

10 PROJECTS TO TRANSFORM YOUR HOME

If you're considering a renovation scheme, discover what you can achieve with these inspirational home ideas

Thinking of starting a building project? Whether you have big plans or they're more refined, there are plenty of clever ways to update your property. And with many improvements now possible under permitted development rights, schemes such as adding an extension or building a conversion can be done without seeking planning permission first, making the process quicker and easier. As with any venture, organisation is key, so have a clear idea of what you want to achieve and stick to the original plan to help keep your project on schedule and on budget. From needing more space to adding a kitchen, rejigging an interior layout or simply increasing your home's kerb appeal, read on for our selection of achievable projects.

1 BUILD A DESK UNDER THE STAIRS

If you want to make the most of a small interior without extending, it makes financial sense to take advice from a designer. Viki Lander of Ensoul Interior Architecture (020 3637 0700; ensoul.co.uk) dreamt up space-saving solutions for this 66sqm property in Earl's Court, west London. A mezzanine level houses a bedroom and en-suite bathroom, which also allowed for a study to be built under the stairs. The desk is made from the stained timber used for the staircase and is covered in the same solid surface used on the kitchen island – with secret storage incorporated, too. 'We didn't add lots of square footage, but we made each inch valuable,' says Lander. The refurb cost £190,000. >





2 REPLACE YOUR FLOORING

A simple and cost-effective way of transforming your home is to replace the flooring. When Felix and Caroline Milns, designers at Zulufish (020 8747 3743; zulufish.co.uk), renovated their home in Chiswick, west London, they wanted to respect and restore the original architecture while reshaping the layout to transform the run-down property into a modern, open-plan and light-filled home better suited to their family's needs. Keen to create continuity from the outside in, they installed co-ordinating patchwork tiles, which run from the pathway at the front of the house into the entrance hall and ground-floor WC. It's a clever technique that helps connect different zones. Mutina Azulej tiles, £112.21 per sqm, Casa Ceramica (01772 201 643; casa ceramica.co.uk). The original 245sqm detached five-bedroom, three-storey villa has been turned into a 370sqm, four-storey six-bedroom family home.



4 EXTEND UNDER PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

If you want to create more living space without first seeking planning consent, see what can be built under permitted development (PD) at planningportal.co.uk. This house in Churston Gardens, north London was in a state of disrepair when its owners bought it. Undeterred, they instructed Mulroy Architects (020 7267 5123; mulroyarchitects.com) to renovate the property and maximise its floorplan while adhering to PD rights. A three-metre ground-floor masonry extension provides room for an open-plan kitchen, dining and living space next to the garden. A loft extension has created a fourth bedroom and the front was refurbished by reinstating original architectural details. As the changes to the rear extension were so extensive, it was assessed to be more cost-effective to replace the elevation with a new facade incorporating a white rendered external insulation system, which also provided a cohesive exterior look. The project cost £225,800.

3 UPDATE YOUR ENTRANCE

The outside of your property is the first thing people see when visiting your home, so it's important to pick the right look to create a good initial impression. From steel aluminium to idigbo, there is a wealth of modern external door choices and by refreshing the exterior, you can transform the look and feel of your home. When selecting a new front door, go for a design that suits the decorating scheme and period of your house – one that complements neighbouring properties, too. Aesthetic considerations are crucial, but you also need to consider security, ensuring both the frame and locks are of a high standard and that the door is installed properly. Look for doors with Secured By Design status, and ensure the lock conforms to British Standard 3621. The owner of this traditional London terrace updated the exterior by giving it a fresh coat of paint and teaming it with a modern front door from Urban Front (01494 778 787; urbanfront.com). Ferrara door with side panel, in oak, from £8,820 (excluding handles).



