

Home Renovation Checklist: Dobsons' Guide for a Successful Project

“‘Excellence’ is the single word that comes to my mind when I think of how Dobsons managed our refurbishment project, which covered the entire house. Attention to detail, impartial advice, timeliness, availability and courteousness are some other notable qualities of Dobsons. The team took pride in their work, and we felt comfortable to let the team guide us through the various aspects as we realised that Dobsons will only do what is right. We cannot praise them enough. Many thanks to the entire team for making our home a perfect place to live and enjoy!” - **Trustpilot review**

Thinking of a home renovation? It's not a decision to take lightly, given the costs, logistics and disruption that will be involved. Rather than just having a [kitchen refit](#) or a [bathroom refit](#), this could be the perfect time to do major structural work on your house in order to create your dream home.

As the only company in Hertfordshire offering complete home renovation project management, we know a thing or two about planning for the perfect renovation.



Essential Steps in Your Home Renovation Journey

Taking on a home renovation is an exciting opportunity to reimagine your living space and create the home of your dreams. While the process can seem overwhelming, a clear plan can help you manage every aspect with confidence and ease. Whether you're renovating to enhance style, improve functionality, or add value, this guide will walk you through the essential steps to make your project a success.

In this guide, we'll explore the key stages of a home renovation—from planning and budgeting to navigating the actual construction to ensure a smooth and rewarding journey.

Initial steps

Planning a home renovation can feel daunting, which is why many people opt to leave the project management to a specialist. The process involves juggling numerous tasks, organising multiple stakeholders, and managing timelines—all while avoiding costly mistakes.

To help you get started, here are the fundamental steps to consider:

Visualising the Finished Result

Imagine what your revamped home is going to look like when it's finished. What do you want to see and feel? As you 'walk' through the house in your head, what is it like? Where have you placed the furniture, pictures, etc? What will your new bathroom be like? When you're preparing meals, how will you use the kitchen? Did you know that [your kitchen can affect your quality of life?](#) And the psychological benefits don't just apply to one room. Your home can have a significant impact on your emotional wellbeing and mental health, so it's a very useful exercise to visualise your ideal living space before you start the detailed planning process.



Do you need planning permission?

If you're only working on the interior of your home, it is unlikely that you'll need planning permission. However, it is always worth checking the rules around planning permission if you're planning an extension, garage conversion, or loft conversion. Additionally, you may need to comply with building regulations or submit a building notice for certain works, such as removing walls, taking down a chimney, or other structural changes. With our experts, we can guide you through the entire process, ensuring compliance and a seamless experience from start to finish.

Work out a realistic budget

At this stage, you need to think about your budget. How much the renovation will actually cost depends on a lot of factors. Your project manager can help you go through the details and come up with a more accurate quote, but before you begin the design process, you must give your designer an idea of how much you're prepared to spend. Having a ball park figure about how much you're willing to spend in total will enable your designer to come up with a realistic design.



Hidden costs

It's important to take into account that house renovation costs aren't just made up of the price of materials and labour - there are other aspects to take into account too. For example, where are you planning to live while the renovation work takes place? It's unlikely that you'd be able to, or even want to live in the house with major building work going on, so it's likely you'll have to move out for the duration - will you stay with relatives or friends, rent a serviced apartment, live in a hotel, or hire a mobile home and live onsite? All options have cost implications.

Decoration is an important part of your house renovation so interior design needs to be budgeted for too. Unless you're planning to use exactly the same furniture, lighting, fittings and decorations as you currently have, add enough to the budget to get new design features. For example, rather than using standard radiators, designer radiators could make a huge difference to the way your rooms look.

Don't leave it until the last minute to choose your radiators as some modern designer radiators are beautiful enough to become a central feature in the room. If this is the case, it will affect the rest of the room design, so choose which radiators you want at the planning stage.

Always add a contingency fund to your budget

You also need to add a contingency fund into your budget for hidden expenses - it's possible that unforeseen problems will be uncovered as the renovation begins, maybe even structural issues, and if the money is already in place you won't need to delay sorting things out because you're trying to get the money together. The contingency fund needs to be a minimum of 10% of your total budget. The good news is that if you don't need to use it, or only need to use part of it, you'll have had peace of mind throughout the project, and a nice lump sum at the end of it!

Take out insurance for your house renovation project

Speak to your insurance company about your renovation project as the work on your house will affect your insurance. You'll need to talk to them about home renovation insurance to keep you fully covered for the duration of the project.



Design and planning

Once the initial planning phase is complete, it's time to hire a designer to help you with the detailed designs and plans for your project. Contact us to [book an appointment](#) with one of our specialist designers to get our professional advice about your ideas and begin the process in earnest.

To our knowledge, Dobsons is the only company in Hertfordshire that will take care of every aspect of your complete home renovation project. As specialists in luxury kitchens and bathrooms we can talk to you about your preferred [kitchen layout](#) and help with ideas for [creating amazing bathrooms](#), as well as talking about the structural, plumbing, and electrical work that will be included in the renovation work.

For inspiration, check out the [home renovation projects](#) we've completed, as well as our general [customer portfolio](#) showing the kitchen fitouts, bathroom renovations and window and door replacements we've carried out in recent years.

