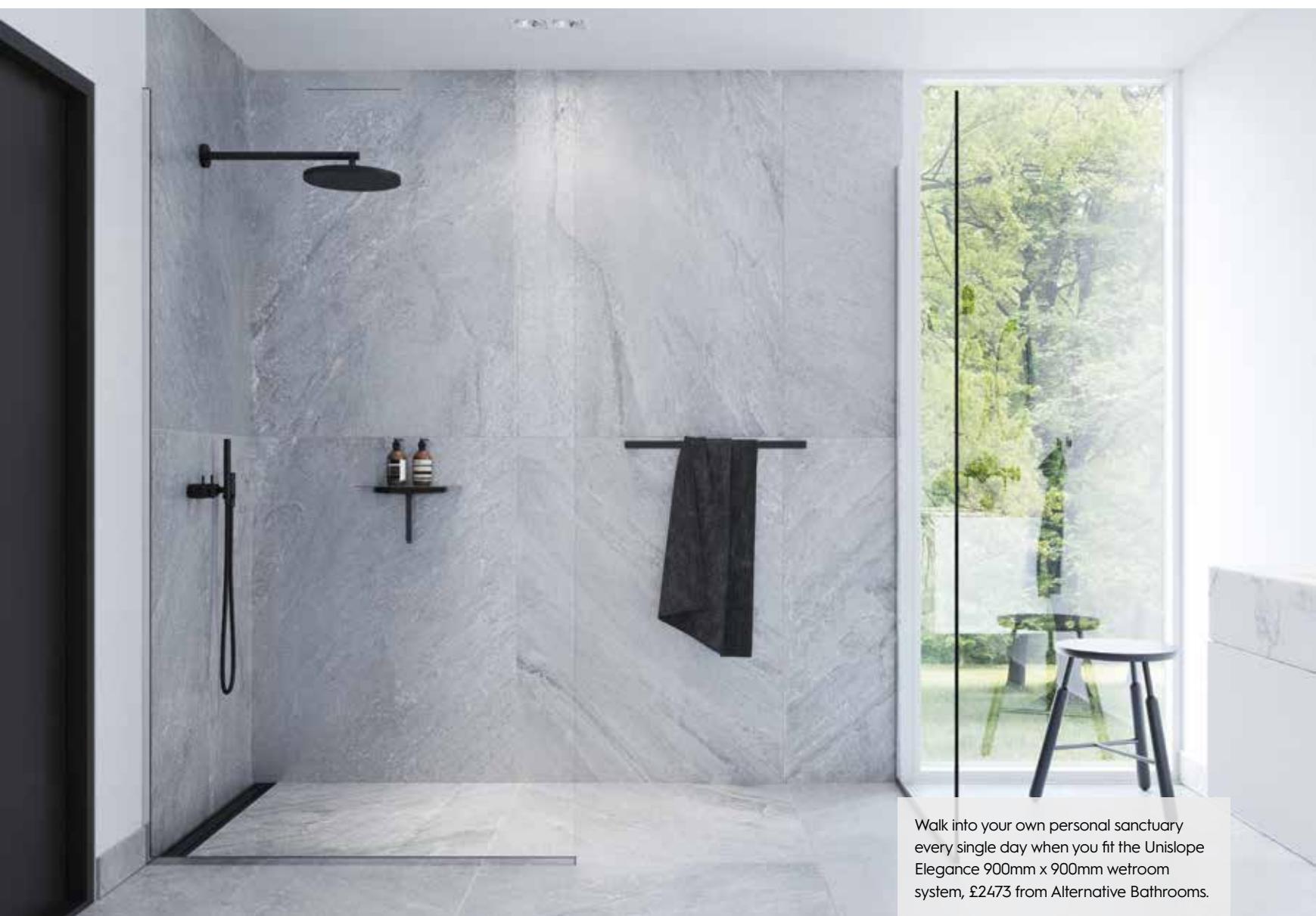


6 steps to planning an ensuite bathroom



Walk into your own personal sanctuary every single day when you fit the Unislope Elegance 900mm x 900mm wetroom system, £2473 from Alternative Bathrooms.

