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Designing For Life

6 Steps to Creating an Accessible Bathroom,
from Design to Fruition

An e-book guide by
Astor-Bannerman (Medical) Ltd

Introduction

Bathrooms are often considered to be the most private rooms in any house, however, if someone is not in a position to independently access or use the facilities, it can have a detrimental effect on both the individual and any family members or carers involved.

By creating a more accessible bathroom you can help to retain dignity, increase independence, and alleviate some of the stress and strain for care givers to create a happier home and make the lives of everyone concerned easier.

This helpful guide will answer some of the important questions and considerations when designing an accessible bathroom.

Read on for the 6 steps to creating an accessible bathroom, from design to fruition.



Step 1: Site Assessment

It's impossible for any organisation to efficiently plan and design an accessible bathroom without first visiting the site. A site survey is important prior to planning in order to gain accurate information about the property, location of the bathroom and any potential access complications within the property.

Take into consideration the location of the bathroom, which may not sound important, but if no site assessment or survey has taken place to check the access within the property, it's impossible to know if equipment can get up the stairs or into the desired bathroom space.

Some modern baths are over 2m long and 800mm wide and can be difficult, or in some cases impossible, to take apart for easy entry into the home or bathroom. However, if this is checked before any adaptation work goes ahead, it's much easier to plan the logistics for all concerned and reduce the risk of additional costly adaptations.

Efficient forward planning is key to ensure every eventuality is covered. The most important thing is for everything right for the client and cause the least amount of disruption as possible to the family and the end user.

Step 2: Home Demonstrations

Specialist equipment needs to be reliable, easy to use and meet the needs of the client and carer in order to give many years of care free use. Home demonstrations are a great way for clients and Occupational Therapists to have the opportunity to physically see, touch, and occasionally try out, equipment. Some specialist equipment providers charge for this service, so take this into consideration.

Making sure everyone is happy with the equipment which is selected is extremely important so write a list of any questions and concerns in advance, and make sure you have the contact details of your specialist product advisor in case any more questions arise after the demonstration.

Step 3: Maintaining Open Dialogue

If architects are involved in the project, maintaining ongoing dialogue is essential to ensure everyone is informed of any internal or structural changes as and when they happen, which may impact on the bathroom layout.

Several visits to the property may sometimes be required. This is nothing to worry about and is important in order to check the progress of the adaptation and ensure there are no issues which will impact on the design and layout.

>> Step 4: Planning and Designing

It's important to remember the work is often within a client's private property and the design and/or layout must work now and also in the future. If the bathroom is for a child, it's possible their needs will change as they grow, so the bathroom and equipment within must be correct in order to suit both the short term and long term needs.

Forward planning of the practicalities of physically fitting the bathroom items into the house and bathroom is of utmost importance. Most domestic internal doors are quite narrow, and as assisted bathing products are getting bigger, careful planning is needed.

Does the door need to be widened or repositioned? Something as simple as a door and the way it's hung can impact on how the bathroom is used. All eventualities should be considered for complete peace of mind.

Taking care to accurately measure all room dimensions, is vital. This allows sketches and CADs to be created to give a 100% accurate scale drawing.

Below are just a few examples of the types of drawings we provide at Astor-Bannerman.



>> Step 5: Assessing Individual Needs

Another important aspect to remember when designing an accessible bathroom, is to assess and take into consideration the individual needs of the client. It's their room and their needs must *always* come first. Everyone is different and something that works for one person will not necessarily work for another, so assessments with Occupational Therapists, clients and the carers are important. All opinions count so that the correct equipment is selected and room layout is planned appropriately to give many years of care free use.

It's important to also consider the usable space within the bathroom. Will a wheelchair be the only means of getting the client into the room? If so, a turning circle of at least a 1,250mm will be required to accommodate that wheelchair.

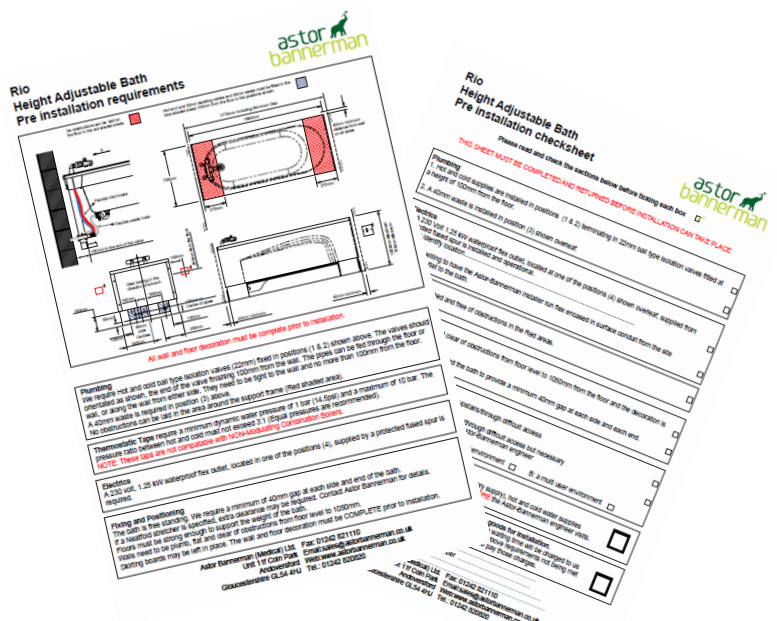
Next consider how many people or care givers are needed in the bathroom at any one time and the amount of space needed to accommodate them as well as the specialist equipment.

