



HOMEOWNERS' GUIDE

7 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN RENOVATING OR EXTENDING YOUR HOME

Practical advice to protect your budget, timeline and existing home.



Good advice should come before a contract.

This guide shares seven practical things Brisbane homeowners should understand before renovating or extending - so you can make clearer decisions around budget, design and builder selection.

WELCOME

We believe the best projects start with clear information - before drawings are finalised and well before construction begins.

Renovating or extending an existing home has more moving parts than most people expect. Existing structure, services, access, approvals, design decisions and budget all have to work together.

This guide is designed to help you understand the early decisions that have the biggest impact on cost, timing and the overall experience. Even if you are only exploring an idea, these are useful questions to consider before you commit.



MISTAKE 1 -

STARTING DESIGN BEFORE UNDERSTANDING THE EXISTING HOME & REALISTIC BUDGET

It is easy to get attached to a design before understanding what the existing home, site conditions and budget will realistically allow.

Structure, services, access, demolition, engineering and material selections can all affect cost. If they are considered too late, the design may need to change or the budget may need to grow.

A BETTER APPROACH

Bring cost and buildability into the conversation early. The design should evolve around your priorities, the existing home and a realistic budget.



GOOD EARLY PLANNING CAN HELP AVOID:

- Redesign and duplicated consultant fees
- Large variations after works start
- Delays while unresolved details are fixed
- Compromising finishes late in the process



MISTAKE 2 -

ASSUMING ALL BUILDERS OFFER THE SAME LEVEL OF SUPPORT

Renovations require more than simply following plans. Existing conditions change, decisions need to be made quickly and the home - and often the people living in it - need to be protected throughout the works.

A good builder should help identify risks early, communicate clearly, coordinate consultants and trades, and explain how changes will be managed.

QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

- Who will manage my project day-to-day?
- How are unknown existing conditions handled?
- How will my home, neighbours and access be managed?
- How are changes and variations communicated and approved?



MISTAKE 3 -

UNDERESTIMATING PRE-CONSTRUCTION & APPROVAL TIMEFRAMES

Before site works can begin there may be design coordination, engineering, certification, approvals, selections, pricing and long-lead items to resolve.

Rushing this stage often shifts unanswered questions into construction - where they are usually more expensive and disruptive.

A BETTER APPROACH

Allow enough time to resolve the scope before construction. A clear pre-construction plan gives you better cost certainty and a smoother start.

1-2-3

RUSHED PRE-CONSTRUCTION CAN LEAD TO:

- Project delays
- Incomplete pricing
- Last-minute design changes
- Avoidable stress and variations

MISTAKE 4 -

NOT ESTABLISHING A CLEAR COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

Renovating your home is personal. You should know what is happening, what decisions are needed, what is coming next and whether the project is tracking to plan.

Good communication builds trust and lets small issues be dealt with before they become bigger ones.

GOOD COMMUNICATION SHOULD INCLUDE

- One clear point of contact
- Regular progress updates
- Upcoming decisions and milestones
- Transparent discussion around changes, cost and timing



MISTAKE 5 -

CHOOSING A BUILDER PURELY ON THE LOWEST QUOTE

The lowest number is not always the lowest final cost. Quotes can differ because of missing scope, exclusions, allowances, assumptions or how much risk has been properly considered.

The important question is not simply 'who is cheapest?' - it is 'what am I actually getting, and how well has the project been understood?'

WHAT MATTERS MORE

Compare scope, inclusions and assumptions - not just totals. Clear pricing helps you make confident decisions and reduces surprises later.

LOOK FOR:

Transparent inclusions & exclusions • Realistic allowances • Clear treatment of unknowns • Value and fit - not just price



MISTAKE 6 -

IGNORING THE EXISTING HOME & SITE CONDITIONS

Every renovation starts with an existing building - and that building can hide constraints. Structure, drainage, services, access, levels, roof conditions and previous alterations can all affect what is practical and what it may cost.

You cannot remove every unknown, but early investigation helps reduce surprises.

EARLY INVESTIGATION MAY INCLUDE

- Detailed site inspection
- Survey and service checks
- Structural / engineering review
- Review of access, drainage and existing conditions



MISTAKE 7 -

OVERLOOKING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BUILDER-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

A renovation may run for months and can affect your everyday life. Trust, communication and mutual respect matter just as much as technical capability.

The right builder should make you feel informed, comfortable asking questions and confident that your priorities are understood.

ASK YOURSELF

- Do I trust this builder?
- Do they explain things clearly?
- Do they listen before they recommend?
- Can I see myself working with this team throughout the project?



A successful renovation is built on trust, collaboration and clarity.

OUR PROCESS - FROM FIRST CONVERSATION TO HANDOVER

1



DISCOVERY & INITIAL CONVERSATION

We start by understanding what you want to achieve, your home, priorities and budget.

2



SITE REVIEW, DESIGN & COST PLANNING

Early builder input helps test buildability, likely risks and cost before the design goes too far.

3



APPROVALS & PRE-CONSTRUCTION

We coordinate the information, selections and planning needed to get the project ready for site.

4



CONSTRUCTION & COMMUNICATION

Works are actively managed and you are kept informed through each stage.

5



HANDOVER & AFTERCARE

We complete the project carefully and remain available after handover.

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

Whether you are only exploring an idea, already have drawings, or are deciding if a renovation is feasible, an early conversation can give you useful direction.

At STURBY GROUP, we believe good building starts with clear advice, careful planning and a builder who stays involved.

CONSIDERED CONSTRUCTION. BUILT PROPERLY.

START A CONVERSATION

Talk to STURBY GROUP about your renovation or extension.

