

The average cost of a home in Rutland has soared to £238,726 with a regional annual increase of 9.1%*. This figure is a massive £58,791 above the national average. This combined with recent increase in interest rates has been the catalyst for a rush of homeowners looking to renovate their properties in the region, according to Architect Your Home, Britain's leading provider of architectural services for the homeowner market. It appears that as borrowing has become more expensive, local residents are looking to invest rather than move.

From smaller renovations such as installing a skylight or taking out a dividing wall, to larger scale redevelopments including rear kitchen extensions and loft conversions Architect Your Home says homeowners across the county are joining the renovation rush.

However, as improving rather than moving appears to be the solution for those prevented from climbing the property ladder, Architect Your Home is warning that homeowners could do more harm than good if they DIY rather than GSI (Get Someone In). Richard Nowak, of Architect Your Home Leicestershire and Rutland warns homeowners to carefully plan their renovations rather than rushing into a project that could turn out to be a building blunder:

'We have seen homeowners from all over the county clambering to join in the renovation rush. Renovating your property can be very worthwhile, you can add some 'wow' factor to your home, create open plan living area, a family room, gain a hobby room such as a gym, a study, an extra

bedroom....the possibilities are endless. The key however is in proper planning. Careful planning of the design of your home will save you money and heartache in the long run. Poorly planned or constructed renovations will put off buyers and decrease the value of your property when you come to sell in the future.'

Architect Your Home's unique 'pay as you go' menu of services means that homeowners of varying budgets, tastes and living requirements can now access a professional RIBA qualified home design expert on a pay-as-you go basis. Homeowners can now call on the company only when needed, for the initial inspirational design, to guide them through the minefield of planning, or to manage the project in its entirety. The choice is theirs.

Despite the warnings; the right renovation to the right property can still have a significant impact on its value. As, Craig Stephens of William H Brown estate agents in Oadby believes:

'With the right renovations and good design, extensions can create a wonderful opportunity of adding value to your home. In a competitive market these kind of changes can potentially give your property the edge over other homes.'