Whether you're installing a brand new bathroom into what was once an under-used space, or are refurbishing an existing master suite, there are a few key steps to take to ensure your project is a success ▷

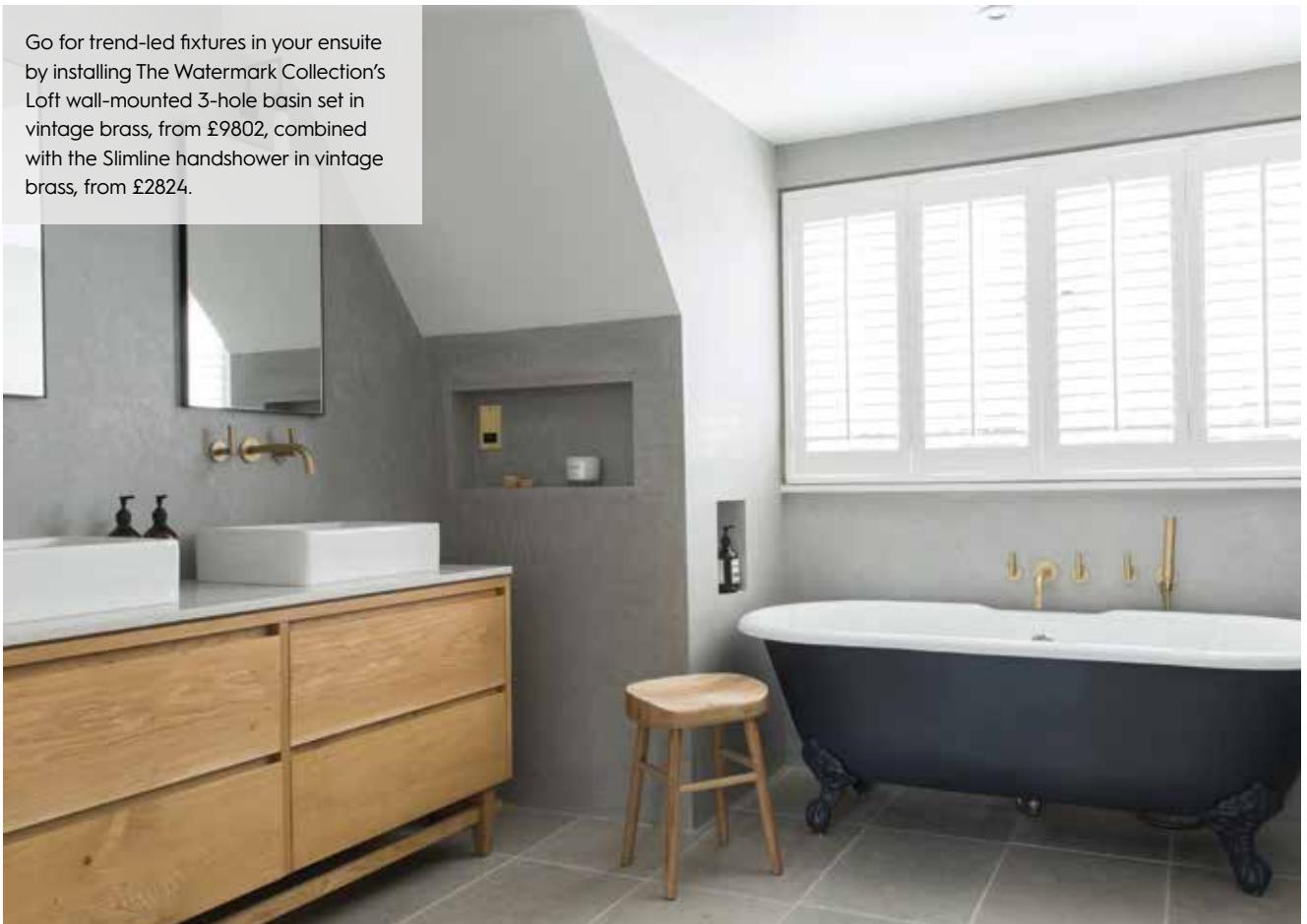
Words: Ifeoluwa Adedeji



Wall recesses, built-in shelving, and a cleverly placed shower and in-set bath all marry to make the space available as functional as possible. Expect to pay from £14,400 for this bathroom from Ripples.

Find the space

One of the first things you need to do is assess the dimensions of the room or space you have or think about sacrificing a small room to create a new bathroom, or even adding one as part of an extension. "Little pockets of space, at the sides of chimneys or behind a flight of stairs going into a loft, for instance, would be perfect to fit an ensuite and often mean you can square off an awkward room," explains Millie Gardiner, architectural designer at Build Team. "Slicing half a meter off two bedrooms can give you enough space for a wetroom and some built-in storage – but this could mean having to remove a structural wall, which will require advice from a builder as well as a structural engineer." Planning in storage is very important, especially if space is tight. Corner cabinets are a great solution in small areas, as are niches, walk-in showers, and cloakroom units combining the storage, basin, WC, and cistern. If you are extremely short on space, pocket doors which can slide into a stud wall leave valuable floor area free. "Occasionally, existing bedrooms are too small to work as sleeping quarters. These can be turned into a generous ensuite and dressing area – but bear in mind you'll need to route plumbing and mains, which will add significant cost," explains Millie. Don't forget to find out where pipes are – positioning sanitary units near existing plumbing will save you both time and money.



