DWELLINGS4U

Our Build, Your Comfort

Save, spend or splurge?

Dwellings4U's guide to maximising your home improvement budget

Save, spend or splurge? It's tricky to know what's worth investing your budget in when it comes to improving your home. We've all read articles and seen social media posts by people who have given their property a makeover for seemingly next to nothing, but what are the important things not to skimp on when you tackle your home renovations?

As a full-service construction company, we have helped many hundreds of homeowners to improve their properties, along with the development of our own investment properties. As you might expect, we are well-positioned to advise on both the 'big', non-negotiable, important aspects of renovation, along with tips for achieving the aesthetic look you want for your home.

We hope you find the information contained in this guide useful and that we are able to help you to achieve the home of your dreams. Please contact our team on **01553 606120**, email **info@dwellings4u.co.uk** or send us a contact form with details of what you are looking for at **dwellings4u.co.uk** to start your project and make your home improvement plans a reality.

Craig and Kevin,
Directors, Dwellings4U
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GOOD **FOUNDATIONS**

Ensuring you protect the structure of your home may not be the most exciting aspect of your property renovation, but it is undoubtedly the most important thing you can do to help maintain its value.

Whether you are buying a home for you and your family, or purchasing a property with the potential to 'flip' or rent it out as a buy-to-let, ensuring your investment is realistic and affordable is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Unless you are a qualified surveyor, architect or builder, it's highly advisable to get a professional opinion before you venture into a costly mistake. It is easy to focus on the aesthetic design of a property rather than the vitally important structural work which may be required to bring a property up to scratch.

At Dwellings4U, we work with investors and homeowners to assess works and scope a cost-effective plan to ensure their property is safe and functional, first and foremost, creating a solid foundation to build on with a look and feel to match their lifestyle.

SPACE MAKERS

Increasingly, homeowners are choosing to extend their home rather than incur the expense of moving and associated Stamp Duty costs. Whether you are buying a new property or considering an extension, a starting point is to look at neighbouring houses to see how they have been developed to expand the living space.

This will give you a broad guide as to what might be permitted by a local authority, should planning permission be required for an extension. This might include adding receptions, bedrooms or bathrooms, adjusting the layout to increase the kitchen size or converting a loft. This work may require planning permission, building regulation approval or listed building consent, although many modifications can be made without planning permission. Dwellings4U has created a free guide to understanding *General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)* and our team is happy to advise on your plans.

BACK TO BASICS

Of course, it's vital that the building is structurally sound with no signs of subsidence or damp, and that the materials used throughout are in good condition. Starting from the top, as a rough guide a new roof for a three-bedroom, terraced house will cost £4,500-£7,000, including scaffolding. It's important to get the fundamentals right when it comes to electrics and plumbing work and these aspects should be undertaken by a qualified professional. On average, a full rewiring of a three-bedroom, terraced house will cost around £3,000 and take 1-2 weeks. Siting of a new bathroom may require the installation of plumbing, waste and soil pipework and although each project is different, depending on the structure of the building, getting these aspects taken care of before you install a bathroom suite may cost around £1,500-£3,000.

In addition to changing the external appearance of a property, new doors and windows can improve the energy efficiency of your home while also protecting masonry from the elements. There is a huge spectrum of choice available, ranging from timber to PVCu plus multiple options such as sliding sash, timber effect and flush systems, along with secondary glazing for listed properties or those in conservation areas. Along with a preferred style, the

size and number of windows and doors will affect the overall price, but on average a new window will cost around £500-£700 and a new door around £750-£1,000, including installation.

Finally, we all want our homes to be warm in the winter months, and a modern heating system can improve the house's energy efficiency, help to reduce heating bills and add value to your property. A traditional gas-fired central heating system for a three-bedroom, terraced house will cost around £2,000-£3,000, depending on the type of boiler you choose. Alternatively, an air source heat pump offers a modern, energy efficient system that, although more expensive to install at £8,000-£17,000 depending on the required output, will cost far less to run over the long-term. **Speak to Dwellings4U on 01553 606120 for a detailed quotation for a new heating system for your home.**

AT A GLANCE

Estimated costs for a three-bedroom, terraced house:

New roof	£4,500-£7,000
Electrical rewiring	£3,000
New bathroom	£1,500-£3,000
Windows (per unit)	£500-£700
External door	£750-£1,000
New gas boiler	£1,500-£3,000
Air source heat pump	£8,000-£17,000





HEART OF THE **HOME**

A stunning kitchen is something most homeowners desire. Creating a practical, effective workspace to prepare meals and spend time as a family will undoubtedly enhance the way your home functions and add value to your property.

Classic or contemporary, matte or gloss, task and ambient lighting, appliances, plus ensuring the 'golden triangle' of workflow… There are so many decisions to make when considering a new kitchen, and getting it right is key to creating a stylish, effective area for the whole family to enjoy for many years.

