

Right on the money

Planning carefully and making savings will ensure you put your budget to good use *Words Helen Stone*

Worrying about how to manage your resources is natural for anyone undertaking an extension project. We've all watched the TV property shows in which creeping costs start to spiral out of control. However, surely one of the most important steps is to set a realistic budget from the outset and to keep back the all-important contingency fund.

Setting a budget

There are a number of websites that have useful calculators that will give a cost estimate based on your current home, location and the type of extension (moneywise.co.uk and buildingsheriff.com are useful sites) and it's worth trying a few to get a reliable ballpark figure. As a rule of thumb, expect to pay around £1,200 to £1,500 per sqm for a single-storey extension (more in the south-east of England) and factor in an extra 10 to 15 per cent plus VAT. Add another 50 per cent for a double-storey extension, and, according to the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), calculate from £23,000 to £31,500 for an average loft conversion and considerably more for a basement.

Keep it simple

If your aim is to add more usable space to your home, it doesn't have to be a groundbreaking masterpiece. Stick to simple straight lines that are quick and easy to build, and fit standard-sized windows that can be bought from builders' merchants and nationwide suppliers. Anything made to order or bespoke will come at a premium and with the risk of delays that can stall your project and incur extra costs.



£ Cost £65,000

Lightweight solution This two-storey extension sits on existing conservatory foundations, which saved on costs and environmental impact. The larch cladding was steam bent on site using boat-building techniques. Simon Gill (020 3713 9465; simongillarchitects.co.uk)

What you can get for your money



£ Cost £60,000

Smart use of space Scenario Architecture added 12sqm to this terraced house to create an open-plan kitchen-diner. The entire project, including a refurbishment and loft conversion, cost £178,768. (020 7686 3445; scenarioarchitecture.com)



£ Cost £128,000

A new angle This garden room clad in western red cedar was designed to link the main kitchen and family room with the garden. An extra 46.7sqm was added, plus alterations. Craig Amy (07890 304 680; craigamy.com)