



RENOVATIONS . CUSTOM HOMES  
HERITAGE RESTORATIONS . COMMERCIAL

## RENOVATING YOUR HOME IN STAGES

For most homeowners, renovation means finding the right balance between what you would like and what you can afford. Depending on the type of job, doing the work in stages may allow you to achieve the results you really want, without undue financial pressure.

Professional renovator members of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association can help you get the greatest value for your renovation dollars. They suggest that you begin by creating an overall vision of what you want to do and developing a master plan for accomplishing it. Your plan must be forward thinking. It should anticipate your changing needs, and it should include any future repair and replacement items from roofing to windows.

At the same time, you want to minimize the impact of renovation on your daily life. Going through major renovations once can be trying enough. Renovations over a long period of time must be very carefully managed and scheduled. You want to map out the work so that nothing has to be done twice. This also benefits your budget.

The first step is to know exactly what shape your home is in. Hire a home inspector or a professional renovation contractor to conduct a thorough inspection. Then sit down with the renovator and evaluate the findings. Divide the renovation work into three major categories:

1. Things that must be done as soon as possible
2. Things that you want but can wait for
3. Things that you dream about

### **Things That Must Be Done As Soon As Possible**

This category consists of repairs and replacements needed to ensure the structural health and safety of your home (e.g., fixing a leaking roof or a cracked foundation, or replacing old wiring that could pose a hazard). This category also includes any work that you personally couldn't live without, even in the short term -- upgrading a badly outdated bathroom or adding an extra room for your growing family or a home office.

### **Things That You Want but Can Wait For**

Next come the improvements that will bring your home up to your expectations of comfort, appearance and function. You might want to combine rooms, open up spaces and install new windows to create a larger and brighter living area. You may consider building out or up for extra sleeping, living and working space. Or you may need a new kitchen and bathroom(s).

While you're at it, include energy efficiency in your plans: upgrade the insulation, replace un-insulated or poorly fitting exterior doors, get rid of the old furnace and install a heat recovery ventilation system. That way, you will be able to save money for the next stage of your renovation, and your home will be a healthier and more comfortable place in which to live.

### **Things That You Dream About**

Finally, every homeowner has a wish list -- a solarium for lush greenery in the middle of winter, a marble foyer, a basement workshop. Now is the time to put your dreams on the table. Some of them might be possible sooner than you think.

Once you have sorted out your priorities, your renovator can start roughing out costs and timelines. You may also be planning to do some of the work yourself to stretch your budget; the renovator can advise you on the types of work that you could do yourself and what is best left to the professionals.

Don't hesitate to ask for professional help in planning how to best stage your renovations over time. Experienced renovators share your goals: a renovation you can afford and a home you can be proud of.

Source: Greater Vancouver Home Builders Association