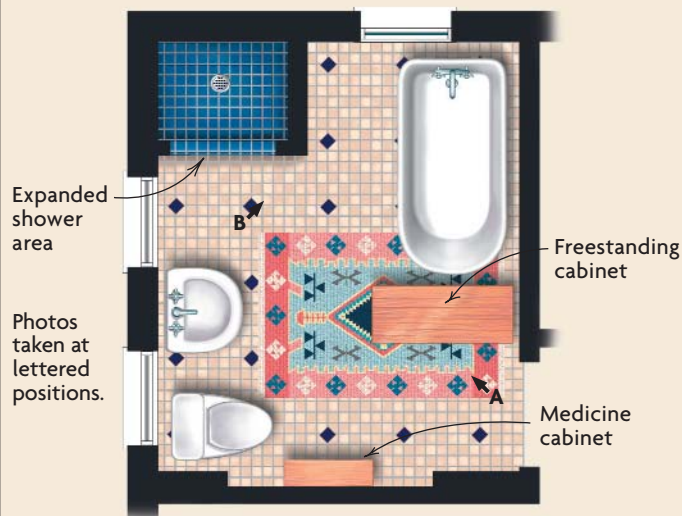
Pete di Girolamo is a principal architect at Salerno, Livingston Architects in San Diego, California, and Connie di Girolamo is pursuing her craft in ceramics. Photos by Roe A. Osborn.



Craftsman cabinet. A custom-made oak medicine cabinet adorns the bathroom.

STICKING TO THE ORIGINAL PLAN

Even though this bathroom was gutted back to the wall studs and floor joists, the basic layout of the fixtures was maintained.



ON-LINE CONNECTION

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NOTABLE FIXTURES

Tub faucet

Sunrise Specialty Co. #403
(800) 444-4280

Pedestal sink

Porcher Calla #558/560
(800) 359-3261

Sink faucet

California Faucets #4702 Venice
(800) 822-8855

Light fixtures

Arroyo Craftsman Evergreen Wall Mount EB-9G (over sink)
Mission Flush Ceiling Mount MCM-8GW (ceiling)
(800) 400-2776

FEEDBACK

Fixing the floor without raising it

Our goals in modifying the floor of our bathroom were to create a stiffer substrate and to provide a more resilient surface for the tile. A standard mortar bed would have put the floor level much higher than the floors in the adjacent rooms, so on the advice of our tile supplier, we chose the Quick Screed system by Laticrete (203-393-0010; www.laticrete.com).

The Quick Screed system starts with a plastic reinforcing grid made of $\frac{3}{8}$ -in. thick squares that snap together. (The grid has since been replaced by a mat that comes in a roll.) Next, Laticrete 250, a fiber-reinforced polymer-modified mortar mix, is floated over the mat. Finally, the tile is set in latex-modified thinset.

This system got us the closest to the height of the floor at the door, which was carpeted. To make an even transition at the threshold, we installed bullnose tile.

With its fiber-reinforced mortar, the Quick Screed system is more flexible than traditional mortar beds, which tend to be brittle. This resiliency was extra insurance for our older floor, framed just with 2x8s.

—P. D. and C. D.