



# Project Planning Guide

Your Blueprint to a Successful Renovation: Plan with Precision, Build with Confidence

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BALANCE & HARMONY THROUGH GREAT DESIGN

# 01 Contents

Embarking on a home renovation is an exhilarating adventure, with the promise of turning your dreams into reality. However, before you leap into the design phase, it's imperative to establish a robust foundation through research - much like a doctor requires an accurate diagnosis before performing surgery, or a builder needs a solid base to construct a house. Recognising this critical need, we developed the Project Planning Guide.

With the Project Planning Guide in hand, you are not just planning a renovation; you are laying the groundwork for a successful transformation of your living space. It equips you with the knowledge and confidence to navigate the complexities of renovation, ultimately setting your project on a path to success and bringing your dream home to life.

- |                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 Contents                                  | Once you have ticked all the boxes below, you are ready to move to the Analysis Phase, see below right. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 Project Roadmap                           | Review the roadmap and identify where you are on your journey   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 Who to Ask                                | Identify the best people to speak to for advice before and during design.                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 Project Expert Directory                  | Directory of professionals who can help you at each stage of your design and building process           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 Building Cost Calculator                  | Simple estimate to assess your building project cost  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 Return on Investment Calculator           | What improvements to your home will make you the most money   |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 Creating a Design Brief Using 7 Questions | Know what to ask those professionals who will be working with you                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 Readiness Slider                          | Gauge of how ready you are to move to the Design Phase  |

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# 02 Building Project Roadmap

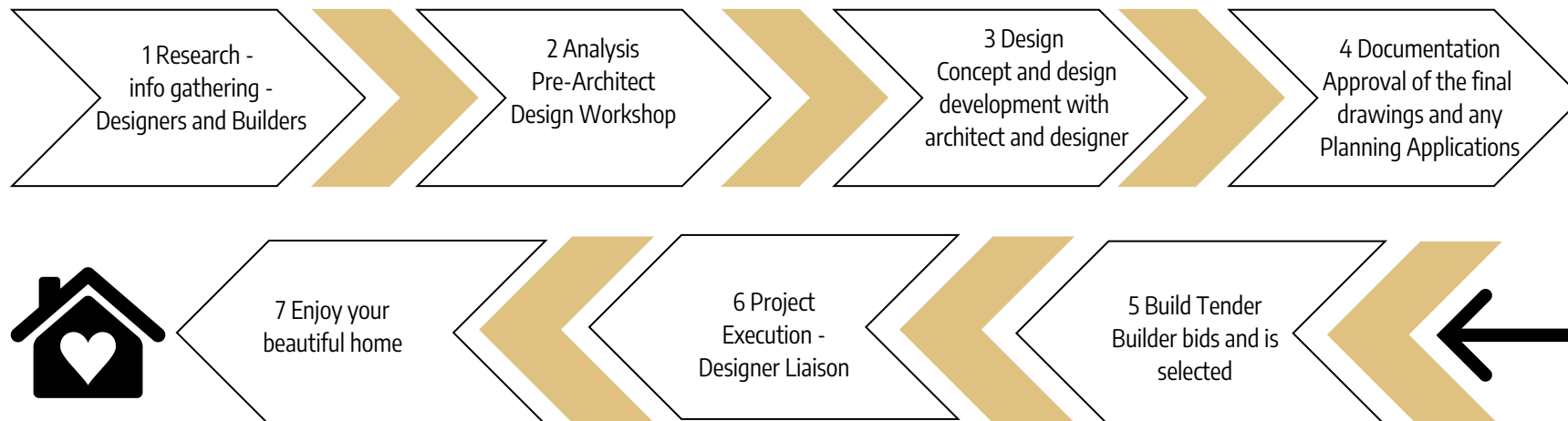
The Major Steps Required for Designing and Building Your New Home Extension

Alice: "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" The Cheshire Cat: "That depends a good deal on where you want to go."  
Alice: "I don't much care where." The Cheshire Cat: "Then it doesn't much matter which way you go."

## The Roadmap This is important so be sure to read this carefully!

Right now, you should be in the Research Phase. This is where you are gathering information and playing around with ideas. At the point where you want to get serious, you will want to check the feasibility of your ideas and understand what the project constraints are. You may be thinking of approaching an architect soon to discuss the next steps. However, there is a crucial step that you should consider before jumping into design with an architect. If you are not totally sure of what you want from your new home renovation and want to dig deeper into exactly what you need to achieve for the project to be 100% successful, then please read on!

