

Complete Guide to Renovating a House

PART SEVEN : EXTENDING

Sometimes there's no getting around the need to add extra space to an existing house.

Natasha Brinsmead

explains the key things you need to know to get an extension right first time

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Ground conditions, site access, location and proximity of services, design and size — all have a big impact on what the cost of your extension will be and for this reason, it is pretty hard to give an exact idea of costs.

In general though, budgeting around £1,000–£1,500/m² for a two storey extension should give you a good idea of what it will cost. Single storey extensions cost fractionally more at between £1,000–£2,000/m² (on account of the more expensive parts of the structure, e.g. foundations and roof, being a greater proportion of the cost/m²).

As a rough guide, the structural side of the project takes up about 60% of total expenditure, whilst fittings use up the remainder.

As a result, you should expect to budget £15–30,000 for a single storey kitchen extension; a two-storey extension will likely cost £50–100,000.



Glazed Glory

A contemporary L-shaped design (by Gregory Phillips) complements the original property — offering expansive living space, while floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors make the most of the leafy garden views

A Typical Schedule

Here's a typical schedule for a single storey kitchen extension project (bear in mind that extension projects are difficult to generalise on, as the extent of remedial works to the existing structure can vary so much):

Week 1: Setting out, digging out footings and pouring concrete foundations
Week 2: Building up to the damp-proof course (DPC), drainage, installing the DPC, concrete oversite/floor structure
Week 3/4: Commence build up of exterior walls — in block and brick.

Any internal walls built up
Week 5: Installation of roof structure and begin covering with tiles or slates
Week 6: Installation of windows and doors
Week 7: Commence first fix electrics and plumbing, and the carpentry runs
Week 8: Break through to existing house and make good all joins, install steels etc.
Week 9-10: Plaster out and dry
Week 11-13: Second fix electrics, plumbing, fitting flooring, installing kitchen units
Week 12: Snagging



LISTED BUILDINGS

All alterations to listed buildings (even internal ones) require consent. Depending on the size of your extension, you may need planning permission as well as listed building consent.

WILL YOU NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

Depending on what you are intending to do, you may be pleasantly surprised to find that you do not need to apply for planning permission for your new extension. So-called Permitted Development (PD) rights entitle homeowners to make changes to their home without the need for express planning approval and include a huge range of modifications including extensions. In some circumstances they might not apply to your home (such as if they have been removed by an Article 4 directive) or they might be limited if you live in a specially designated area, e.g. a Conservation Area.

In general, however, planning permission will not be required for an extension so long as:

- The extension (which should include any extensions added since 1947) will not exceed 50% of the total area of land around the original house — sheds and other outbuildings should be included when calculating the above 50% limit;
- Single storey side extensions do not have a width greater than half the width of the original house;
- Single storey side extensions are not above four metres in height;
- Extensions within two metres of a boundary are built no higher than three metres;
- Single storey rear extensions do not extend beyond the rear of the

original house by more than three metres for an attached house, or four metres for a detached house. However, until 30th May 2016, these limits have now been increased to six metres for attached houses and eight metres for detached (subject to a neighbourhood consultation scheme though);

- Single storey rear extensions do not exceed a height of four metres;
- The maximum ridge and eaves height of the extension is no higher than the existing house;
- Extensions of more than one storey do not extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by more than three metres or be within seven metres of any boundary opposite the rear wall of the house;
- The roof pitch of extensions more than one storey should match that of the existing house — as far as practicable;
- Exterior materials are similar in appearance to those of the existing house;
- Upper floor windows in walls or roof slopes in a side elevation have obscured glazing and are non-opening — unless the opening parts are more than 1.7m above the floor of the room in which they are installed.

Opening Out

This small full-width rear extension was built under Permitted Development — meaning it didn't require express planning consent — for £73,000. It welcomes light into the whole house through sliding doors and Velux windows, and offers valuable extra kitchen and dining space

BUILDING CONTROL

All extensions require Building Regulations approval. Building Regs are there to ensure that minimum design and construction standards are achieved and cover things such as fire safety, insulation, drainage and access.

