

Add space & value to your home

Up, down or sideways, you'll benefit from well-planned extra space, says Prima homes expert Suzanne Wilkinson

1 Add a conservatory

Across Britain, it costs £35,000 more to buy a home with a second bedroom, £50,000 to buy a third and £100,000 to buy a fourth. So, if an extension costs less than the price of a bedroom, you're winning all round, according to a recent survey by website propertyfinder.com.

However, investing in an extension does involve careful planning. Don't settle for a bog-standard solution from a builder just because you're concerned about an architect's costs. The architectyourhome system is designed for those on a budget. Rather than appoint an architect to run the whole project – and take a percentage of the overall build cost – this flexible option gives you a more manageable fee structure. You pick their services from a menu, such as clever ideas or having plans drawn up, and only pay for what you choose. Architectyourhome involves a network of like-minded architects across the country. Call 0800 849 8505 or visit www.architect-yourhome.com for more information.

Conservatories are versatile spaces and are quicker to build than extensions. At a cost of around £750 per sq m, an average conservatory costs about £10,000.

Most conservatories aren't covered by building regulations and won't need planning permission, but it's always best to check with your local authority. Generally, conservatories have concrete foundations, brick cavity lower walls with glazed upper walls and roof panels set within a framing system. PVCu-clad aluminium is the most usual and economical, coated aluminium, steel and timber are alternatives. K2 is one of the largest conservatory suppliers nationwide (0800 195 2962).

Glass acts

To use the conservatory all year round, consider the glazing carefully:

- For safety, toughened or laminated glass must be used throughout. Laminated glass offers added security against break-ins and cuts out around 90 per cent of the sun's UV rays, which fade furnishings.
- To prevent overheating (vital for south-facing conservatories), use solar control glass or bronze polycarbonate panels for the roof. These reduce internal temperatures in the summer and also minimise glare.
- Roof systems with ridge ventilation and roof vents that open automatically above a given temperature allow air to circulate.
- Consider the position of windows and door openings to allow a cross-flow of air.

- For winter, fit low-emissivity glass, such as K2's Celsius Performance Glass, which will add approximately £200 or £300 to the bill but will reduce heat loss.
- It's worth paying extra for a glass roof to reduce noise. Polycarbonate roof panels may be cheaper, but they are noisier and a real conversation-stopper in a downpour!

Adds £12,000



Adds £11,000



2 Convert the garage

'If you don't park your car in the garage, you are sitting on 14sq m (150sq ft) of space – and it's probably full of junk,' says Phil Bateman, managing director of the Garage Conversion Company. He says that for £10,000 for a single garage, or £20,000 for a double, you can add more to the value of your home than the work costs (providing you have a parking space somewhere else).



Conservatory top tips

- Does the quote include flooring and electrics, or just the bare shell?
- If it's south-facing, it will need good ventilation and shade; if it's north-facing, it will need efficient heating.
- Choose a design that's in keeping with your home.

- Don't add a conservatory if it's going to spoil the garden.
- Search for builders who specialise in conservatories in your area at the Federation of Master Builders' (FMB) website www.findabuilder.co.uk. The approved installer scheme protects consumers. It's complemented by the FMB's MasterBond warranty.

- In two weeks, the Garage Conversion Company will transform a garage into habitable space, such as a dining room, home office or bedroom with en-suite.
- The typical client has a new-build home with an integral garage. This style of house has more room upstairs than downstairs, so converting the garage restores the balance.
- Garages aren't designed as living spaces, so you will have to upgrade the structure to meet current building regulations – including energy efficiency, damp-proofing, sound-

proofing, heating, electrical insulation, building a floating floor. Walls, floors and roofs may also need to be enhanced.

- To complete the job, a new opening is knocked through into the hallway, existing brickwork outside is matched with new and a window is installed.
- Double detached garages can also be converted into granny annexes.

For more details, contact the Garage Conversion Company on 0800 587 0262, www.garageconversion.com.



Wickes conservatories (0800 106068) are for competent DIY-ers or hired builders. It involves preparing the base, constructing the wall and assembling the conservatory. The *Good Idea* leaflets 114 and 115 give practical information on building foundations and dwarf walls. Wickes' PVCu Victorian conservatory starts at £1,950, most average around £3,000. Hardwood conservatories with dwarf walls start from £4,490.