



Space to grow

JENNIFER GEDDES looks at the pros and cons of extending your property

Adding more space to a property is almost guaranteed to increase its value, but it requires a commitment of both time and money. It is also probably the most complicated change you could make and you'll need to talk to an expert.

Hetreed Ross Architects specialises in environmental design and is celebrating its tenth birthday this year. We put a few questions to co-founder Jonathan Hetreed so you can find out what you need to know about extensions.

Q: What type of extension will add the most value to your property?

A: In many cases adding another

bedroom may be the most cost-effective, or perhaps an en-suite bathroom to a house that already has enough bedrooms. It depends a lot on what you have to start with. For a house with a poorly daylit kitchen the best value might be to build a garden room extension and re-locate the kitchen there. A good estate agent will be able to help with an educated guess as to what your house may be worth when you've built the extension.

It's very important to the end value that it's designed and built well. Imagine a potential buyer coming to see your house. When you show them the extension, it should make them smile, perhaps gasp. The wow factor



Improving space with a stylish staircase

Main; a curved extension suits this Art Deco property
Below; an award winning design by Hetreed Ross



does help to sell houses faster and at the top of their price range.

Q: What are the current trends with extensions?

A: Garden rooms are consistently popular, often replacing conservatories which are too hot in summer and too cold in winter. Moving or extending kitchen or dining rooms to improve the links with the garden is much favoured. Making the best of available daylight is often key to success. Rear extensions tend to reduce daylight for what become the middle rooms, especially for terraced houses, so its often worth incorporating big roof-lights close to the back wall of the house to regain that light. Even with two storey extensions, it's possible to drop daylight

to the heart of the house using sunpipes.

Q: What advice would you give to someone wanting to build an extension for their period property?

A: If it's a listed building, you will need consent for any extension, and it is sensible to make a preliminary application to B&NES Historic Environment Team for advice. This will take a few weeks but will reduce the risk and the cost of preparing a full application only to have it refused. It may be helpful to take a cue from what your neighbours in similar houses have been permitted to do in recent years.

Conservation policies do change, so don't assume that an extension permitted 30 years ago would necessarily be permitted now. Extensions that do least

to change the character of the historic building may stand the best chance, but this might still be a contemporary design.

There is a tradition in Bath of many of the grandest set piece houses being smart up-front and relatively shambolic at the back, with all sorts of different sizes and shapes of extensions, so try working sympathetically within this tradition. An extension for a charming house rich in historic character should be relatively simple and low-key, not necessarily matching the house but designed in sympathy with it.

Q: Are there less costly changes people can make that will improve their home's space and layout?

A: Building new space is expensive and often very little is actually needed to make a big difference. It's really worthwhile thinking carefully about what's needed most. A space's character can be transformed by fitting larger windows or rooflights. More generous and useful space might be achieved by removing internal walls, or perhaps creating internal windows, if some separation is still preferred. If it is one particular dimension of a room that's restricting its use, a small extension there may prove really good value; something as simple as doubling up the use of a room. The classic example might be the study or office being adapted to serve as a spare bedroom with the use of flexible furniture. It is one of an architect's most useful roles to provide clients with perceptive analysis and good advice. **BL**

