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LONDON HOME RENOVATION GUIDE

WE LOVE BUILD



YOUR LONDON HOME RENOVATION GUIDE

Whether you're extending a kitchen, restoring a Victorian terraced home, or hoping to boost the value of an investment property, our London home renovation services will help you to do so effectively. We've created this guide to walk you through a residential renovation process from start to finish, giving you the confidence that you need to get started with us.

We're using this guide to give you the insights you need to plan effectively, avoid common pitfalls, and increase the potential of your property; and as a team of trusted general contractors, we've already taken many homeowners and investors on this journey. All of our customers receive a completely bespoke solution, designed specifically to give them their dream home – start the process with us today.

Who have we created this guide for?

We have created this guide as a starting point for:

- Homeowners who are keen to transform their current property into the home they've always dreamed of having.
- Landlords (or prospective landlords) seeking to improve rental yields and tenant longevity.
- Investors aiming to increase property value through smart upgrades.
- Renovation-curious individuals exploring whether a renovation project is right for them.

Whether you're at the ideas stage, or deep into planning, there's something in here for you.

RENOVATING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES IN LONDON

Understanding the property market in London

London's property market is vast, and extremely competitive – and when it comes to residential homes, there's certainly something for every type of owner.

You'll find a whole host of different types of property in the city; from impressive Victorian-era terraced homes, to chic new build apartment blocks, nestled across quaint, leafy suburbs, right through to the hustle and bustle of zones 1 and 2. Knowing what adds value in your specific borough, whether it's a loft conversion, a garden room, or a modern open-plan kitchen, is key to making smart decisions when renovating.

It's also worthwhile to think about the types of people that the location of your property would appeal to – it could be in a prime spot for commuters, holidaymakers, or families looking for a place to call home. Both of these factors are essential for maximising your return on investment; and working with a builder who understands London's micro-markets in this way can give you a clear edge. Here at We Love Build, we have experience working on residential renovations over a breadth of different areas across the capital.



Types of projects we work on

As we briefly mentioned, there are a few specific types of residential renovators that we work on – here are some examples:

Renovation projects

There's been a big boom in the amount of homeowners who are willing to take on significant renovation projects (often referred to as 'doer-uppers'), where multiple rooms in the property need a complete overhaul – in terms of both aesthetics and functionality.

Here at We Love Build, we provide a unique offering where we accompany clients to view the properties they have shortlisted, and we use our findings to create an outline of the potential renovation cost. This way, homeowners have prior awareness over just how much a property could cost them, before any of the hard work begins.



Buy-to-let renovation

Some of the most frequent kinds of home renovators that we encounter are buy-to-let landlords (or prospective buy-to-let landlords). The aim of these projects is to renovate the property to a high standard, ahead of letting it out to tenants. It's extremely popular in London, given the amount of people that move to the city for work, requiring rental accommodation.

Whether you're already a landlord with tenants and you have a property that is in need of an update, or if you're making use of a home that you no longer live in, a renovation could be the key to making significantly more profit in the form of rental income. We also work directly with property investors, who may purchase a property with the same intent to let it out to tenants.

Renovating a holiday let

It'll come as no surprise that London is also a hotspot for holiday lets, given the tourism industry in the capital. We are frequently approached by clients who either have space in their current home that they use as a holiday let, or that have a second home that they'd like to use for this purpose.

These types of renovations are all about providing high quality finishes and homely touches – and this is where our interior design expertise proves beneficial.



Things to consider when renovating in London

As with any renovating project, there are a few factors that will need to be considered, especially during the planning stage.

Navigating permissions

Renovating in London often requires navigating different types and levels of permissions, including:

Permitted development (PD)

For smaller changes like rear extensions, lofts, or garage conversions. Under permitted development, you don't actually need to submit a formal planning permission application.

Full planning permission

Full planning permission is needed for making substantial changes, or for renovating a listed property/a property in a conservation area.

Party wall agreements

Having a party wall agreement is essential if your renovation affects shared walls or structures.

Understanding what permissions apply to your project is a must, as proceeding without this knowledge can cause delays – it can even result in having to undo your renovation work once complete – which would be a costly, but easily avoidable, outcome. A good project manager or contractor will guide you through these steps, liaising with local councils and specialists to keep things on track – and this is part of our service here at We Love Build.

PLANNING YOUR RENOVATION

Why carry out a residential renovation in London?

Properties in London are some of the most lucrative renovation projects across the entire UK, given the nature of the city's property market. Some of the biggest benefits of renovating in London include:

Value uplift

Renovations in the right postcodes can significantly boost both resale and rental value – and even if you're not about to put your property on the market, it's still advantageous to know that your home would be worth more.

