

## GD PROJECTS SIDE-RETURN EXTENSIONS

# A side order

Increasing the size of your home by using the full width of its plot is a winning strategy

WORDS CAROLINE RODRIGUES

**Too narrow for a proper garden,** too overshadowed for a patio, a side return might be better used for extra living space, especially for a house with a deep, thin layout. 'Not only can an extension create full-width space, there are also opportunities to reconfigure the layout of the house, to flip rooms around, change the circulation or add a utility, WC or dining area,' says Alex Raher, director of Delve Architects (delvearchitects.com). >>

George & James Architects designed a split-level kitchen for this Georgian house in Islington's Barnsbury conservation area in north London. See more of the project overleaf



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### Gaining consent

In many instances, this type of extension can be carried out without planning permission. 'Under permitted development [PD] you can extend 6m from the rear of a terraced house, or 8m for a detached house. This is measured from the rear wall of the main part of the house, not the back of the outrigger – the original portion of the house that extends at the rear,' says Alex.

**'Under permitted development you can extend 6m from the rear of a terraced house, or 8m for a detached house'**

This would allow for the side-return extension of a typical Victorian terraced house. 'To comply with PD rules, if you're closer than 2m from the neighbour's boundary, the eaves will need to be under 3m to gain permission. The maximum height of the extension needs to be less than 4m to comply,' he explains. You'll also need a party wall agreement with your neighbours.



**THIS PAGE** George & James's plan for the triangular space entailed extending along the wall between the garden and street. A substantial frameless rooflight, measuring 4.1x1.7m, had to be craned over the wall in one piece. The project cost £220,000. (georgeandjames.co.uk)







### Extending further

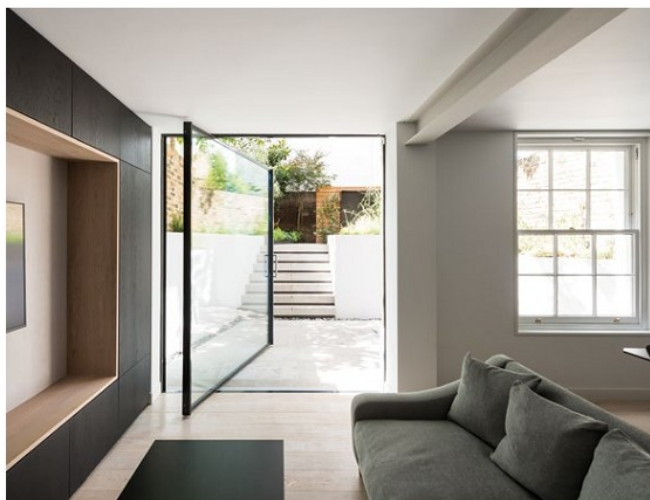
If you can push out at the back as well as the side of the house, you'll gain even more space. 'A stepped extension, coming out 6m from the original rear wall of the house, to include the side infill and rear extension, can be done under PD,' says Alex. But a full wraparound extension requires planning permission. 'It is worth speaking to the local council before submitting as some have policies against wraparounds,' he says. »



**THIS PAGE** This Victorian terraced house in a conservation area of Putney, south-west London, already had a basic side-return extension that was separated from the dining area by an awkward low beam. Cox Architects replaced it with a larger, brighter version that looks smart both inside and from the outside. Key to the design is the structurally glazed slot window. The project cost £125,000. (coxarchitects.co.uk)



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### Material choices

Though masonry is a tried-and-trusted option, consider other possibilities such as timber frame and SIPs (structurally insulated panels), which are fast to build with. Once the structure is up, it can be clad in brick, rendered, or you could opt for metal or timber. Some local authorities restrict what can be used while others welcome an innovative approach. 'Under PD rights only materials that are similar to or the same as those on the original house can be used,' Alex explains.

For a terraced home often the only access for building materials is through the house, which can have a knock-on effect on what can be included. As a last resort large items can be craned over. »

**THIS PAGE** When Yard Architects ([yardarchitects.co.uk](http://yardarchitects.co.uk)) extended and reconfigured a dark basement flat in Westminster, London, expanding the cramped living space and bringing in the maximum light were essential requirements. IQ Glass ([iqglassuk.com](http://iqglassuk.com)) provided this Vitra pivot door, measuring H2,250xW2,575mm, at a cost of £8,160



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### Natural light

Side-return extensions can be lit from above by a fully glazed structural glass roof, a flat roof with flat skylights inserted or a pitched roof with rooflights. 'We recently completed a fully glazed one with sandblasted glass to avoid a view of the neighbours' drainpipes,' says Steve Cox of Cox Architects (coxarchitects.co.uk).

The skylight of a side return has an important role as the main provider of light into the rear room of the house, which usually loses its garden-facing window when the side return is added. 'One way around this is to include a small courtyard. This can be a functional solution for a bigger house,' says Steve.

**The skylight of a side return has an important role as the main provider of light into the rear room of the house**

### About the budget

According to Design for Me (designfor-me.com), a service that matches homeowners with architects, building costs in London can be anywhere between £3,000 and £5,000 per sqm excluding professional fees and VAT. Outside London, they can vary from around £2,000 to £4,000. This does not include a new kitchen or other internal renovations.

**BELOW AND BELOW RIGHT** Paul Archer Design filled in the rear lightwell of this 19th-century Grade II listed townhouse in Islington, north London, with a playroom extension, tucking a WC and utility space beneath the new upper ground floor extension adjoining it. The contemporary glazed lantern enhances rather than detracts from the historic building. The project cost £200,000. (paularcherdesign.co.uk)



**ABOVE AND RIGHT** This extension to a terraced house in Clapham, south London, features an impressive double-height living area, which has the bonus of aiding natural ventilation. Devised by Matthew Giles Architects (matthewgilesarchitects.com), the project cost around £320,000 and is highlighted by steel-framed glazed doors and windows by Fabco Sanctuary (fabco-sanctuary.com). The panes were carefully sized to be in keeping with the Victorian originals

PHOTOGRAPHY: MEGAN TAYLOR, MATT CLAYTON, FRENCH+TYE, LOGAN IRVINE, MACDONALD





## SAVING GRACES

Keep your costs in

check with some tips from **Simon Drayson**, director of **George & James Architects** ([georgeandjames.co.uk](http://georgeandjames.co.uk))

- Always try to work with your site's strengths rather than against its weaknesses. Constraints such as size are often a starting point for the creative process.
- When choosing your construction method, keep in mind which materials your builder is most familiar with. Timber frames are less expensive, less time-consuming to build and more sustainable than traditional construction techniques - a triple win.
- If you have the time and are confident doing so, you can save money by managing subcontractors yourself. That said, the quality can suffer and the build can end up taking longer. Hiring a trusted main contractor alongside an architect is another way of controlling build costs.
- The golden rule for keeping costs in check is not to change your mind on the design once the building contract has been signed, at least not without discussing it with your architect or builder first. Always set aside a contingency of at least 10 per cent.
- Glazing is an area where shopping around pays dividends. Some of the mainstream suppliers are beginning to offer more niche products at competitive prices. It's worth considering alternatives to metal frames such as timber or uPVC.
- For cladding, rather than use standing seam copper or zinc, consider corrugated steel instead. Softwood is less expensive than hardwood at the outset, but needs more maintenance and has a shorter lifespan. Whatever cladding you use, just be sure to do so in a creative way.

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