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CLEVER KITCHEN EXTENSION PLANNING

Turn your dream kitchen into a reality with a spacious new design – here's everything you need to know to make it a stress-free success

↑ SKILFUL SOLUTIONS

Exposed brickwork adds an industrial edge, but means electrical wiring may be on show. Here, the splashback covers cables and protects the bricks. Wood kitchen with Silestone worktops and splashback by 3rdEdition (01793 529 496; 3rdedition.co.uk). Brick extension with folding glass doors, £125,940, Bradley Van Der Straeten (07800 640 456; b-vds.co.uk)

Love the idea of open-plan living, or simply need more space to realise your culinary ambitions? A kitchen extension could be just the ticket. It's no wonder then that new kitchens and extensions top the list of renovation wish lists, with 36 and 34 per cent of homeowners respectively listing them as the most desirable improvement, according to a survey by Go Compare (gocompare.com). Kitchen extensions can be stressful, but by planning ahead even the largest projects can run more smoothly.

Before you begin

Start by finding the right people for the job. If you have a complex

design or large extension in mind you'll need an architect, as they will be able to advise about planning permission and how to best design the space. For more straightforward projects, you may be able to work out the layout yourself and hire a structural engineer to prepare drawings and calculations. This is essential if you're planning to remove walls, as you need to ensure the building remains structurally sound.

You'll also need to find a builder and a kitchen designer. It can be useful to take recommendations from each trade or professional – if they've worked together before, it can ensure good communication. Similarly,

individuals who haven't been part of the same team in the past can end up causing delays.

By getting everyone on board at the start, you can avoid major changes to plans (and the expense incurred) later on. Keep a budget in mind and also have a contingency plan. Your team will be able to identify if there are any areas you haven't allowed for and help you manage your budget. Allow around 40 per cent for the build, 30 per cent for fixtures and fittings (including the kitchen itself) and the remainder for planning and architect fees.

Next, create a time frame – how long each stage will take and ➤



→ SMART SUPPORT

Supporting pillars don't have to be a barrier in your design – turn them into a feature by picking a decorative option, such as this reclaimed column. Handleless painted tulipwood and maple Shaker kitchen with Corian worktops, £33,000 (including installation and appliances), Higham Furniture (0800 047 0235; higham.co.uk)

↓ MAXIMISE SPACE

Instead of sacrificing a large portion of your garden to a rear extension, consider including a side return to boost your kitchen and dining space. Schüller C kitchen in wood veneer and white and grey laminate with Silestone worktops, from £20,000, Holloways of Ludlow (020 8487 9422; hollowayskitchens.com)



IN FOCUS

PROJECT CHECKLIST

- ❖ Ensure you have enough contingency budget. Even the best-planned projects can encounter unexpected costs.
- ❖ Think about how your kitchen will flow with the rest of your home – the ways it will be accessed and the positions of doors and windows are key considerations.
- ❖ Don't get too tied up with the specifics of the kitchen at the start of your project – it's all too easy to focus on finishes, but establishing where ducting and services will be required is more important.
- ❖ Think about moving out during the initial building stages or when it's likely to be noisy. Trying to live alongside dust and debris can be the most stressful part.
- ❖ Give yourself plenty of options for electrical supply. Badly located light switches or a lack of power points for appliances will be a constant source of frustration.

↑ SET THE TEMPERATURE

It's best to locate the preparation section of your kitchen away from glass-roofed areas, as they can be too warm to cook under during the warmer months. Place relaxed dining areas below them instead. Elba kitchen in clay and cotton with Corian worktops, from £7,200 for a 14-unit kitchen, John Lewis (0345 604 9049; johnlewis.com)

in what order the work will be done. 'For an average kitchen extension, planning can take between three to six months and the build between three to four months, depending on the complexity,' explains Daniele Brutto, co-founder of Hub Kitchens (020 7924 2285; hubkitchens.com). Consider all the stages involved – rip-out, demolition of existing walls, building of new walls, first fix and second fix – as well as how you'll cope without a kitchen in the interim.

Managing the project

Trying to coordinate an extension can be difficult if you haven't had some team leadership experience or time is against you, so a project manager can be a worthwhile investment. They will run the site, anticipate problems (which can be tricky if it's your first

project), keep an eye on costs and ensure all trades understand the others' requirements so work doesn't overrun. Your architect, builder or kitchen company may offer this service, although it can cost between 15–25 per cent more. 'Choose a project manager who understands your requirements, can manage the process and organise planning permissions or party wall agreements,' advises Nicola Burt, founder and MD of Finishing Touch Interior Design (07766 133 727; finishingtouchlondon.com). 'If you're managing it yourself, check your local authority planning portal for permitted developments, necessary planning permissions and utility notifications.'

Organising the project will mean coordinating elements you may not have considered, like skips, a digger,

scaffolding and material supply. If you're trying to save money, consider taking over more straightforward tasks such as removing your old kitchen, painting and tiling.

Rights and regulations

Small extensions may not need planning permission if the work is classed as within permitted development (PD) rights. Planning Portal's interactive house guide helps explain what's permissible (planningportal.co.uk). Larger extensions will need development approval, which should be granted before any work begins. Contact your local council's planning department before you submit anything to find out what's likely to be acceptable and how long the process usually takes – this will help prevent delays. 'Allow around >





eight weeks for planning consent in your timeline,' says Burt. 'If you live in a conservation area there may be certain things you aren't allowed to do. Permission for a Victorian property is sometimes easier if you follow the line of the original house rather than adding a box to the back.'

Regardless of whether they're built under PD or planning permission, all extensions will require Building Regulations approval – these ensure that your project will be built to the minimum standard for design and construction. If you live in a terraced or semi-detached house and you're extending towards a boundary wall or excavating near a neighbouring building, you will need a Party Wall Agreement, which can prove time-consuming. Your neighbours are not obliged to agree to your plans so it's best to maintain a good relationship with them. Find out more at the HomeOwners Alliance website (hoa.org.uk).

Staying on schedule

Kitchen extensions are prone to delays for several reasons, such as the weather,

unavailability of products, structural changes and work taking longer than anticipated. However, careful planning and realistic time frames can offset these. Book contractors well in advance and carry out work during the warmer months. 'The key is to design and specify the project well so that your choices are desirable and affordable,' explains Martin Smith, architectural designer from Holloways of Ludlow Architectural Design & Build (020 8487 9440; hollowaysbuild.com). 'The most common problems occur when the specification changes as the project gets under way.'

Work is divided into first fix and second fix. First fix is the initial construction, from foundations and damp-proofing through to plastering. This will include adding cables for electrics and pipes for plumbing. On a four-month schedule, first fix will usually take around 11-12 weeks. Second fix is the work that comes afterwards – fitting kitchen units, floor covering, final plumbing and electrical work, which takes 3-4 weeks more. Then all that's left to do is enjoy your new kitchen space. **GD**

↑ CLEVER CONSTRUCT

Different ceiling heights can make incorporating extraction tricky; speak to a kitchen designer to ensure there's a clear run for ducting through steels or beams. Urbo handleless painted matt lacquer kitchen with solid oak breakfast bar and Blanco Zeus stone worktop kitchen, starts at £35,000, Roundhouse (020 7297 6220; roundhousedesign.com)

↓ DAYLIGHT SAVING

In a north-facing project, use a skylight to allow extra light to flood in alongside bi-fold doors. Glossy finishes will help to bounce additional light around the room. Metz Savanna kitchen, from around £6,800, Caple (0117 938 1900; caple.co.uk)



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