The most common route is to complete a Full Plan Submission to your local authority (your architect or designer can do this for you, or you can do it yourself), along with a fee, which will vary according to the project and type of submission. Taking this route means a building inspector will visit the site at various stages during the project.

Alternatively, you could submit a Building Notice. This informs the local authority that you will be complying with the regulations and gives the department 48 hours' notice of your intention to start work. A building inspector will then periodically visit the project, but you'll have to correct work that does not meet the regulations.

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For more detailed information on Permitted Development, visit planningportal.gov.uk. The situation is slightly different in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland — you should check the individual Government websites

DESIGN TIPS FOR EXTENDERS

More often than not, properties in need of renovation are either crying out for, or would benefit from, some kind of extension — whether it is a rundown terrace that could gain extra space through a side-return extension or a Georgian farmhouse that would look great with a contemporary glass add-on. The point is that extensions can be in keeping or in stark contrast to the original house — either can be a success as long as it is well designed and considers the original building.

A good designer will pay attention to the issues around the changing roofline, and of course ensure that the materials (particularly claddings, coverings and windows) have a coherence to them as a whole house, rather than treating the extension as completely separate.

CONTRASTING EXTENSIONS

Design-wise, it often makes more sense to build a contrasting extension that proudly shouts about its status as a new addition, yet complements and draws out the best elements of the existing building. In fact, far from being set against contemporary extensions, planners often now welcome well-designed, modern additions.

If you go down the contrasting extension route, you have to go all the way. That is to say, you are either going contemporary or you are not. Too many times this type of extension fails due to a seeming lack of commitment to the design, where owners have perhaps added some great cedar cladding, but then ruined the look with small plastic windows or a traditional door.

Materials to consider include plenty of glazing in the form of aluminium or timber windows or folding sliding doors, timber cladding, smooth render, zinc and copper.

Sympathetic Addition

A £120,000 two storey extension, complete with thatched roof, complements this English cottage, providing extra space for family life whilst remaining in keeping with the traditional style



Clever Cladding

A flat roof extension, complete with roof terrace, designed by PAD Studio, makes for a striking addition to this home — while timber cladding marries the extension with the existing house



MATCHING EXTENSIONS

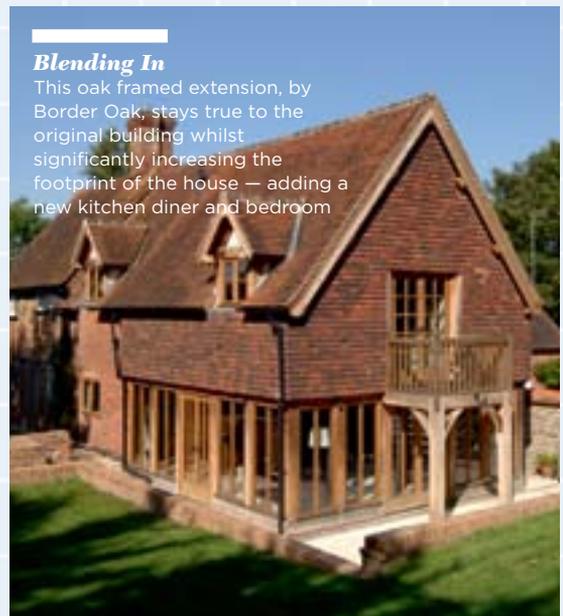
Arguably much more difficult — and often expensive — to get right compared to contemporary extensions, making an extension appear as though it has always been there takes skill and attention to detail. In order for this style of extension to work, not only must the materials you use match the originals as closely as possible (using reclaimed or local materials is key), but you should also aim to copy the main design elements. These include the roof pitch and details such as the brick bond and even the mortar colour. Windows are also massively important, in terms of materials, style and size — make sure their proportions are in keeping with the rest of the house too.



