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| 26 | 27 | APRIL 2019

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COVER STORY

By AMELIA BARNES

A home for
the holidays

Looking to move into your newly renovated home by Christmas? With the right planning and timeline, it might just be possible.

Most builders and DIY renovators roughly adhere to a planning and construction timeline able to be achieved in eight months. Observe the following to manage your renovation under the guidance of a professional team.

May Planning

The first month of any renovation is the planning and design phase.

This phase typically takes one month, but can take up to two.

Within this stage, you should confirm council approvals, builders and trades, floor plan, the electrical and lighting plan, budget, timeline, and mood board or design scheme.

If working with an architect, interior designer or builder, they will be heavily involved in this process.

"It's important to start kitchen and bathroom planning before anything else as trades need to know positions of plumbing and electrical items as a priority," Amy Thackeray, business manager at Sunday Homes says.

June Selections

The next step is to make your selections on materials, fixtures and appliances including cabinetry finishes, tapware, tiles and flooring.

OUR COVER

Gable House, designed by Clare Cousins
Architects, photography by Shannon McGrath



SHANNON MCGRATH

Start by liaising with your builder or project manager as they can provide a detailed list of what is required and expected product lead times.

If you're tackling the project on your own, you'll need to shop for these items independently.

"It's important to do as much of the selections as possible prior to construction commencing to enable enough time for them to be delivered to the site," Thackeray says.

July *Demolition*

The build team will now commence demolishing any structures being replaced or upgraded. This includes removing existing kitchens, bathrooms, walls, windows and doors as necessary and takes roughly two weeks to complete.

"This is the messy part of the build and it is recommended you relocate for a few months if possible," Thackeray says.

"If you will still have a functional kitchen, bathroom and ample living space, then sometimes you can stay put during this phase. Speak to your builder though as this can affect the build process and cost because they will need to do things in a roundabout way."

Serial renovators Ronnie and Georgia Caceres from the 2017 season of *The Block* and the television program *Quick Room Flips with Ronnie & Georgia* say gutting bathrooms and kitchens is something you can tackle on your own, but be mindful of load-bearing walls.



August *Framework & rough in*

For the remainder of July and into August, it's time for the build team to construct the home's new framework.

At this point, trades will rough in all new electrical and plumbing items laid out in your planning including new wiring, power points and light switches.

September *Construction*

In the Caceres' renovations, walls are typically constructed first, followed by ceiling fixes and plasters, then flooring and cabinetry.

"If you're restoring existing floorboards, hold off on the final sand and polish until after the painting stage as to avoid spills on your new floor," Georgia Caceres says. You can simultaneously tackle the kitchen, bathroom and laundry by co-ordinating trades.



The extension at Gable House, top, above and opposite, seamlessly blends old and new.

"These rooms are often the most technical part of a renovation and will take the longest time to complete, so tackling them earlier on in your timeline is smart planning," Caceres says.

October *External facade & landscaping*

It's time to focus on the exterior.

"Kerb appeal is very important, so be sure to allow provision in the budget for landscaping, as this is often an oversight," Caceres says. "Always consider irrigation and reticulation as it is counterproductive to spend the budget on plants without a sufficient watering plan."

Other tasks might include rendering, constructing a carport and brick paving.

November *Painting*

Painting can commence once all the dirty work is complete.

"If you're handy on the tools this is something you can do on your own and is a great way to save on the budget," Caceres says.

"In the same breath, if you're time poor, sometimes it's easier to have the professionals knock this out in a couple of weeks."

December *Finishing touches*

Your home has just undergone a massive transformation and will need some work to return to a normal living standard.

"Cleaning a worksite is not your average surface clean – it requires serious elbow grease. If you're not up to the task, there are companies that specialise in construction cleaning," Caceres says.

You might find that your furniture doesn't quite work in the new space. This is common, so if possible, Caceres advises allocating some budget to furniture and styling elements to finish the job. 🏡

Start your renovation mood board with more beautiful images of Clare Cousins Architects' Gable House, on domain.com.au/design

WORKING WITH PROFESSIONALS

Working with an architect or interior designer requires more time for the initial planning stages.

Architects and designers say this process takes a minimum of six months and typically comprises six to seven stages: engaging a designer and determining the brief, site measurement and pre-design research, developing schematic diagrams and images, interior design development, construction documentation, and administration.

"We can help guide on where is best to bend the budget and pare back in other areas.

If more planning is done upfront, the execution and the outcome is often a lot more successful," says Golden director Alicia McKimm.

The construction period also depends on the project. Founder of Ekah Studio Jasmine Richardson is currently working on a small alterations and additions project with a construction timeline of 10 to 12 weeks, but she says larger projects can take more than a year.



Waratah Garden Room by Ekah Studio