



# Talking RENOVATIONS

After living in their house for 36 years, **Janis and Dave King** decided to move and renovate Janis' childhood home – a 1950s bungalow. Here, we follow them as they begin their journey

I know most people are downsizing at our age – my husband Dave and I are in our mid-to-late 60s – but this is our chance to have our dream house, and so we've taken on a rather large project. It all started after my dad left me my old family home last February. We've decided to start the next chapter for it and us, but have never done anything like it – in fact, we've lived in the same three-bedroom semi-detached house in Middlesex for the last 36 years. To say we're nervous is an understatement.

The two-bedroom bungalow is in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, and was built in 1959. My mum and dad bought it off-plan for £3000. Everything was included and they could pick anything they wanted, from the wallpaper, flooring, and lighting to the bathroom fittings. They chose pink for the WC, bath and basin, all of which are still in

↓ The original advertisement for the bungalow Janis' parents bought.



As told to: Georgina Townshend | Illustration: iStock.com/Tolga



← Janis as a little girl outside her parents' bungalow.

↓ The property as it is today. Janis and Dave would like to convert the loft and add a rear-and-side extension to maximise the available floor area.



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there, in fine condition, and – so I've heard – on trend again.

My dad was happy there for 60 years and Dave and I were in two minds whether to sell it or renovate and move in. To be honest, our main worry about it all is whether we are too old to start a big project that will probably take a year or more. Another question we ask is can we afford it? We don't want to sell our home until the bungalow is finished. We like our house now and, as you can imagine, feel very attached to it after all these years – we have raised our two children within its walls, who are now grown up and have homes of their own.

However, our worries are put aside when we think of all the positives. We have always wanted a bigger house, especially a larger garden, and

this is the only time in our lives that we can realistically do it.

The property is in such a great position in a nice area: there's a bus service just round the corner, a train station a five-minute walk away, a doctor's surgery nearby, and shops within easy reach. The garden faces south, so gets sun all day whereas our current house loses it very early. There is a greenhouse where I used to raise plants for my allotment, which will now be in the same road instead of a drive away, plus the property has ample parking while the road we live on now is getting more and more crowded each year. We've also realised we could future proof it. Dave's dad had to go into a nursing home at 92 because there were no downstairs facilities at his house, while my dad, who was the same age, could stay in his bungalow. We also didn't want to sell it only to drive by later and

see that someone else had achieved what we could have done. But I think the deciding reason is that even if we sold the bungalow, we still wouldn't have been able to afford the type of property we would want in the same area. This way, we will hopefully have some money left over and a lovely home to move into.

Our initial idea is that we want the property to be very different to when my parents lived there, so a total renovation is needed. We imagine a loft conversion, as well as a rear-and-side extension that will enhance it for us and make it very sellable in the future. We'd like to be able to go upstairs to bed while we still can, and then with the advancing years, move downstairs – so a bathroom with a shower on the ground floor is key. I really think my parents would have liked seeing us living there. So, although slightly anxious about it all, I can't wait to get started... **KBB**

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