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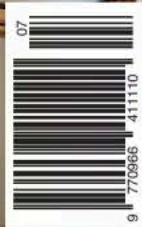
THE MAGAZINE FOR HOME REMODELLING, EXTENSIONS, LARGE RENOVATIONS AND INTERIORS ADVICE



**ANGLED EXTENSIONS**  
LEARN ALL ABOUT THIS DRAMATIC STYLE

## KITCHEN QUESTIONS

YOU NEED TO ASK  
YOUR DESIGNER  
AND YOURSELF



**PLUS** BATHROOM STYLES • BEDROOM LIGHTING • 'SECRET' KITCHEN DOORS

# QUESTION time

After a new kitchen? Laurie Davidson explores what you should be asking yourself before taking the plunge...

**T**he decision has been made: you'd like a new kitchen and can't wait to start poring over paint charts and picking out tiles. Before you begin, however, there's some very important questions you should be asking both yourself and your kitchen designer. From where to start to what you should include, to how long it takes and what the price will cover, we've uncovered the key queries you should be concerned with – and why.

→





**above** *Ledbury Studio* created a light and spacious kitchen-diner in a north London basement.

**left** Patagonia, from *Laminam's* porcelain-surface I Naturali Series, is a great way to create impact in your kitchen. Prices start from £450 per sq m.

**right** *Loch Anna* Handmade Lifford range in White Oak, Pearl & Midnight from £11,510.



## THE QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING YOUR DESIGNER

### Can you show me previous projects?

Asking to see your designer's portfolio prior to you bringing them on board is key, so you can see previous projects they've completed and get an understanding of whether they're the right person for the job. "By doing this you'll gain a clear idea of their design style and capabilities," says Charlie Smallbone, founder of Ledbury Studio. "Ask about any challenges they faced during those projects and how they overcame them. This can give you a sense of their problem-solving skills and whether they can handle any potential obstacles that might come up during your kitchen renovation."

### What would you recommend for my kitchen?

Once you have a clear idea of your budget and some of the factors you want to include, it's wise to talk to your kitchen designer so you can bat ideas around and benefit from their experience. They'll likely know about the latest technology in appliances or whether there's a better way you could save space or add storage. They should also be able to tell you more about the materials and surfaces you're choosing, with advice on the pros and cons, from countertops to cabinetry. "Ask designers which surfaces they prefer and why," suggests Oliver Webb, director at Cullifords. "If it's a big kitchen design chain, be careful not to be pushed into products that head office wants the designers to push – instead, make sure you are given all the options available to allow you to find the right material and style for you."

### Are you able to coordinate and oversee the project from design to installation?

It's important to know what your designer can and cannot undertake for you, and what you as the client will be responsible for. "If you don't feel entirely confident, then commissioning the services of a local architect or interior designer would be wise," says Clare. "While these services will be an extra cost, chances are your experienced specialist will guide you seamlessly through the process past many (potentially far more costly) pitfalls along the way. Plus, designers are often able to negotiate preferential rates from kitchen suppliers – so you may just get both kitchen and specialist for the same budget!"



Design featuring  
Crown's EasyClean®  
Kitchen in Matt  
Emulsion, Grey  
Putty, Spice Rack,  
Powdered Clay and  
Emerald Vision.



### What are the costs?

You may have a figure in your head that you're prepared to spend, but it's wise to find out if there's any way you can save money and where the costs are going to be. "It may be you're designing a kitchen that's not for your forever home, and want to know what sort will yield the best retail value," says Rebecca Nokes, design director at John Lewis of Hungerford. It's also good to know what your designer charges – do they charge for their design service, for example, or is it a free service where the designs can only be viewed in store? "It's useful to be able to take your designs home to discuss with others, plus your supplier should feel confident enough in their product to allow you to compare prices with other suppliers before expecting you to come to a decision on who to buy from," says Clare.

### Does the price include installation?

"In terms of budgets, all final prices should include installation," says Rebecca. "However, if you're configuring a new space – for example turning your old dining room into a kitchen or installing a kitchen in an extension – then you'll need to consider extra building costs on top of your kitchen design and installation."

### How long will it take for my kitchen to be fitted?

The timeline and project management are important aspects to discuss. "Ask your designer for a rough estimate of how long the project will take and any factors that might affect this timeline," advises Charlie. "Also, understand who will manage the contractors, delivery of materials, and any unexpected issues that may arise."



**above** Inspired by Scandinavian and Nordic design, *Nolte Kitchens'* new *Artline* range features fluted front detailing that offers natural beauty and contemporary flair.

**below** *Kavanagh* collection in *Nightshade* & *Pink Dusk*, *Tom Howley*, from £25,000.

## KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Where** will I store items like the Hoover or mop?
- **Do you** have enough room for bins and recycling?
- **Do I** require a lot of countertop space?
- **Do my** choices need to be child-friendly?
- **Do I** want integrated appliances? Or compact/slimline models?
- **Are** my surface choices (flooring and countertops) as durable and easy to clean as I need them to be?
- **Do I** have space for an island, and what do I want it to house, ie a sink or hob?
- **Are** there eco-friendly options or sustainable materials that I'd prefer?
- **What** items do I need to store? (Think about the height and width you'll need for drawers and shelves.)
- **What** are the pros and cons of different handles?
- **What** are the guarantee terms for my chosen cabinetry?
- **Where** will I need task lighting to ensure I have a well-lit space? ■

