

## Renovation Planning Pays Off

“A well-planned renovation is a successful project at the end.”

There is a lot to think about when you first start planning your renovation project. It is a good idea to do a little research by visiting home shows and manufacturers' showrooms, going through home magazines and spending time on the Internet looking at products and materials, prior to calling in a renovator.

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 look closely 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 what for, e.g. to create more room for the family to relax and watch television, to make it easier to entertain big crowds, to accommodate several cooks in the kitchen at the same time, and so on? Do you need to add new square footage, or can you reconfigure the space you have? 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, that is, 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 soundproofing in the walls instead.

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

- Imagine the individual spaces. 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 in 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 there, it may look and feel cramped.
- Is payback important? The kitchen and bathrooms 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 become the most expensive home on the street. On the other hand, if you plan to stay for a long time, the houses around you will catch up.
- 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 will be able to help turn your vision into a design, and a home, that you will be proud to own and enjoy for years to come.

*This backgrounder has been prepared by the Canadian Renovators' Council  
of the Canadian Home Builders' Association.*