If you work with me, we will move to the Analysis Phase by conducting a Pre-Architect Design Workshop - a revolutionary approach that precisely defines your true aspirations, with regards to how you want to live in your new space, even if you can't fully articulate them yet. You will receive a document that can be used going forward with other professionals, such as your chosen architect, that will ensure you reduce project risk and get the best options for your site and budget. We'll work together to define clear design criteria, ensuring that the home that you eventually live in aligns perfectly with your vision. By the time you're ready to bring in an architect, you'll have a solid, well-thought-out plan that considers all the possibilities and addresses your needs on a deeper level.



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# 03 Who to Ask

Seeking Advice from a Professional pre-design

Here's why the interior designer should be your first call

*If you think it's expensive to hire a professional to do the job, wait until you hire an amateur.”*

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## Interior Designer

Interior designers are more than just decorators—they're experts in how spaces work for the people who live in them. They delve into understanding not just what you want, but how you want to feel in your new space. An interior designer excels at aligning the design with your personal goals for the project. They ask the right questions: Are you seeking more natural light? Do you want to create a seamless flow between rooms? Are you envisioning a cosy corner for relaxation? By nailing down this vision from the start, they ensure that every element—from layout to lighting—supports your lifestyle aspirations. Get them on your team early. Skipping this step can lead to three common, yet costly, problems:

1. **Disappointing Designs:** An architect dives into the design phase only to deliver a result that misses the mark, requiring costly redesigns.
2. **Expensive Mid-Build Changes:** You realise better options exist only after construction begins, leading to expensive changes or settling for a sub-par design.
3. **A Home That's Good, But Not Great:** Without a clear understanding of your true aspirations, you end up with a home that doesn't fully satisfy your vision.

## Architect

Architects are brilliant at taking that initial vision and translating it into a structurally sound, aesthetically pleasing design. They ensure your extension fits seamlessly with your existing property while adhering to all necessary regulations. While architects are skilled at design and structure, they might not always dive as deeply into how you'll use the space daily, which could leave some elements being overlooked. Once the design criteria is set with the interior designer, an architect will ensure the structure is sound and compliant.

## Builder

Builders are essential for turning plans into reality. They know how to bring designs to life efficiently and within budget, handling the physical labour and logistics. They focus on execution rather than design, which means they might not provide input on how the space feels or functions. However, once your plans have been drawn up, that is when you go to a selection of builders to tender.



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# 04 Project Expert Directory

*"It's not What you know, but Who you know!"*

Our Personal Directory of Trusted Professionals






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## Who Can Help?

Understanding WHAT to do is one challenge, and figuring out WHO can help you is another. Every day, our team receives inquiries from homeowners seeking recommendations for trusted professionals. Navigating the sea of options can be overwhelming, so to simplify the process, I've compiled a list of professionals we trust implicitly for design roles, as well as other areas that may be able to help you along the way. These experts not only deliver exceptional work but also offer invaluable advice throughout your project.

If you have any other questions about your project, don't hesitate to reach out to us. We're here to help. If we can't provide the answers you need, we'll connect you with someone who can, ensuring you have the support and guidance necessary to bring your vision to life.

Profession	Name	Company	Contact Details
 Interior Designer	Natalie Rodrigues	Rodrigues Interiors	natalie@rodriguesinteriors.co.uk 07518 984999
 Architect	Andrew Sheeley	Roc Haus	andrew@roc-haus.co.uk 07958 952 585
 Structural Engineer	Luca Seculin	SCB Structures Ltd	luca@scbstructures.co.uk 07426 742331
 Builder	Nigel Leaver	Absolute Creations Ltd	nigel@absolutecreations.ltd 07904 195911
 Estate Agent	Emma Taylor	Hilbury Chaplain	emmataylor@hilburychaplain.co.uk 07401 780108
 Mortgage Advisor	Ian Wicks	Best Mortgage Group	ian@wearebest.uk 07759 126664
 Landscape Designer	Samuel Moore	Consillium Hortus	samuel@consilliumhortus.co.uk 07463 101012
 Wills and Power of Attorney	Rob Bishop	Family First Consultants	info@familyfirstconsultants.co.uk 01708 510342



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# 05 Building Cost Calculator

The Simple, Do-It-Yourself Way to Estimate your Number

*"What you get free, costs too much!"*

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## The Big Burning Question that Everyone Wants to Know

The most dreaded question architects, builders and every other professional hates has got to be, 'how much will my project cost'? There are so many variables that a definitive answer is literally impossible. Even worse, the consequences of trying to answer and risk giving 'bad advice' will have most experts running away to avoid the question. The problem is that this question is VERY important. No one can proceed if they don't have a ball-park estimation of cost. This guide will help you to determine an estimate of overall project costs. Your actual number may be more or less, but it can be helpful to see an estimated figure. These figures are based on a national average, are ground floor rear extensions to the plaster finish stage and exclude VAT.

