



# Talking RENOVATIONS

**Janis and Dave King** have taken on the challenge of doing up her childhood home – a bungalow her parents bought in the 50s. This time, they find an architect to get the ball rolling

**W**hen my husband Dave and I agreed we would renovate my old family home after my father left it to me last year, we knew the next stage would be to get help – after all, we've never done anything like this before. It was when we were getting our house valued, we actually got our first tip-off. One of the three estate agents who came round said in passing that her own house, which was nearby, had needed doing up and she had used a great architect who lived in the area – Gráinne O'Keeffe. We didn't know how to start planning the renovation or what we could actually do to make sure the property reached its full potential – so we looked online, found the phone number her, and phoned her up. We'd seen some of her projects on her site and also read numerous good reviews, so we felt confident.

To get started, Gráinne came to us for a consultation, did some rough sketches, and told Dave and I the price for each stage of the renovation. During this initial meeting, we were also asked for

our budget and what we wanted to achieve. In turn, we got to query whether she thought it was a good idea to have things such as a utility where we could fit washing appliances and extra freezers – I have an allotment and Dave goes fishing, so we need the storage – or whether it was possible to widen the hallway. We got on well and we liked her instantly, as it was clear she knew what she was talking about. She also seems to have done a few houses in the area and usually gets her clients by word of mouth – a good sign. We were happy with the ideas, so hired her without looking for anyone else – it's rare, I know. However, we don't feel concerned that we haven't looked at any other architects, even though we know you should always get three

quotes for trades. But, because Dave and I had an idea of how much we wanted to spend, which she met, and – looking at other projects she had done – she seemed perfect for us.

Soon after hiring Gráinne, she created around four different hand-drawn sketches. We played around with them until we found the best configuration, but I had to keep going over each little detail as I had trouble visualising what she was proposing – which is what I'm really finding difficult at the moment. I find it useful to talk everything over

until I understand and can see it in my mind. After Dave and I approved the final drawing, she organised a site survey to measure everything up properly. Now, she has gone away to do the first set of digital plans, which will take about a fortnight. We're looking forward to seeing them, as well as a 3D model of all elevations of the bungalow – it is all starting to feel real now... **KBB**

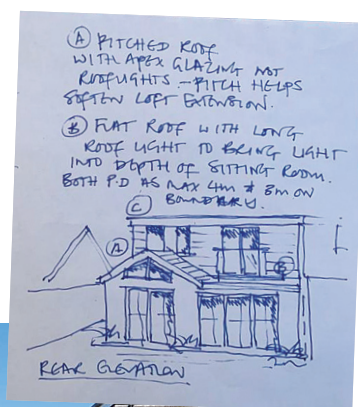
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FINALISING PLANS AND GETTING PLANNING PERMISSION...

"We don't feel concerned that we haven't looked at any other architects."

## Our wishlist TO THE ARCHITECT

- **A loft conversion** to include two bedrooms and a bathroom with a freestanding tub and walk-in shower, plus storage space.
- **A bedroom on the ground floor** which we will use as a living area for now, and bathroom with walk-in shower or wetroom.
- **A rear extension** with plenty of natural light as the existing lounge is quite dark, plus possibly some kind of glass roof with blinds to reflect heat.
- **An open-plan kitchen** with an island and breakfast bar, plus a separate dining area.
- **A utility room.**
- **Bi-fold or sliding doors** leading to the garden.
- **Outside electrical point.**
- **Spotlights in all rooms.**
- **Underfloor heating.**
- **Low-maintenance external finish.**
- **Outside water tap.**
- **Car parking.**
- **Widened hallway.**
- **A place for additional small freezers** as Janis has an allotment and Dave goes deep-sea fishing.
- **Heated towel rail** in all bathrooms.
- **Side walkway.**



↑ The first rough sketches of what the extension is going to look like.

← The back of the bungalow, which will soon feature a kitchen extension.



As told to: Georgina Townshend