Go for trend-led fixtures in your ensuite by installing The Watermark Collection's Loft wall-mounted 3-hole basin set in vintage brass, from £9802, combined with the Slimline handshower in vintage brass, from £2824.

Love sleek, contemporary style? Aestus's R70 towel warmer, from £742, oozes modernity and is available in a variety of sizes to suit your space.



Need to know

Connecting your bedroom and bathroom

Design a decorating scheme that works in both your bedroom and ensuite for a cohesive design with a good sense of flow. Follow these tips for a successful look across both spaces...

- Invest in built-in cabinetry made from the same material and in a matching shade in both spaces, or choose a style of furniture in your bathroom to mirror that in your bedroom. Look out for popular Mid-century inspired vanity units or Shaker-style doors painted in dark blue or grey.
- Add a feature in both spaces. This doesn't have to be a large addition, but consider a colour, pattern, or accent material or texture and utilise it in each area.
- Select a similar style of window dressing for the two spaces. There are water-resistant shutters or blinds available that would look as good in a bathroom as in a bedroom and will help to visually connect the rooms.
- Continue a flooring style from the bedroom into the bathroom. Try a herringbone floor for the bedroom which can easily be replicated using floor tiles in an ensuite.

Heat it up

Making sure you achieve comfortable temperature levels in your ensuite is essential to attaining a luxury feel when finished. Think about the type of heating you'd like and what you have space for – a towel warmer, radiator, or underfloor heating (UFH). Your plumber can perform a heat loss calculation, which will give you an indication of what size radiator you may need to place in the space. If you've decided you want to install UFH, plan this in early. You can choose from wet or dry systems. Wet UFH uses warm water, much like your central heating. Requiring pipes to be fitted within the floor between the joists involves lifting the floor to install. Dry UFH could be a simpler retrofit option. Also known as an electric system, this usually comes as mats, and it can be laid under the floor and connected to the mains and your thermostat. Generally, dry UFH is cheaper to install compared to a wet system, but more expensive to run. However, it's worth remembering if you're covering only a small surface area, these savings would likely be nominal. Floor tiles made from slate, stone, ceramic, or terracotta, as well as good-quality laminate or vinyl, are ideal over UFH – but always check with the manufacturer to make sure your choice is suitable. The thickness of the tile will affect the amount of time they take to warm. When heating an ensuite, a combination of sources is often the best solution. Think about having UFH for the colder months, as well as a towel warmer on a different circuit which can be switched on year round.

"Bathrooms have been the victim of the 'all white makes it look bigger' philosophy for too long. Thankfully, the newest emulsions are an easy way to refresh a space with a more daring colour – think vibrant blues, spring greens, or a bold fuchsia. I firmly believe in introducing a little playfulness. Depending on your bathroom's size, going overboard comes with a warning, but a braver shade on a feature wall or accessories could be just what you need to inject life into your room."

Judy Smith, colour consultant at Crown



The image shows a modern bathroom interior. The upper half of the wall is painted a rich teal color. A rectangular teal-framed mirror hangs on the wall, flanked by a small round black-framed mirror on the left and a single pendant light with a white bulb on the right. Below the teal wall, the lower half of the wall is a lighter, neutral color. A teal-colored vanity unit with a dark frame stands against the wall. It has a rectangular top and a lower cabinet with two doors. On top of the vanity, there is a small blue candle and some toiletries. To the left of the vanity, a folded grey towel hangs from a hook. To the right, a stack of folded grey towels sits on a shelf. A small black cylindrical object sits on the floor to the right of the vanity.

Cielo's olive green freestanding Narciso Mini, from £2496, is a compact yet striking unit which offers stylish storage integrated with practical sanitaryware. ►

Plan ventilation and lighting

Depending on your ensuite's location, you may be fortunate enough to have an external opening affording natural light and essential access to fresh air. However, if you don't, you'll need to install an extractor fan to avoid mould and damp. Building regulations require you to ensure ventilation by a mechanical system if there is no window, so remember to include this in your plans. "An extractor fan is required by Building Control for all wet areas that include a WC to reduce condensation by extracting the moist air," explains Adam Jannece at JCJ Construction. "The necessary performance for an extractor fan is normally measured in litres per second (l/s). Typically for a bath or shower room, an extraction rate of 15l/s, including an additional overrun of up to 15 minutes after the light is switched off, is required."

