

## Small projects can make a big difference

**Still stymied by the credit crunch? There are still plenty of building project options open to a smaller budget**

### Conservatory

A conservatory is a cost-effective way to increase the space in your home. Conservatories come in every

around for a bargain and do remember to use reputable tradespeople.



conceivable shape and size, with corresponding costs. Do plenty of research before deciding on design, layout and furnishings. It's worth marking out the area before deciding on size too.

### New kitchen

A great way to refresh a kitchen is to fit new worktops, cabinets, appliances, components, lighting or fittings. Do thorough research - you don't have to spend a fortune, but make sure you use a reputable builder, a registered electrician, plumber and Gas Safe registered gas engineer and that they provide you with the correct certificates to satisfy Building Regulations.

### New bathroom

Installing new bathroom fixtures and fittings can give your bathroom a new lease of life. It's worth shopping

### Open plan your downstairs

By knocking down the walls between your kitchen and dining room, you could create an open plan living space, which would transform your home. Talk through your ideas with a reputable builder you trust and also seek advice on whether you need

### Add a porch (and fit a downstairs bathroom in too)

Adding a porch could transform your hall by creating space for coats, shoes and wellies, ease congestion and provide shelter from the rain while you find your keys. There may even be space to squeeze a useful downstairs toilet into the porch area too. It generally doesn't need planning permission, but always check with your local planning office first. Make sure the style you chose is in keeping with the property.

### Convert the under stairs cupboard into an office or downstairs toilet

Adding a downstairs toilet can be one of the most useful additions to your home, especially if you have your children or many visitors to your home. However seek advice on the cost implications, as drainage adds considerably to the cost. A macerator may be a cheaper - but noisier option. If the cost is prohibitive, then perhaps look at converting under the stairs into an office instead.

**Add a utility room** If you have enough room in your home, it may be worth dividing off one area of the kitchen to make a utility room. This removes the washing machine, dryer and laundry away from the living space.

**Give your home an energy efficiency makeover before winter** You could save around £300 every year by increasing the insulation, glazing and draught proofing in your home. For more information visit the Helm website.

## SUMMARY

- With all these projects don't forget to prepare your plans thoroughly and define your budget.
- Take care to choose a reputable builder that are members of a reputable trade association such as the FMB
- Seek at least three like-for-like quotes before making a decision.
- Don't just go with the cheapest - make sure you find a builder you trust and like.
- It is vitally important to agree a plan for the work and cost in a signed contract before starting.

For FREE advice on all your home improvement projects, call Helm FREE on

**01454 634 020**

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# HELM

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