

TOPMARKS NEWS

Exploring kitchens, bathrooms and home improvements in
Hampstead, Highgate, Muswell Hill and East Finchley

January
2012

JOB DONE!

You can now see images of kitchens and bathrooms fitted by us
Go to the gallery pages of our website: www.topmarks.co

Call TOPMARKS for your free
kitchen or bathroom site visit
0208 340 1000
www.topmarks.co

Since opening their new show-room in Highgate last summer, **TOPMARKS** has completed kitchens and bathrooms for many happy householders in the surrounding area.

"I am so pleased I chose TopMarks," said FF, a satisfied customer.

"They designed and fitted my new kitchen beautifully and did many other jobs in the house.

"It was such a relief to find a company that understands everything required in the home."

Undertaking complete jobs is **TOPMARKS'** speciality.

"We don't just design and fit kitchens," said **TOPMARKS** Director of Construction, Yousif Latham.

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Fully fitted bathrooms
PRICE GUIDE
See back page

Applestone Classic limestone bathroom made by **TOPMARKS** with veining in the limestone connected, wall-mounted vanity unit, matching limestone countertop, floor-standing bath and bath mixer, corner shower, storage cupboard

"We undertake everything residential: gas, electrics, water, new floors and ceilings and plastering. We even do structural work, removing supporting walls and changing staircases."

"We organise planning permission, building regulations, architect, engineer and party wall surveyors to get everything done correctly."

TOPMARKS gives free quotes for all residential refurbishment work including kitchens, bathrooms, decorating, structural, electrical, gas and all building work.

TOPMARKS gives a "no quibble" guarantee on all its work: this is peace-of-mind to clients and is beyond price. It is unmatched by others locally.

FREE OFFERS!

TOPMARKS NEWS
New Year special offers
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and fit an entire
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david@topmarks.co

How many bathrooms is too many?

TOPMARKS are experts at designing and fitting bathrooms, but rarely does the opportunity arise to stop and ask: how many bathrooms in a house is too many?

A generation ago, when the director of **TOPMARKS** was a child in Muswell Hill (ok, that is 50 years!), living in a substantial Edwardian house off Fortis Green, there was one bathroom and one extra lavatory.

The bathroom was not so much "designed" as dropped in place.

There was a bath, a pedestal basin and that was it.

In the past ten years, bathroom design has undergone a revolution in London in what we call the "middle market" (ie about £11-£19,000 all-in).

What was previously regarded in the trade as a "Five Star New York Hotel" bathroom is now available as a middle-market bathroom in north London.

The range of materials available, their prices and the all-important

skills of the fitter (not forgetting the overlooked and under-thanked role of the designer) mean that the average new bathroom is now equal to what used to be called a "high end" luxury bathroom.

Limestone and travertine with outside corners cut in mitre joints; wall-hung toilets, basins and vanity units; all pipework recessed; concealed and LED lighting; showers with multiple shower head outlets and diverters; underfloor heating; wetrooms.

The bathroom has gone from a place of utility to one of relaxation. The aesthetics are now more important than the utilities.

We are putting large family bathrooms into what were once bedrooms; master en suites to make a second bathroom; and second en suites to make a third bathroom.

The answer to the question of how many bathrooms is too many therefore appears to be: when the number of bathrooms exceeds the number of bedrooms!



A FRESHLY COMPLETED BATHROOM in a ground floor rear extension by **TOPMARKS**. The tiles are our special, light-coloured natural stone travertine in large, 600x600mm slabs. The bathroom contains the following features:

- Underfloor electric heating
- Wetroom drain for a shower in the far right corner
- Recessed shower mixer with handshower and overhead shower
- Double-ended enamel bath with concealed filler: no taps on the rim
- Recessed bath filler with diverter to hand shower (out of sight)
- Wall-mounted toilet
- Wall-mounted, white lacquer, bespoke vanity unit
- Matching stone countertop on the vanity unit
- Matching stone ledges over the toilet and in the window
- New lighting
- Heated towel rail

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0207 272 1234 www.hmb Solicitors.co.uk

Trade Secrets

Finger prints and other marks on stainless steel kitchen appliances

Stainless steel is very popular in the kitchen, with ovens, hobs, microwaves and hoods often finished in this material. The growing popularity of American-style fridge/freezers had lead the way in fridges being increasingly supplied in stainless steel.

