

The
6
Stages
Of
Renovation

By www.q-e-c.com.au

STAGE 1: THE DESIGN PROCESS

Most projects begin with an initial phone call, which serves as an introduction to you and your project vision. A follow-up site visit will then be arranged to discuss the project in greater detail and to assess the site constraints and opportunities.

Following the site visit, you'll be given a fee proposal for a concept design process and asked to distil your brief down to an A4-page document. This page captures the core ideas, requirements and ambitions for your project. You can document your brief through images, descriptions, lists of 'wants' – whatever captures your desires for the project.

During the concept design phase, you'll be presented with hand-drawn sketches that illustrate the broad spatial and conceptual ideas of the proposed design. These meetings explore the potential of the project. Sometimes a design is agreed upon quickly, other times it can take a little longer, but every design is a process, an evolving conversation between client and architect. Concept designs are generally based on a survey and measured drawings of the existing house. If these aren't available, your architect can work with you to get them drawn up.

After concept design, the sketches are transformed into a 3D computer model in the design development phase. The model enables your architect to generate plans, sections and elevations that help to integrate and refine the design. The building will be considered in detail from the inside out; how you'll use the space and want to live in it. Balsa wood models and material sample boards supplement the drawings and help bring the building to life.

By the end of this phase, the broad brushstrokes of the design are pretty much locked down, particularly with regard to the external structure of the building.

STAGE 2: COUNCIL APPROVAL

Approval from council is generally required for any renovation that changes a house's envelope or structure. Your local council will supply you with a checklist of documentation that forms your application and may include – in addition to architectural plans and shadow diagrams – documents from consultants, such as private planners, landscape architects, hydraulic, geotechnical or structural engineers, and bushfire or heritage consultants.

Generally applications to council will also incur an assessment fee.

Depending on the scale and complexity of the renovation – and the local council – the approval process can be as quick as one month or longer and more complicated, which may require the submission of additional information.

STAGE 3: CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTATION & CERTIFICATE

After the building is approved through council, your architect will then prepare detailed drawings, with descriptions of the design and finishes for tender and construction.

Once a builder has been engaged for the renovation, a contract needs to be drawn up and agreed upon by both parties.

Before the project can begin on site, a construction certificate (or the equivalent) needs to be obtained from either a private certifier or from council – it will be their job to ensure that the finished building is consistent with the approval and adheres to construction standards.

During construction, you'll attend regular site meetings with your architect and builder to review progress and discuss the finer resolution of details. You'll also work together to finalise the fittings, fixtures and finishes in coordination with the builder's construction program.

STAGE 4: DEMOLITION & CONSTRUCTION

The first step in a renovation begins with demolition. All services – electricity, gas, water – need to be disconnected and any existing structure removed. Once demolition is completed, footings are excavated and any sub-soil electrical and plumbing fixtures are installed.

The footing steel is put in place and concrete footings poured. When these are finished, any structural brickwork can start. The timber framing (floors, walls and roof) is next and the roof cladding is done.

After the framing is up, external doors and windows are fitted, plumbing and electrical rough-in is completed and the external linings are done. This brings the renovation to lock-up stage.

STAGE 5: LOCK-UP

Lock-up basically means the structure is watertight and that the property is secure. This usually happens when the external cladding, windows, roof and doors are all in. Now the focus turns to the inside of the house. As many fixtures and fittings as possible should now be on site. Most builders like to have fixtures and fittings on site one to two weeks before they are needed so as not to hold up the build.

STAGE 6: HANDOVER

This is when works have been completed as they state in the contract. Generally, a builder will do a full walk-through of the project with the client and the architect.

Both will inspect the property and raise any issues or concerns. A final inspection is conducted by a certifier, who will issue an Occupation Certificate when satisfied that the building has been constructed in accordance with the council approval and relevant compliance controls.

(Please note: This info serves as a general guide as every build is unique and different build methods require different scheduling. This guide is indicative of brick veneer renovation with concrete slab on ground or bearer-and-joist construction.)

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