5 REINTRODUCE PERIOD FEATURES

If you're considering an interior renovation of an older property, think about reinstating its original features. This flat was designed in the 1950s by British firm Chamberlin, Powell and Bon as part of the Barbican Estate, and it's one of the largest examples of the Brutalist style. The bathroom and WC hadn't been touched, but the previous occupants had removed a lot of the property's original features such as the kitchen, which was out of keeping with its design, and also the sliding doors in the living area. The owners instructed Azman Architects (020 7739 8191; azmanarchitects.com) to reintegrate sliding panels back into the renovation scheme. The new cherry wood doors slide across to partition the dining room from a small living area, which can be transformed into a guest bedroom when friends and family stay over. The project cost £162,000. >



6 ADD A DOUBLE-HEIGHT VOID

Chris Romer-Lee at Studio Octopi (020 7633 0003; octopi.co.uk) took the less is more route when he redesigned a mews property in Holland Park, London, losing six square metres of floor area in the process. The 116sqm house hadn't been touched for years and as you walked through the property it got progressively darker. When Donna and Peter Dowding bought the house they wanted to introduce as much natural light into the home as possible. Romer-Lee's solution was to lose the box bedroom on the first floor and replace it with a double-height void, which opens up the interior and overlooks a new ground-floor dining area, flooding the downstairs living space with light. Upstairs there are now only two bedrooms and two en suites, and the third bedroom has been moved to the ground floor in place of the garage. The project cost £250,000.



7 INSTALL NEW FENCING

Landscaping your outdoor space can be a high-impact update. This project by Stefano Marinaz Landscape Architecture (020 3727 7264; stefanomarinaz.com) was about making the garden a true extension of the home. The upper level extends from a ground-floor kitchen and the lower level continues from a living room in the basement, while materials were chosen to create a synergy with the main house. For example, the mellow sandstone tiles indoors were specially treated to make them non-slip and suitable for external use, and the design of the outdoor seating mimics a bench inside the home. But the pièce de résistance has to be the stunning fencing at the side and rear of the garden. Made from hardwood iroko, it's displayed in an unusual horizontal design in slats of various sizes, creating a unique exterior finish. Furthermore, behind the back wall of fencing sit two concealed storage spaces, one for an air-conditioning unit and the other for garden and outdoor equipment. The project cost £65,000. >



9 FIT INTERNAL WINDOWS

'Sometimes you only need to make a small gesture or change and the affect can be immense,' says architect Amos Goldreich of Amos Goldreich Architecture (020 7272 6592; agarchitecture.net). This concept was showcased in his recent project in Primrose Hill, London – a 60sqm, two-bedroom flat. The owner's brief called for a reconfiguration of the layout to transform the apartment and create a second bathroom. The new bathroom had no ventilation, so a slot window was built between the bathroom and the single bedroom to allow natural light to filter through. The kitchen was moved to where the bathroom used to be and is now part of the living area, and what was the kitchen has merged with the former single bedroom to create a bigger room with more windows. This allowed for the bathroom to be moved and a new guest WC to be created. The project cost £150,000.

8 CREATE BESPOKE STORAGE

If clutter is becoming an issue, make the most of unused areas to create much-needed storage solutions. Floor-to-ceiling and wall-to-wall open and closed shelving filled with books, home accessories and photographs will create a striking feature, as well as vital space to hide away all your unsightly belongings. Sudbury Concept fitted furniture range, from £3,000, Neville Johnson. (0161 873 8333; nevillejohnson.co.uk)



10 INSTALL A FREE-STANDING KITCHEN

If you dream of an open-plan kitchen, dining and living space, but also want to close off some areas, try this clever kitchen on wheels concept by Turner Architects (020 7733 0220; turnerarchitects.co.uk). The owners wanted smaller cellular rooms day to day, but also to open up the space for family gatherings, so the solution was to create an adaptable piece of furniture that moves to fit the occasion. The oven and fridge, which are both integrated into the design, can work regardless of where it is placed – there's a floor socket for when it's positioned in the centre of the room, and when the unit is moved the plugs are lifted and replugged into the wall. All of the kitchen carcasses were made by Lamtek (01623 759 856; lamtek.co.uk) and the kitchen veneered and sprayed door fronts by K Williamson Veneers (01992 500 059; kwilliamsonveneers.com). The kitchen cost around £10,000. **GD**

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