



FREE GUIDE

A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE

Planning an extension, renovation or *major home improvement?*

What to think about before you start: budgets, planning permission, building regulations, choosing a builder and living through the build. In plain English, from a family-run building company with 40+ years on the tools.

Southampton & Hampshire

40+ years' experience

5.0 on Google

WELCOME

Before you start

An extension or a big renovation is one of the largest things most families ever spend money on. Done well, it changes how you live for years. Done badly, it's stressful, late and over budget.

We've been building homes around Southampton for over 40 years, and we've noticed that the projects that go most smoothly nearly always have one thing in common: the homeowner did a bit of homework first. They knew roughly what they wanted, what it might cost, what permissions they needed and what to ask a builder.

That's what this guide is for. It isn't a sales brochure. It's the advice we'd give a friend who asked us, "Where do I start?" Read it with a cup of tea, make some notes, and use the checklist at the back to keep track.

If you've got questions after reading it, we're always happy to talk them through, with no obligation.

Gary & Craig

Directors, Maidanbuild Homes

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A kitchen renovation by Maidanbuild

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Start with how you want to live

It's tempting to start with pictures of kitchens. Start instead with the problem you want to solve.

Before you speak to anyone, jot down what isn't working in your home now, and what a normal day would look like once the work's finished. A bigger kitchen? A downstairs toilet? Somewhere for the children to do homework? A bedroom for an elderly parent?

Then split your list into **must-haves** and **nice-to-haves**. When the budget gets tight (it often does), you'll already know what you can let go.

- **Light and flow.** Where does the sun come round? Which rooms do you walk through most?
- **Storage.** Almost everyone wishes they'd planned more.
- **The next 10 years.** Children growing up, working from home, getting older.
- **Look around.** Similar houses on your street may already have done what you're planning.

Our tip

Ask yourself whether you'd be better moving. Stamp duty, fees and moving costs add up, but so does building. If you love your area and your plot, improving usually makes sense.

Set a realistic budget

The build itself is only part of the cost. Knowing where the rest of the money goes is the best way to avoid nasty surprises.

What a project usually includes

- **The build:** groundworks, structure, roof, windows and doors, plastering, first and second fix.
- **Design fees:** architect or architectural technician, and a structural engineer.
- **Official fees:** planning application (if needed), building control and, sometimes, party wall surveyors.
- **Finishes:** kitchen, bathroom, flooring, lighting and decorating. These are often priced separately, so check.
- **VAT:** make sure you know whether every quote includes it.
- **Contingency:** money set aside for the unexpected.

Plan for the unexpected

Older homes hide surprises: poor foundations, old drains, rotten timbers, wiring that needs updating. We recommend keeping **10–15% of your budget** aside as a contingency. If you don't need it, it's a bonus for the finishing touches.

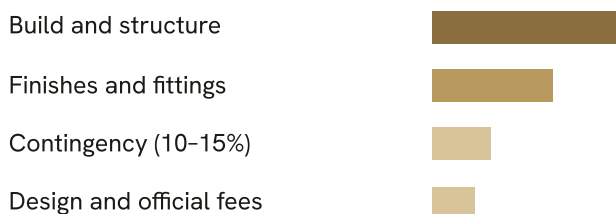


Illustration only. Every project splits differently.

Our tip

Watch out for "cheap" quotes that leave things out. A quote that looks lower may not include skips, scaffolding, making good, or the kitchen fitting. Compare like with like, line by line.

Get a ballpark early

A builder who visits your home can often give you a rough figure before you pay for full drawings. It helps you decide whether the plan is realistic before you spend on design.

Planning permission: do you need it?

Many single-storey extensions don't need a full planning application, thanks to "permitted development" rights. But there are limits, and they don't apply everywhere.

Permitted development in England: the headline rules

Single-storey rear extension

Up to **3m** deep on a semi-detached or terraced house, or **4m** on a detached house, and no more than 4m high. Under the "larger home extension" scheme you can go to 6m or 8m, after notifying your council so neighbours can comment.

Two-storey rear extension

Up to **3m** deep, and at least 7m from your rear boundary. Materials should be similar to the existing house.