Extension Quality	Size	Price Range - Low	Price Range - High	Price Range - Average
Basic Extension	20 sqm	£40,000	£56,000	£48,000
Medium Extension	30 sqm	£60,000	£84,000	£72,000
Premium Extension	30 sqm	£75,000	£110,000	£92,500
Large Extension	50 sqm	£100,000	£140,000	£120,000

### Factors that will affect the cost of your extension:

- Type of extensions - Basement, side or double storey extensions will all cost more than a single rear extension
- Build quality - particularly in regard to windows, doors, insulation, soundproofing
- Accessibility - access issues for large machinery to get to where the build needs to happen, will create higher labour costs and will affect the timeline
- More unusual designs such as vaulted ceilings will require more steelwork and will require more drawings from certain professionals such as a structural engineer
- Regionality - labour costs are higher in the south and in London than elsewhere
- The interior design as well as the added features of kitchens, bathrooms, joinery and other bespoke features
- Getting the right professionals - the cheapest cannot be the best, they just cut corners. Go for the best value, who will be paid well but will deliver the best outcome.
- And finally getting the design right from the beginning. Changing a design after it has started could greatly affect the budget and will cause delays.

These generic estimates for assessing project costs might be close to your actual costs or could be way off the mark, if it is important to get a more accurate estimate please call my number and ask if a pre-Architect Design Workshop appointment would be suitable for your project.



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# 06 Return on Investment Calculator

What improvements to your home give you the most return on investment?

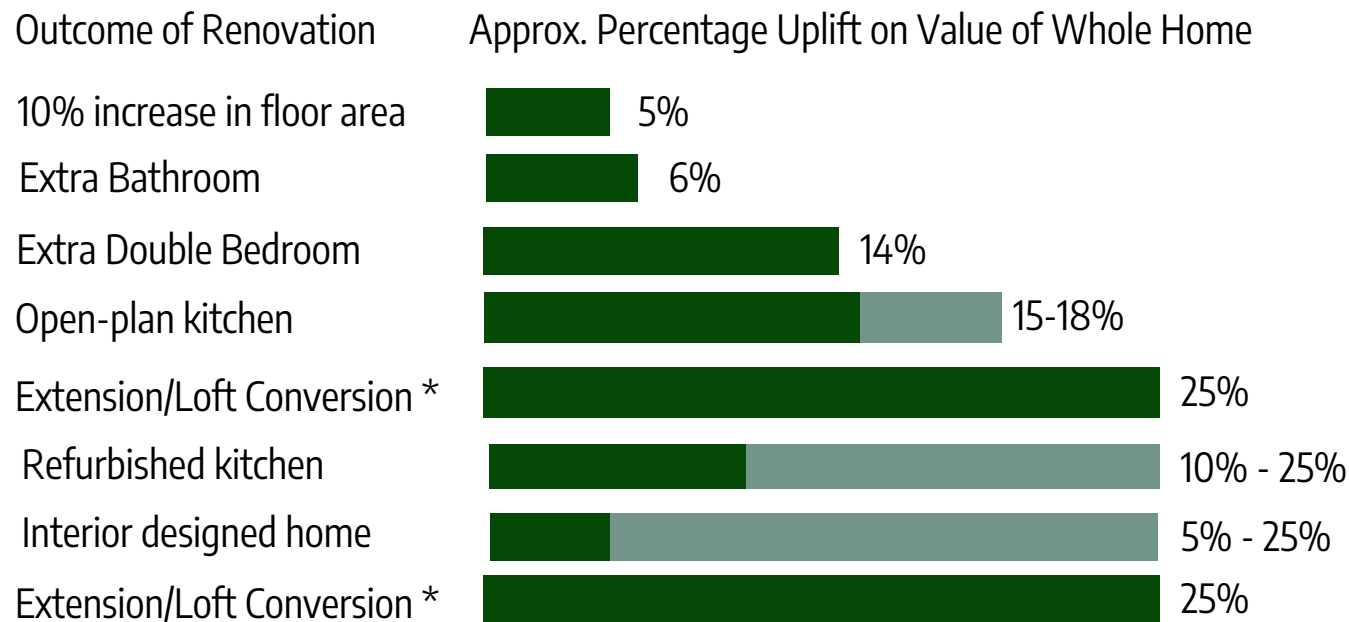
*"Price is What You Pay.  
Value is what You Get!"*

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## The 2nd Big Burning Question that Everyone Wants to Know

OK, so if I invest in my home and build that loft conversion or extension, will it increase the value of my home? In the UK, savvy home renovations can be one of the best investments you make. Whether you're upgrading your kitchen to something even Gordon Ramsay would envy or transforming that dusty loft into a cosy living space, the right improvements can add serious value to your property. Whether you are thinking of selling or staying put, not only do these upgrades make your home more stylish and functional, but they can also turn it into a hot commodity on the market for now or later on. So, if you're looking to invest wisely, these renovations could have you laughing all the way to the bank!



