

Across Solihull and much of the UK, an interesting trend has developed over the last few years: many homeowners thinking about “trading up” — moving to a bigger or better property — pause once they truly face the daunting reality of stamp duty and a raft of other moving costs. For many, the numbers just don’t stack up, nudging them toward the alternative “extend-not-move” approach. But what exactly causes this so-called **stamp duty shock**, and why are the financials often tipped in favour of staying put and renovating?

The Solihull Price Gap: Turning Movers into Extenders

Solihull offers a microcosm of this national phenomenon, with local housing prices rising sharply while available larger homes remain scarce or priced out of reach. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), property values in and around Solihull have jumped significantly in recent years, widening the gap between what homeowners can sell and what they need to pay to buy “upstairs”.

This price differential — the *price gap* — means many residents face a challenging catch-22: move to a larger home at a greater upfront cost, while paying substantial *stamp duty and fees*, or invest in extending their current property and gain extra space without the hassle and expense of relocating.



ONS May 2026 Local House Price Breakdowns

The latest ONS data, published in May 2026, shows precise detail on house price breakdowns at local authority levels, including Solihull:

Property Type Median Sold Price (May 2026) Year-on-Year % Change Terraced £290,000 +6% Semi-detached £360,000 +7.5% Detached £520,000 +8%

The jump from a semi-detached to detached home in Solihull now often means an increase of over £150,000 — before factoring in the added costs of selling and buying, including **stamp duty land tax (SDLT)**.

Stamp Duty Shock Explained: Why It’s More Than Just a Tax

Stamp duty is often the first “sticker shock” moment for homeowners thinking about moving up. Recent governments have adjusted stamp duty rates, which can sharply increase transaction costs when purchasing more expensive homes. But as anyone who has moved recently knows, that’s just the start.

The Real Moving Costs: Adding Up Estate Agent Fees, Legal Fees, and More

Many homeowners forget that selling and buying homes is an expensive process that doesn’t directly add any additional living space but can sharply impact budgets. Let’s break down the major moving costs that crop up:

- **Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT):** For properties over £250,000, stamp duty rates can escalate rapidly, sometimes up to 12%. Your exact rate depends on the property price and whether it’s your primary residence.
- **Estate Agent Fees:** These typically range from 1.5% to 3% of the property’s sale price. Companies like Checktrade show that negotiating or choosing online agents can save some money, but the fees still scale sharply on more expensive homes.
- **Solicitor/Conveyancing Fees:** Legal costs for transferring ownership usually run between £800 and £1,500 per transaction, and often need to be paid for both buying and selling.
- **Survey and Valuation Fees:** Essential for mortgage approval, these fees add several hundred pounds.
- **Removal and Miscellaneous Costs:** Moving companies, storage, cleaning, and utility transfers add further layers of cost.

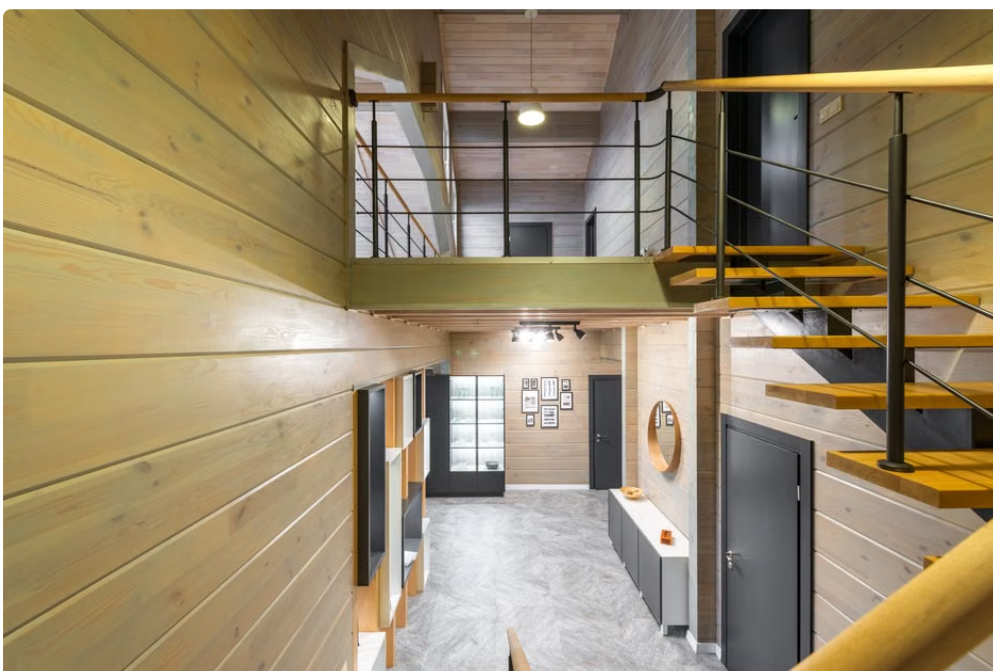
When combined, these fees often add tens of thousands to the cost of moving, money that does not translate into extra living space — a factor ignored by many first considering to “trade up.”

