



Design / Build / Renovate



Planning & Preparing for a Major Home Renovation

Remodeling your home can be a rewarding and wonderful experience if patiently and carefully planned. I know what you are thinking, is this guy crazy? Having my home completely destroyed is wonderful and rewarding!!! My wife has told me that it is much like elective surgery. if meticulously planned and prepared for, the ends justify the means. The quality of life resulting from a well planned renovation, is a much greater reward then the short sacrifice to get there.

Preparing & Planning a home renovation is a complex process and can become overwhelming. This report was developed as a general guide to assist homeowners in emotionally preparing themselves and their expectations for the remodeling process. In addition, we have organized this article in the required steps to ensure an effective planning process for homeowners to follow.

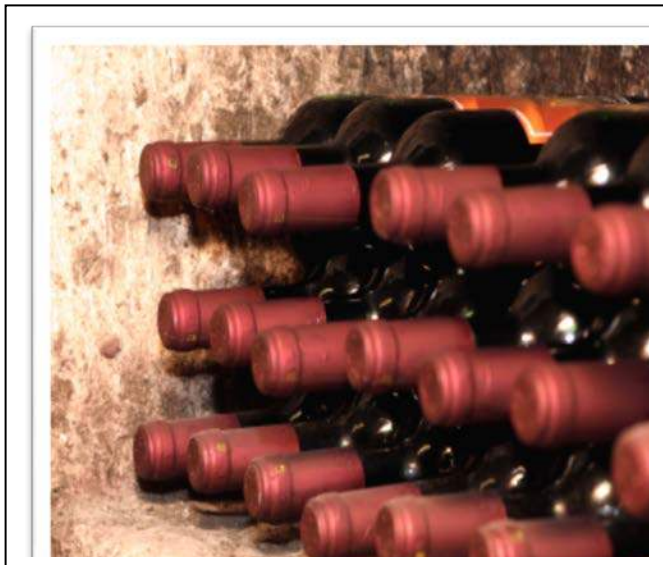
If you are searching for resources for guidance with your renovation project, this suggest you have a need and desire to improve your homes lifestyle. Yes, I did say lifestyle. Your home reflects your taste and desires of your lifestyle to your family, your friends and most of all to yourself. It is where your family gathers for holidays and where you entertain your valued friends. So by the mere fact that you are looking for renovation planning insights implies that you are motivated. You have evaluated your surroundings and have determined that it is time for some changes to your home.





Preparing a Wish List

You should begin by identifying the areas of your home that you would like to repair, update or completely change. Take some time to develop a complete *wish list* of rooms and areas of the home that are in need of some level of restoration. This is the time to allow yourself to dream and image what your home could look like without qualifying limitations. Just image if there were no restrictions like money or interruptions of your day to day life with workers, dust and the other realities that come with a major remodeling project. Let your visualizations and imagination soak in and sleep on these ideas.



After your visit to Fantasy Island, it's time to prioritize your wish list. This should be done by focusing on the emotional value you have placed on these mental pictures. Not by financial limitations or other practical reasoning decision making tools at this stage. There will be time for this later. The significance in prioritizing your wish list is that you are allowing your emotions and creativity to lead this process. The significance of this procedure is that it will assist you in clarifying what is important to you. So when you are

required to start eliminating ideas through reasoning and justification while preparing your preliminary budget, your important priorities don't get dismissed easily.

We at Marwood Construction also like to look at the wish list as a menu. Your immediate budget may not be practical for a specific item or area of the home during a specific remodeling phase, but by focusing on the big picture we can plan and build in the infrastructure for future remodeling projects or even do it yourself projects. This provides you the advantages of responsible financial planning, while avoiding disrupting recently remodeled work to accommodate access for future project needs, like light switches, underground conduit and flooring material pattern breaks. This is why I always recommend looking at your home wish list globally.



Collecting Design & Product Ideas

This is our clients favorite part of the renovation process. If they could only find the photo image of the room they wanted and snap their fingers! Well it not quite that easy, but it still is enjoyable for them.

