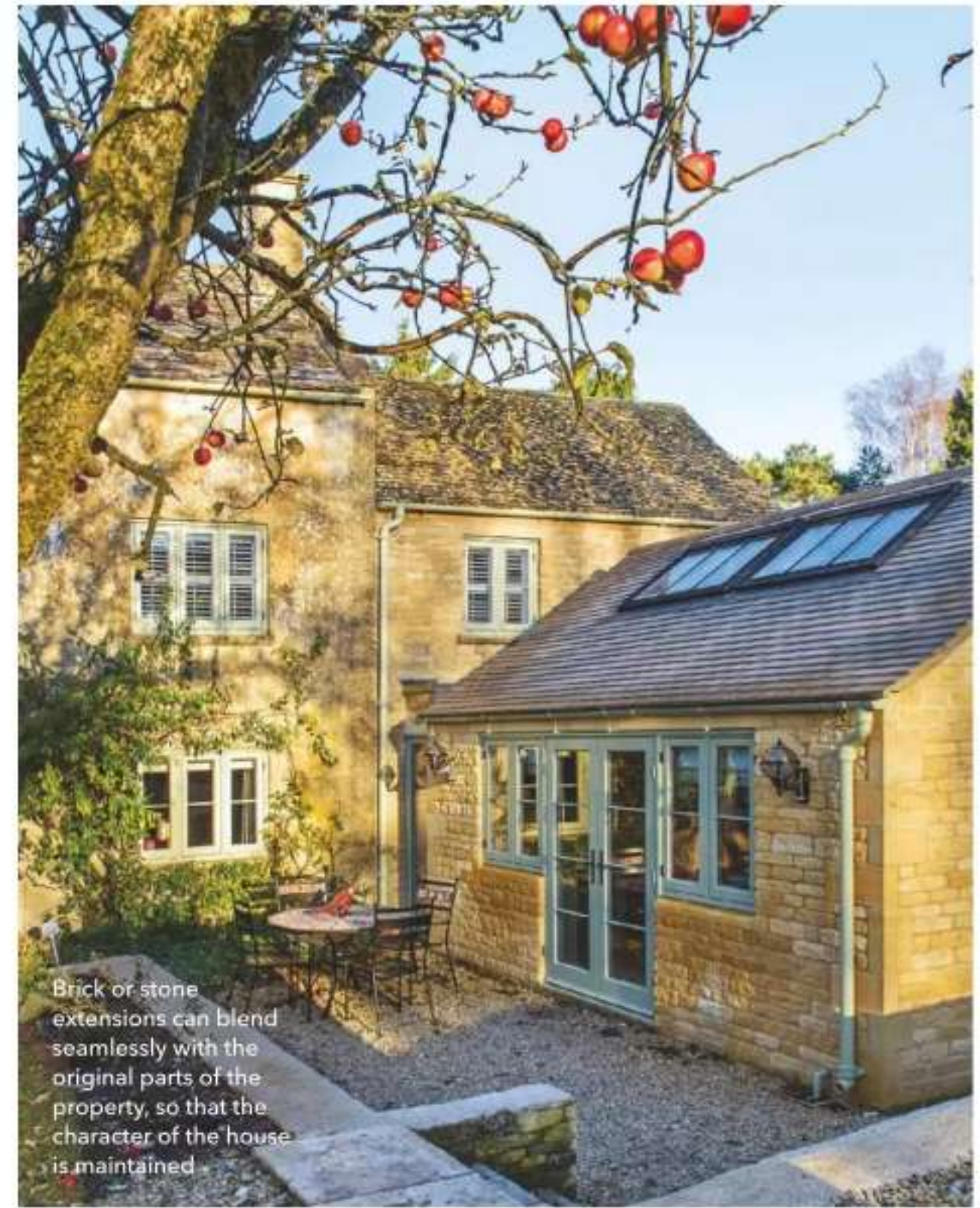


Oak is both a natural and sympathetic material and is often a key choice for extending period properties, as shown by this Prime Oak project



Brick or stone extensions can blend seamlessly with the original parts of the property, so that the character of the house is maintained

Besides boosting your home's floor space, an extension can help pave the way for a reconfigured layout that complements your lifestyle. But there's a lot to consider before going full steam ahead with an extension project, so before anything else you should identify your needs. Do you need a bigger kitchen or living space? A separate bedroom or a laundry room? Once you've highlighted the key functions you want from your extension, the design process can begin and you can decide what type of extension best suits your requirements, as well as your budget.