Kitchens are one of the most expensive home improvements you will make and working with a practically minded, supportive construction company such as Dwellings4U that can take care of all aspects of the renovation from start to finish will help maximise the use of your budget and ensure the project runs smoothly. Whatever your budget, it makes sense to utilise it effectively without wasting cash on pointless or ill-conceived ideas, leaving more for the fixtures, fittings and finishes that will add the 'wow' factor to your kitchen.

KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

Let's start with the basics. Before you embark on a design for your kitchen, it's best to think about where utilities currently run, as repositioning water, gas and waste pipework can be costly and tricky in some settings. If you can work with the existing layout of your kitchen you will save money on work that will be largely 'invisible'. At Dwellings4U, we strongly advise homeowners to speak with our team *BEFORE* undertaking the services of an architect or kitchen designer to scope and suggest an approach which works with the existing structure of your home.

The exception is when a property is being extended to accommodate a larger kitchen or kitchen diner where structural work is required and the opportunity to re-site services can be accommodated into a wider plan of activity.

From DIY box stores to bespoke cabinets, hand-crafted by skilled furniture makers, there is a vast spectrum of choice when it comes to choosing your new kitchen and correspondingly the cost can range from as little as £3,000 to upwards of £100,000. Undoubtedly the two are poles apart in price and product, and it will come down to personal preference and budget when choosing a kitchen for your home, but here are a few factors to consider.

Again, much like the services to your kitchen, if the existing cabinets are well-positioned and in fairly good condition it may be possible to simply paint or replace the doors and drawer fascias to create a fresh, new look. Several companies offer a respray service for kitchens which may look more professional and be quicker than hand-painting multiple doors and drawers. New hardware is also a great way to refresh the look of an existing kitchen.

A growing trend is to install a high-quality, second-hand kitchen which has been lightly used by its previous owner. Again many can be resprayed or repainted to freshen up and breathe new life into quality cabinetry. Search for luxury makers such as John Lewis of Hungerford, DeVOL, Plain English and Smallbone on auction sites such as Ebay and Facebook Marketplace, or visit sites such as the Used Kitchen Exchange, Used Kitchen Hub or Kitchen Exchange. **A good construction company such as Dwellings4U will be able to help you modify and fit a second-hand kitchen to work in your property.**

If you do choose a new off-the-shelf kitchen, it is often said that the carcasses are largely universal so one option may be to choose a relatively inexpensive frame and to invest more of your budget in cabinet doors and hardware that achieves the look you want. Companies such as Husk and Plykea offer premium-look doors to fit Howdens and IKEA cabinets, which works well for homeowners with a mid-point budget.

TOP WORK

With plumbing and units sorted, it's time to tackle the finishing touches of your kitchen design. Worktops are often the holy grail of a kitchen makeover and choosing a look and feel that sets off your cabinetry can make a vast difference to the finished result.

Bearing in mind our previous thoughts on kitchen cupboard carcasses, a premium quality worktop can elevate off-the-shelf cabinets. Granite, quartz and stone worktops are the Rolls-Royce end of the market, but if your budget doesn't stretch to this, composite worktops can create a clean, sharp look that works well with a contemporary or classic contemporary style.

Wooden worktops offer a warm, natural finish that is hugely forgiving of the daily wear and tear a kitchen endures and works well with a country style kitchen. However, there are no hard and fast rules and mixing styles can be highly effective – try using a mix of materials such as a run of composite worktops with a wooden top for an island unit.

If you are considering laminate worktops, a material which has evolved in recent years and now offers a wide variety of styles, spend as much as you can on a quality product – cheaper laminates are more likely to chip or stain and require updating more quickly, making them an expensive option in the long-run.

Finally, if you have a small space, search for salvaged materials on Ebay and Facebook Marketplace or try a local stone mason. **Again, a flexible construction company such as Dwellings4U will be able to explain what will work and adapt materials to create a unique design for your kitchen.**

THE LITTLE EXTRAS

Flooring, lighting, tiles, taps and sinks are all aspects of your kitchen makeover which will benefit from professional fitting to complete the look of your new kitchen. You may be considering an extension to create a stunning open plan, kitchen diner or perhaps the removal of a dividing wall would enable you to integrate the kitchen with the rest of the home? Working with a full-service construction company such as Dwellings4U can save you costly mistakes, time and the hassle of managing multiple trades with the risk of miscommunication between each. We have helped many Norfolk homeowners achieve the kitchen of their dreams and can help you to do the same. Give us a call on **01553 606120**, email **info@dwellings4u.co.uk** or send us a contact form with details of what you are looking for at **dwellings4u.co.uk**

SAVE, SPEND, OR SPLURGE?

QUIDS IN

Essential appliances endure daily wear and tear, so invest in a quality over, fridge-freezer, dishwasher and laundry equipment, but unless you are a wine aficionado or keen baker, built-in wine fridges and warming ovens can be costly and eat up vital real estate in your kitchen.