Lifestyle upgrade

From creating layouts that are tailored to your lifestyle, to opting for one-of-a-kind bespoke finishes, renovations can improve quality of life and make your home work perfectly for your needs.

Improve your home without selling

You might feel like you are in your 'dream home' already – it ticks almost all of your boxes, but there could be a few points missing. A renovation could help you to solve this, without having to sell and move elsewhere.

High return on investment

Due to the competitive nature of the property market in the city, paired with the fact some neighbourhoods are seriously sought after, you're almost certain to see a higher return on your renovation investment.

Whatever your reason is for renovating in London, our priority is to help you to do so in a way that maximises the value of your property.

PLANNING YOUR RENOVATION

Defining your vision

A successful renovation starts with a clear vision. Ask yourself:

- Is this about modernising outdated decor?
- Are you starting a renovation journey with the goal of long-term transformation?
- Do you need to expand your space – adding bedrooms, creating open-plan living, or maximising underused areas?
- Have you considered your lifestyle needs, future plans, and how the renovation will enhance both function and feeling?

Having clarity on your vision for the project upfront will help you to brief your builder effectively, and stay focused during the progress of your renovation.



Budgeting realistically

One of the biggest mistakes homeowners make is underestimating costs. When budgeting, follow these tips as a rule of thumb:

- Include contingency funds (typically 10–15%) for surprises.
- Factor in quality of materials – cheap finishes may end up costing more in the long run.
- Don't undervalue skilled workmanship – the cheapest quote often isn't the best one if corners are cut or delays mount.

PLANNING YOUR RENOVATION

Timeline expectations

Completing a high quality home renovation will take time, but when you're working with the right professionals, you'll always have a clear oversight of progress. A typical timeline might include:

- Design & planning: 1–3 months
- Permissions & approvals: 1–2 months
- Build phase: 3–6+ months depending on scale

This takes the total timeframe to anywhere between 5 and 11 months. Weather conditions, material availability, and council response times can all impact the schedule, so it's worth being mindful that some factors will be out of your contractors control. The key is to allow buffer time, and communicate frequently with your build team to keep things moving. These values are built into our process here at We Love Build – your dedicated site manager and project manager will coordinate all communication and updates with you, keeping you informed at all times.



DESIGNING YOUR HOME RENOVATION

A well-planned design stage is what turns a basic renovation into a space that feels intentional, cohesive, and future-proof. In London, where property sizes vary dramatically, and period homes often come with quirks, this stage is particularly critical.

Working with designers

Engaging with an interior designer early in the process can save time, reduce stress, and prevent costly mistakes later on. Our designers do more than choose colours or fabrics; they work with our architects and builders to make sure every detail, from lighting layouts to socket placement, supports how you intend to use the space. They can help you think through questions you might not have considered: Will that oversized kitchen island restrict movement when all the cupboards are open? Is there enough natural light in your new home office to avoid feeling closed in?



In London renovations, where period features and structural limitations often need to be preserved or adapted, designers are invaluable at balancing modern living requirements with the character of older homes. The best results usually come from treating design as part of the construction plan rather than as an afterthought.

Maximising space

Space is one of the most valuable commodities in London properties. Even a modest square footage can feel generous with the right layout. Clever planning can turn underused corners into functional areas, and thoughtful circulation routes can make a home feel larger without extending it.

For example, reconfiguring internal walls might allow for an open-plan kitchen-living area that feels brighter and more sociable. Built-in furniture—such as alcove shelving, window seats with storage, or floor-to-ceiling wardrobes—can free up valuable floor area while keeping things uncluttered. Natural light plays a huge role here too: rooflights, glazed doors, and internal glass partitions can help previously dark rooms feel open and airy.

Sustainability and greener materials

Renovations today are increasingly focused on long-term environmental impact as well as immediate aesthetics. Choosing eco-conscious materials like sustainably sourced timber, low-VOC paints, and recycled metal reduces the carbon footprint of your project, while often improving indoor air quality.

Energy efficiency upgrades should be a priority. Adding high-performance insulation, upgrading windows to double or triple glazing, and exploring renewable heating systems can dramatically lower future energy bills. Sustainable choices also tend to align with government incentives and can boost your home's overall market appeal, making them a practical investment rather than just an ethical one.

THE BUILD PROCESS EXPLAINED

Once the design phase is complete and permissions are in place, the build itself begins. Understanding what to expect during construction will help you stay in control and make better decisions as your renovation progresses. We've aligned this section carefully with the RIBA Plan of Work, which breaks projects into seven stages. While you don't need to know every technical detail, having an overview will make the process far less daunting.