But this gives rise to a new problem: how to get rid of those annoying finger prints and how to get the stainless steel back into its showroom, shining condition on kitchen appliances?

TOPMARKS has the answer, taken from our trade experience. We even use it ourselves.

We use a spray to clean and polish stainless steel appliances. It is made especially for the kitchen.

This spray is not used every day and does not replace ordinary kitchen cleaning. Instead we use it occasionally to spray onto the appliances to remove finger prints and many other marks and buff it back into good condition.

We sell the spray at £10 per can: used carefully, it should last over a year.

Profit from your home improvements

London-based architect Ed McCann looks at the profit to be made by householders undertaking home improvements

When considering home improvements the costs of the works are generally the most important factor. They tend to come before longer term considerations such as the effect the changes will have on the value of the property.

Costs are more immediate and pressing: they are straight forward to calculate. And the bill has to be paid now, whereas the benefit is felt over a longer period of time.

For most people, a house is primarily their home rather than a development opportunity. Nevertheless it can be a useful exercise to think of the investment potential of home improvement proposals as well as their fitness for purpose.

With bank interest rates at all-time lows, for many people finding investment opportunities is neither simple nor secure. However looking at your own house might bring some surprising benefits.

Research was published recently comparing the cost of home improvements with their value – ie the rise in price of the house, giving a capital profit to the householder.

This table gives some examples of cost, value and percentage profit or return for typical home improvements in an average £500,000 house. This is based on stable house prices: as we all know, house prices can rise or fall for other reasons.

When average house prices are higher than £500,000, as in many parts of Highgate, Muswell Hill, Finchley and surrounding areas, the profit margins can be even higher.

And unlike most investments, the rise in value of a home for most people is tax-free. Provided it is the family's "principal private residence", no capital gains tax is levied on the rise in value and the profit on home improvements.

Home improvement	Cost	Value	Profit
Kitchen extension	£30-50K	£75-100K	100-150%
Loft conversion	£30-50K	£60-75K	50-100%
Conservatory or garden room	£10-20K	£20-30K	50-100%
Complete cosmetic redecoration	£50-100K	£50-150K	0-50%
New kitchen	£20-30K	£25-30K	0-25%

The most evident conclusion to draw is that those developments that add space to the property are most likely to add value.

