

Renovation Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

- Home Renovation Planning
 - List the renovation projects you are considering.
 - Talk with friends, neighbors, and even realtors about their home renovation experiences.
 - Look in magazines, catalogs, or open houses to get some ideas for your renovation projects.
 - Do some research to get rough estimates of the cost of the renovations.
 - Check to see how much the renovations would enhance the value of your home.
 - Prioritize your renovation project, keeping in mind your budget.
- Estimating Costs
 - Get multiple estimates.
 - Establish a budget.
 - Get advice from a bank to figure out how much you can afford to spend, and how much you can borrow.
 - Do consider renovations that give you the most bang for your buck.
 - Getting More Information on Financing from the Internet, your local bank, realtors, and renovation firms.
- Choosing a Contractor
 - Go with a contractor who was recommended to you by friends, co-workers or realtors.
 - Use the Internet to find resources in your area.
 - Look for contractors who do the kind of work you are planning.
 - Don't let a general contractor do the hiring.
 - Create a list of questions to ask each contractor you are considering.
 - Check contractor's skills, experience, knowledge.
 - Check how long have has he been in business in this area.
 - Check what kind of projects he does most often.
 - Check if he offers any ?green? building techniques, materials, or products.
 - Check how he handles change requests.
 - Check what are his typical site safety and clean up arrangements.

- Check if he has a warranty.
- Check if he is insured.
- Get a list of references.
- Create a list of questions for each reference and call them.
- Make sure you get at least three bids to gauge the going rate.
- Don't always jump at the lowest rate.
- Ask for proper licensing and insurance.
- Contract should include:
 - Detailed description of the project.
 - Specification of materials, finishes, fixtures.
 - Specification of any materials, fixtures, accessories that will be provided by the homeowner.
 - Other allowances that may be chosen during the course of the project.
 - Start date, estimated finish date.
 - Schedule, milestones, other project plan items such as permits, inspections.
 - Payment terms.
 - Communication methods.
 - How disputes are handled.
 - How change orders are handled.
 - Portable toilet facilities, safety, waste disposal, cleanup.
 - Protecting landscape; dirt-moving/fences.
 - Warrantees.
 - What constitutes final acceptance.
 - Attached architectural plans.
 - Attached site plans.
 - Attached surveys.
- Managing Contractors
 - Walk the site daily, if possible.
 - Check everything.
 - Keep change requests to a minimum (get them in writing and include costs).
 - Keep paper work for everything.
 - Ask questions.