



Janice Kochan, President
WRHBA 2010-11

Renovation Planning Pays Off in a Successful Project

Across the country, the Canadian Home Builder's Association will be promoting October as Renovation Month and our region will be supporting it as well. The Waterloo Region Home Builder's Association represents the professional renovation industry locally through its RenoMark program. RenoMark is a customer protection program, intended for homeowners planning a renovation. With your home being one of your biggest investments, it makes sense to protect it by ensuring you hire a qualified WRHBA RenoMark member.

The RenoMark logo is your assurance that the renovator you hire has agreed to abide by the WRHBA Code of Conduct as well as a Renovation specific Code of Conduct. You are assured that each contractor warrants their work, carries liability insurance, and among other things, offers peace of mind. When a renovator joins the RenoMark program it is your sign that the renovator is concerned about fair and honest quotes, reliable start and finish dates, and understands that open communication is key to a successful renovation.

Between now and October, we will be looking at home renovations in a series of articles and we'll start with one on planning. There is a lot to think about when you first start planning your renovation project. Experienced renovators in the RenoMark program can contribute a great deal to the planning process so that the final result lives up to your expectations.

Before deciding on all the details, renovators recommend that you step back and take a good look at the bigger picture, to make sure that you spend your budget wisely and get what you really want and need. The first step is to understand your primary reasons for why you want to renovate. By having firm goals such as finding more space or making your home more energy efficient, helps determine your priorities and make trade-offs when needed. Experienced renovators can also help you plan a staged approach to reach all your goals over a period of time.

Next, take stock of your home. Understand what you like about it and what don't you like. Don't be too hasty to get rid of something that works well for you. An experienced renovator or designer can often integrate the positive features of your home into the new design.

Another good idea is to look at how much space you really need. For instance, do you want more room

Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association

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for the family to relax and watch television, to make it easier to entertain big crowds or to accommodate several cooks in the kitchen at the same time? Bigger isn't always better, you can find more room in an existing space. By moving or removing walls, changing layouts and adding bigger windows and doors, an older home may suddenly function better, and seem bigger and brighter.

Consider how you live in the home and how your family functions. For instance, if you like to barbecue a lot, keep the kitchen at the back of the house. If the kids are growing up, you may want some separation between their rooms and the master bedroom. Think about what furniture you have or plan to buy. If you like large furniture make sure it fits. A common mistake is to make additions a little too small, perhaps add a fireplace for coziness, and then have difficulty fitting all the furniture in. A 10' by 10' room may look big enough on paper but by the time you get everything in, it may look and feel cramped.

Finally, know what it is that you would love to see in your house. Before meeting with renovators for the first time, it's a good idea to create a folder or binder of ideas, designs, products, materials and so on that you like and would be interested in using in your renovation.

So take the time to properly plan, check out our valuable resources and contact a RenoMark renovator. You will then be well on your way to a successful renovation. A list of RenoMark renovators in Waterloo Region can be found at www.renomark.ca/waterloo.

WRHBA is a network of professionals who effectively manage industry issues across the region including the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich. WRHBA is actively involved in all facets of the new home construction and residential renovation industries. It is a voluntary association whose primary goal is to positively impact the communities where their members and their customers live, work and play. WRHBA encourages innovations and excellence in the planning and building of sustainable communities and in the redevelopment and renovation of existing communities. WRHBA works with government at all levels to establish fair and effective policies that impact the building and development industry and its customers. WRHBA regularly facilitates discussions between the industry and the federal, provincial, regional and local governments with respect to issues that affect development, building, and home ownership in Waterloo Region. Through ongoing representation to Municipal and Regional government, media relations and consumer education, WRHBA addresses important issues head on and have a strong presence that benefits members and contributes to housing affordability and the well-being of communities in the Region of Waterloo.

Visit www.wrhiba.com for further association information.

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