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NEW ENGLAND BUILDER'S Renovation Guide FOR 2025



Building or renovating your home is an exciting journey, but it requires careful planning and consideration.

As the founder and project superintendent of MANCO, a design-build company serving clients in New Hampshire and Maine, we have overseen and completed decades of projects.

This guide is designed to provide you with the essential information you need to ensure a successful renovation.

Let's dive into the ten crucial points to consider before starting your renovation journey.

- Mark Mancini

01

— VERIFY BUILDER CREDENTIALS —

One of the most important decisions you'll make is choosing the right builder. In the United States, especially colder climates like ours, it's vital to hire an experienced builder who is a member of reputable organizations such as the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). These builders adhere to strict industry standards and regulations, ensuring your renovation is completed safely and to local standards.

To separate yourself from local unlicensed renovation crews, always ask your builder for their certificate of liability insurance documents, their NAHB membership information, and any state licenses for specialty trade work.

This ensures they are fully licensed and qualified to carry out the quoted work.

02

— DEFINE YOUR GOALS AND BUDGET —

Before embarking on your renovation, clearly define your goals. What do you want to achieve with this renovation? Whether it's increasing the value of your home, creating more space, or updating outdated features, having a clear vision will guide your decisions. Equally important is setting a realistic budget.

Consider luxury extras such as heated flooring, heated towel rails, LED strip lighting, niches, and recessed shaving cabinets. These items can quickly add up, so be prepared!





03

PLAN FOR THE LONG TERM

Consider how your renovation will serve your needs in the long term. Are you planning on living in your home forever, having more kids, or selling in the near future? Questions like these will influence your renovation choices. For instance, if you're planning to stay long term or expand your family, you might want to include features like a bath, double vanities, and dual shower heads. If you're renovating to sell, you may opt for a cost efficient approach that appeals to many potential buyers.

04

UNDERSTANDING RULES AND APPROVALS

If your renovation is purely cosmetic—stripping walls and redoing them with new fixtures and tiles—it generally doesn't require approval. However, changing plumbing points necessitates plumbing inspections, costing \$1,500+ just for approval. Altering the façade of your building, such as bricking up a window or creating a new one, often requires approval from the Code Enforcement Officer. This involves hiring a draftsman or architect (~\$1,500) and a structural engineer (~\$2,000).

Failure to obtain these approvals can cause problems when selling your house, as unapproved building work is a significant issue. This is another reason why your builder must be reputable. Working with a licensed builder ensures all necessary permits are obtained and the project adheres to legal requirements, avoiding potential fines and guaranteeing that your renovation is safe and structurally sound.



05 CHOOSING QUALITY MATERIALS AND FIXTURES

Selecting the right materials and fixtures is crucial for the success and longevity of your renovation. There are different tiers of quality available, depending on your end goal:

Low Tier: The most affordable options are typically found at suppliers like IKEA or Amazon. These products can be suitable for budget conscious projects but may not offer the same durability and aesthetic appeal as higher-end options.

Medium Tier: Suppliers like Delta and LG provide a good balance of quality and cost. These fixtures are generally more reliable and stylish than budget options, making them a solid choice for most renovations.

High Tier: For top of the line quality, look to niche retailers like Bertazzoni or Viking. These products offer exceptional durability, unique designs, and a premium feel.

Vanities can also be custom made by a joiner to your exact specifications and style, ensuring a perfect fit and finish for your space.

06

FOCUS ON FUNCTIONALITY AND LAYOUT

A well designed layout is the cornerstone of a successful renovation. Before you begin getting quotes, consider using online 3D planners like SketchUp or Smart Draw these both offer free online trials. Start by getting a tape measure and measuring the room, and from there, use the online planner to see if changing the configuration would work better for your needs.

Doing this helps the builder visualize your goals and allows for more accurate quoting. A functional and efficient floor plan maximizes space and enhances flow, ensuring that the layout supports your daily activities and future needs.



07 — COMMUNICATE REGULARLY WITH YOUR BUILDER

Effective communication with your builder is key to a smooth renovation process, and our company is known for our belief in consistent communication. This helps relieve stress for the homeowner, keeps miscommunication to a minimum, and ensures everyone is on the same page.

Regular updates and transparent discussions about progress, challenges, and changes are essential. Choose a builder who values communication and is responsive to your questions and concerns.

08 — USE AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

If budget allows of course, an interior designer can surprisingly be one of the best investments you'll ever make. Truth be told, a bathroom designed by a normal mum and dad is very different from a bathroom designed by an interior designer. Often, the cost of hiring an interior designer is offset by the increased sales value they can bring to your home. An interior designer can help you achieve a cohesive and stylish look that meets your functional needs while enhancing the overall appeal and value of your home.

09

THINK ABOUT RESALE VALUE

Even if you're planning to stay in your home for the foreseeable future, it's wise to consider how your renovation will impact resale value. Most renovations should yield you a 1.5-2x return on your investment. For example, if you invest ~\$20,000 into your bathroom, the value of your house should increase by ~\$40,000.

Similarly, spending ~\$70,000 on redoing the lounge and kitchen could increase your home's value by as much as ~\$140,000.

Choose designs and materials that have broad appeal and add significant value. A well-executed renovation can make your home more attractive to potential buyers and boost its market value.

10

PLAN FOR CONTINGENCIES

Despite careful planning, unexpected issues can arise during a renovation. Common problems include finding asbestos, water-damaged walls, and unexpected load-bearing walls. These issues can be costly to rectify.

Allocating a 10-20% contingency budget is always a wise decision. Flexibility and a positive attitude will help you navigate any challenges and keep the project on track.





Renovating your home can be a rewarding and transformative experience. By following these ten crucial points, you'll be well prepared to tackle your renovation project with confidence. At MANCO, we pride ourselves delivering on high-quality builds that meet your needs and exceed your expectations.

If you found this guide useful and would like to chat with our team, we would be happy to offer you an obligation free quote.

Contact us today to start your renovation journey with peace of mind.

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