

HOW MUCH *room* DO YOU NEED?

A little can go a long way when it comes to extensions. Follow our tips to invest in a design that will make the biggest impact on your home **Words Luke Tebbutt**

When it comes to judging how much extra space you need, quality is just as important as quantity. A side-return extension may only give you a few extra square metres, for example, but the extra light and room it adds can transform a poky and dark kitchen into the heart of the house.

As a guideline, 12sqm (3m by 4m) will give you an extra room in a typical terraced house, though 15-20sqm will give you more area to manoeuvre, says architect Andrew Mulroy (020 7284 2712; mulroy.info).

'It's worth adding as much space as you can, and perhaps even more than you immediately need,' he says. 'We always advise our clients to think about their lives in five-year blocks. Is it worth putting in a downstairs WC and bathroom for when you are older? Will you need a zone for the kids to use when they reach their teens?'

To make the biggest impact, you also want to integrate your extension with your home as much as possible, which requires more investment in design, construction and refurbishment. For example, making the rear addition open plan will make your existing home and the new extension feel much bigger. A level threshold between your indoor and outdoor spaces also helps to create a stronger connection with the garden. Continuing your existing stairs up to your new loft or down to your new basement creates a seamless flow between the spaces.

Enhancing the feeling of light will also make your new and old spaces seem more generous. Roof lights are a must for rear extensions, and avoid making the middle of your home dark; internal glazing or increasing the height of interior doors will also help to bring more light into the room. High-level clerestory windows are useful for a side extension, where overlooking may be an issue. And creating a void between

your ground floor and basement will scoop extra light deeper downstairs.

Basements will add the most space in one go, but at a cost – expect to pay around £3,000 to £4,000 per sqm. A loft conversion can be one of the quickest ways to add space, as you don't have to dig foundations. However, you will need to do some re-roofing and beef up your joists to take the extra weight, and you should shop around for a design professional to make sure you don't end up with a one-size-fits-all solution. When planning extra space, it's also wise to get advice from a local estate agent about how much value your work will add to your home. A basement TV room might not be the best idea in an area crying out for more bedrooms.

'Make an audit of the problems your house has, and think about whether the work you are planning will solve those for you and for any potential owners in the future,' advises Mulroy. **GD**

Key considerations

- ✚ An extra 12sqm will give you an average-sized room in a typical terraced house, but aim for 15-20sqm to give yourself more room to manoeuvre.
- ✚ The quality of your space will make a greater impact than the quantity, so invest in a design that easily integrates.
- ✚ Think about piggy-backing another storey on top of your rear extension to add a new bedroom or bathroom. This will work out cheaper per sqm.
- ✚ Basements are the best way to add a lot of space in one go, but you'll pay around £3,000 to £4,000 per square metre.
- ✚ Speak to a local estate agent to get advice about whether your proposed extension meets the needs of the area.

Architecture for London (020 7127 0696; architectureforlondon.com) extended into the side return of this Victorian house to create space for an island unit and dining table. The project cost £120,000 excl VAT and fees



DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Six clever projects that add space



Detached garden room

Ideal for providing a separate space for work or leisure. This one by Scenario Architecture (020 3095 9787; scenarioarchitecture.com) is 25sqm and has been partially submerged into the ground.



Double-height side extension

A rear and double-storey side addition by OB Architecture (01962 865 344; obarchitecture.co.uk) has added 55sqm to this house, giving the owners an expansive kitchen-dining-living space and a new master bathroom upstairs.



Extra space on the side

Hayward Smart Architects (01608 661 000; hsarchitects.co.uk) added 27sqm to this home with a single-storey side extension, which mimics the pitch of the original house, but has contemporary glazing to distinguish it as new.



Rear and roof addition

This 2.3m-wide house has been reconfigured and extended by London architect Alma-nac (020 7928 2092; alma-nac.com). It's provided an extra 28sqm for a ground-floor dining area, plus a bedroom and a study upstairs.



Front and back extensions

Zminkowska De Boise Architects (07792 293 056; zdbarchitects.com) added 90sqm with a number of additions. The garage at the front has been converted into a guest area, and a new rear addition creates a new family space.



Contemporary dormer

Edinburgh architect Konishi Gaffney (0131 555 4939; konishigaffney.com) extended this house in a conservation area with a modern dormer, creating 25sqm for a bedroom and en suite in the loft, and 15sqm for storage.