A great solution for linking a period property to a new extension is to use a fully glazed link or walkway — the extension can then be either traditional or contemporary in style but, being pretty much an entirely separate building, need not fully match the original

Blending In

This oak framed extension, by Border Oak, stays true to the original building whilst significantly increasing the footprint of the house — adding a new kitchen diner and bedroom



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Open Plan Living

A rear extension, designed by William Tozer, opens up the ground floor of this 1970s semi – where furniture has been used to create zones in the large space – and adds extra height by leaving the ceiling open to the joists



EXTENSIONS: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

DO I NEED AN ARCHITECT?

For small, simple extensions the services of an architect may be somewhat wasted. Alternative options include hiring a designer, taking a DIY approach to drawing plans, or even asking your builder to come up with a design. More complex and larger extensions will, on the other hand, certainly benefit from a designer or architect.

DO I NEED PERMISSION TO CONVERT AN INTEGRAL GARAGE INTO LIVING SPACE?

Although planning permission should not be required (unless your Permitted Development rights have been removed or do not apply because of the designation of your home), Building Regulations approval will be.

HOW DO I OVERCOME PRIVACY ISSUES AND STILL GET LIGHT INTO MY EXTENSION?

There are lots of great alternatives to traditional windows. Consider banks of rooflights, roof lanterns, glazed doors (both internal and external), rows of windows set just below ceiling level and above the eye level.

You could also consider the different types of privacy glazing such as textured or stained glass, or acid-etched or sandblasted glass. You could look into electro-opaque glass too, which switches from transparent to opaque at the touch of a button — it's a handy yet expensive option though.

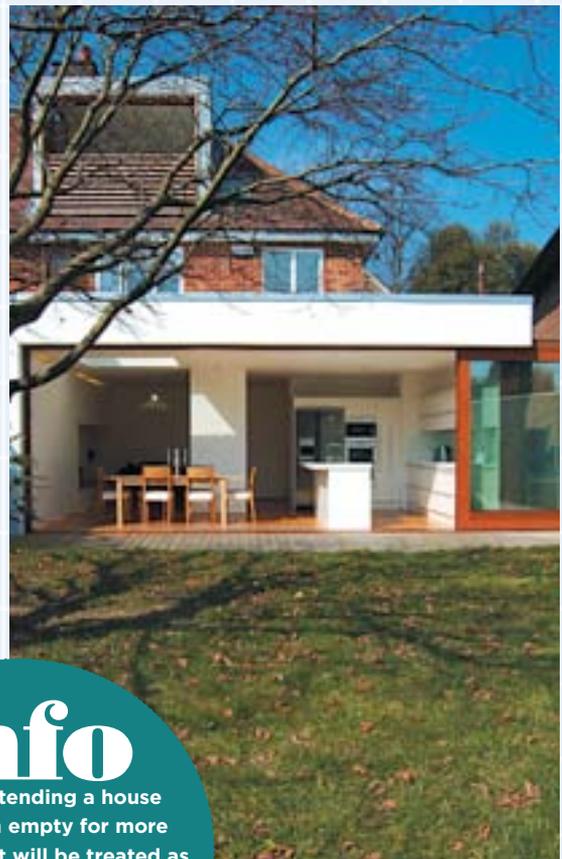
HOW DO I FIND A BUILDER?

Finding a builder is easy, but finding one you are going to get on with for the duration of the project can be somewhat trickier. So, one of the main things to be sure of is that your builder is someone who you like and can communicate with.

Ask around for recommendations and chat to previous clients and ensure that the builder you hire is willing to give you a fixed-price, detailed quotation, which he should be able to do provided you have given him enough information. ■

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If you are extending a house that has been empty for more than 10 years, it will be treated as a conversion and therefore will be largely free of VAT. If it has been empty for more than two years, a reduced rate of 5% will be levied



Opening Out

A contemporary kitchen diner extension in this 1940s semi, also by William Tozer, features oversized timber doors that slide away to blur the boundaries between inside and out — perfect for year-round entertaining. A beautiful loft conversion has also been added too