

Libby Elliot enlarged her four-bedroom detached family home in Wimbledon, choosing a modern glass-roofed extension featuring a wall of folding glass doors opening out onto the garden, which fills the new space with light and opens the living area out onto the decked garden.

Libby Elliot loved the Wimbledon home she shares with her husband and young children, Hamish and Daisy, but a growing family meant they needed more space so instead of moving they decided an extension was the answer. The couple's aim was to create one large living space incorporating the kitchen and dining area, and a utility room and loo. Libby wanted the finished space to look bright, light and modern, and called in an architect for ideas on how she could achieve this.

'I spoke to architectyourhome, who suggested building an extension right across the back of the house and fitting it with a large glass roof. Instead of a back wall, a fabulous folding glass door across its full width opens up the house to the garden, giving us more useable space, especially in the summer months'.

Special reflective glass was chosen for the roof so the new rooms wouldn't get too hot during the summer. Planning permission was needed, then Libby worked closely with the architect and builders for around 12 months to complete the work. The extension and interior work cost about £80,000, and Libby is thrilled with the result. 'I love it,' she says. 'It's light all year round and, although I was worried about it overheating, it never feels too warm and it's perfect for a young family. We've also added greatly to the value of the property and we don't have to move away from the area to find more space.'



#### What it cost

Glass roof.....£2,300

Folding doors.....£7,200

Building work.....£70,000

Total.....£79,500

#### **USING GLASS: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

Building with glass to make your home brighter – and even bigger – is easier than you think. Here's what you should know....

## HOW CAN I USE GLASS?

'There are three ways of adding to a house; using it to replace an existing wall or roof; it as one of the materials in an extension (windows, skylights, folding glass doors); or building a glass structure or 'modern conservatory'. The third option will cause less disruption as most of the work is outside, including foundations. If you're replacing a brick wall with glass, some supporting steel beams may need to be put in for extra strength if a load-bearing wall is taken out.

## AREN'T I JUST BUILDING A FANCY CONSERVATORY?

Traditionally, if you wanted to add glass to your home, it meant building a conservatory. But the latest technology means glass can replace other building materials like wood or brick – so a kitchen wall can be transformed with glass, or a roof can have panes fitted, all giving the light and space of a conservatory. If you build a glass extension, the difference between that a conservatory is latter has to be separated from the rest of the house with external quality doors.

## WILL I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

With small extensions your project may fall within permitted development rights, but for bigger extensions, you'll require planning permission. As a guide you'll need permission to add 10% of the property size to a terrace and 15% to a detached, but check with your council first.

## WHAT ABOUT BUILDING REGULATIONS?

You are required to seek approval if you do any structural work to your house an in April 2006, a new building regulation (Part L) dealing with energy efficiency and renovations came into

effect. Glass isn't very energy efficient and if you project has a negative impact on energy, it may not be allowed. Conserve energy by using triple-glazed glass or high-performance double glazing. You can make use of 'passive solar gain' – where the house uses heat from the sun to warm it up, lowering your energy bills – if most of your windows are south facing. And adding insulation to other walls or ceilings will increase efficiency.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

For any extension you will need to allow time to receive planning permission and building regulations approval. It can take as little as a few weeks to install folding doors or a skylight but, if you are having a conversion with walls being taken out and areas reinforced, it could take over six months to complete.

## WHAT WILL IT COST?

For a stylish, fully glazed, architect-designed extension you should expect to pay somewhere between £30,000 and £50,000, while simply extending into a side return using glass can cost just £10,000. A sliding glass panel that replaces either a traditional patio door or an existing brick wall cost from £1,000, but can still make a dramatic difference to your home.

## WILL IT ADD VALUE?

If done properly and sympathetically to the original building, adding a glass extension to your property can add as much as 10% to the value. If you spend much more than £10,000 on a house worth £200,000, you probably won't make all your money back as it's possible you could exceed the maximum

value properties are selling in your area. Check with a local estate agent to find out more about property values in your street. It's also important to create a style that's appealing to local market. A very modern glass kitchen extension will generally prove more popular on a London town house rather than in a traditional village setting.