Side extension

Single storey, no more than 4m high, and no wider than half the width of the original house.

General limits

Extensions can't cover more than half the garden around the original house, can't go in front of the main front wall, and must stay lower near boundaries.

When the rules are stricter

- **The New Forest National Park** and **conservation areas**: fewer permitted development rights (for example, no side extensions).
- **Listed buildings**: you'll need listed building consent for most work, inside or out.
- **Flats and maisonettes** don't have these rights.
- Some houses, often on newer estates, have had their rights **removed by a planning condition**.

Our tip

Even if you're sure you don't need planning, consider a **Lawful Development Certificate** from your council. It's official proof the work was allowed, which buyers' solicitors will ask for when you sell.

If you do need planning permission, a householder application usually takes around **8 weeks** for the council to decide, so build that into your timeline.

This is a simplified summary of the rules in England as of September 2026. Rules change, and every house is different, so always check with your local council or the Planning Portal (planningportal.co.uk) before you start.



Foundations on one of our Eastleigh new builds

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Building regulations and party walls

Building regulations

Planning is about how a building looks and its effect on neighbours. **Building regulations** are about whether it's safe, warm and built properly. You'll almost always need building regulations approval for an extension or structural work, even when you don't need planning.

A building control inspector (from your council or an approved private inspector) checks the work at key stages, such as foundations, drainage and insulation. At the end you receive a **completion certificate**.

Keep it safe

You'll need the completion certificate when you sell your home.

The Party Wall Act

If your work affects a wall you share with a neighbour, builds on the boundary, or involves digging foundations close to a neighbour's building (usually within 3 metres), you must serve a **party wall notice** on them.

- Work on a shared wall: at least **2 months'** notice.
- A new wall on the boundary, or digging near their foundations: at least **1 month's** notice.
- If they don't agree in writing, surveyors are appointed to draw up a "party wall award".

Talk to your neighbours early, before any letters go out. A friendly chat about your plans, working hours and parking goes a long way.

Drawings, design and decisions

Good drawings are the foundation of an accurate quote and a smooth build. The more that's decided on paper, the less that changes on site.

Who you might need

- **An architect or architectural technician** to draw up the design, and the planning and building regulations drawings.
- **A structural engineer** to calculate steels, beams and foundations, especially if you're knocking walls through.
- For some jobs, a **surveyor** (party walls, or checking an older house before you commit).

A good builder can often recommend people they've worked with and trust, and can look over drawings early to spot things that will be expensive or awkward to build.

Decide early

Some choices affect the structure and the price, so make them before the build starts:

- Windows, bifolds or sliding doors, and rooflights
- Kitchen layout, including where the sink, hob and island go
- Heating: radiators or underfloor heating
- Sockets, lighting and switches
- Flooring (especially if it runs through into existing rooms)

Many items, such as bespoke glazing and kitchens, take **several weeks to arrive**, so order in good time.



How to choose the right builder

This is the most important decision you'll make. The right builder will guide you through everything else in this guide.

What to look for

- **A real business:** a registered company with an address you can check on Companies House.
- **Insurance:** ask to see their public liability insurance certificate.
- **Recent, local work:** photos, references, and ideally a past client you can speak to.
- **Reviews:** genuine Google reviews that mention names and projects.
- **A written, itemised quote** that says what's included and what isn't.
- **A work schedule and a payment schedule**, with payments tied to stages of work.
- **A clear process for changes**, such as a signed variation form, so both sides know where they stand.
- **Good communication:** who's on site day to day, and who do you call?

Warning signs

- A large payment up front before any work starts
- A discount for paying in cash
- No written quote, or a one-line price
- Pressure to decide today
- "We can start tomorrow" on a big job
- No business address or company details
- Vague answers about insurance, building control or timescales

Questions to ask

- Have you built something similar recently?
- Who will be on site, and will you be there?
- How long will it take, and when could you start?
- What isn't included in this price?
- How do you handle changes and extra work?

What happens during the build

Every job is different, but a typical single-storey extension follows these stages. Knowing the order helps you plan around them.



Set-up

Site protected, skip and welfare arranged, services located.



