



Renovation Planning Pays Off



Steven Harris,
WRHBA President 2014-15

Across the country, the Canadian Home Builders' Association will be promoting October as Renovation Month and our region will be supporting it as well. Part one of the Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association's (WRHBA) renovation month series discusses the importance of the planning process.

"A well-planned renovation results in a successful project."

There is a lot to think about when you first start planning your renovation project. Experienced renovators can contribute a great deal to the planning process, to ensure 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.

- What are the primary reasons you want to renovate? What are you trying to achieve: Get more space? Modernize and update a tired look? Improve the energy efficiency of your home? By having firm goals, it becomes easier for homeowners to determine 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.
- Take stock of your home. What do you like about it? 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.
- Analyze your space needs. How much space do you really require, and for what? For instance, do you want more room 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? Do you need to add new square footage, or can you reconfigure the 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 the traffic flow, 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. Or consider installing sound insulation to the walls instead.

Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association

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Think about your daily routines - for example, configure bedrooms, bathrooms and walk-in closets, so early risers don't disturb others.

- Imagine the individual areas. What type of furniture do you have or plan to invest in? If you like large furniture, will it fit, and not overwhelm the room? 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 or drawn on the ground but by the time you get everything in, it may look and feel cramped.
- Is payback important? Kitchen and bathroom renovations add most value to your home, so make sure you allocate enough money and don't skimp in those areas. If you plan to sell the house within the next few years, you may not wish to go beyond market value or risk becoming the most expensive home on the street. On the other hand, if you plan to stay for a long time, the value of neighbouring homes will catch up.
- What attracts you? 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.

The more you can describe your vision and ideas, and define what you are trying to achieve, the more easily your renovator can help turn your vision into a design, and a home, that you will be proud to own and enjoy for years to come. Most important though, is to remember that you shouldn't be expected to answer all these questions on your own. A professional renovation contractor, like those found at RenoMark.ca, will work with you through this process and ensure that your renovation fits your needs, wants and budget.

Visit www.wrhba.com and www.renomark.ca for a listing of professional renovators who can help you achieve your renovation dreams – without the nightmares!

Since 1946, the Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association (WRHBA) has been "the voice of residential development and construction industry"—one of the most vital and enterprising industries in Canada. WRHBA represents over 220 member companies comprised of all disciplines involved in residential construction. WRHBA is built on a vision to be a leader in supporting our industry by fostering a vital membership through advocacy, resource sharing and education and in its commitment to improve new housing affordability and choice for new home purchasers and renovation consumers through positively impacting legislation, regulation and policy that affect the industry at all levels of government.

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