

Five steps to success

Be clear in what you want and expect from your renovation, writes GRAY SMITH.

Renovating can be daunting, but it needn't be. A successful result simply hinges on detailed planning, a well-considered design that best meets your needs and a project delivered within budget. Here is a step-by-step overview of how best to go about it.

DEFINE YOUR BRIEF

It is important to define clearly what you want to achieve with your renovation, being careful to anticipate future needs. Although your architect will help to develop your brief, it is important to start with clear ideas of needs ... and expectations.

DEFINE YOUR BUDGET

You need to establish how you will pay for your renovation and how much you are prepared to spend. Include in your calculations fees for services such as an architect, a structural engineer and a surveyor. And don't forget council fees. It is important to have a realistic expectation of what can be achieved within your budget, and your architect can assist with this.

It is wise to consider the long-term savings associated with environmentally sustainable design technologies. For example, water-conserving systems and renewable power systems will have upfront costs that will be more than compensated for in the longer term.

CHOOSE AN ARCHITECT

The best way to choose an architect is either through the recommendation of family, friends or colleagues, or if you have seen a house you like – be it in a street or magazine – you can find out who the architect is.

ArchiTeam Co-operative, the Australian Institute of Architects and Archicentre all have registries of architects.

You will be working closely with the architect, possibly over a long period, so it is important you choose one with whom you have a good rapport and who is a good communicator and listener.

FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESS

Initial design: The architect will work with you to refine your brief and will take that information to develop at least one concept design.

Design development: The architect will work with you to develop the approved concept into an actual design.

Council applications: The architect will provide documentation for planning and building applications to council. A site survey and structural engineer's drawings may also be required at this stage.

Contract documentation: The architect will carry out a detailed design of all aspects of your home and will provide architectural drawings and specifications for tendering by builders.



The end result:

A classy, well-designed renovation. (INSIDE-PHOTO ERICK SAILLET GETTY IMAGES)

Contract administration: The architect will oversee the tendering process and selection of builder, as well as overseeing the construction of your home to final completion and defects period.

An architect is usually contracted for all of the above stages but, if finances do not allow, some architects will agree to being contracted for a partial service.

Don't expect a problem-free renovation. And there

is no way to avoid the inconvenience that comes with renovating. However, the enjoyment of living in a well-designed, newly renovated house and the increased value of your property will make it all worthwhile. \

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