

The Before You Renovate Checklist

15 decisions to make before plans, quotes and selections become expensive.



WELCOME

Before the first quote

A considered renovation begins before the finishes, fixtures and mood boards.

This checklist helps you resolve the decisions that shape the brief, the budget and the quality of everything that follows. Use it before engaging your wider team, or return to it when the project begins to feel noisy.

You do not need perfect answers. A clear first position is enough. Circle, write, cross out and refine as the project develops.

THE EDIT

Fewer decisions do not create a better renovation. Better sequencing does.

Project snapshot

Name the outcome before you name the products.

01 Define the outcome

In one sentence, what must this renovation change about daily life?

02 Understand the property

Record the age, type, orientation, strongest existing features and most limiting conditions.

DECISION 03

Life at home

Design for the way the property needs to work, not a generic ideal.

03 Clarify household needs

Who lives here now, who may live here later, and what does the home need to make easier?

Daily friction

List the three recurring frustrations that the renovation must resolve.

Budget boundaries

A useful budget is a decision-making tool, not just a ceiling.

04 Choose a working ceiling

Record the amount available for the complete project, including design, approvals, construction, fixtures and furnishings.

05 Protect contingency

Choose the contingency you will preserve rather than quietly spending early.

- ☐ 10 percent
- ☐ 15 percent
- ☐ 20 percent
- ☐ To be confirmed with the project team

What will not be funded

Write down the upgrades that are outside scope unless other priorities are reduced.

Scope and priorities

A project becomes clearer when the boundaries are explicit.

06 Lock the current scope

List the rooms, structural changes and exterior works included in this phase.

07 Rank the priorities

Choose the five outcomes that matter most, then number them from highest to lowest.

Plans before products

Resolve movement, proportion and function before finish selections.

08 Test the layout

Check circulation, furniture placement, storage, natural light, sightlines and door clearances.

- ☐ Furniture fits at realistic scale
- ☐ Paths feel direct and generous
- ☐ Storage is located where it is used
- ☐ Wet areas are practical
- ☐ Views and daylight are protected
- ☐ Future accessibility has been considered

The expensive-to-change list

Note the layout decisions that must be resolved before documentation or quoting.

Material direction

A whole-home material language is more useful than a room-by-room mood board.

09 Choose the material direction

Describe the tonal, tactile and architectural qualities the whole home should share.

10 Resolve what is hard to replace

Prioritise flooring, stone, tile, windows, doors, plumbing positions and built-in joinery.

- ☐ Flooring
- ☐ Stone and benchtops
- ☐ Tile
- ☐ Windows and doors
- ☐ Plumbing locations
- ☐ Built-in joinery
- ☐ Lighting positions

People and permissions

Clarify responsibility before decisions begin to fall between roles.

11 Confirm approvals

Record the planning, strata, heritage, engineering or certification advice the project may require.

12 Define team roles

Who owns design, documentation, selections, cost control, ordering and site decisions?

Ready for the market

Good information creates better comparisons and protects the long view.

13 Create quoting information

Check that every bidder receives the same drawings, scope, assumptions and selection allowances.

- ☐ Current drawings
- ☐ Written scope
- ☐ Finish assumptions
- ☐ Fixture allowances
- ☐ Exclusions
- ☐ Provisional sums
- ☐ Proposed program

14 Apply the resale filter

Would a future buyer understand the layout, value the major materials and accept the maintenance burden?

DECISION 15

Your next 90 days

Turn the brief into a sequence that can actually move.

15

Set the next ten actions

Write each action, the owner and the date it needs to be resolved.

CLOSING NOTE

A clearer way forward

Your project does not need every answer today. It needs the next decisions in the right order.

Keep this checklist with your plans and revisit it before major scope, budget and selection decisions. If a choice does not support the brief, it is probably noise.

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