



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LOFT CONVERSIONS

A loft conversion is a big investment and one you should take your time over. Although professional advice will be required at some stage, we recommend you research the different types of conversion suitable to your property, as well as the likely cost.

This guide will look at some of the main design considerations, helping you visualise the construction process and what the end result will look like. It's perhaps a simpler development than you think, especially with a conversion specialist on hand.

Before you go ahead, the first thing to do is check if your building is viable for conversion.



PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS. CAN YOUR LOFT BE CONVERTED?

Unfortunately, some roof types make it tricky to complete a loft conversion whilst others make it impractical altogether. However, the good news is that most residential UK homes make a conversion possible, as long as they fulfil some basic criteria:

► Planning permission.

In most cases, you won't need planning permission from the local authority as a house purchase usually includes permitted development. If unsure, check with a conversion specialist who'll make the necessary checks.

► Loft size.

It's generally accepted that the minimum height of the roof should be greater than 2.2 metres, although some builders recommend 2.4m. Use a tape measure from the bottom of the ridge timber to the top of the ceiling joist in the tallest part of the room.

► Living space.

A general overlook of the room will let you know how much living space is viable. Walk around and examine the footprint; dimensions of around 5.5m x 7.5m are considered an accepted minimum. The room's purpose should be considered – a children's play den will require less room than a teenager's bedroom, for example.

► Shape of the roof.

Gable-end walls are easier to modify than hipped roofs. Intersecting pitched roofs are perhaps the most difficult to convert as the support for new timber beams may not be present. The higher the pitch angle, the higher the central head height will be. Generally speaking, any slant of 30 degrees or higher will be fine.

► Obstacles.

Some lofts have features such as water tanks or chimney stacks that could make the conversion unviable. During the inspection, enquire if these obstacles can be modified or worked around to maintain a decent amount of living space.

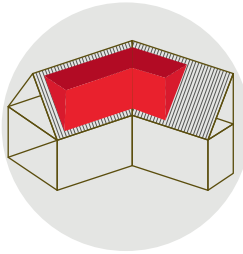
► Roof materials.

Because traditional framed roofs have more structural input, space can be opened up by strengthening the rafters and adding supports if needed. New builds tend to use roof trusses as the construction material – these are the supports that run through the cross-section of the loft. Additional reinforcement is needed to replace them, usually at extra cost, along with the specialised knowhow of a conversion specialist.



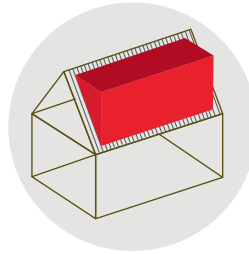
LOFT CONVERSION TYPES

As homes come in all shapes and sizes, no roof layout will be the same. Each type poses a different challenge depending on the conversion required. We've listed the most commonly found roof types here:



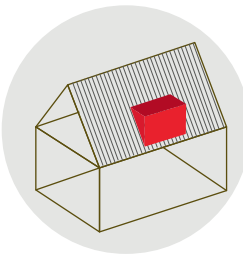
L-Shape Dormer

Popular on Victorian homes, two dormer-builds connect together to form a recognisable L-shape. Expect the easiest conversion process as they offer the most space. Two or even three rooms can be constructed, adding significant value onto the property.



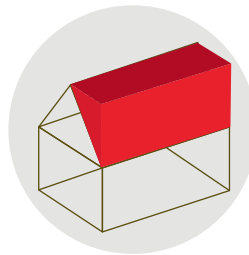
Full Width Dormer

A full width dormer covers the entire length of the building, producing the maximum amount of loft space on one side. For those with a larger budget, luxurious master bedrooms or modern office suites can be designed.



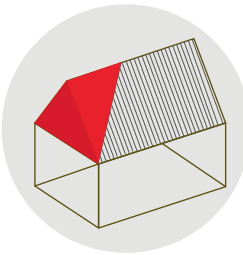
Single Dormer

Single dormers are commonly seen on the exterior of residential homes. Additional conversions can be added for a symmetrical look, depending on the aesthetic of the property. They let in a great deal of natural light once complete.



Mansard

Although a mansard roof conversion is complex, they're especially useful if headroom is at a premium. The sloping side of your roof will be altered to become almost vertical, although it may have to be removed altogether which requires planning.



Hip to Gable

A hip-to-gable loft conversion takes the roof's sloped edges and converts them into a gable wall instead. A considerable amount of headroom and floorspace can be created. They suit bungalows, chalets, semi detached and end-of-street terraced properties.



LOFT CONVERSION COSTS

Without assessing the property, it's difficult to quote an exact price for a loft conversion. However, we can outline a basic figure based upon the value of projects completed previously. For example:



Rear pitched roof dormer with large bedroom & en-suite:
£32,000 - £38,000



With large bedroom & En suite L-Shaped conversion estimate:
£44,000 - £51,000



Rear flat roof dormer with large bedroom & En-suite:
£40,000 - £47,000

More specific examples are listed below.
These costs are based on a bedroom with en-suite depending on size.

An end of terrace loft conversion with a rear and side dormer:	£45K + VAT
A mid terrace loft conversion with a rear dormer:	£40K + VAT
The conversion of a truss loft Velux-only conversion:	£35K + VAT
Semi-detached house loft conversion with a side and rear dormer:	£45K + VAT
Bungalow attic conversion:	£40K + VAT
A loft conversion in a three-storey house:	£30K + VAT

It's worth noting that we offer a free, no obligation site inspection of your property before any work begins. This removes any guesswork from the quote and allows you to plan your financial obligations with added clarity.