Collecting design ideas and photo images of products and well designed spaces is critical for conveying your ideas and dreams to your team of professional advisers and



collaborators. In our era of the internet, it has never been easier for a homeowner to access good design and product ideas . Unlike the past, you are no longer restricted to books and magazines, you can visit web sites such as; Houzz.com , Pinterest.com.com , Home-designing.com , Venanda.com , ect. These resources will provide you with design, product, color and fashion ideas that will have your imagination racing with possibilities.

Why is this important you ask? A picture is worth a thousand words. Most homeowners biggest complaint is that their design team or sometimes just the contractor, did not listen to their ideas and needs. While this is often a

valid issue, the homeowner is far better off working from a specific reference point that photographs offer. Photo images provide a working canvas allowing your decorator, designer and contractor to actually see the intricate detail associated with your vision. This will also stimulate open discussion about the purpose of use and functionality of your ideas. This method is also provide you a good indication of communication and the future working relationship with your adviser. In all your collaborating parties will work more efficiently and produce a more detailed design plan. The results will save you money and a great deal of frustration during the entire remodeling process.



Allowing Enough Time for Preparing and Planning

This is a topic that causes our clients the largest amount of heart burn. If they have never undertaken a major remodeling project before, they will undoubtedly underestimate the required time line from wish list to completion of their project. By underestimating your time requirements, the homeowner welcomes a significant amount of unwarranted stress into their lives. This results in either higher cost or sometime postponements, which in turn generates ill will for all concerned

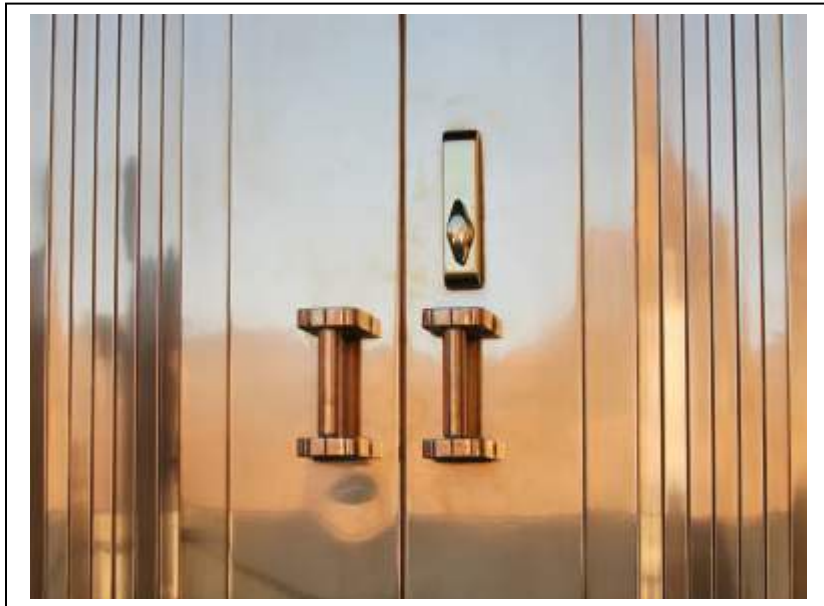
As a rule of thumb, a homeowner should allow 3-4 times the amount of time required to actual complete construction of the project. If you do not know how long the construction side of the remodeling project will take, start with looking at a calendar and determining when you would like the physical work to actually take place, such as when kids are out of school or having your home in top shape for a holiday season. Work backwards making note that this will be a time consuming process, blocking out seasonal down time, vacation time and high demand times of in your life. You can never over plan and never start the process to early. Just ask someone you know, the better the planning, most often the better the project outcome.





Developing a Budget

This is not a task that requires you to get sheet rock prices or square foot unit pricing, although that will assist you greatly. This is a process of looking at key product components such as cabinets or plumbing fixtures or appliances and once again determining what is most important to you. These products are what drives a \$25,000 kitchen remodel to \$50,000 or even \$100,000. Will it be marble or wood instead of ceramic tiles or Viking Appliances over Thermador? It is the product selection that drives the budget.



