

How to add extra living space & value to your home

The most commonly stated reason for moving home – is to gain more space, but before you give your hard earned money to HM customs & excise in the form of stamp duty – it's worth considering your options:

Loft conversions

A loft conversion is a great way to gain extra living space without altering the external appearance of your home. Costing £15K - £35K, they can add about 15% to the value of your home. Most homes built before 1975 are suitable for a loft conversion, which adds another room or two in the attic space. The work generally takes about 12 weeks and the builders access the roof from the outside, which means there shouldn't be too much disruption until they break through to build the new stairs.

Extensions

Adding a ground floor extension can create good practical space such as a bigger kitchen, dining or combined family room. Costing around £150 per square foot for the more common single storey extension, two-storey extensions can create an additional bedroom, bathroom or master suite without going into the loft.

Conservatories

A conservatory is a relatively inexpensive way of adding extra living space at around £10K-£15K and you are unlikely to need planning permission (though do check with your local authority). Available in a huge range of styles, from very contemporary steel and aluminium structures through to the more traditional timber framed conservatories, there is something for all tastes and house types. Do however make sure you give a lot of thought to how you will keep a conservatory warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Garages

Most garages are too small for modern cars and end up being used as storage rooms anyway. As the basic structure already exists, there is no need for expensive external walls and foundations. Disruption to your home life should be minimal and this can take from a couple of weeks to a couple of months for more substantial conversions. Costs start at around £7K for a brick or stone garage, but can add thousands to the value of your home.

Garden rooms

Becoming increasingly popular garden rooms are now much more than glorified sheds. Like conservatories you are unlikely to need planning permission – as long as you stay within the local authority guidelines regarding height of exterior buildings and proximity to boundaries. Garden rooms can be wired and plumbed like ordinary rooms and so give great flexibility in terms of use. They can become guest suites; children's play rooms or home offices. Prices are upward of around £8K.