



THE CRAFTSMAN'S GUIDE



BUILDING RESTORATION PLAN

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Where should you start when renovating an old house? Maybe you should paint first. No wait, aren't you supposed to refinish the floors before you move in? Someone once told me that you have to have the bathroom done before anything else.

Restoring an old house is like eating an elephant. One bite at a time. It may look like an overwhelming and impossible feat as a whole, but when done in pieces it is not only possible, but quite enjoyable.

In this guide I'll walk you through the process we use in my restoration company to renovate and restore historic homes. This is our way of breaking the sometimes massive job of restoring an entire building into bite-size manageable phases and tasks.

There is no specific timetable for this restoration plan only to say that depending on the part of the country you live in some exterior work will have to be done in accordance with the seasons and the varying weather they bring. Plan your renovation so that mother nature is working with you instead of against you.

This building restoration plan consists of two phases (exterior & interior) and each one is broken down even further to help you avoid doing tasks twice or damaging elements you have already restored. You'd hate to spend months repairing plaster walls before leveling your foundation only to find you've just damaged the very walls you spent precious time and money restoring.

The exterior phase is really the important one. Following the order for the exterior repairs is very important to your success. There is much more leeway with the interior, and I will still give you a great framework for a renovation and some invaluable tips you can use right away.

If the exterior of your building is damaged enough that the elements are getting inside then that is where time is of the essence. The sooner you stop the leaks the less damage you'll have to repair inside. So, push to complete the exterior as soon as possible.

Trust the process and work through each of these steps one at a time. If you come across a step that is in acceptable condition and doesn't need to be repaired, great! Check it off and move on the next one. That just means you're ahead of the game. But be forewarned that if you skip a step that does need repair and come back to do it later you may end up spending more time and money to unnecessarily do something twice.

This process works if you follow it. Each step has several sub-parts that are listed in the order they should be completed as well. Work your way through them one by one. Even though some of the steps aren't the most exciting (who wants to repair a leaking roof?) they are all pivotal to protecting and restoring your historic house.

Put the checklist on your refrigerator and take pride when each check mark is ticked off. You can do it!

I understand that if you need to move into the house and do a "live-in renovation" there are certain allowances that need to be made. So, I won't argue with you if you get the plumbing working before you move in. Once the interior is in a state that you can live with without going insane during the process of your restoration then pick up at the top of the checklist.

PHASE 1 EXTERIOR RESTORATION

☐ THE ROOF

Stop the big leaks first and protect the rest of the house. A leaky roof can do serious damage (seen or unseen) to all elements of the house. Mold, rot, increased likelihood of insect damage. Water is the number one cause of damage to old houses followed closely by stupid men. That is why it is the very first repair I recommend doing. A leaky roof can destroy everything from framing to plaster to the foundation. Get the roof watertight before you do anything else.

- Roof Framing - Fix up the framing first if there is any damage so that the roof deck has something solid to be attached to.
- Roof Decking - A rot free, well attached roof deck is a major piece of your roof structure.
- Fascia - While the decking is being repaired that's the time to replace any damage fascia. Have your roofer do this at the same time as the decking since the drip edge will likely cover a portion of most fascia boards.
- Roof Insulation - If you plan to add rigid foam insulation now is the time. Discuss the options with your roofer.
- Roof Covering - Asphalt shingles, tin, clay tiles, wood shingles, whatever you choose install it as soon as the insulation is in.

☐ THE FOUNDATION

There may some settling that has occurred over the decades and that may or may not need to be addressed. But major foundation issues should fixed as soon as the roof is in good shape.

- Stem Walls - If the mortar joints are crumbling or weak here they should be addressed quickly since this is the main support for most crawl space homes.
- Masonry Piers - These piers provide support under the house and many were poorly assembled and cared for. Sagging or springy floors are one symptom of pier failures.
- Floor Joists and Support Beams - These beams are what are supporting the floor system of your house. Once the masonry items above are repaired you

are ready to strengthen or replace any joists or beams that have been compromised by termites, rot or other problems.

□ **WALLS**

Any walls that are significantly out of plumb, termite damaged or are otherwise compromised should be fixed now so you've got a solid and proper structure to attach your siding and trim repairs to.

