

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

A downstairs toilet is a great addition to your home, but creating a stylish layout can be tricky. We've asked six experts for their advice on how you can make the most of even the smallest room

Words: **Sally Smith**

Q "What are the first key considerations when you are creating a new cloakroom?"



Siobhan Hayles
Siobhan Hayles Interiors

A "A new cloakroom will, without exception, need an extractor fan to comply with Building Regulations, but they can often spoil the décor. I always try to fit the extractor as high as possible, above eye level and out of sight if I can. There are fans on the market which you can paint or even wallpaper over to fit in with your colour scheme. Cloakrooms can fit into the smallest spaces, but it's important you check whether you actually have enough headroom before you start. The floor-to-ceiling height must be at least 1.8m to allow your tallest guest to comfortably stand when using the toilet or washing their hands."

► This understair cloakroom still has plenty of headroom below the pitch to comfortably fit a toilet without cramping your guests. A standard door has been modified to fit perfectly under the stairs. A similar design would cost around £2500.
otta-design.com



▲ Even if the cloakroom has a window, include an extractor fan as well for maximum efficiency, as in this scheme. A similar cloakroom by Siobhan Hayles would cost around £1400.
siobhanhayles.com

► Getting a standard door to fit can be a problem if you have an awkward space under the stairs. Sliding or bi-fold doors make for a simple but effective solution. Crosswater's Glide II 70 vanity unit with a cast mineral marble basin is priced £925.
crosswater.co.uk





Brian O'Tuama
Brian O'Tuama Architects

Q “I want to put a cloakroom under the stairs. What do I need to consider in terms of the water supply and services?”

A “You’ll always need to install a lot of new pipework with water supply and waste to the toilet and basin. It is a messy business and unfortunately there are no quick fixes – it will always mean pulling up your floors. Try to install your new cloakroom as close as possible to the main sewer outside. It will mean less plumbing and the least amount of disruption to the rest of the house. The waste pipe from the toilet ideally needs to be as short as possible, too, so the closer to the main soil pipe you can get the better. The pipework also needs to run at an angle, so you’ll need enough space under the floor to accommodate this – the minimum pitch required is 18mm. In addition, if you don’t have a basement or cellar you’ll likely find your electric meter, fuse box and gas meter under the stairs. These will need to be moved so you’ll have enough space for the toilet and basin.”



▲ Choose sanitaryware designed for compact bathrooms, such as Ideal Standard's Concept Space range. Shown are the wall-hung vanity, £335, and WC, from £345. ideal-standard.co.uk

► Interior designer Laura Simpson from My Bespoke Room made the most of this compact space under the stairs by neatly installing a corner basin and back-to-wall toilet, while still leaving enough space for essential hallway cupboards. mybespokeroom.com

▼ Do any ground-floor renovation at the same time as the cloakroom, to only pull up the floors once. The Mosaic Del Sure floor tiles Brian O'Tuama Architects used here cost from £55 per sq m. brianotuama.com



To discover even more cloakroom designs on Pinterest, search **KBB magazine**



▲ The Kern Mini basin from Kast measures just 350 x 250mm and has an integrated splashback, making it perfect for tiny spaces. Available in 22 colours, it costs £1170 from Ripples. ripplesbathrooms.com

◀ It's the main feature in a cloakroom, so why not make your toilet a statement? Grohe's Sensia Arena shower toilet features not just a range of cleansing options and a nightlight function, it can also be controlled via an app on your smartphone. Priced £3370, you can even save your favourite settings so they're ready at the touch of a button. grohe.co.uk

▼ Choosing a back-to-wall WC makes for a practical cloakroom solution – because all the pipework is tucked out of the way and out of sight. This WC from Laura Ashley's Pavilion range projects just 550mm and is priced £444. lauraashleybathroomcollection.com

Q “What products are can help me make the most of the compact space?”



Chris Payne
Ripples senior designer

A “There are only two essential elements required for a basic cloakroom to function: a basin and WC. It's worth doing your research, as there is a good range of slimline sanitaryware specifically designed for a smaller cloakroom's restricted dimensions. If you are really struggling for space, a compact or corner basin with a single-lever wall-mounted mixer tap works well with a wall-hung toilet. A short-projection WC is a good option, as it has a shorter depth and a more compact cistern than a standard model. This combination takes up much less valuable floor space, giving you more flexibility with the layout.”