Extension Costs by Size and Type: A Smarter Alternative?

In contrast, many Solihull homeowners are increasingly considering extensions — especially given the scale of the price gap and moving expenses.

Single-Storey vs Two-Storey Extensions: What’s the Budget Difference?

Based on averages from numerous local builders and validated estimates from MyJobQuote, here’s a sanity-checked ballpark guide on extension costs in Solihull:



Extension Type Approximate Cost per m² (VAT Included) Example Total Cost (40m²) Single-Storey Rear Extension £1,600 - £2,200 £64,000 - £88,000 Two-Storey Extension £2,200 - £2,800 £88,000 - £112,000

Of course, costs vary with building complexity, materials, and interior fit-outs, but the above provides a useful frame of reference. Crucially, extensions add real living space, often improving household flow and resale value.

What People Forget to Budget For When Extending

- **Planning Permission and Building Regulations:** Depending on your property's location and design, you might need planning permission or approvals. Solihull Council's pre-application enquiry service is invaluable for ironing these details out early.
- **Permitted Development Rights Checks:** Some extensions may be permitted development (not requiring a full planning application), but it heavily depends on factors like conservation area status or proximity to neighbours. Always check Solihull planning application rules carefully.
- **Contingency Budget:** Renovation and build projects often face unexpected costs — a sensible contingency of at least 10-15% is strongly recommended.
- **Temporary Accommodation or Lifestyle Disruption:** Living through a build can be disruptive and costly if alternative accommodation is needed.

Moving Costs vs Extension: Crunching the Numbers

Let's do a simple comparison addressing a typical Solihull homeowner's scenario considering upsizing from a semi-detached (£360,000) to a detached house (£520,000).

Cost Element Moving Up Extending Stamp Duty (on £520,000 less £360,000) Approx. £14,000* £0 Estate Agent Fees (Selling £360k + Buying £520k @ 2%) £17,600 £0 Solicitor Fees (Buying + Selling) £3,000 £1,000 (approvals & contracts) Moving / Removal Costs £2,000 - £3,000 £0 Extension Build Costs (e.g. 40m² two-storey) £0 £100,000 **Total Approximate Additional Cost £37,600+ £101,000+**

*Stamp duty calculation approximated on difference over £250,000 with recent rates.

On face value, extending may seem costlier. However, the key consideration is that moving costs add no space, just expense, while extension costs bring tangible square footage and enhanced living environment. Adding 40m² (around 8-10% more home) can be a game-changer.

Why So Many Homeowners Choose to Extend, Not Move

Our experience liaising with many local homeowners, plus the insight gathered via platforms like MyJobQuote and Checkatrade, shows:

1. **Budget Certainty:** Extensions have clearer, upfront building costs versus the unpredictable property market.
2. **Community & Schools:** Many want to stay close to excellent local schools and maintain community ties.
3. **Planning Control:** With Solihull Council's accessible pre-application enquiry system, there's more certainty on what's feasible — especially where permitted development rights apply.
4. **Avoiding Stamp Duty Shock:** Stamp duty and scaled estate agent fees can cost tens of thousands with no extra space benefit.

[building regulations approval cost](#)

Final Thoughts: Get a Clear Picture Before You Decide

Before you decide to “trade up” in Solihull or similar markets, it’s vital to seriously factor all associated costs, particularly stamp duty, estate agent fees, legal fees, and moving expenses. Using tools like Solihull Council’s pre-application enquiry service and checking permitted development status will prevent costly surprises if you opt for extending instead.

While every homeowner’s circumstances differ, understanding the full financial implications — and balancing moving costs versus extension budgets — helps turn the dreaded **stamp duty shock** into a strategic decision that can save money and add real value to your home.