After you have determined your preferred products for your wish list areas, you can evaluate your renovation expenditures requirements easily with a plus or minus 25% contingency factor. This will provide you what is called a "Cost of Magnitude" for the entire wish list. Now you can start studying your wish list priorities and considering the financial impact of your global wish list plan. This is often where homeowners choose a kitchen over a bathroom remodel or a outdoor living area over a swimming pool. They fully understand that if their finances do not allow them the luxury of the entire wish list at one time, they can plan various remodeling phases over a period of time.

What's important at this stage is that you are now better prepared to start your research for the design and renovation team.



Decorator / Designer / Architect / General Contractor

All 4 of these specialty professions have a place in the renovation process. The question is what is right for you?

Decorators are great with furniture, fabrics and color. This what they do. If this is a skill set that you do not possess, then having a Decorator as part of your team could provide some stunning results. The size of the renovation will determine what and how much of role the Decorator will play in the overall project.

Designers are great for homeowners that are having issues with space and finished products. Designers are very useful in providing as built drawings of existing floor plans and drawing up plans for taking bids. Most good designers will introduce you to new products and trending design ideas. We have found that most designers are not the most appropriate professional for a major renovation that often effects the structure. Most designers are not required to be licensed, but are a good fit for developing plans for smaller projects with quick turnaround.

Architects are licensed professionals that not only offer design guidance but will process the training and ability to determine the impact of home modifications on the overall structure of the home. They are well suited for a major renovation that requires adjustments to foundations and roof lines or the moving of load bearing walls to create open space areas.

General Contractors are not required to be licensed in Texas, but are in many states. A good general contractor is a professional facilitator, which will provide a homeowner all the required services (one stop shopping) needed for a project of any size. That is because they are required for most renovation projects to apply for a building permit and required to meet compliance inspections by the local municipality. One of the requirements for most significant projects is to provide detail drawings with the application for the building permit. The greatest advantage to a homeowner for using a general contractor is that the GC is fully responsible and accountable for both design and construction. This serves as a effective solution to homeowners getting caught in the middle of disputes between uncooperative professional advisers or professionals determining who is responsible for design errors.



Seeking a Qualified General Contractors

If you have not hired an architect or designer to prepare the required documents (project blueprints & specifications), you will need to interview and request a general contractor to provide you a detailed proposal of their scope of work, including inclusions and exclusions. Prepared with this information from several general contractors, you can carefully review these documents and prepare a thorough question and answer process to complete your hiring of a qualified GC.

It's appropriate at this point for you to understand that this hiring process is a give and take process. A professional GC will be interviewing you at the same time you are interviewing them. This is a good practice that will result in both parties getting to know each other, while establishing a level of expectation and performance standards. It is also an successful method for establishing the basis of a trusting and efficient working relationship. I cannot overstate the importance of this relationship development process. If you as a homeowner do not have a warm and trustful feeling that the GC does not have your best interest at heart, it does not matter how much money he can save you or how good he says his workers are. You are likely to regret ever entering into a legal relationship with them. Keep one important point in mind when hiring your GC. Even a good contract will not fix a detrimental experience and poor workmanship with a GC that you are having issues with. A contract will only provide a remedy for the damages, not the loss of time of joy from your new home. Hire for character, quality and consciousness.

There are many factors to weigh in making your decision regarding hiring a qualified General Contractor, such as insurance, time in business, cooperation and knowledge shared during the interviewing process. The willingness to work with your advisors, the day to day habits of housekeeping during the construction process and the overall friendliness and courtesy you can expect from his workforce. After all this is a service business that takes place in your home, around your family for sometimes a extended period of time. You may think at times that they are never going to finish their work and will be moving in with you. To this I promise you, a good GC is as motivated to complete a project as you are to have them finish.



Contracts / Scope of Work / Insurance

I always recommend regardless of the size of the project, that both parties develop a comprehensive and detailed scope of work, a contract of substance and furnish the homeowner a certificate of insurance as name insured. This agreement should clearly address such matters as payment schedule, allowance schedules, work schedules and the conditions and consequences for non performance and disputes.