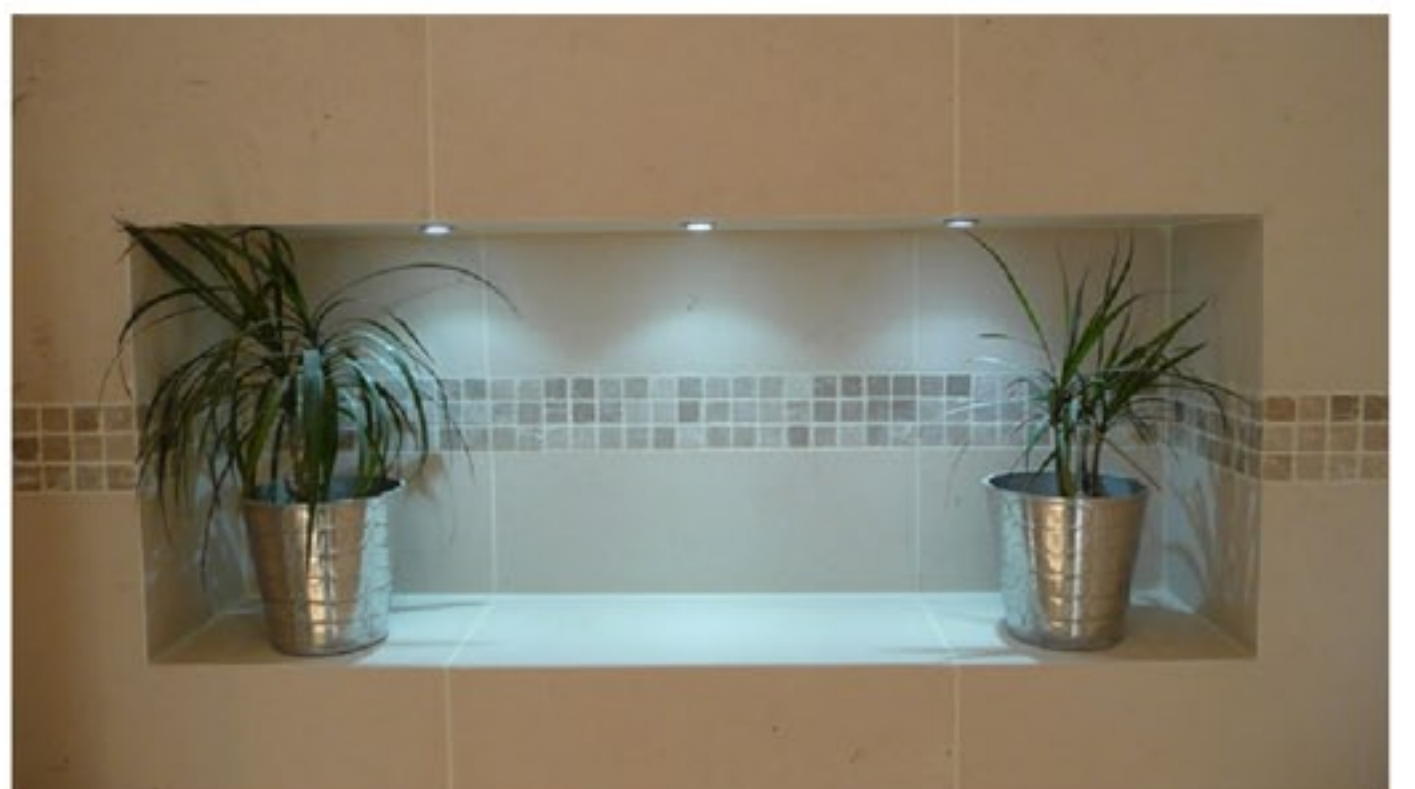
Extending and redoing the kitchen offers the most return as a development, which reflects the increased importance of the kitchen at the heart of modern family life.

Following extensions in the profit league table are loft extensions, conservatories and interestingly the construction of a new garden room. Although the latter is detached from the house, it is still seen as increasing the liveable footprint of the property.

Depending on your circumstances many of these additions can be achieved under permitted development as opposed to full planning permission.

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NATURAL STONE RECESSED SHELF made by TOPMARKS

We are experts in constructing bathroom recessed shelves fully clad in natural stone. Note the outside edges are "mitre" cut, giving a sharp, clear, crisp edge. Low voltage LED lights can also be fitted as above.

Choose a new kitchen Plain or Shaker?

The two most popular styles of new kitchens are plain and Shaker. But why is plain so popular and what is a Shaker kitchen?

Plain

It comes as a surprise to some, but plain-fronted and featureless kitchens are a big seller.

Plain-fronted kitchens comprise simple doors and drawer fronts with smooth, single pieces of material.

Our best-selling range is finished with lacquer: this comes in a choice of 200 colours with either a high gloss shine or a matt buff.

There are alternatives to lacquer: they are painted, laminated or wood veneer plain fronts.

The plain-fronted kitchen gives a far from simple appearance. It might look plain, but it has a presence in the home that impresses upon one's consciousness.

Rarely in life do we see large, flat, plain panels of anything devoid of flourishes and finishes. In the plain kitchen, this simplicity of appearance gives a sophistication that is transcendental.

One variation of the plain kitchen in gloss or matt lacquer uses the new "Osaka" fully handleless system (see photo). The removal of handles takes out yet another feature, enhancing and accentuating the smooth, unbroken lines.

TOPMARKS' website shows many plain kitchens fitted in north London, most but not all in lacquer. TOPMARKS is an expert in all uses and

applications of lacquer. Lacquer kitchen units can be made to measure to ensure they fit exactly.

However all plain kitchens, whether lacquer, painted, laminate or veneer, are excellent value.

**Call into the showroom
for more information
or ring to book a free
site visit 0208 3400 1000**

Shaker

The Shakers—today more commonly known as the Quakers or Society of Friends—were an 18th century religious sect.