Consider if the bath needs to be installed into pier position. If this is the case, for Astor-Bannerman baths, a minimum of 700mm behind the back of the bath and around about 1,000mm to the front working side of the bath is required which will impact on the space. Always check these details with the equipment manufacturer.

A specialist bath is always the last product to go into an accessible bathroom, so it's important again to get the planning right and make sure flooring and tiling etc is all completed.

>> Step 6: Accurate Information

All manufacturers will have detailed information on the requirements prior to any installation so always make sure that subcontractors are provided with accurate pre installation documentation about the particular product.



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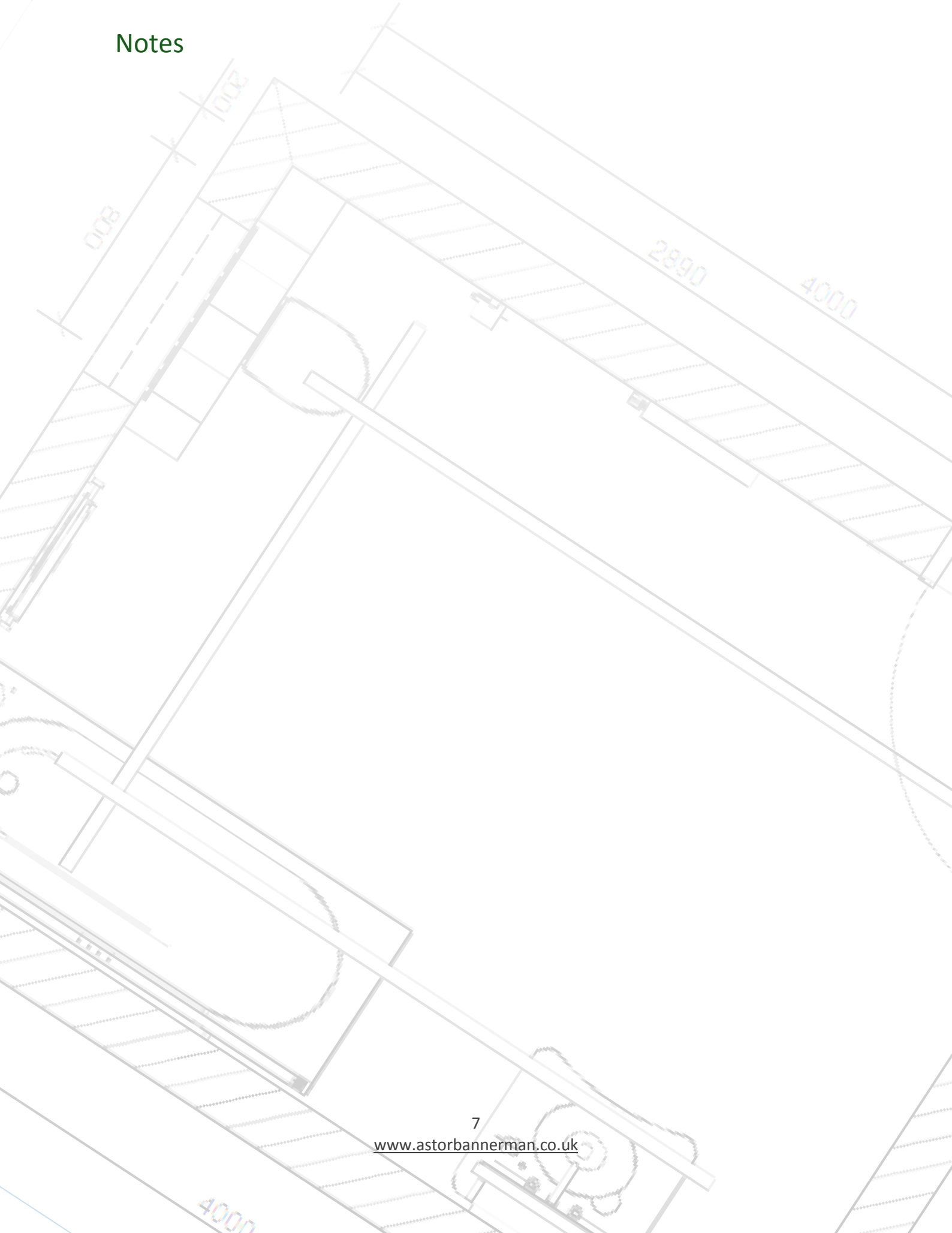
Summary

Providing you take these 6 steps to creating an accessible bathroom into consideration and you carefully plan and prepare for the installation of an accessible bathroom, you will be safe in the knowledge that your client is receiving the best possible solution for their needs, with the minimum amount of disruption to their home.

If you're unsure of any information in this document, or would like any further advice, the team at Astor-Bannerman are always on hand to answer any practical or technical questions to ensure everything runs smoothly.



Notes





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