



# *reno*MASTERS

*renovation is in our veins*



*how to prepare for*  
**RENOVATION**



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# Demystifying the Renovation Process!

Let's face it, renovating can be stressful!

Like us, you've probably heard some terrible stories over the years. But your home renovation doesn't have to be a nightmare.

With good advice and solid planning, you can avoid most of the pitfalls and run a smooth, low stress project.

It's true. I've been renovating homes for over 30 years and together with my experienced team, we know a thing or two about how to make your home renovation a success.

RenoMasters are based in Dunedin. Our team of experienced Master Builders specialise in residential renovation and provide unrivaled experience and expertise in their field.

In this eBook, we will share our professional knowledge, point out epic fails and show you how to avoid them with smart insights and handy tips.

Yours sincerely

*Andrew Elliott*

Managing Director  
RenoMasters Ltd







## Challenge No 1

### "I'm struggling with securing a builder!"

**Tip # 1: Lock in your builder's expertise early in the building process to save time, money and energy.**

Architectural plans, compliance, resource consents... there's a bucket load of things to consider before the hammering begins. But you don't have to do it on your own. Lock in an experienced building company early and they can help from the get-go.

Save time and avoid stress.

The right building team can give you a clear idea of the scope of your project, what's possible and when. That's crucial information to know before you draw up complex architectural plans or coordinate the process with council.

Often building companies can be booked out at least six months in advance so the earlier you find one, and secure them, the better.

A good builder will have the knowledge and expertise to:

- Give you an accurate idea of the scope of your renovation project
- Provide a preliminary budget to offer you a transparent idea of costs
- Come up with ways to build better, more cost-effectively and with less stress
- Introduce you to an architect that suits your needs and budget
- Navigate the local building conditions and council compliance
- Find the best building materials for the job to suit your budget
- Know how much subcontractors cost
- Sort out which specialised (and often unexpected) subcontractors you might need (ie. drainage engineer, structural engineer, height to boundary expert)

*Don't leave it to the last minute! Ask your builder for advice on any sketched ideas and get a preliminary budget in place. You can bet your bottom dollar things will evolve, but at least you've got a starting point"*

*Andrew Elliott, Managing Director*



# No Nasty Surprises!

## Knowledge is power

If you know how much things will cost before you sign off on any building decisions, you can alter your spending BEFORE expensive working drawings are created and building starts. This gives you a solid base to work from.

Find a builder who understands your vision, who makes you feel at ease and listens. Get your builder involved early and ask them for a preliminary budget so you're up with the play on likely costs and can benefit from their recommendations.

## What you need to know:

Work that requires building consent:

- Structural building - additions, alterations, repiling, demolition
- Plumbing and drainage - except repair and maintenance of existing components
- Relocating a building
- Retaining walls higher than 1.5 metres
- Fences or walls higher than 2 metres
- Swimming pools and swimming pool fences
- Decks, platforms or bridges more than 1 metre above ground level
- Buildings greater than 10 square metres in floor area
- Some earthworks (check with your Council).



*While looking for the right design is important, high-quality materials should always be a top priority.*

## Challenge No 2

### "I don't want to over capitalise!"

#### Tip # 2: Don't believe the hype.

It is important to have a vision for what you want your home to look like. Collecting ideas and taking photos is a wonderful way to do this. But it's important to be flexible.

If you've been watching reality TV renovation shows be aware they tend to exaggerate a little (or a lot).

To avoid getting caught up in all the hype and exaggerated time frames, here's what we suggest to keep your feet on the ground:

Take a reality check!

Before you begin, take a good hard look at the scope of your renovation expectations in relation to your budget. Your renovation wish list is important but keep an eye on your spending.

Will your renovation meet your ongoing needs?

Avoid over capitalising in a way that adds value to your home and life. Think about how your values and needs will change over time, in relation to your evolving lifestyle.

What can you afford, what do you value and what gives you a return?

Depending on your total renovation spend, the areas you renovate and the suburb you live in, some renovation choices might not yield the same return as others.

However, it might be of value to you personally especially if you plan to live there for some time.



What renovations add the highest value?

- upgrading the kitchen
- upgrading the bathroom
- adding an ensuite
- adding another room
- improving the indoor/outdoor flow





*"Remember to always look for a return on the money you plan to spend, particularly in the local market. Getting a Quantity Surveyor involved means you'll get a better idea of what your renovation project will cost, you'll get a detailed estimate based on a solid knowledge of your requirements, construction stages, building methods and materials."*





## "Challenge No 3

### I don't seem to gel with my architect"

#### Tip # 3: Choose an architect or designer who "gets you"

It's important to choose an architect you connect with. Why?

Because architects are people too. They may hate mornings, love the colour yellow and hate green vegetables. In the same way, they may lean towards particular design trends or concepts. This springs from their personal taste, their education and what ideas they're learning and what they're working on at the time you meet them.