They sought greater freedom by emigrating to the American colonies, where they developed a distinctive "Shaker" style of furniture. The main characteristics were simplicity, innovative joinery, quality and functionality.

These characteristics inspired many other designers and gave rise to the modern Shaker kitchen.

The main identifying feature of the Shaker kitchen is the panel door: a plain panel surrounded by four pieces of timber.

Shaker doors can be made from oak or walnut in either a modern or *continued on page 4*

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

All work guaranteed

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NATURAL STONE & TRADITIONAL TILES:

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See samples of our work on our
website

www.topmarks.co

TOPMARKS 020 8340 1000



Fully handleless "Osaka" kitchen in high gloss white lacquer: choice of 200 colours in high gloss or matt finish. Factory showroom photograph.

FULLY FITTED BATHROOMS PRICE GUIDE

Prices include design, supply, fit, no-quibble guarantee & VAT

Price Group 1

£11,000 - £13,000

Fully tiled
Porcelain tiles
Close-coupled toilet
Repaint bathroom

Grohe mixers (standard range)
Standard enamel bath
Bath/shower mixer
Bath/shower screen (glass)
Bath pop-up waste
Fit accessories

Pedestal or wall-mounted basin
Rim-mounted basin mixer
Spring-loaded pop-up waste
Light point for mirror
Replace extractor with new one
Heated towel rail

Price Group 2

£14,000 - £16,000

Fully tiled
Travertine or limestone
Wall-mounted toilet
Ceiling downlights
Repaint bathroom

Grohe mixers (std or mid range)
Standard enamel bath
No tap hole on bath
Wall-mounted bath mixer
Bath pop-up waste
Shower tray (stone resin)
Shower door and side panel
Thermostatic shower mixer
Shower head
Fit accessories

Bespoke vanity unit
Matching stone countertop
Wash basin on countertop
Rim-mounted or tower mixer
Spring-loaded pop-up waste
Light point for mirror
Independent mirror light switch
Extractor fan with timer delay
Heated towel rail & radiator

Price Group 3

£17,000 - £19,000 +

Fully tiled
Travertine, limestone or marble
Upgraded natural stone choice
Underfloor heating
Wall-mounted toilet
Ceiling downlights
Repaint bathroom

Grohe or other mixers
Upgraded choice of mixers
Designer enamel bath
Wall-mounted bath filler valves
Concealed bath filler
Large shower tray (low profile)
Luxury shower door/side panel
Thermostatic shower mixer
Shower diverter/2 outlets
Overhead and hand showers
Fit accessories

Large bespoke vanity unit
Matching stone countertop
1 or 2 wash basins
Wall, rim or tower basin mixers
Spring-loaded pop-up waste
Light point for mirror
Independent mirror light switch
Extractor fan with timer delay
Heated towel rail & radiator
Additional cabinetry/storage

Extra features for all bathrooms

Grohe or other mixers
Upgraded choice of mixers
Designer enamel bath

Cast iron & free-standing baths
Floor-mounted bath fillers
Cupboards and shelves

Call TOPMARKS for a free site visit for new kitchens & bathrooms 0208 340 1000 www.topmarks.co

continued from page 3:

Traditional style and then given a variety of finishes leaving the wood visible or painted. Painted doors are also made from MDF.

The effect is a kitchen that has a traditional feel but all the modern facilities. This style is much in demand in north London, where

most homes were built between the late 19th century and 1939: late Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war.

All TOPMARKS' Shaker kitchens are made in Wales. There is a wide choice of styles ranging from antiqued and rustic through to

modern. And behind the door and drawer fronts, the most up-to-date fittings are available: pull-out larders, swing-out shelves, soft-close drawers and much more.

We have a catalogue showing the full range. Call into the showroom for a free copy or ring us.

NOTICE

SURPLUS STOCK SALE

Surplus stock for sale, 50% discount: kitchen and bathroom mixers, showers, stainless steel socket & switch plates and more.

Email: surplus@topmarks.co

www.topmarks.co

TOPMARKS

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Kitchens, Bathrooms & Home Improvements

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