

GRAND DESIGNS

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New-build house
**AS SEEN
ON TV**
Falmouth, Cornwall



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EXTENSIONS **SPECIAL**

25 INNOVATIVE DESIGNS TO INSPIRE YOUR PROJECT

Sophie Conran

Inside the designer's bright and beautiful home

KITCHENS & BATHROOMS

New looks for 2011

TV ARCHITECT

GEORGE CLARKE Q&A

Public property sell-off

Is your local council putting its buildings up for sale?

SHOPPING Garden gates • Coat stands • Interior shutters • Rocking chairs



Sourcebook

Essential advice, ideas and updates



Paul McNamee Architects

Put the finishing touches to your home with our selection of interior shutters (p105) and garden gates (p101); get clever with kitchen storage (p115); and pick the perfect bathroom basin (p119). And if you're improving not moving, our guide to extensions has all the inspiration you need (pictured, p128)

PLANNING PERMISSION

How do you get the coveted green light? Use these tips from the experts on how to get the go-ahead

Architect Michael Trentham knows all about getting planning permission for extensions: since setting up his practice (020 7231 5931; mtarch.co.uk) 10 years ago, he has designed around 50, often in conservation areas. Here are his tips on how to get a green light for yours.

Look at houses on your street 'Do a visual check to see what other homeowners have done. Also check your local planning office's online records for previous and current applications in your area, so you can see what has or hasn't been permitted. The National Planning Application Register (planningportal.gov.uk) also lets you search for planning decisions from the past year in any area.'

Keep your neighbours onside 'Objections can really scupper a project, so talk to everyone you share a boundary with before you start, and again once you've come up with a design, and make every effort to take on their concerns. Give as much information as possible, including drawings and plans, but try not to leave things with them: you want to keep neighbours informed; you don't want them to start re-designing your plans.'

Talk to your local planners before you apply 'Visit your local planning department with drawings and site photos, or send them with a letter or email. Even if the response is negative, it gives you something to go on before you apply. Treat it as a positive consultation. If you are reasonable now, it puts you in good stead later if you need to appeal.'

Don't be scared to go contemporary 'Sometimes, even with listed buildings, there's more scope to add a contemporary extension. The key is to get a good design conversation going with your planning officer.'

If at first you don't succeed, try again 'A planning officer might object to your design because of how it looks, as well as the size. It's worth going back with a size they're happy with, but with the same look. That way, you're only dealing with one issue if you have to go to appeal, and in my experience appeal officers are more objective, so you get a better dialogue about design, rather than whether the bricks match.'

Listed building consent

If you live in a listed building, getting approval for your extension can be trickier; you need planning permission and listed building consent. Listed buildings are those that have been deemed worthy of protection for

heritage reasons, and the control extends to any object or structure affixed to the building. You obtain listed building consent from your local authority; forms are at the planning department. It's often worth hiring an architect with

experience of changing such buildings; a good place to start is the RIBA directory. Projectbook, a resource for period and listed building projects, has specialist information and listings (0844 561 1646; projectbook.co.uk).



above With its innovative floating external deck and open rear facade, it's hard to believe this property was once a decrepit three-bedroom Edwardian house in need of modernisation

'You just have to prove that you are compliant with the regulations'

'WE FIND CLEVER WAYS to play the planners,' says architect Paul McAneary (020 7240 0500; paulmcaneary.com), who managed to win permission to build a striking extension in a conservation area in Hammersmith, London. He had to fight two battles, one to beat the planners and the other to gain conservation area consent. 'It was extremely difficult to achieve,' he says.

The brief was to open up a dark and narrow Edwardian terraced house with a single-storey addition. A simpler option would have been to make the extension smaller (inside it measures 16.7 square metres) as this would have meant it fell under Permitted Development Rights, but that wouldn't have satisfied the client's remit to open up their family home.

The secret to success was thanks to an intimate understanding of the regulations and the rule book. 'You just have to prove that you are compliant with the regulations, then they can't stop you,' says McAneary. The architect only finished this project last September, but already

the legislation pivotal to their success has changed. For this reason, McAneary advises people always to consult an architect. 'This is our expertise. Believe me, it's an ever-changing rule book and a constant battle!'

You may think it's surprising that, when faced with these problems, the owners went for such a contemporary design (and if you're in a conservation area, design is scrutinised in minute detail). Lots of frameless glazing and a floating external deck brings the garden right into the house; standing at the kitchen sink, you can feel it right behind you thanks to the angled rear facade. And while internally they wanted a seamless transition between the old and the new, this wasn't the case with the exterior. The striking zinc cladding was chosen both for being arrestingly modern and for being sympathetic to the colour of the original brick. 'It seemed appropriate – the warm, natural colour respects the heritage and gives the house a unique aesthetic,' says McAneary.

right A frameless glass skylight has been cleverly incorporated into the design to allow natural light to flood into the new kitchen-dining space



Permitted development rights

Some extensions can be built without planning permission (though it's always advisable to check with your local planners before you start work), as long as they fall within Permitted Development Rights. The main stipulations are as follows:

Extensions (including any previous extensions, plus sheds and outbuildings) must not exceed 50 per cent of the land around the original house.

External materials must be similar in appearance to those of the existing building.

Side extensions must not be more than half the width of the original house, and are not allowed in designated areas (for example, a conservation area). They must be single storey with a maximum height of four metres.

Single-storey rear extensions must not extend more than three metres back if the house is attached, or four metres if the house is detached, and must not be taller than four metres.

Double-height extensions must not extend back from a house more than three metres, or be within seven metres of any boundary opposite the rear wall of the house, and the pitch should match the existing house as much as possible. Windows in upper storeys must be obscure glazed and non opening, unless they are 1.7 metres above the floor.

Double-height extensions are not permitted development in designated areas (such as conservation areas).

Balconies or verandas are not included in permitted development.

For a full rundown of the planning process and what constitutes Permitted Development Rights, visit the Planning Portal (planningportal.gov.uk)