

REVIEW \ RENOVATION

There can be many benefits to renovating your home, from creating a living environment that you enjoy every day to the increased value of your property.

The extension and renovation of a Victorian villa in Elsternwick, pictured here, was designed by Coy & Yiontis Architects. This is a beautiful example of a highly resolved design that creates exciting, modern and elegant living spaces that are of their time, yet are in harmony with the existing Victorian house.

However, renovating can be daunting and fraught with problems if you don't take time to plan carefully. Here are some common mistakes made by the uninitiated and suggestions how to avoid the problems to ensure a successful renovation.

MISTAKE 1

STARTING WITHOUT A MASTER PLAN

It is very important to see the big picture before starting renovations. Doing all required renovations in one go is not only the most cost-efficient way to renovate, it will also cause the least inconvenience. However, if finances dictate that you do the work in stages, be sure that a thorough design has been resolved, addressing all aspects of the renovation upfront. This will provide for a cohesive overall design and allow for a considered staging of works that will minimise unnecessary costs and delays.

MISTAKE 2

SCRIMPING ON DESIGN

A good design can truly transform a property and its value, and is well worth the cost. Many home owners fail to appreciate the importance or potential of design and scrimp on the planning and design stages to reduce costs. The finished product will only be as good as the design. Good design will provide a quality living environment, maximising the potential of the property in relation to the budget, thereby maximising the value of the property. Good design can also avoid or minimise unnecessary building costs and delays.

MISTAKE 3

MAKING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AFTER THE BUILDING PLANS ARE APPROVED OR BUILDING WORKS BEGUN

Making significant changes to the design after obtaining council approval will likely require going back to council for approval of the changes. This will cause delays and unnecessary costs in the redesign and council fees. Before drawings are submitted to council, make sure you understand exactly what has been designed and that you are happy with it. It is important that as much information in regard to the design and specification of finishes and inclusions is included in the contract documents, as this will minimise unexpected costs during construction.

MISTAKE 4

BEING UNPREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Unexpected costs and delays during construction is an inherent part of renovating. This is because there may be potential problems that you will be unaware of until after the demolition has started. For example, it may have been assumed that much of the existing plumbing will be retained. However, after removing a floor, it could be found that the plumbing does not meet required standards and needs to be replaced. It is also likely that some design changes will be made during construction. You may change your mind about



(CHRIS BUDGEON)

RENO MAGIC \

This project involved the extension of a single-storey Victorian house in Elsternwick. The design, by Coy & Yiontis Architects, included a new wing on the southern boundary, which created a private courtyard and allowed the living areas to take advantage of the northern light.

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Taking the 'no' out of reno

the tiles in the bathroom, or that you need more cupboards in the kitchen. For these reasons it is advisable to plan on a contingency of about 20 per cent of the budget.

MISTAKE 5

DON'T CHOOSE A BUILDER ON PRICE ALONE

A quote from a builder that is considerably less than other quotes may indicate that the builder has not properly costed or understood the full scope of works. It is essential that the builder you choose is capable of carrying out the building works to a high standard. Be sure to check at least three references. Your architect can help you obtain the required information for you to choose the correct builder.

MISTAKE 6

CUTTING CORNERS ON PRODUCTS AND MATERIALS

Even on a tight budget, be careful not to buy poor-quality products and materials. Though cheap, they can prove to be costly when they fail and need to be repaired or replaced. By all means hunt bargains, but be sure they are of suitable quality and will last.

MISTAKE 7

NOT MAINTAINING GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Good communication and trust between you and your architect and builder is vital for a successful renovation. Don't hesitate to bring your concerns to their attention. If you don't understand any part of the process, make sure they clarify the issue until you do understand and are happy to move forward.

MISTAKE 8

OVERCAPITALISING OR UNDERCAPITALISING

If the renovation is being done with the intention of selling in the short term, be careful not to overcapitalise. You need to determine a budget that you can afford based on the likely sale price and desired profit, and keep to it. However, if you want to build your dream home and not sell it for the next five, 10 or 20 years, then you need to decide if overcapitalising on your property in the short term is an issue. Should it stop you from creating the home that you want and that you will enjoy for years to come? \

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