Choose one that resonates with you!

Show them your design and colour ideas, show them photos of houses, kitchens, hallways and exteriors you like. Look at their previous work and if possible, talk to their former clients. Get a recommendation.

Having worked alongside many, a good building team will be able to recommend a designer or architect who suits your needs and can understand the scope of your project.

While some smaller home renovation jobs don't require an architect (check on this) other projects can take a long time - months or sometimes years. Keep this in mind before you sign on the dotted line.





# Challenge No 4

## "My builder hasn't given us a contract. Do I need one?"

### Tip # 4: Get your paperwork in order

Not having a building contract and a clean scope of work is like travelling without an itinerary; sweetly optimistic and frighteningly naive.

A written contract between you and your builder protects you!

If something goes wrong, or if there's confusion, a clearly written contract leaves less room for argument. While you may be tempted to accept a builder's quote or list of tasks as your written contract, it's better to go into more detail. That way, if something isn't up to scratch, you've got enough information to know the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved. Plus, by New Zealand law, any project over \$30,000 requires a written contract.

In most cases you'll have a contract with the builder (as the main contractor). They are then responsible for organising all the subcontractors. But if you're managing the project yourself (perhaps under a labour-only contract with the builder) you will have to arrange contracts with each electrician, plasterer, painter, plumber etc.



Make sure your contract contains:

- The scope of the renovation project
- An expected timeline
- The tasks expected to be done and by whom
- Workmanship warranties and material guarantees
- Payment schedule
- Any other guarantees, for example Master Builders Guarantee







## Challenge No 5

### "How do I deal with renovation concerns"

#### Tip # 5: Communicate, discuss & ask questions

Congratulations!

You're excited about your project or perhaps you're renovating your dream home. You have design ideas, an architect and a builder. Work is about to start and your money is about to be spent.

Now is the time to take a breath and roll out your people skills.

Face-to-face communication is key to bringing your renovation to life. The team you've engaged needs to understand your renovation vision clearly.

Make sure you are comfortable talking to your architect, builder and subcontractors on all matters, big or small. Renovation projects can last for months. You need to be sure you're kept in the loop and it's essential you feel at ease approaching your team.

There's no such question as a silly question.

Before you begin, think about this:

- Can you ask your builder/architect any kind of question?
- Do they listen?
- Are they open to your ideas?
- Do they have a clear visual representation of the final result that you all agree on?
- What happens if there is a problem or issue?
- Do you have a positive way of communicating issues to ensure they can be dealt with quickly and with transparency?

Pondering these questions before the project takes off may save you angst in the long run.



# Challenge No 6

## "My DIY turned into a disaster because I was out of my depth"

### Tip # 6: Know your strengths and outsource the rest

We're a nation of do-it yourself and we're proud of it. But when it comes to complex renovation projects, there can be a false economy in trying to go it alone.

#### DIY Contracts

As mentioned under Challenge No 4, if you have a contract with your builder as the main contractor, they'll organise subcontractors, usually choosing trusted tradies they've worked with before. But, if you decide to be your own project manager you'll need to source and organise all contracts and contractors. This in itself can cause major headaches, for example they can't come when you need them or they tell you they're too busy to come at all!

#### DIY Discounts

If you think you can talk your way into bulk discounts for quality building materials, think again. Most builders have long standing relationships with suppliers, allowing them to purchase the best materials at the most cost effective price. (Generally they can get a better quality product at whole rates for the same price you can purchase a cheaper and often inferior quality retail product).

#### DIY Project Management

While you're cutting out the middleman, giving you the illusion of control, many renovation tasks require the coordination of multiple subcontractors and processes. Years of experience means a professional builder and his team know the right people, when they can work and have systems in place to coordinate basics like; insurance, warranties, contracts, payment, council compliance and consents.

#### DIY Dealing with Councils

This takes knowledge, patience and experience.

A proactive, switched on builder will be up to date with compliance, issues, consents and be able to tick all the boxes that need to be ticked. Just one example in Dunedin is the 2 GDP and the effect this will have on building and housing density.



## Here's what our customers are raving about

If you're ready to start talking with a team of expert builders who live and breathe renovations, because "renovation is in our veins!"

Then take a look at what some of our clients are saying about us.

*"I highly recommend the team at RenoMasters.*

*Professional, meticulous builders. Not only did they do a great job building, but also project managing my full house renovation. Would have no hesitation in recommending this team".*

Ash Stevenson

*"Would recommend RenoMasters to anyone, such a great team and done an awesome job on the bathroom! Couldn't be happier. Thanks guys for your hard work".* Sarah Leebody



## CONTACT US TODAY

We offer a free no obligation  
initial consultation to discuss your project.  
To make a booking with one of our consultants  
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