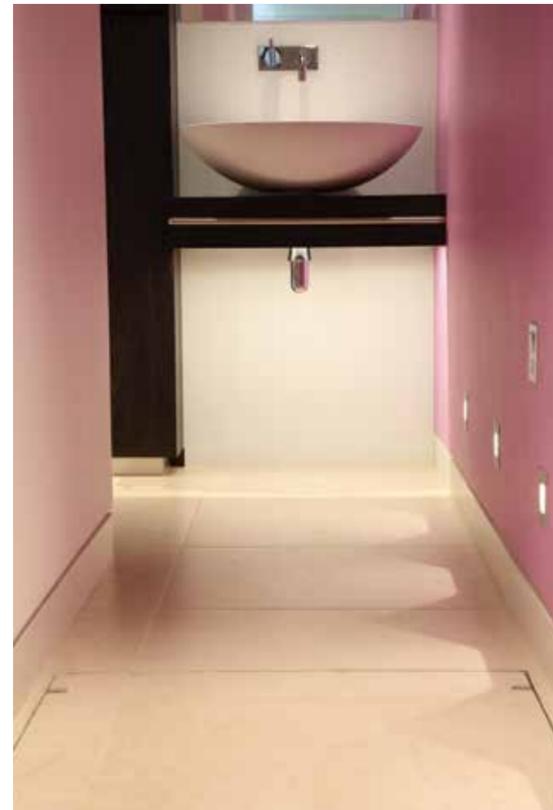


Q “I would like the vanity area to make a real statement in the cloakroom – any advice on how to achieve this?”



Natalie McHugh
NK Living

A “If you want to impress your guests, don’t go for the standard vanity unit with a cupboard underneath which can end up dominating the space. Remember, you don’t have to store all the endless toiletries you have in your main bathroom, so a freestanding table works well with a vessel basin. Shop around and take time to find a more unusual piece of furniture. You may also already have a table or a small console unit you could upcycle. The narrower the legs are the better, as this will help give a feeling of space.”



◀ In this design by Brilliant Lighting, a linear LED light fitting under the basin floodlights the vanity area. Putting each set of lights on a separate circuit allows you to opt for different lighting designs – like low-level illumination in the evening, when installed with a dimmer switch. Similar linear fitting costs around £136 per m. brilliantlighting.co.uk

▶ Interior designer Beth Dadswell of Imperfect Interiors kept this project’s lighting scheme simple. The feature fittings are installed either side of the mirror – like low-level illumination in the evening, when installed with a dimmer switch. Similar linear fitting costs around £136 per m. imperfectinteriors.co.uk

▲ This cloakroom scheme by John Cullen Lighting looks inviting even without natural light. Fazer downlights, priced £199, are used in the niche behind the WC, while low-level Manhattan floor washers, £92, installed above the skirting boards illuminate the floor. johncullenlighting.com



▼ Treat the area behind the basin as a feature wall to make it stand out. In this project by Natalie McHugh of NK Living, the floor-to-ceiling tiles behind the vanity – made from glass with a brass edging – create a dramatic effect. A similar cloakroom project would cost around £8000. nkliving.co.uk

◀ If you have a bit more floor space available and need additional storage in the cloakroom, opt for a vanity basin unit. This slate grey unit from Roper Rhodes’s Esta range is a good alternative to a standard white unit. Priced from £272. roperrhodes.co.uk

▶ This space may be small, but the vanity area makes a statement. Laura Simpson of My Bespoke Room cleverly designed every element to work together – from a mix of hexagonal white marble tiles and contrasting floral wallpaper to the wall-hung enamel bucket basin with brass taps. Similar fittings would be priced around £800. mybespokeroom.com



Q “My cloakroom doesn’t have a window. How can I use lighting to make it a more welcoming space?”



Sally Storey
Creative director of John Cullen Lighting

A “I’m always telling my clients that lighting is one of the most powerful interior design tools. And I would encourage anyone to treat their cloakroom like any other room in the house when it comes to choosing lights. It can be tempting to choose a simple single fitting on the ceiling – it’s perfectly functional, but it won’t dazzle your guests or add anything to the décor. There are plenty of other options available, though. Extravagant decorative fittings are a growing trend for cloakrooms – like chandeliers, balanced with built in low-level spots in the skirting boards. They give a much more interesting multi-layered effect and in the evening you can set the mood with just the low-level lighting.”



“The cloakroom is the one room all my guests see, so how can I use the décor to create wow factor?”



Alison Johnson
Otta Design

“The smaller the room, the more dramatic you should be. Take inspiration from the bathrooms in boutique restaurants and hotels to achieve a striking look. Don’t forget you can afford to be extravagant with your material choices as well, as the quantities will be comparatively small. A clever trick to make a room appear bigger is to decorate with darker tones, such as rich blues or even black with a soft-sheen finish. In turn the light reflects off the walls, giving an illusion of space. If you’re feeling brave, paint the entire room the same colour – even the ceiling.”

