

Renovating a kitchen in a Victorian conversion flat in London can feel like stepping into a labyrinth of quirks and challenges, especially come 2026 when costs and regulations have evolved yet again. Whether you're looking to upgrade a compact kitchen or fully strip back to the studs, understanding what adds cost, what traps to avoid, and where to prioritise your budget is vital to keep the project running smoothly — and your wallet intact.

In this comprehensive guide, we'll explore the typical costs you can expect in London today, break down where it pays to spend versus save, and highlight that pesky "walls not square" and "services not where drawings suggest" conundrum that plagues so many Victorian conversions. We'll also touch on how VAT at 20% and Building Regulations Part P influence pricing and project scope. As a London-based renovation writer with over a decade on-site experience, including time working with contractors like Beams and Genesis London, I'll share insider insights to help you anticipate unexpected costs and sidestep common oversights.

2026 London Kitchen Cost Ranges – What to Expect

London kitchens remain some of the most expensive in the UK due to high labour costs, logistical challenges, and the age and idiosyncrasies of the buildings themselves. According to **London Post**, the average installed kitchen cost in a Victorian conversion flat in 2026 typically falls between **£15,000 and £30,000**, depending on specifications, brand choices, and the complexity of the install.

Let's break down typical cost bands:

Cost Range	Description	Includes	Excludes
£15,000 – £20,000	Entry-level quality, standard layouts, off-the-shelf cabinetry	Basic units, laminate worktops, standard appliances, installation	Bespoke joinery, major structural alterations, rewiring/plastering
£20,000 – £25,000	Mid-range, some bespoke elements, upgraded appliances	Semi-bespoke units, quartz/granite worktops, improved kitchen appliances	Large-scale reconfiguration, full rewiring, replacement of plumbing systems
£25,000 – £30,000+	High-end bespoke kitchens, extensive reconfiguration, full rewires	Custom cabinetry, premium appliances, full M&E upgrades	Structural underpinning, external façade works

You will want to remember that these figures are *installed prices*, which include supply plus fitting, waste clearance, and VAT at 20%. Beware of showroom "units only" prices that exclude installation — a pet peeve of mine, as this can result in nasty surprises when comparing quotes.

The Installed Price vs Showroom Price Trap

One of the most common mistakes homeowners make is comparing the "unit price" on display at a showroom or on websites to the fully installed price from companies such as Beams or Genesis London. Many providers quote "units only" prices to win attention, but fail to make clear the additional labour, delivery, skips, and VAT costs.



Here's a quick sanity check: I always convert big quotes into **cost per linear metre** installed — that includes cabinets, worktops, appliances, and the essential labour and consumables. <https://london-post.co.uk/how-much-does-a-kitchen-renovation-cost-in-london/> For Victorian conversions, expect at least **£2,000–£3,000 per linear metre installed** in 2026.



- **VAT at 20%** applies to most domestic kitchen installations. Remember this is often added on top of supply and labour costs.
- **Labour is lumped in** but be suspicious if there's no breakdown of days or tasks — lump-sum labour without day counts can hide inefficiencies or mark-ups.
- **Services like rewiring, replastering, or plumbing alterations** are almost always quoted separately and can double your costs.

Budget Breakdown — Where to Spend and Where to Save

Victorian flats bring their own set of quirks, with uneven walls, out-of-place electrical points, and complicated plumbing runs. As such, knowing what matters and what can be skimmed on is a valuable skill in any renovation.

Where to Spend

1. **Services (Rewiring and Plumbing)** – Older buildings require compliance with Building Regulations Part P for any notifiable electrical work. Rewiring is often unavoidable because existing circuits are old, undersized or in poor condition. Failure to comply is dangerous and could jeopardise insurance — investing in a qualified electrician is non-negotiable.
2. **Replastering** – Walls are rarely perfect squares or smooth in Victorian conversions. Poor plasterwork reveals tired homes and ruins fancy cabinetry. Quality replastering costs vary depending on wall size and complexity but is worth the spend for a flawless finish.
3. **Quality Units and Fittings** – Cheap, flimsy units won't last and tend to warp in London's humidity. Opt for mid-to-upper tier kitchens with durable carcasses, soft-close drawers, and water-resistant materials, especially near sinks and windows.
4. **Labour** – London labour carries a premium but skilled workers reduce errors and delays. Pay a trustworthy firm like Beams or Genesis London to handle sensitive older buildings.

Where to Save

1. **Appliances** – Consider buying these yourself. Big suppliers or designers often add a markup. If you pick standard models that can be easily sourced and integrated, you could save a considerable amount.
2. **Lighting and Decorative Finishes** – Decorative tiles, backsplashes, or task lighting can be installed after the main work, giving you flexibility to watch sales and trends.
3. **Worktop Materials** – Quartz and granite are durable but costly. Laminate surfaces have improved considerably and can be a budget-friendly alternative in less-used kitchen zones.

London Premium Drivers: Labour, Access, Waste, and Older Housing

The three-bedroom Victorian flat conversion in London packs punches that drive costs beyond national averages.

- **Labour Costs** – London's living costs push tradespeople to charge more, and skilled trades like electricians or plasterers often bill between £250-£350 per day.
- **Access Restrictions** – Narrow corridors, lack of parking bays, and tight staircases add logistical challenges. Booking a parking bay suspension can add £150-£300 to project costs, often overlooked during quoting.
- **Waste Removal** – Victorian flats generate large volumes of old cabinetry, plaster debris, and electrical waste. London's disposal charges are steep, with specialist waste carriers charging over £200 per skip load.
- **Building Condition** – Walls not square, uneven floors, and hidden services are almost a guarantee. Custom adjustments, tweaking unit sizes, and fixing unexpected damp or damage add time and cost.

Contractors can sometimes quote a fixed price but won't commit to warranties that cover these older building wrinkles, so insist on written terms before signing. Promises of bespoke kitchens done in four weeks also tend to be optimistic; these are rarely straightforward jobs.

Final Thoughts

When budgeting for a Victorian conversion flat kitchen renovation in London in 2026, expect that the devil is in the detail — rewiring to Building Regulations Part P standard, replastering uneven walls, and working around

irregular layouts will all impact price significantly. Always ask if VAT is included (remember it's 20% on most domestic kitchen work) and be scrupulous when comparing quotes to avoid the "units-only" price trap.

Your best approach is to partner with reputable companies experienced in London's peculiarities — such as Beams or Genesis London — and take time to plan a realistic budget that balances spending where it truly counts (services, labour, quality fittings) and saving where you can (appliances, decorative extras).

Doing your homework today means fewer surprises tomorrow — ensuring your Victorian kitchen renovation is a joy to use for years to come.