

TILED OASIS LENDS OLD WORLD CHARM TO VINTAGE ISLAND PARK HOME

Attention to detail a key factor in Westend Bath and Kitchen makeover

BY BRIAN McCULLOUGH

The breeze pushing gently past the curtains into the second-floor bathroom of Michael Keeler and Joanne Cooke's 1940s-era home on Island Park Drive seems to have left most of the midday heat on the other side of the window. Inside this newly renovated space the effect is that of a cool, tiled oasis of Old World charm fused with modern bathroom comfort. It is very pleasant.

"The subway tiles, pedestal sink and wall lamps give it that old look," says Michael, an elementary school principal. "We were after a clean look, but keeping the old style."

A thoroughly modern, custom-fit walk-in shower unit with synthetic marble walls, chrome fittings and tempered glass door looks perfectly in place alongside an original cast iron radiator. The walls for the shower were delivered as 20 pieces which were then custom cut on site to fit into the arched shower cavity.

"Initially what we were after was to replace the tub with a walk-in shower," Michael says. "The tub was leaking, the taps were getting harder to turn, all the enamel had peeled off — it was finished." Removing the tub would have meant ripping out much of the original floor and wall tile, so rather than manage a patchwork solution the couple decided to have the entire bathroom redone by Westend Bath and Kitchen. "Even if we had tried to save some of it," Michael says, "it would not have looked right."

Westend designer Tarisha Goonasekara and renovation contractor Rick Cleroux understood the project would require



Westend Bath and Kitchen designer Tarisha Goonasekara worked closely with contractor Rick Cleroux to create modern bathroom convenience in an Old World style. Even the original cast iron radiator was removed, sandblasted and brought back to mint condition. JONATHON HARRINGTON/ICON IMAGING

extensive attention to detail at every stage. Not only did the clients want to maintain as much of the original bathroom style as possible, but the renovation presented some interesting complexities. The cast iron tub was sitting on a 15-cm thick slab of concrete, and the bathroom (like the rest of the house) was constructed with cinder block exterior and interior walls. Demolition would take almost three days.

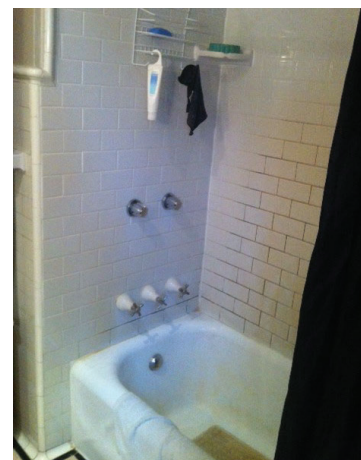
"We knew it would be a big job because of the concrete," says Tarisha, "but Rick has worked in this neighbourhood before and had the experience to deal with 'fortress homes' like this with all their hidden secrets." Replacing the cast iron plumbing would involve a certain amount of creative cutting into the cinder block walls.



JONATHON HARRINGTON

The old bathtub and its 15-cm thick concrete base (right) gave way to a beautiful Schluter walk-in shower featuring a Grohe faucet system and custom-fit synthetic marble walls by Grant's Marble.

"We were very much in the mindset of keeping the traditional feel of the home," Tarisha says. "I suggested a fusion of the modern



RICK CLEROUX

with the traditional to bring a '40s Parisian touch, while maintaining numerous elements of the original bathroom design."

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Westend Bath and Kitchen designer

"It's perfect," says Michael, who adds that he was very pleased Westend was able to maintain the old look with modern materials.

"It's a modern bathroom in an old house, but with an old look," he says. "It's stunning. We turned to Westend Bath and Kitchen because of the company's good reputation and years of service, and I wouldn't go anywhere else now."

Westend Bath and Kitchen's 8000 sq ft showroom is located at 1660 Woodward Dr., just south of the Maitland exit off the 417. They're open Monday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You can also check out their great renovation ideas online at www.westendbathandkitchen.com, or call 613-226-7701 to arrange a free in-home consultation.