□ **EXTERIOR CLADDINGS**

Now that the structure of the house is completely secure you can focus on sealing the elements out of your walls.

- Wall Insulation - Blown-in insulation is easiest to add to old houses by removing a portion of the siding and blowing insulation into each stud bay. If you plan to insulate your walls this is the best time to do it.
- Wood Siding & Trim - Any rotted exterior woodwork falls into this phase. Don't worry about decks and porches here. The focus is on making a watertight structure to keep the interior free from all leaks.
- Flashing - Any doors and windows that are not properly flashed should be addressed while the wood siding is being repaired.
- Masonry & Stucco - Brick or stone homes with mortar joints may need repointing and this is the time to do it. Also patch any cracks or damaged stucco at this time. Don't forget about the chimney.

□ **DOORS & WINDOWS**

Sticking doors and windows are not uncommon in old houses, especially if you just leveled a sagging foundation. Now is the time to tune them up as much or as little as is necessary.

- Repair/Reglaze - Windows and doors need attention to keep them water and airtight as well. Replace worn out glazing putty. Make sure doors open and close properly.
- Weatherstrip - Once everything is tuned up consider adding weatherstripping for added efficiency.

PORCH & DECK

These aren't as important as the other preceding items unless they are relevant to protecting the exterior building envelope or there is a safety issue. A second story porch that is leaking into the area below would be one such exception. In general, I recommend repairing these items depending on their need before painting the exterior.

EXTERIOR PAINT

Prep and paint the exterior of the house to protect all the hard work you've done. Just don't paint the windows shut again.

PHASE 2 INTERIOR RESTORATION

The building envelope is now safe! You've stopped the bleeding and sealed out the elements. Now the interior of the house will not be subjected to any further damage. The pressure is off and you can relax and get to the fun interior projects.

There is no specific order as to whether you should renovate a bathroom or a kitchen first, but there are a few things that still need to be done in order. Below is a breakdown of the order that most contractors use for scheduling their projects.

Stick with this guideline if you are acting as your own contractor and things should flow smoothly.

BASIC INTERIOR RENOVATION ORDER

- Demolition
- Framing (subfloor ---> walls ---> ceiling)
- Windows & Door Installation
- Mechanicals Rough-in (plumbing, electrical, HVAC)
- Wall Coverings (drywall, plaster, panelling)
- Flooring (tile, wood)
- Trim and baseboards
- Mechanicals Finish and Install Fixtures
- Finish Paint
- Carpet (if needed)

INTERIOR RENOVATION TIPS

- Floors - If your old house is like most then it has hardwood floors somewhere. These should be refinished (if needed) after all your other renovations are done. Otherwise you run the very good chance that your floors will get damaged or worn during the renovation.
- Plaster - It may sound obvious, but if you plan on repairing any damage to your plaster walls and ceilings make sure it's done before you paint the interior. It's always easiest to paint once.
- Kitchen Cabinets - Install your cabinets *after* the finish floor has been installed. Sure you'll need a bit more flooring, but it's easier to install the flooring without having to cut around cabinets. Plus, if you ever decide to change the layout of your kitchen you won't have to patch or install new floors in the empty areas previously occupied by the cabinets. While we're on the subject of cabinets. Always install your upper cabinets before your lower cabinets. It makes installation much easier and less complicated.
- Painting - Every professional painter will tell you that there is an order to painting a room. Paint the ceiling first, then move onto walls and finally trim (crown molding, casings, baseboards). Paint your way from the top down to minimize having to touch up drips and roller splatter.

Follow this restoration planning guide and you will slowly work your way through a major renovation with grace.

I've also included, as a bonus, my 7 keys to a successful renovation. These 7 keys are tailored specifically to old houses. Equipped with these two items you can virtually eliminate renovation fatigue and get the project done under time and under budget. That's what we all want isn't it? A beautifully restored historic home that didn't break the bank.

Combine these renovation guides with the hundreds of tutorials available on The Craftsman Blog and you'll have a restoration that makes all the neighbors jealous.

7 KEYS TO A KILLER RENOVATION

KEY #1 WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE PROJECT?

