

Lofty Ambition – The Sky's the Limit!

Can I have a loft conversion?

It is possible to convert any loft space from a dusty inhabitable area of the home to a clean living space such as bedrooms, bathroom or office.

As well as giving you the extra room or rooms a loft conversion or extension adds an average of 30 per cent to the value of your home, yet typically it costs one third of moving to a house with an extra room.

At the moment if you spend around £25,000 on a loft extension you will definitely get the money back when you sell or possibly more.

Is it possible?

Your two main concerns are head height and structural stability. Realistically you need a minimum height of 2.3 m over half the roof area. Measured from the apex of the roof to the top of the existing joints – you will lose about 400 mm when you fit the floor and ceiling. Remember, you can only walk in the areas that are high enough.

Extending one side of the roof to fit a dormer window or mansard will increase headroom. In some cases it may be possible to build a whole storey on top of a house. But of course this is expensive and planning permission may not be granted.

Houses built before the mid -1960's are usually ideal for loft conversions or extensions. They often have sufficient roof pitch (40 to 50 degrees) and an easy-to-convert internal structure. For properties built after this date it may be easier to move.

The house must also have adequate load-bearing walls to support the extra burden. This is usually only an issue if you are converting a bungalow, where the foundations are not deep enough and there are also no internal load bearing walls. In this case you can underpin the foundations, but this will add to the building costs.

Planning Permission

In most cases, if you have not extended your house and the proposed roof extension will not exceed 70 m³ (50 m³ if a terrace house), it falls under permitted development rights and you won't need planning permission. However, if the house is in a conservation area, is listed or you plan to change the roof externally, you will need to apply for permission. Similarly if you want a dormer window or mansard then you will also have to seek planning approval as it will be changing the exterior look of the building.

If you live in a terrace or semi-detached house and the new floor of your loft is to be supported on a party wall, you must obtain your neighbours permission under the Party Wall Act before you carry out any work.

General Specification of Work

Preliminaries

To include obtaining permission from the local authorities for the alterations and for building works, for drawings and engineers calculations, scaffolding, hire of skips etc

Demolition

Taking down part of the ceiling to form a new stairwell. Taking out roof necessary to create the space for the alterations, including all temporary supports and protection as required

Floor

Construct new floor SW timber joists supported on beams, trimmers or walls as required. Laying down 22mm, thick tongue and groove chipboards and fixing them on structure as required by Building Regulations

Steel Work

Steel beams (RSJs) supported on steel plates built into existing walls, well packed and secured

Dormer

To be constructed in 75mm. x 50mm. SW timber with noggins. Rehang tiles to match sloping roof on SW battens on building paper on 8mm. Plywood (exterior quality) or 6mm. masterboard when check is within 1 metre of boundary. Build in 100mm. Fibreglass insulation and polythene sheet VB on internal face. Finish with 10mm plasterboard and skim internally

Window

Choice of timber, aluminium or uPVC window frames (generally double glazed), to be in keeping with the existing windows and style of the house

Roof Light & Velux

If roof light required, allow for trimming roof incorporating the roof light (Ubink or similar) with opaque plastic double skin dome over stairwell. Supply and fit escape Velux if required by Building Regulations, all Velux's fitted to Building Regulations, all Velux's fitted to Building Regulations Standard

Electrics

To comply with Electricity Board requirements

Flat Roof

Exterior quality plymood on SW joints. Three Layers of felt on hot Bitumen. Infill with 150mm. Fibreglass insulation between the joists. Polythene sheeting vapour barrier and then plasterboard with plaster skim

Internal Walls

Internal walls are to be in 75mm x 50mm. studs of 400mm. centres with 75mm x 50mm. SW plates top and bottom 10mm. plasterboard and skim on either side

Party Walls (Interior)

Render existing brickwork faces and finish off with skin coat. Where external face of wall is exposed to weather, line with thermal insulation

Plumbing and Heating

To deal with all plumbing points routing in copper tubes as required to new radiators and to taps. Relocate the water tanks and all connections. Client to supply all sanitary ware, pump, water heaters and new tanks as required, Hammonds to supply radiators

New Stairs

To be constructed and prepared in timber, to have balustrades and newel posts and handrail similar to existing. Underside of stairs to be lined with expanded metal lathing and plasterboard and be plastered on the underside to give a smooth finish

Doors

These are to be fire resistant where necessary to meet Building Regulations requirements, finished in ply both sides ready for decoration

Skirtings

In all new rooms, the skirtings are to be similar to the existing ones on lower floors

All Decorations by Others

Hammonds reserves the right to alter specifications as the need arises

Please feel free to contact us via our website or through the normal channels

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