

## THE PROPERTY EXPERT



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If you're thinking about moving to a larger property, and you have the space, why not extend your home instead? As well as adding value it makes good financial sense, because moving costs such as stamp duty and estate agent's fees can be put to much better use extending the house you already have. Adding living space is achievable as long as you consider four things: Budget, Planning, Design and Construction.

### BUDGET

- The cost of an extension depends on location, accessibility and specification, but we estimate you will need to budget for £1k to £2k per m<sup>2</sup>.
- Many factors affect your budget, including: location relating to soil conditions, services, history of flooding, surrounding trees and rights of way, accessibility on roads with no parking, access to rear gardens, sloping ground needing retaining walls.
- Keep an eye on your budget when choosing fixtures and fittings. And remember to balance the amount you are willing to spend on your extension with the estimated value it will add to your home.

## DON'T MOVE... EXTEND!

### PLANNING

- Building regulation approval is needed even if planning permission isn't.
- Building regulation requirements are for structural integrity, fire safety and energy efficiency.
- You will need damp proofing, ventilation and other aspects that ensure a building is safe.
- There are different rules for extending in conservation areas, so be aware of your location.

### DESIGN

- Avoid through-rooms to access the extension.
- Don't sacrifice more than you are gaining by reducing a good size room into 2 pokey rooms!
- Be aware that add-on rooms can cut out light and make the house darker.
- Create a larger, brighter and more open space by knocking down walls.

### CONSTRUCTION

- Builders are not all the same. Make sure you get a reputable and experienced one by doing your research and getting recommendations.
- Ask for evidence from the builder that they have the relevant 'Site Insurance' prior to starting work. Your home insurance is not enough!
- Get to know someone who has had a similar extension, they may be able to offer tips, advice and recommendations – and also what NOT to do.
- A good builder will be able to go through a step-by-step process with you of what's involved, how much it will cost and invite you to look at their previous and existing projects. In this way you can take time to fully assess their level of craftsmanship and talk to previous clients.

Lastly, take your time, do your sums and be realistic. Good luck with your project.



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**Adding living space can be more cost-effective than moving**