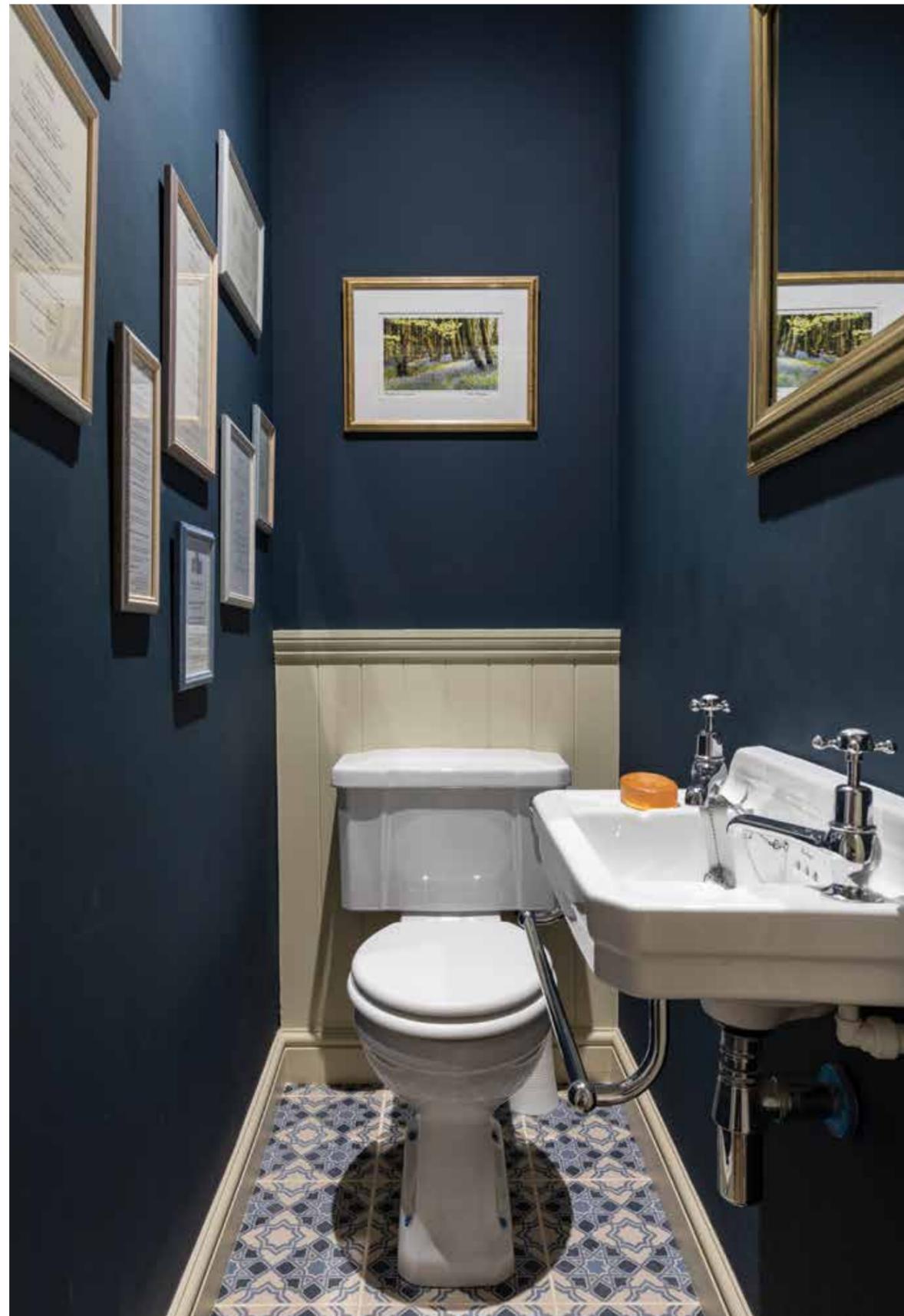


▲ It’s a small space, so you can afford to invest in high-quality décor. This project by architect Brian O’Tuama is a perfect example of how to use a mix of materials, including wooden panelling, wallpaper and patterned floor tiles, to wow your guests. A similar cloakroom project would cost around £5000 to £7500.
brianotuama.com

◀ You’ll definitely impress your guests if you decorate your cloakroom with dramatically designed wallpaper. A good example is this cloakroom which features Farrow & Ball Lotus wallpaper, priced £112 per roll.
farrow-ball.com

NEXT MONTH...

Get some rest and relaxation at home with our advice on creating your own spa bathroom.



◀ Michael Schienke of Vorbild Architecture decided on a more traditional look, contrasting this cloakroom’s white sanitaryware with the paintwork. The panelling behind the WC is painted in Neptune’s Shingle, contrasting the deep navy on the walls (neptune.com). A gallery wall of artwork adds interest.
vorbild.co.uk