

Sunday Independent

ARCHITECT'S CLINIC

PETER ANDREWS

How much should we budget for our extension?

Q WE are thinking of having an extension designed and built and are at the early stages of budgeting for it. Our mortgage is paid off and we have some money saved but will also need to get a loan from the bank. Can you let us know how much an extension would cost?

A EXTENDING or renovating your home is an exciting project to undertake. However, it can involve considerable disruption and significant cost. The more research you do beforehand and the clearer you are on what you want from the project the smoother it will progress.

Obviously, one of the first things that must be addressed is the budget. Extending or renovating your home can involve considerable investment and setting a budget can dictate the size and scope of the project.

You would need to establish some of your main hopes and aspirations such as the size, extent and configuration as this may affect whether or not it would require an application for planning permission – which may bring with it additional expenses such as planning costs, development levies/contributions, fees, architects, assigned certifiers, and health and safety costs.

Generally, if it is proposed to construct a single or two-storey extension using traditional materials and construction methods such as concrete strip foundations, insulated cavity walls, flat or pitched roof, a moderate amount of services, new kitchen/bathrooms, renovations to the existing house and services, then a cost range of €1,500-€1,900 per sqm should be allowed for. With smaller projects, the figures can increase as much of the preliminary work is required regardless of the project size. Where the new work involves non-traditional construction methods or requires high quality finishes or materials, a figure in the order of €1,800-€2,300 plus per sqm should be considered. These figures are based on Dublin suburban area figures and costs would

vary around the country. All noted figures would be exclusive of Vat which, for construction works, is 13.5pc and for professional fees is 23pc.

There could be a number of additional cost factors that should be taken into account and which may have an effect on the budget:

- Is the existing property a protected structure?
- Is there suitable access to the site for plant, machinery and materials?
- Will materials have to be brought in by hand through the existing building?
- Can materials be stored on the site?
- Can waste materials and skips be stored on the site?
- Does the work require substantial disruption to the existing building?

■ Do existing services need to be relocated?

■ Are there any unusual ground or level conditions or difficulties?

■ Are there any existing finishes to be matched or replicated?

■ Are there any high quality/ special finishes/ fittings required?

It is recommended that you consider employing a registered professional such as an architect who has the qualifications, vision and experience to take you through your building project. They will help set a viable brief and budget, guide you through the planning process, obtain quotes for the work, manage consultants like surveyors and engineers, monitor the budget and administer the construction contract.

You can find an architect at RIAI, the registration body for architects in Ireland, has compiled a document – *Consumer Guide to Building/Construction Cost Guidelines* – which provides guidance and is available from shop. riai.ie

Peter Andrews is a registered architect and a fellow of the RIAI and is a partner in J Peter Andrews Architects

Do you have a design dilemma we can help you with? Email your problem to designclinic@independent.ie. Advice provided is for guidance only and readers are advised to seek professional assistance for any proposed project.