Pre-construction: Preparing for the build

This is the point where ideas turn into action – final technical drawings are signed off, building regulations approvals are secured, and your contractor's schedule is confirmed. It's also important to review insurance coverage. We have adequate liability insurance (included as standard), but you'll need to check that your home insurance policy covers renovations and any potential structural risks. Our contract will define responsibilities, timelines, payment schedules, and what happens if unexpected issues arise – giving you total reassurance.

During the build: What happens on site

The construction phase (RIBA Stages 4–5) is where walls are opened, extensions take shape, and the property begins to transform. For homeowners, this period can be disruptive, noise, dust, and access restrictions are inevitable. Your project manager will keep you informed about progress, and allow you to address any questions quickly.

Can I live onsite while building work is underway?

The majority of our home renovation clients opt to arrange alternative accommodation for the duration of the works, as living on-site is rarely comfortable or safe.

Common challenges during the build stage

Unforeseen challenges are common, particularly with older London homes: hidden structural weaknesses, outdated wiring, or damp issues can surface once work begins. Having a contingency budget and flexible mindset will prevent these surprises from derailing your project. When you choose us as your renovation contractor, we will account for all of these eventualities, taking the hassle away from you.

Snagging and completion

Once the main construction is finished, we will conduct a snagging review. This is a detailed inspection to identify any small defects, unfinished elements, or items that don't meet agreed standards, perhaps a door that doesn't close properly, a misaligned tile, or a paint finish that needs retouching. These details may seem minor, but resolving them now ensures the quality of your renovation stands the test of time.

Completion also involves formal sign-offs: building control approval, electrical and gas certifications, and final documentation for warranties and guarantees. At this point (RIBA Stages 6–7), you can move back into your home, confident that the work meets both regulatory and quality standards.

WHY WE LOVE BUILD & YOUR NEXT STEPS

Renovating a home in London can feel complex, but the right information and early planning make all the difference. In this section, we've given you some case studies, as well as providing practical answers to common questions.

Case studies

A beautiful home renovation for a family home in Peckham

We were invited to the home of our client in Peckham to discuss the possibility of extending the property, as the family had plans to grow. They needed a solution that gave them additional space and practicality from their home. We established that the client would benefit from reimagining the current basement level, with a newly designed space consisting of a gym, walk-in closet, and a bedroom, and a large bathroom – this space would also be used as a private holiday let.

We began our pre-construction support by submitting a pre-application, a preliminary meeting with the local council to present the development plan that our architects and technical design experts had created, which was approved. Following this point, we submitted the planning application and obtained the necessary building permits. We had designed a small courtyard at basement level, accessible via stairs, to create the connection to the garden that the client had wanted to achieve.



Our project managers handled costing, preparing a bill of quantities, a very detailed breakdown of costs that included materials (such as bricks, cement, sand, flooring, decorations, painting, and other specifics). With this information, we finalised the budget and provided the client with a clear estimate of the overall construction costs.



Our team of site managers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, joiners, and decorators worked onsite for several months, and a variety of specialists were needed to execute different elements of the project; from plumbers and electricians, to joiners and decorators. Upon completion of construction work, we had added a gym, bedroom, large bathroom, and a walk-in closet, as well as the new outdoor courtyard and windows to connect and blend the basement with the garden.

