



Essential information when renovating your home

Renovating is a journey of many paths – not just the obvious ones. Our aim is to make the journey a pleasant one and for you to reach your destination; a beautiful, functional and architecturally designed home!

Get to where you want to go

As with every journey, plan and become informed about the best way to reach your destination. Surround yourself with honest, professional and expert advisors. The steps to consider when starting your renovations journey are:

Find the right builder

Look for a builder that has experience and proven track record of renovating the type of homes relevant to you. Do not waste your time approaching builders who are ‘jack of all trades and masters of none.’ One give away sign is when you go onto their website and they profess to do extensions, renovations, pergolas, decks, new homes and multi-unit developments. This is a sure sign they are desperate for work and will try their best on any building project.

Ensure the builder is professional, local and not intimidated by working with professional architects and engineers. There needs to be a healthy respect and understanding that these professionals are critical to the success of your project and need to be relied on for their expertise; a builder who professes to be the fountain of all knowledge and ‘bad mouths’ architects for example needs to be given a wide berth.

Finally, look for a builder who is at the top of their game; i.e. a Master Builder!

Build less, build better

More and bigger does not always equal better. Well-designed renovations that feel great can be compact in design, have less walls and rooms, yet still perfectly suit your needs. Better still, you won’t have the financial stress of the large mortgage looming over your life.

Quality over quantity will impact your everyday life. Every time.

Be innovative with traditional domestic building techniques and materials.

Using traditional domestic building methods and materials will give you access to experienced tradespeople and builders when looking for your team. Look for an expert craftsman in construction and building with wood! Getting a volume builder or modular



builder to help with your renovation is definitely a mismatch of skills, experience and project.

Build-in the ability to add later

Most homeowners set their budget based on the highest possible amount they can afford to spend – right now. However, chances are your financial situation will change. Your career progression may mean higher pay. Once the kids are older, you may have both of you in the workforce.

It is possible that down the track, you can afford to do things to your home you may not be able to afford now. That extra living space, pool, bigger deck, or parents' retreat, might be able to wait until then – so build in the ability to add it now with the way you choose your design, even though the second phase of construction may occur in a few year's time.

Build flexible spaces that work hard for you

Well-designed compact homes can feel spacious and work well because they're doing more with less. Rooms that serve more than one function, clever storage ideas and connectivity within the home, and to the spaces beyond it can go a long way. A great design can get the existing rooms, structure and spaces to work very hard for you and can save you time and money in the long run.

Hold onto non-negotiables that will impact how you live and the feel in your home

Focus attention on your living areas, and their connection to outdoors. Get them in the best orientation possible, with views and light. You'll spend most of your time in the home in these spaces, and they're where you'll entertain family and friends. Getting them to work well will improve the overall feel of the home.

Choose materials for functionality, durability and neutrality. Whilst you can be seduced (and chew up budget) with beautiful stones, gorgeous pendant light fittings and herringbone tiles, long term fun and love of a home comes when materials suit their purpose, can be cleaned easily and endure the punishment a family can inflict. You can bring personality in your easily-replaceable soft furnishings.

An architect can help with all these items but make sure to spend time explaining how you want your home renovation to function, look and feel.



The Carbonist

ARCHITECTURAL RENOVATIONS IS WHAT WE DO

Choose your architect first

For you to really get it right, design has to be chosen first and prioritised. The design of the renovation will dictate whether a home works, or doesn't.

Going straight to the builder, and selecting one of their floorplans (or working with their draftsman to tweak or create one for you) does not prioritise design. Non-designers (such as builders) convert instructions / conversations into drawings; instead of interpreting your needs and volunteering ideas for you about look, feel and functionality, as a design professional would do.

If you are unsure of finding the best architect for the type of work you do, feel free to contact Simon from The Carbonist for a list of expert architects via email on

simon@thecarbonist.com