

# PLANNING A HOME RENOVATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS



Design Renovations and Photos / STROBEL DESIGN BUILD

This homeowner wanted to transform the home design to a "West Indies" style.



A home is a sanctuary for most of us, a place reserved for family and close friends. However, if you've ever found yourself in the position of undergoing a remodel, you know that these sacred spaces quickly become the workplaces of countless new faces.

A home remodel can (and should) be a beautiful thing, an opportunity to imprint personal style into a home, and choosing the right contractor is a key piece to the puzzle. The pitfall that many face in the beginning of the remodeling process is not contemplating a few important questions that ought to be considered before courtship between a client and a contractor should begin:

### What do I want to do?

Write it down, discuss it with your partner, and have a concept in mind. A handy way to do this is with a list, from most important to least important, what are your goals for your home? Maybe the guest bath needs to happen by Christmas, but the outdoor space can wait until next summer.

### How much money do I want to spend?

This is important to address for a few reasons. First, it will help you in your search for a contractor. There are many price points of contractors and knowing your budget for your project will help you identify which price point you are operating in. Secondly, it will inform you, and eventually your contractor, what the financial limitations of the project will be.

### How quickly do I need this done?

Addressing timeline goals in the very beginning of your courtship will help you and your contractor in managing expectations. It gives your contractor the opportunity to collaborate with you on ways to achieve these goals, and also to give you feedback on their ability to meet these goals.

Once you've got these figured out, you should be prepared to reach out to firms to begin your search.

At the beginning of any homeowners remodeling odyssey is the

inevitable search. The daunting and harrowing search for a contractor. Fortunately, there are a few things you can look out for when deciding which contractor you'll be getting into bed with.

#### Ask around.

It's helpful to begin this search in your neighborhood, scanning neighbors' yards for signs or branded trucks. Friends, family, and neighbors are also great assets for referrals, so ask around. For example, the project featured in these photos was referred to the contractor through the homeowner's real estate agent. Home remodeling is an intimate process, and knowing which firms your loved ones trust is a good place to start.

#### Confirm regulatory compliance.

Be sure to confirm that the contractors you are considering are licensed in their trade. Each licensed contractor is issued a license number that you can search and confirm on the website for the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation. Additionally, there are professional organizations that contractors can elect to be members of which offer additional credentials and certifications and set higher standards. The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI Tampa Bay) is a great example of this.

#### Find the right fit.

At this point you should have narrowed the list down to local, trustworthy, licensed contractors. Now it simply comes down to finding a good fit for you.

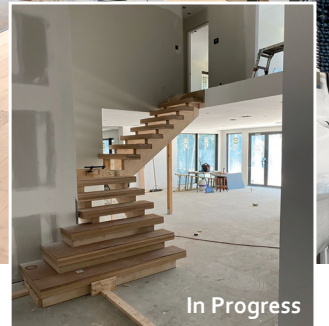
Review the portfolios of each contractor to be sure they have experience delivering on the type of project and quality of work you are expecting. Inquire about the contractor's project management process to address their plan for collaboration between you, the designer, and construction manager. A company with a strong project management process will be better equipped to provide you with quality work at a comfortable pace for you.



A gourmet kitchen is complete with custom cabinets and the latest design trends.



The outdoor kitchen has a motorized pergola to use rain or shine.  
Continued next page



A custom-built floating staircase leads to a loft area with dramatic oak ceiling at entry.



Years in business can also be a helpful indicator of some important things: a positive reputation in the community, a strong degree of familiarity and experience with your type of project, and strong relationships with collaborating contractors. Finally, in meeting with each contractor be sure to pay close attention to who you feel most comfortable with, as the firm you choose will likely be working closely with you, inside your home, for several months.


Once you have chosen and committed to your firm, the project management process should begin. If you have already completed your plans with an architect, you will likely begin the permitting process immediately. If you are starting from the very beginning, then this is the point where your collaboration with your designer will begin.

**Be prepared.**

Remodeling your home is as much an art as it is a technical process. Good work takes careful planning and time to execute. The more time you take working through all the details with your contractor up front, the quicker the actual construction will happen without

delays. We all want to see work starting to happen as soon as possible, but living through a stop-and-go remodel on your home is frustrating. Starting and stopping a construction project has compounding effects on a timeline; if you have to stop to redesign or change a material, everyone down the line has to reschedule their work. Let your contractor cut or dig holes to inspect an existing condition up front, this will save having to stop the project to re-engineer or redesign, usually resulting in countless weeks of inactivity.

Finally, don't be afraid to make drastic changes to your home. With today's technology and skilled designers and contractors, you can do just about anything to your home to make it fit your needs and love where you live. It just takes patience, trust in your designer and contractor, and an idea.

On these pages you see a dated home transformed into a work of art with impeccable functionality. It wasn't easy, but with a patient and involved homeowner, a dedicated contractor, and many talented designers, it has a new soul for years to come. 



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A retractable screen lanai, resort-style pool, and sun lounge area create a luxury outdoor living sanctuary.