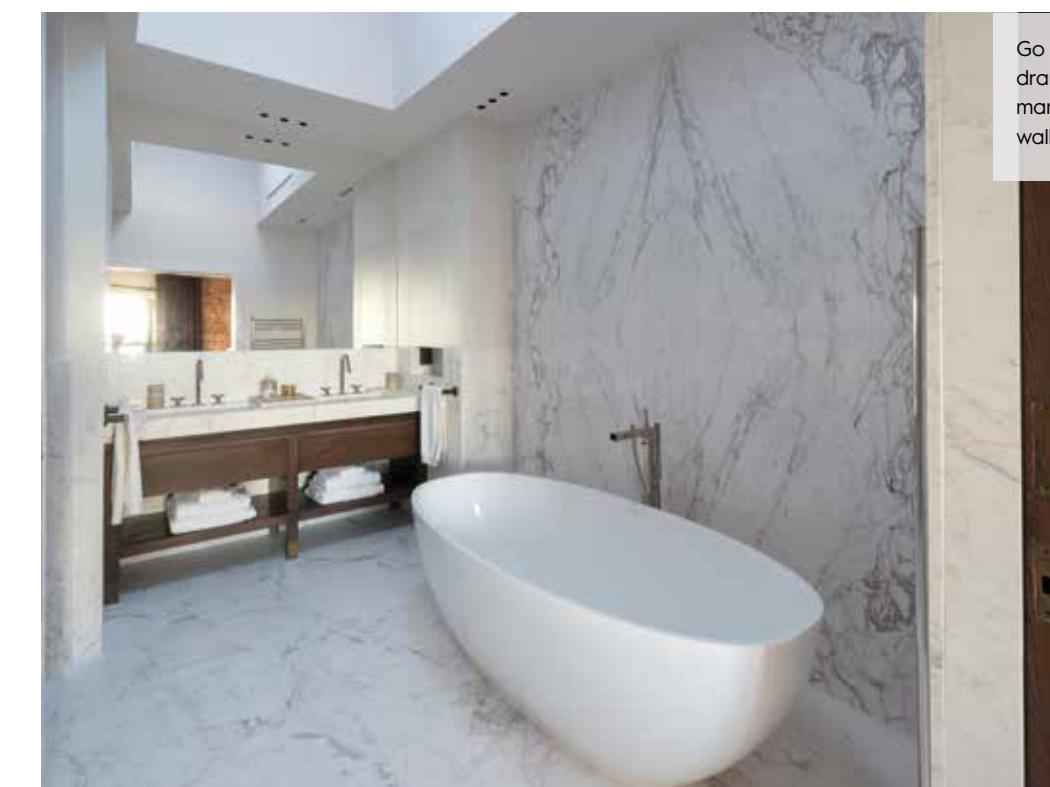
If your space does have windows, however, good news. Remember, letting them do their work is key – so try not to block light and ventilation with elaborate dressing or knickknacks on the windowsill. Remember to include different light sources, too. Pair wall sconces or an illuminated mirror with down lighting, in-unit options, and ceiling-mounted designs if there's space. Bright 150kw LED bulbs are ideal, as they are as close to daylight levels as possible. You can also add dimmers to take the levels down for a relaxing mood or nightly trips to the loo. Remember, bathroom lighting should be specifically designed for this space so it is safe around water. Look out for IP ratings (see page 50) and consult the manufacturer if in doubt.



If you love Art Deco, the Hebdern vanity basin with black Marquina marble in nickel finish, from £3300, is for you. Pair it with the Nene shower with wall arm and 300mm shower rose in nickel finish, £2664.



Providing a durable, soft-to-the-touch covering ChasingSpace's Comfort Collection of polyurethane resin, from £98 per sq m, is available in a variety of colours to suit your scheme both in the ensuite and the bedroom.



Go for glamour with Lapicida's dramatically veined Calacatta Delicato marble, from £474 per sq m, for the walls and floors of your new suite.

Explore available materials

Tiles were once the go-to material for wet zones. However, today we can opt for resin, concrete, or even engineered timber floors. Porcelain and ceramic flooring are still favourites, and for good reason too: they offer slip-resistant covering and are available in a range of shades, designs, and patterns.