SOUND INVESTMENT

Taps are one of a kitchen's most frequently touched surfaces and cheap materials along with budget kitchen cupboard handles will wear quickly. Invest in at least mid-priced options that will withstand daily wear and tear.

WORTH A LITTLE EXTRA

While you are undertaking a full renovation, consider investing in underfloor heating which ensures a warm, toasty room all year round. Additionally this will free up valuable wall space from radiators, which can be a game-changer for runs of cupboards and worktops in your kitchen design.





INTO THE BLUE

Clean and simple, elegant and luxurious or a classic style – whatever inspires your bathroom, there are some key principles to adhere to when planning a makeover.

Along with a kitchen, bathrooms are a key functional area in a home that needs to be practical, and yet simultaneously offer a relaxing space. With a vast spectrum of options, the cost of a bathroom renovation can range wildly from £3,000-£30,000. As a rough guide, an estimate of cost might break down as 15-25 per cent on a bathroom suite, 10-15 per cent on fixtures, 15 per cent on electrics, flooring and tiling, with 45-60 per cent on plumbing and installation. Even with a judicious use of budget, it's perfectly possible to achieve a stylish, spa-like space which adds value to your property.

As with a kitchen, if possible, work with the position of existing pipework to avoid disruptive and potentially costly plumbing and plastering work. One of the greatest expenses is to move the soil pipe and venting (SV) system, and this should be avoided if possible. **Again, it is highly advisable to speak with a full-service construction company such as Dwellings4U before creating a design that could prove impractical and costly.**

With plumbing, carpentry, electrical, tiling and decoration involved in most bathroom makeovers, it can be better to work with a single company to ensure a smooth workflow and, additionally, they may be able to purchase sanitaryware and fittings more cost-effectively than buying these online or from a High Street showroom.

If you are upgrading a bathroom with a new shower it's important to consider the pressure of the water supply to determine whether you choose an electric or valve system. Additionally the layout of the room may determine whether it is possible to accommodate a concealed system.

Similarly, hand basins will be frequently used and need to withstand a family's daily wear and tear. Traditional pedestal systems or those mounted on a floor-standing cabinet are safe options, but wall-hung basins will require reinforcement to ensure they remain in place. A free-standing bath with a spout will create a real statement piece for your bathroom but pipework for the supply of water and waste will need to be concealed, so again it's important to check the feasibility before falling in love with a particular style.

It is also worth bearing in mind that until an old bathroom is stripped back, it's impossible to know what the existing pipework will reveal, so plans may need to be modified while the job is in progress. One option in a bathroom is to stud out the walls to create a small, waterproof void which can accommodate the pipework, valves and wiring required for your design. **Speak with Dwellings4U for expert advice on planning your bathroom, plumbing and sanitaryware.**

CLEAN LINES

A golden rule when creating a bathroom design is not to squeeze too much into the available space. While twin basins, a walk-in shower and separate bath will look stunning, it's far better to opt for a combined bath over shower or shower only design, wall-hanging toilet and basin if the room is compact. Think practically about keeping things clean – if a sink is sited too closely to a tiled wall it will be impossible to wipe away splash marks from daily use. Don't forget to build in storage, not just a decent-sized bathroom cabinet, but also to keep towels and toilet rolls, along with a suitably sized shelf for frequently used toiletries.

If your sanitaryware is a classic style in good shape, one option might be to refresh the space with new taps, a stylish shower head, light fittings and

tiling. White metro tiles offer a classic contemporary look but there are some incredible styles, colours and textures available so be adventurous and create a unique style for your home. Natural stone is a premium quality material but good quality porcelain is a cheaper option which is also more durable. Whether you fully or part-tile your bathroom, invest in a professional to install them as the difference will be hugely noticeable.

If new sanitaryware is required, don't opt for a budget suite which may not last the course – constant flushing can weaken a cheap toilet's cistern, a low-grade bath is likely to flex under pressure and a basic basin may stain or crack. It's worth visiting several showrooms to see the quality of products 'in the flesh', assess the finish and size of something you will use daily. Once you have found your perfect suite, talk to your builder to ensure this will work in your home – **Dwellings4U is happy to give you a free, no-obligation quote and advise on your initial ideas.**

SAVE, SPEND, OR SPLURGE?

FEET FIRST

It's important to choose flooring carefully for a bathroom and worth remembering it costs as much to install, regardless of the material you choose. Vinyl offers a practical, hard-wearing option in a wide range of grades and styles.

WRAP IT UP

A heated towel rail is a must but don't skimp on the quality as this may run the risk of unsightly rust in a room where there are high condensation levels – stainless steel is a classic, durable style.

WORTH A LITTLE EXTRA

We'll say it again, but cheap sanitaryware is a false economy. Look out for ex-display or end of range sales on more expensive brands if you are working to a budget.

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