



16 TOP TIPS

for value-added property

There are many ways to add value to your home. Here are some ideas on how to get the best return on your biggest investment – your home

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1 Going up?

"Attic conversions are an ideal way to add value to your property," says Jill McStay, Head Negotiator at Murphy Moore Properties. Attic conversions are one of the least disruptive ways to add square footage to your home and will significantly add to the price of your property.

2 Extend

Extensions can add value to your home, particularly if you are adding an extra

bedroom or extending the kitchen area. But beware – it will mean a smaller garden, so ensure the interior and exterior of the house are proportionate.

3 Dig it

In areas where building up or extending are not viable options, converting an existing cellar is a great way to add value. But if you need to dig beneath the house to gain a basement it can cost over £80,000 – this will not be easy to recoup when selling.

4 As featured

If you have a garage or outhouse, this could be used to add a unique feature room, such as an office. As many people are now choosing to work from home, an office, away from distraction and noise, will add to the price of your home.

5 Tear it down

Open plan living has become popular in recent years. Kitchens, living rooms and dining areas are being used as one large



family space. Knocking down walls to create a better flow can be an inexpensive option when trying to add value. If the walls are not load-bearing it is a quick process and can cost as little as £70. It is more expensive and complex if the wall is load-bearing; it will need to be supported and you will need planning permission.

6 Under your nose

There may be existing space right under your nose that you can make use of. If you have a small spare room, turn it into an extra bathroom, you could also remove the wall between a bedroom and the spare room to make a bedroom en suite. If you have a walk-in wardrobe or dressing room, changing this into a bathroom will prove valuable.

7 Bathroom basics

"Bathrooms can really benefit from a little remodelling and can increase the overall value of your home," says Jill. Trends have moved toward neutral colours. If you have a peach-coloured suite circa 1970 then it should be replaced. If your bathroom is already a neutral colour then keep it clean, re-grout tiles and add nice towels, new mirrors, chrome fixtures, a heated towel rail and matching accessories. Jill also advises investing in features, "Adding sought after extra touches like a power shower, a Jacuzzi bath and double sinks can give you a great return on your investment."

SELLER BEWARE

Every home has a ceiling price, so ensure that costs incurred don't outweigh the value added from refurbishments.

8 Kit out your kitchen

The trend towards using the kitchen as a family space, instead of somewhere to simply cook dinner, means your kitchen can add greatly to the overall price of your home. "A well-groomed kitchen is usually one of the main selling points in a property," says Jill.

Unfortunately, it is also one of the most expensive to completely redecorate. It is therefore not advisable to rip out your kitchen and start from scratch; Jill advises changing fixtures and fittings in the room instead. Replacing cabinet doors and adding a worktop will greatly enhance the look of your kitchen.

9 It's getting hot in here

Many older houses do not have central heating. Installing a central heating system will greatly enhance the price you can command for your home. ▶



10 Glazing over

Installing double-glazed windows will not only add value to your house, but will also increase the overall comfort of the property. They are extremely energy efficient and will also improve the 'kerb appeal' of your property. "New windows are a great way to increase the value of your home. Due to new building regulations the standard of new windows is now very high. Modern windows are easy to clean and energy efficient," Jill explains.

11 Planning ahead

Obtaining planning permission is certain to add value to your property. Even if you don't plan to use it while living in your house, the option will be valuable to potential buyers.

12 Light up

Light creates the illusion of extra space and will make your home more attractive to potential buyers. "Buyers avoid dark, cramped spaces," says Jill. "Consider increasing the amount of natural light by



adding skylights around your home, particularly in hallways, landings and kitchens. Raising ceilings and changing colour schemes will also help."

such as cream or white. Matching your blinds or curtains to the colour of the room will also give the feel of extra space.

14 Garden essentials

If you have a garden, make use of it. It can be an excellent selling point and a well-groomed garden will add value. "No matter what time of year, buyers will be thinking about the summer months in the back garden. They will be imaging areas for entertaining, barbecues and space for children to play," says Jill. A decking area can also add to the appeal of your garden and it is an investment, but one that you can also enjoy while you're still living in your home. "A well-designed deck or patio would greatly enhance the appearance of your garden and provide you with additional living space."

15 Out front

Keep the front of your house clean and clutter-free. This will be the buyer's first impression of your home. Keep your lawn mowed and weed-free, hedges neat and add some potted plants. Make sure your windows are clean and the front of your house is freshly painted.

16 Floored

Flooring has the biggest impact on the house as a whole. "Today, carpets are no longer acceptable in certain areas of the house," says Jill. Common sense should dictate what flooring to use where; generally hard flooring (tiles and wood) downstairs and in bathrooms, and carpets in bedrooms for added comfort. ■

PLANNING REGULATIONS

When making changes to your home ensure you visit the Government's planning portal for advice, www.planningportal.gov.uk.

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