\*when incorporating a large double and bathroom to the value of a 3 bed one bathroom house

While this gives you a pretty good idea of how to boost your home's value, it's not quite as simple as adding a room and watching the pounds roll in. You still need to weigh all your options to make sure that your dream renovation won't turn into a financial nightmare. My top tip? Get an estate agent in before you start knocking down walls. Chat with them about house values and what sort of return on investment you can expect. Keep in mind, though, that a lot depends on where you live and how high-end your refurb ends up being. So, plan wisely—unless you fancy turning your cash into dust along with that old wallpaper!



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# 07 Myth VS Reality

## What Do Interior Designers Actually Do?

*“The Right People, in the Right Place, at the Right Time!”*

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An Interior designers role is a lot larger that most people realise and NOT all interior designers are created equal!. Often people assume that the interior designer comes well after the project is underway, and is all about the decorative side of things. This is a misconception - a well-chosen interior designer should be a vital part of your professional team from the start. When you involve them at the pre-design stage of your project, they should get involved with every part of the process to ensure that, potentially, the biggest investment you will make to your home, turns out the way you want it to.

Myth	Reality
Designs a decorative scheme, that includes the colours and fabrics we should use	<p><b>Establishing Design Needs and Options</b></p> <p>Helps you to clarify and establish the specific design criteria that your project will need in order for it to be 100% successful in every way. This is a deep dive into finding out your true aspirations for what you want to achieve and how you want to live even if you can't quite articulate them yet.</p> <p><b>Crucial Liaison with Architect, Builder and Landscaper</b></p> <p>Whilst these professionals are busy with the technicalities and compliance, an interior designer will be actively ensuring that every design decision will reflect your values, priorities and vision from the layout, to the aesthetics and the functionality of your new space and also how that design leads through to it's surroundings.</p> <p><b>Interior Design</b></p> <p>Working closely with you, the right interior designer will achieve the concept of the interiors in a holistic way with all the elements considered: from the design of the lighting; architectural features; joinery; wall and floor finishes; window treatments and other soft furnishings and so on - so that the final scheme is not just beautiful but deeply personal and perfectly aligned with your vision.</p> <p><b>Furnishings, Fixtures and Artwork Sourcing and Procurement</b></p> <p>Using specialist suppliers and artisans, all that you need for your new space will be sourced for you and styled ready for your enjoyment.</p> <p><b>Interior/Landscape Liaison</b></p> <p>Bridging that gap between the interior and the exterior, so that external features are viewed at their best from inside your home. Patio design, lighting and architectural features are all vital elements that enhance your interior and so could also fall under the interiors scope.</p>



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# 08 How to Create a Design Brief Using Only 7 Questions

The method below is our famous 7 question design brief creator

*"It's not the Destination, it's about the Journey"*

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Full design brief on our website

The Question

Your Answer

---

1 What is your current situation?

---

2 Is how you life changing or about to change?

---

3 Who are the important people this home needs to be designed for?

---

4 What are the budget timeframes and boundaries we need to work within?

---

5 What will you need to see to know that your project has been a complete success?

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6 How do you want to FEEL as you move through your space?

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7 What does your home really mean to you?

To download our full design brief guide got to our website - see above



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# 09 Readiness Slider

*"Success is where preparation and opportunity meet!"*

Are you ready to move to the design phase?

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## Do you Now Need To Seek Professional Help?

This exercise allows you to assess how ready you are to move to the Design Phase. If you are not close to 10 on ALL scales, then it's best to seek help from an expert to do this research. If you rush into the design phase without this information available, you'll run the risk of making too many assumptions, which is the # 1 reason projects go over budget and over time.

Question	Slider (0-10, 0 = Low, 10 = High)	
On a scale of 1-10, how clear are you on exactly what you want to do as a project?	0	10
On a scale of 1-10, how aware are you of all the options that are open to you?	0	10
On a scale of 1-10, how aware are you of the process you will need to have in place to get the project completed on time and on budget?	0	10
On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you that your budget will achieve your needs?	0	10
Give yourself a current overall rating for readiness.	0	10



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Don't worry if you are not at 10 on all scales yet. The Pre-Architect Design Workshop process allows you to fill in the knowledge gaps and get you ready to move into the Design Phase. See details to the right.



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how to turn  
your dreams into  
a reality then  
book a discovery  
call with Natalie

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