For a modern look, contemporary concrete or refined resin – which is more flexible and softer underfoot – might work well for your bedroom and bathroom suite. These materials can be combined with a UFH system for the ultimate comfort. Prices start from between £90 and £120 for poured concrete and £150 for a resin floor. Consider having the same flooring, or a very similar style, in your bedroom and ensuite, for design continuity. For example, you may like to lay wood flooring or laminate in the bedroom, with wood-look tiles or a stone in the same shade in the bathroom.

There are a multitude of options on how to lay these boutique brick 250cm x 50cm tiles, from £37, from Walls and Floors – opt for the popular chevron pattern or a simple horizontal design, for example.



Make sure your space-saving solution suits your scheme, if you've chosen a contemporary finish. Fixtures such as Geberit's ultra-modern wall-hung WC, £370, and black floating cabinet, £366, could be ideal.



Choose fixtures and fittings

Do you have the room for a large freestanding roll-top bath, or have you decided there's only space for a shower? You should have a good idea of what you can realistically have in your bathroom from the very early planning stages. If you're struggling to fit everything in, don't try to cram – think about what you'll use most. For compact spaces, wall-hung sanitaryware and furniture are good options as being able to see the floor alludes to more space. "Short projection options are vital to making the most of the room available," says Daniel Ward, product manager at Geberit. "Furniture such as under-basin cabinets can also be a good way of creating storage, and mirror cabinets will provide reflection, which will give the feeling of a bigger room as well as providing storage." Wall-mounted brassware will offer more countertop space and looks very contemporary. Be sure to plan these fitting in carefully – for instance, a basin tap will need to be fitted so it projects out sufficiently over the basin if it is fitted to the wall.

If you've foregone a bath in favour of a shower, choose a frameless enclosure to maximise the feeling of space. "Pick a statement piece you really can't live without and design your bathroom around it," advises Barry Hoyne at Merlyn Showering. "A frameless enclosure will also bring a less 'cluttered' look. Walk-ins are ideal for tight spaces as there are no outwardly opening doors which take up valuable space."

Remember your budget

An ensuite's cost is mainly down to how much you want to spend on fixtures and fittings and the level of structural work involved. Adam Jannece at JCJ Construction recommends adding £1250 for the labour on existing pipework, or £1650 if new pipework is required, to a budget of £1500 for fittings. "General plastering and making good could be an additional £700, and tiling would cost around £1000 subject to how much is required," he says. "As a guide, an ensuite using existing pipework could be achieved for approximately £4500." Remember, plumbing work – such as installing new mains supplies and rerouting a waste pipe – will add significant expenditure. Always consult a plumber, electrician, or bathroom designer – at least three of each – to gather quotes before committing to a design or service.



It's the small details that make the difference to a design. Burlington's arched mirror, £249; Victorian 56cm Basin and Regal Pedestal, £214 are sure to do just that.

Need to know

Need to know: IP ratings

Lighting used in proximity to a water source must have an IP rating – meaning ingress protection rating. This ensures that the fitting's design has been created with safety in mind. The first number represents protection against solid objects, and the second protection against liquids. Generally speaking, the higher the number the better the protection. The bathroom is split into zones with each requiring different IP levels.

Zone 0: inside the bath or shower, at least IP67.

Zone 1: above the bath or shower, up to 2.25m from the floor, at least IP65.

Zone 2: up to 0.6m outside the perimeter of the bath, 2.25m from the floor, at least IP44.

Outside zones: anywhere outside zones 0 and 1 where no water is likely, at least IP20 to be safe.

SOURCE BOOK

Crosswater 0845 873 8840 or crosswater.co.uk

Drummonds 020 7376 4499 or drummonds-uk.com

Crown 0330 024 0281 or crownpaints.co.uk

CP Hart 020 7902 5250 or cphart.co.uk

The Watermark Collection 020 7740 7340 or thewatermarkcollection.eu

Alternative Bathrooms 020 3375 8990 or alternativebathrooms.com

Lapicida 01423 400100 or lapicida.com

Ripples 0800 107 0700 or ripplesbathrooms.com

DesignSpace London 020 7228 8088 or designspacelondon.com

Geberit 01926 516800 or geberit.co.uk

Aestus 01902 387000 or aestus.co.uk

Merlyn Showering 0808 101 429 or merlynshowering.com

Walls and Floors 01536 314730 or wallsandfloors.co.uk

Burlington 01322 473222 or burlingtonbathrooms.com

ChasingSpace chasingspace.co.uk

Build Team 020 7495 6561 or buildteam.com

JCJ Construction 01273 857886 or jcjconstruction.co.uk