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More work... on tighter budgets

Home improvement budgets are down nine per cent on last year, but enquiries to a tradesmen recommendation website are up 50 per cent, suggesting cash-strapped homeowners want to make changes as cheaply as possible.

RatedPeople.com analysed more than 2.2million enquiries to its website over a seven-year period. In the past year, its customers have spent an average of £1,264 on improvement jobs. Average budgets have been trending downwards for the past three years but job enquiries have increased.

Demand and budgets for big renovations and extensions, once considered the mark of affluence for British homes, are significantly down. Searches for builders dropped by 40

per cent from 2012, while the average budget for building work decreased by five per cent, now sitting at £10,592.

Extra space is the priority for most households, with enquiries for loft conversions up a steep 711 per cent in the past year.

RatedPeople.com's Tariq Dag Khan says: 'Homeowners are still struggling to make their money go further so budgets are being cut across the many different trades that we offer.'

The current climate has put a stop to many people moving house. 'What we are seeing instead is an ever-increasing number of people searching for information about how to expand and improve their existing property in a more cost-effective way,' says Dag Khan.

www.ratedpeople.com