Design

The next step is to design your ideal home. Your designer will have detailed discussions with you, visiting your home to conduct a thorough site survey. They will talk to you about all the details and finishing touches that will transform your house into your dream home. If needed, they will collaborate with an architect on the new layout, creating a 3D computer-aided design (CAD) that provides images of what your home will look like, helping you visualise the final result.

You can then make revisions to the plans and designs, possibly going back and forth with your designer two or three times before you're 100% happy with the designs. It's your project, so if you change your mind about what you want when you see the CAD, that's absolutely fine.

“Even though we changed our minds several times, nothing was too much trouble to ensure we got the kitchen refurb we wanted.” - Trustpilot review



A whole house renovation is a huge undertaking, so it's worth investing time and attention in the planning stages where any changes can be made quickly and easily. As soon as the work goes ahead, changes are much more difficult, time consuming and could be expensive to implement, so it's important to us that you're completely satisfied before work commences.

Once the design is signed off, we'll then be able to give you a more accurate quote for the total budget as well as the timescales for when the work will be carried out.

What you'll need to do if you project manage the renovation work yourself

If you opt to take control of your own renovation project, make sure you know what you're letting yourself in for, especially if you've never done anything like this before. You will have to research the best builders, electricians, plumbers, glaziers, plasterers, carpenters, joiners, and decorators to do the work, negotiate their fees and make sure they're all available at the right times throughout the project. If one of them is delayed for any reason, it will have a knock-on effect on the timelines for the others and it will be up to you to keep on top of the revised work schedules for everyone concerned.

You'll have to make sure that all the stakeholders will get access to your property when they need to, especially if there are large deliveries to be made which might inconvenience your neighbours.

You will be responsible for the quality control of the work, and for sorting out anything that goes wrong. This means you'll need to be available at any time if the tradespeople working on your project have any questions or come across an issue. And with multiple stakeholders, this will happen more frequently than you'd like, or have the time and energy for.

You will also have to source and buy everything you'll be using in your renovated home, from the kitchen cabinets to the skirting boards, floor tiles to loft insulation. You'll have to arrange the deliveries, making sure someone is on site to sign for them, as well as quality checking the goods as soon as they arrive, dealing with returns and organising replacements.



And when the builders, plumbers, electricians and installers have moved out, you'll need to organise the decorators (or do it yourself).

“From design to completion the service was truly outstanding, nothing was too much trouble and everything was completed to an extremely high standard and on time. Everyone at Dobsons is friendly and professional and they instil the highest confidence. All the additional trades who came on site were equally professional, courteous and highly skilled.” - **Trustpilot review**



What you'll need to do if you hire Dobsons to project manage the renovation work

Relax and let us take care of it! When it comes to house renovations, we've got it covered.

"They managed the whole process through the design, planning, building works and regulations and the installation of the kitchen and we have been extremely impressed. The quality and professionalism of everyone involved in the project - the builders, kitchen fitter, electricians, plumber, floor layers etc was second to none, with the work delivered efficiently, cleanly and in a very friendly and pleasant manner. Highly recommended."- **Google review**

Renovating a house is a huge undertaking, so you need to know you're in safe hands. Whether it's a large scale renovation or just a few rooms, your Dobsons professional project manager will be your single point of contact. They'll keep you informed of the progress of the work of your renovation project. From time to time they may have questions to ask, but we'll take care of all the stakeholders, timings, day to day issues, purchasing, quality control checks, scheduling, deliveries, access, utilities, decor, snagging, decoration...whatever it takes. We'll even make sure everyone cleans up after themselves so all you'll need to do is move back in.

Aftercare

Even after the project's complete and you're getting used to your new home, we've got your back. It's understandable that there may be teething problems and things do occasionally need fixing. In which case, we'll deal with it as soon as possible.

"Kevin Milne, a director, is an absolute star, going above and beyond every day...turning up at 9pm one night because of a slight problem that was worrying us." - **Google review**

"A family owned business that cares about families when undergoing work and disruption in the home! I feel at ease knowing they are the very best in the industry." - **Google review**



Checklist for managing the project yourself

Initial Steps

- Agree on your total budget, including a 10%+ contingency fund
- Check insurance policy to cover renovation work
- Check if you need planning permission

Planning and Design

- Find a kitchen designer
- Find a bathroom designer
- Find an architect if necessary
- Find an electrician
- Find a plumber
- Find a company to replace doors and windows
- Find a carpenter
- Find a painter / interior decorator
- Find a landscaping company or gardener to tackle the exterior when the project is finished
- Find an interior decorator
- Get quotes for building work, plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, plastering, new kitchen, new bathrooms, doors and windows, and exterior work
- Get material to protect walls, floors and furniture during renovation process
- Get expected timelines and availability for each of your chosen tradespeople
- Make access arrangements



Building work

- Onsite management
- Daily checks on progress
- Organising deliveries, arrange access, and being on site to receive and check each one
- Organise skips
- Buying materials not supplied by tradespeople
- Quality check work as and when tradespeople complete it

Checklist for hiring Dobson for your home renovation

- Agree on your total budget, including a 10%+ contingency fund
- Check insurance policy to cover renovation work
- Make living arrangements for when the work takes place
- Make an appointment to discuss your ideas with a Dobsons home renovation specialist and let us take care of the rest