It is very important that your GC have liability insurance, builders risk insurance and workers compensation (or waivers) if facilitating a major renovation. The State of Texas does not require general contractors to maintain insurance. This means if there is a gap in the insurance coverage of the GC 's insurance, the liability of an unanticipated event could come back on your insurance company or worse you personally.

A brief word about undisclosed (covered up) defects. This is an issue that causes many disputes and hard feelings between GC and homeowners. The covered unknown is part of the remodeling and restoration process. These conditions usually result from the GC not being able to visually see a defect in the original covered area that could not be anticipated as part of the original scope of work. The procedure of these conditions should be discussed in detail with the GC prior to hiring. In addition, it is always wise to maintain a reasonable financial contingency reserve for these unwanted surprises. The amount depends of the size of the project and age of the property. The larger and older the home, the larger the reserve contingency.





Project Schedule

It is best for the homeowners family during a major renovation to make other living accommodations or to go on vacation if possible. Unfortunately, this is not always feasible. In these situations, careful discussion and consideration between GC and homeowners to plan for the homeowners every day convenience during the project. The best method is careful planning of multiple construction phases by allowing for a portion of the home to remain dust free and plan temporary utility rerouting to avoid service interruptions at less than opportune moments. These temporary adjustments and accommodations will more than offset the expenses of alternative housing during the duration of the project

The GC should provide some form of project schedule for the restoration project with weekly updates as to the project progress's. Weather and unexpected surprises can quickly cause schedule delays. It is extremely important to the project and relationship success that open conversation be shared between GC and homeowner regarding concerns and expectations of projected scheduling milestones and completion dates. On smaller projects this matter is even more critical due to the relaxed nature of expectations due to short time lines.





Preparing Yourself and Family for a Home Restoration Project

Although we have touched on many of the following items, it would be appropriate to cover these items in light of preparing the homeowner for the restoration project journey.

a) **Financial** - This topic causes considerable stress and conflict before, during and after a remodeling project. Pay a little more for a professional and the results will translate into greater value in your home and enormous sense of pride. Secondly, do not bite off more than you can chew. If the pricing is pushing your budget to the max, scale back the scope of work or look for acceptable alternative products. It is much wiser planning a contingency reserve for the unexpected surprises than living with stress of trying to figure out how to complete your project. This will only result in greater schedule delays, interruption of the use of your home and likely greater cost from remobilizing back to the project.

b) **Align your Expectations with your GC** - The remodeling journey will go much more enjoyable if you and your GC's interest and project goals are aligned. This means both parties are entering into a good faith relationship with a win / win attitude. The GC should clearly understand the homeowners vision and should be sensitive to the conditions stipulated by the homeowner. The homeowner should understand that as diligent as the GC may try, there is going to be dirt, dust and noise. There are also likely to be lost work days that push an optimistic completion date. It is a two way street that is best traveled together with each other interest in mind and reaching the same goal.

c) **Be Decisive** - It is acceptable to mull things over when faced with a decision regarding your dream project. Ask as many questions as you can to get a complete understanding about your options, what the consequences of the change will be and the pending what if's. But be decisive when you make your decision or choice. Nothing will run up cost or slow a project down more than not making decisions or changing your mind too often.

d) **Contain Your Emotions** - This is often a great challenge for homeowners who have become personally invested in their projects. Find a constructive way to share your disappointment when things don't go as planned or discussed. Communication of details can get lost in translation. It is best that you and your GC agree on several key items;



a) who is your project point of contact, b) who is the is responsible to you when you are displeased. Losing it will not get you what you desire. Find a location away from the dust and noise that you can visit if you feel your blood pressure rising or tearful. In most cases, the trades do not make mistakes on purpose and when told of their mistakes, they feel bad for their short comings.

Conclusion

There are many moving parts to the complexity of planning and preparing for renovation of the family home. It is my desire that this guide will be of some value in your pursuit of your homes remodeling project. If you have further questions regarding the renovation process or would be interested in considering discussing your remodeling need with us, we would be pleased to be of assistance to you in any way we can. Marwood Construction is committed to quality craftsmanship and unparalleled customer service. We look forward to serving your luxury housing needs.



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