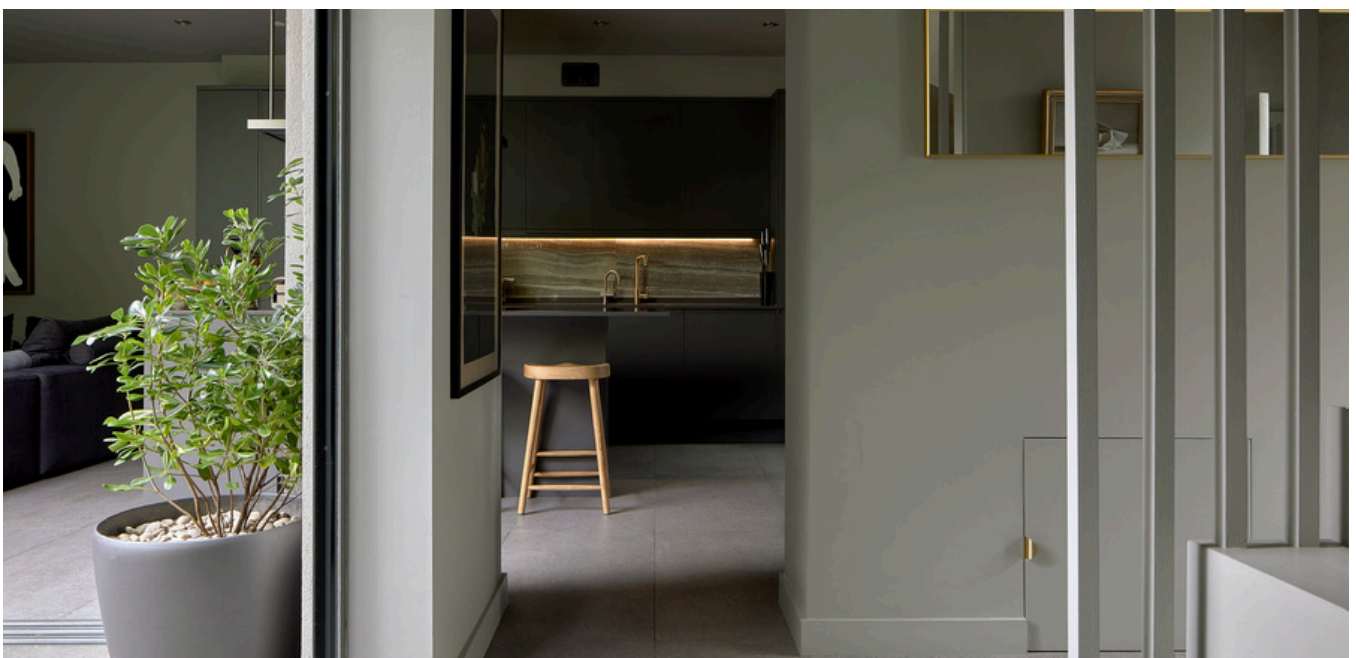


Double extension and complete revamp for a unique property in Kentish Town

We were tasked with designing a double extension and full renovation for this stunning property in Kentish Town, London. The existing property had an extremely unique facade, and one of our main objectives was to carry out the work in a way that retains the original integrity.

Our project management team started this renovation by capturing our clients' vision, understanding any special requirements and translating them into our initial architectural drawings. During this stage, we refined the proposed roof terrace structure, creating a facade that complemented the existing exterior of the space. This was a complete home refurbishment, so we created designs for the ground floor rear and front, the new roof terrace, and the resultant patio space. Our team of trusted contractors then began the construction work that we had outlined.

Our interior designers turned the structure that we had built into a welcoming, ambient home. We opted for a neutral colour palette throughout, using decor choices to create accents in each of the rooms that we refurbished. This created a subtle, contemporary backdrop for this character-packed space.



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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I need planning permission for my renovation?

A: It depends on the type and scale of the project. Some works, like modest rear extensions or loft conversions, may fall under Permitted Development Rights. However, larger structural changes, projects affecting listed buildings, or properties in conservation areas usually require full planning permission. We can help determine what approvals you'll need and manage the process on your behalf.

Q: How long will my renovation take?

A: The duration varies by project complexity. A straightforward kitchen renovation may take six to eight weeks, while a full house refurbishment or large extension can take several months. Allow time for design development, planning approvals, and material lead times in addition to the construction itself. Setting realistic expectations early prevents unnecessary stress later.

Q: Can I live in the property while work is underway?

A: For smaller refurbishments, staying in the property can be manageable. For larger builds, especially those involving structural changes, utilities being disconnected, or significant dust and noise, it's often more practical to arrange temporary accommodation. We'll advise based on your specific scope of work.

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Q: How should I budget for unexpected costs?

A: Even with meticulous planning, older London properties can reveal surprises once walls and floors are opened. We recommend setting aside a contingency fund of 10–15% of your build budget to cover unforeseen issues or small design adjustments you may want to make during the process.

Start creating your dream home with We Love Build

Every successful renovation starts with a clear plan. Our free design consultation is an opportunity to discuss your goals, explore options tailored to your property, and receive guidance on timelines, permissions, and budgets. There's no obligation, just practical advice to help you decide your next step.



READY TO BRING THE PLAN FOR YOUR DREAM HOME IN LONDON TO LIFE?

Whether you're renovating to create your forever home, or revamping an investment property in London, We Love Build is here to help. As a team of trusted designers, architects, builders and tradespeople, we've transformed countless homes across the capital and in the surrounding areas.

Your journey begins when you book a free home design consultation with us, and we'll support you from start to well beyond completion with our comprehensive aftercare.

Visit our website:

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