There is a reason this is #1. You need to know exactly what you hope to accomplish with your renovation. What problems are you looking to solve? What functionality do you hope to achieve from your new kitchen or bath or whatever room you're working on. Get specific and make sure that your renovation will meet these goals. Zig Ziglar said, "If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time." Make sure you're aiming at something.

KEY #2 WHAT IS THE SIMPLEST WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS?

Not every renovation needs to be huge and expensive. Once you know your goals, sit down and try to find the simplest way to accomplish them. Sometimes it is an extensive renovation and other times it can be a simpler fix. Don't immediately assume the worst, but try to find clever ways to get what you want with the least work and expense.

KEY #3 WHAT IS THE BUDGET AND TIMELINE?

This key will eliminate more stress than all the rest during your renovation! Dave Ramsey says "A budget is telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went." And a timeline is like a budget for your time. You need to have a budget and it needs to be realistic. With a budget you will know which items to splurge on and where you can save a few dollars. Don't forget to add about 20% for unexpected expenses. And once the budget is decided, stick to it.

KEY #4 IF WORKING ON A DAMAGED SECTION OF THE HOUSE HOW CAN WE PREVENT THIS IN THE FUTURE?

Don't just dress up the pig. If you have rotted siding from faulty gutters and you just replace the siding, you'll soon have rotted siding again. You need to find the source of your problems and deal with it effectively before handling any of the cosmetic issues associated with the damage. Fixing the source of the problem will ensure a lasting repair that you can enjoy for years.

KEY #5 WHAT HISTORICAL ELEMENTS CAN WE SAVE/REUSE?

Sometimes you will have to remove some historic details when renovating an old home, and when at all possible these pieces should be saved and reused. The value of these items is important to your home and reusing them will create a seamless renovation that blends in perfectly with the rest of the house. If your house is a Craftsman and you remodel a bedroom with stock moldings from Home Depot... well...there are simply no words. Just don't do it.

KEY #6 WHAT ELEMENTS WILL NEED TO BE REMOVED? WHY?

As a preservationist it's hard for me to accept that a historic element will have to be permanently removed, but sometimes it is necessary and beneficial to the renovation. If you have to remove historic elements that won't be re-installed I want you to ask yourself one question. "Why?" If you can't answer this question then you should re-think the decision to nix it. If there is a valid reason to have the item removed then please donate or sell it to an architectural salvage yard for other homeowners and restorers to use.

KEY #7 WHERE CAN WE USE SALVAGED/VINTAGE MATERIALS EFFECTIVELY?

If your house is historic, then you should really consider incorporating salvaged materials into your renovation. You can find great deals on these items and they will make your renovation fit with the rest of the house. There is nothing more architecturally jarring than an ultra-modern bathroom in a Victorian house or some other historic home. Show your own personality in your renovation, but maintain the integrity (*and value!*) of your home by sticking with the general style that already exists.

If you can find the answers to these 7 keys then your renovation will run as smooth as the pros! There will always be hiccups but armed with these keys you will be better prepared and less stressed. And that always makes for a happy renovation.

THE CHECKLIST

PHASE 1 EXTERIOR RESTORATION

- ROOF
 - FRAMING
 - DECKING
 - INSULATION
 - ROOF COVERING
 - FASCIA

- FOUNDATION
 - STEM WALLS
 - MASONRY PIERS
 - FLOOR JOISTS & SUPPORT BEAMS

- WALLS

- EXTERIOR WALLS
 - WOOD SIDING & TRIM
 - MASONRY & STUCCO
 - INSULATION

- DOORS & WINDOWS
 - REPAIR/REGLAZE
 - WEATHERSTRIP

- PORCH & DECK

- EXTERIOR PAINT

PHASE 2 INTERIOR RESTORATION

- DEMOLITION
- FRAMING
- WINDOW & DOOR INSTALLATION
- MECHANICALS ROUGH-IN (PLUMBING, ELECTRICAL, HVAC)
- WALL COVERINGS (DRYWALL, PLASTER, PANELLING)
- FLOORING (WOOD, TILE)
- TRIM & BASEBOARDS
- MECHANICALS FINISH & INSTALL FIXTURES
- FINISH PAINT
- CARPET