Groundworks and foundations

Digging out and pouring foundations. Building control inspects before concrete goes in.



Drainage and floor slab

New drains connected, then the insulated floor laid.



Walls up

Blockwork and brickwork rise to roof height, with steels fitted where needed.



Roof, windows and doors

Once these are in, the building is watertight: a big milestone.



First fix

Electrics, plumbing and heating run inside the walls and floors.



Knock-through and plastering

Often left until now, so you keep your existing room as long as possible.



Second fix and finishes

Kitchen or bathroom fitted, sockets and lights, flooring, decorating.



Snagging and handover

A walk-round together to put any small things right, final inspection and completion certificate.



Slab and blockwork



Roof going on

Weather

Heavy rain or frost can pause groundworks and bricklaying. A good builder builds a little slack into the programme.



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Living at home while the work's done

Most of our clients stay at home during their build. With a bit of planning, it's very manageable.

- **Set up a temporary kitchen** in another room: a microwave, kettle, fridge and a table go a long way.
- **Expect some dust and noise.** We seal off work areas, but it helps to clear rooms and cover furniture nearby.
- **Agree the basics** before day one: working hours, access, where materials and the skip go, and use of a toilet.
- **Think about pets and children.** Sites have open trenches and tools, so keep a safe, separate route through the house.
- **Let your neighbours know** when you're starting and when the noisier stages are due.
- **Check your home insurance.** Tell your insurer about the work before it starts.
- **Keep talking.** A quick chat at the start or end of the day stops small questions becoming big ones.
- **Take photos** as it goes up. You'll love looking back at them.

Your planning checklist

Getting started

- ☐ Written my must-haves and nice-to-haves
- ☐ Looked at similar homes on my street
- ☐ Set a total budget, including 10-15% contingency
- ☐ Had a builder visit for a rough ballpark

Permissions

- ☐ Checked if my home is in a conservation area or the New Forest National Park
- ☐ Found out if I need planning permission
- ☐ Applied for planning, or a Lawful Development Certificate
- ☐ Building regulations route agreed
- ☐ Spoken to my neighbours
- ☐ Party wall notices served (if needed)

Design

- ☐ Drawings completed
- ☐ Structural engineer's calculations done
- ☐ Windows, doors and kitchen chosen and ordered

My notes

Choosing a builder

- ☐ Checked the company on Companies House
- ☐ Seen their insurance certificate
- ☐ Read their reviews and seen recent work
- ☐ Written, itemised quote received
- ☐ Compared quotes like for like
- ☐ Work schedule and payment schedule agreed
- ☐ Understood how changes are handled

Before the build

- ☐ Told my home insurer
- ☐ Temporary kitchen planned
- ☐ Working hours, access and parking agreed

At the end

- ☐ Snagging walk-round done
- ☐ Building regulations completion certificate received
- ☐ Guarantees and manuals filed safely



ABOUT US

Maidanbuild Homes

We're a family-run building company based in Southampton. Gary has been on the tools for 40 years; his son Craig has now been building for 20 years, and in 2017 they founded Maidanbuild Homes together. We build house extensions, renovations, new homes, patios and landscaping across Southampton, Eastleigh, Romsey, Winchester, the New Forest and further afield in Hampshire.

40+

years' experience

5.0

on Google

£10m

public liability

Free

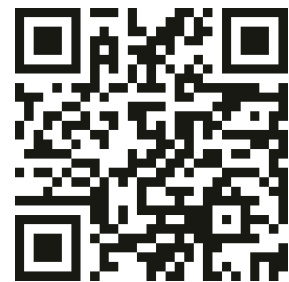
quotes & site visits

Ready to talk about your project?

Book a free, no-obligation site visit. We'll look at your home, talk through your ideas and give you honest advice.

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Scan to get in touch

This guide gives general information only and isn't legal or professional advice. Rules on planning, building regulations and party walls are summarised for England as of September 2026 and can change; always check with your local council or a qualified professional. Maidanbuild Homes Limited, registered in England and Wales, company no. 11122127. Tagus House, 9 Ocean Way, Southampton SO14 3TJ.