Taking into consideration the age and style of your country property is important, so that your new extension will complement the existing structure. Work closely alongside architects and builders with experience on similar projects, and always ask to see examples of

past work or talk to the firm's previous clients before making your decision. Get it right and you'll enhance the look and feel of your property, increase its value and create additional living space.

HOW DO I DECIDE WHICH TYPE OF EXTENSION TO BUILD?

The most common types of extensions are rear, side-returns, wrap-arounds and two-storey designs. What you can do to your property will largely be determined by the size and location of your house, the extent of your budget, and any planning restrictions.

DO I NEED AN ARCHITECT?

While it isn't essential to bring a professional on board, a designer's vision will help you make the most of the space you have available. Their insight on positioning, structural systems and building materials can make a huge >



Done well, glass extensions on period properties can add a real, yet sympathetic, style statement

All you need to know...
EXTENSIONS

A WELL-DESIGNED EXTENSION WILL ADD SPACE, STYLE AND VALUE TO YOUR COUNTRY HOME. HERE'S OUR GUIDE TO GETTING IT RIGHT...



The pitched roof of this bespoke oak-framed extension by Oakwrights creates a vaulted, airy space inside



A single rear extension is one of the most popular choices, as they tend to be the most straightforward in design



The subtle 'Verdi' colour selected for this Montpelier Joinery project brings a sense of calm to the space

difference. An architect's knowledge and experience can prove invaluable when dealing with listed buildings, or ensuring your new design is sympathetic to the period of your property. Having an expert involved can also help when construction begins - particularly if you encounter any unforeseen issues once you've broken ground.

DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

Many extension schemes can be achieved under permitted development rights, but anything that's pushing the boundaries in terms of design is likely to require formal consent from your local authority. Likewise, if you live in a conservation area or area of outstanding natural beauty, you will need planning permission to go ahead. Working with an architect or planning consultant can increase your chances of success at this stage

as they will be aware of local planning policy. It can also help to find similar extensions in your area, as these can serve as a precedent for your project.

WHAT ABOUT MY NEIGHBOURS?

Once your design concept has been drawn up, it's courteous to touch base with neighbours and keep them informed. Should you need planning consent, their support could be crucial for the scheme's

success. Be aware, if you're creating a new shared boundary wall or excavating within 3m of your neighbour's house, you'll need to send them a party wall notice.

WHAT MATERIALS SHOULD I CONSIDER?

Think about whether you want the extension to blend in with the rest of the property, or if you want to make more of a statement. Oak-framed extensions suit country-style



This traditional-style bespoke kitchen design by Martin Moore, starting at £35,000, sits within a light-filled rear extension thanks to the full-length sliding glass doors and skylight

homes aesthetically and can be sustainably sourced, though you will need to hire contractors who specialise in this type of design. Bricks and stone are also popular if you are looking to match with the existing property, whereas glass designs make a striking statement.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

It vastly depends on the size of the build, though as a guide you could expect a straightforward single rear extension to take around three-to-four months. You will also need to factor in the design and planning stage, as well as lead times for commissioning joinery.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF DIFFERENT EXTENSIONS?

Rear extensions are a good option if you have enough garden space to spread into and are popular for those looking to create an open-plan living space. Depending on

how they are constructed, you can lose a lot of light in the middle rooms of your house.

Side-return extensions are commonly seen on terraces or semi-detached houses, as they can make use of the unused side passage alongside the property. They are generally small projects so don't cost as much as other types. A wraparound extension adds space to both the rear and sides of your property, so can substantially increase the square footage to your home. By their nature, these are extensive, costly, projects that create a lot of disruption.

Two-storey extensions provide you with more space overall,

allowing you to add another bedroom or bathroom upstairs, as well as more space on the ground floor. However, they will require full planning permission, which can be difficult to obtain if the design drastically changes the view or impacts neighbours.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

As a guide, you should set aside between £1,100 and £1,300sq m for small, single-storey schemes, and between £1,300 and £1,500sq m for two-storey extensions. Allow at least £2,500sq m for large-scale projects or those featuring high-spec materials. It's also a sensible idea to ring-fence a 10% contingency fund.

FEATURE YVETTE MURRELL
PHOTOGRAPHS POLLY ELITES, JONATHAN GOOCH

Sourcebook Our pick of extensions experts

- For bespoke oak-framed buildings Oakwrights, oakwrights.co.uk
- For seamless organic structures Prime Oak, primeoak.co.uk
- For best of British Julius Bahn, juliusbahn.co.uk
- For premium timber designs and bifolding doors Montpelier Joinery, montpelierjoinery.com
- For more oak-framed designs Border Oak, borderoak.com