

How to Plan a Renovation in the Right Order

A renovation can go sideways very quickly when the sequence of work is wrong. Plenty of projects run over budget not because the work is impossible, but because tasks are done out of order. A clear plan helps reduce disruption, avoid rework, and keep trades moving efficiently.

Step 1: Survey and define the job

Start by understanding the property and the scope. Decide what is staying, what is being removed, and what needs upgrading. This is the point to review structural concerns, damp, services, access, and any legal or planning requirements.

Step 2: Set the budget and contingency

Build a realistic budget that includes labour, materials, waste removal, professional fees, and a contingency. Renovation budgets without contingency are usually fiction in a hard hat.

Step 3: Complete strip-out and preparation

Before new work starts, remove unwanted fixtures, finishes, damaged materials, and non-structural elements safely. This helps expose the real condition of the property and creates a clean base for the next stage.

Step 4: Deal with structural and external issues

Any roof repairs, structural alterations, lintels, drainage works, wall repairs, or weatherproofing should be addressed early. The goal is simple: stabilise the building and keep water out.

Step 5: First fix services

Electrical wiring, plumbing pipework, heating upgrades, ventilation ducts, and any hidden service runs should be completed before walls and floors are closed up. Chasing out newly plastered walls later is a classic own goal.

Step 6: Insulation, boarding and plastering

Once the structure and first fix are complete, insulation upgrades, drylining, boarding, patching, and plastering can begin. This stage starts to turn the project back into a finished space.

Step 7: Floors and subfloors

Floor repairs, levelling, screeding, or preparation for final floor finishes should take place at the correct point in the programme. Always allow for drying and curing times where needed.

Step 8: Second fix

This includes fitting sockets, switches, radiators, sanitaryware, kitchens, doors, skirtings, ironmongery, and visible joinery items. This is where the project starts looking like a finished renovation rather than organised chaos.

Step 9: Decoration and finishing touches

Painting, tiling, flooring finishes, sealants, and final details should come near the end. This reduces the chance of finished surfaces being damaged by later trades.

Step 10: Snagging and final checks

Allow time for snagging. Small adjustments, alignment issues, cosmetic repairs, and final testing are all part of finishing properly.

Final thought

A good renovation plan is not just a to-do list. It is a sequence. Get the order right and the project becomes easier to manage, easier to price, and much more likely to finish without drama.

