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DAILY MAIL

Launch space mission to better your home

Extensions can add value – but be sure to protect your garden

Whether you need more space but cannot afford to move, or want to sell your house on, it makes sense to make the most of what you've got.

Space has overtaken location as the first and foremost concern for homeowners for the first time in years, according to new research.

Bigger rooms topped the list of the most important criteria when shopping for a new home, according to a survey of 2,000 homeowners by ratedpeople.com, a website putting consumers in touch with trusted trades people. It also said one in six people are dissatisfied with the size of the rooms in their home.

But, many people are not in a position to move home at present.

Faced with a difficult housing market, homeowners should be looking instead at what they can be doing to improve their current home – and where they can add value to it for when moving does become an option.

A well-planned extension nearly always adds value, but look at house prices in your local area to gauge how

much value another bedroom will add to your property, careful not to overdevelop.

Another thing you can consider to grow your space is a conservatory.

They can be a quick, cheap

way to boost your home's appeal, and you do not necessarily need planning permission to build.

Before you fork out for an extension, you could weigh up how to increase the space and potential of your property by changing the internal layout instead.

Removing an internal wall can make a huge difference

and at a lower cost than building on – just do not start swinging the sledgehammer until you've checked whether it's a load-bearing wall. Check with a professional if you are unsure. The big message is: "don't destroy your garden". Extending your house at the expense of the garden can actually reduce the value of your home.

Some home improvements are real positives in adding value to your home – and making it more enjoyable for you to live in the meantime.

There are other changes, however, that could

positively devalue your residence.

Losing a bedroom, for any reason, is a no-no, so forget creating another bathroom in there.

Garish kitchens and bathrooms will have a detrimental effect, too.

Decoration needs to be neutral – just because you love bright colours and patterns doesn't mean prospective buyers will.

Go for something plainer and potential buyers will be able to visualise themselves

and their belongings in your surroundings, much more easily.

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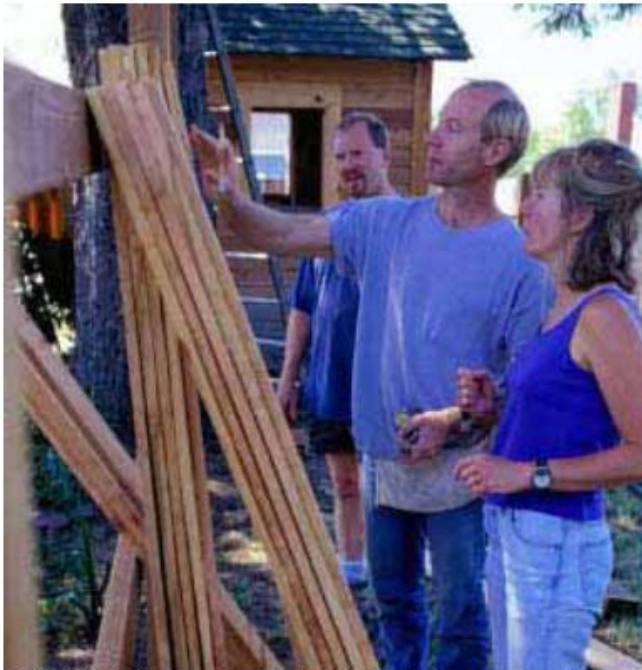
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GOING UP: Extending your property and keeping designs neutral will attract buyers.



TAKE ADVICE: Check with a professional before starting any major work.