Breaking down some of the expected costs can help you visualise how our professional services are drawn up. The table below provides further details:

LOFT CONVERSION FEES

Design plans	£400 - £1,400
Architectural drawings	£800
Building inspection	£500 (+ £500 for structural engineer)
Party wall consultation & draft	£1,000 - £1,500
Project management	£1,500 - £2,500
Engineer structural design	£500 - £1,800
Permitted development	£172
Scaffolding hire, erection & removal	£1,000 - £3,000

FIXTURES, FITTINGS, FURNISHINGS & FINISHINGS

We often get asked how much different elements of a loft conversion would be. To give you an idea of what we include within our costs and the cost of any optional extras please see the lists below. However it is important to note that these optional extras costs can vary greatly from job to job and your final quote could be considerably different.

INCLUDED WITHIN OUR QUOTATION

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
|  | Windows |  | Standard bathroom suite and plumbing including radiators |
|  | Standard and fire doors with door furniture |  | Stairs (match your existing as near as possible) |
|  | Plastering (loft and stairwell only) |  | Standard Electrical installation including lights, switches, sockets & fire alarms |
|  | Skirting and Architrave | | |

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
|  | Window upgrade
£1000-£3000 |  | Luxury bathroom suite
£1000-£3000 |
|  | Premium fire doors or door furniture
£100 - £500 |  | Stair upgrade
£500 - £1500 |
|  | Additional Plumbing
£500 - £3000 |  | Additional Electrics
£500 - £3000 |
|  | Decorating
£1500-£3000 |  | Tiling
£500-£1500 |
|  | Floor covers/carpets
£500-£2000 |  | Furniture
£500-£1500 |



FIRE SAFETY

Every UK loft conversion requires a practical escape route in the event of fire, specifically for allowing occupants to reach a first-floor window. To comply with this, we offer fire-safety doors, interlinked smoke alarms and partitions to protect the stairway.

For a three-storey property, fire precautions are more stringent. Smoke detectors must be routed through the mains power so battery failure is avoided, whilst a sprinkler system is also generally required. The stairwell must be especially protected to stop fire spreading into the loft as well.

SOUNDPROOFING

The majority of residential loft conversions might require proper soundproofing to block the sound of a neighbour's music or passing cars. Likewise, you also have a moral responsibility to soundproof the room yourself.

Stud walls are a tried and tested method of blocking soundwaves. They work in a similar way to double-glazing, creating a gap between the stud and existing wall. Soundproofing materials, such as acoustic mineral wool, are placed in between plasterboard.

All windows are double glazed as standard, and can be triple glazed for extra soundproofing at an additional cost.



INSULATION

Regulations can change from time to time but you can be confident that MPK will ensure that all legislation is complied with when insulating your property.

We can identify three main areas that can be insulated. They are:

► The residual space

This is the area behind the perimeter wall used for storage, Rockwool insulation and insulation quilt is generally used here.

► Stud walls

These are dividing partitions and would usually have insulation quilt set between the stud wall to provide sound insulation.

► Flat/sloping roof

A combination of various rigid and multi foil insulation is used here to comply with the necessary building regulations.

VENTILATION

Because lofts don't have many natural sources of clean air, a good ventilation strategy is extremely beneficial. Without one, dampness will start to set in that will eventually cause timbers to rot.

Air space must be left to create a ventilation path before condensation can form. To minimise this via the roof, a 50mm space must be left below the underfelt of the roof tiles. Windows must have an opening equivalent to 1/20th of the floor area, combined with background ventilation of 8000mm².

FAQs

With many years' experience behind us, we've compiled some frequently asked questions customers tend to ask.

"Will you be able to work with my own architect?"

We appreciate some clients will have their own architect who've already assessed the job in hand. We're more than happy to coordinate with them to come to the best solution. Some companies don't offer this provision.

"How long will the job take?"

Everything depends on the job in hand so it's difficult to put an exact time span on it. Some may take around 4-6 weeks, whilst others could stretch over 8-10 weeks. It would be wrong to make a judgment without knowing the job specifications.

"How much disruption will there be to my property?"

Loft conversions require scaffolding on the outside of your building. This means disruption is kept to a minimum as we'll bring materials in through the roof. Some conversions need ceilings to be lowered which will cause more of a disturbance. Any mess or removals will be taken care of, leaving you with a brand-new loft with no extra hassle.

"Should I let my neighbours know?"

Although it's not a legal requirement, we highly recommend you let your direct neighbours know of the conversion plans. Although detached properties are very unlikely to be affected, an issue of contention will come with a party wall.

"What is a party wall?"

Walls that attach onto another property are known as party walls. If you live in a terraced or semi-detached property, signing a party wall agreement with your neighbour/s is highly advised. If one isn't obtained and building work commences, they can obtain a court injunction to stop the construction.

It's best to seek professional advice when drawing up an agreement with a party wall surveyor, predominantly so you'll comply with the Party Wall Act of 1996. Affected neighbours need at least two calendar months warning before the intended construction begins.

If the conversion will directly affect the adjoining property, a party wall notice is compulsory. The following is a list of specific actions which make this agreement necessary:

- Completely demolishing and rebuilding the party wall.
- Removing any part of the wall, or modifying its height or thickness.
- Removing the bearing of a beam or to insert a damp wall course into the wall.

