

# TIPS FOR SELECTING AND RENOVATING AN EXISTING HOME

Are you looking to purchase an existing, aging, or historic home and transform it into to your modern dream home? Do you already own an older home and want to explore possibilities for renovation? Here are a few things to consider when considering a house for renovation.

## LOOK IN THE BASEMENT

Is it dry? Is it moldy, cold, or drafty? Water in the basement can be explained many ways; it always warrants investigation.

### WHEN ASSESSING FEASIBILITY FOR RENOVATING A HOUSE

First confirm that the foundations have not been compromised by water. If the actual foundation walls have eroded or show major damage (erosion or cracking), get an expert opinion!

## LOOK AT THE CEILING THROUGHOUT THE TOP FLOOR

To check for signs of water damage. Are ceilings stained or crumbling? A leaky roof could cause problems throughout a house that would require investment.

### WATER DAMAGE COULD COMPROMISE ...

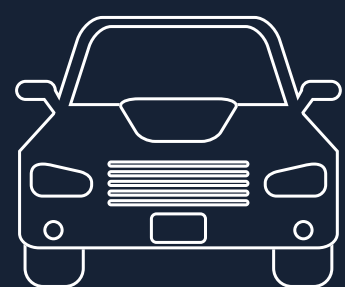
Wood elements in walls, or could foster mold. Although it may not be a deal-breaker, recognize that a leaky roof will almost always need to be replaced with a new roof.

## LOOK AT THE EXTERIOR WALLS FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

In a modern home, exterior walls must be sufficiently insulated and waterproofed. In winter, do the exterior walls feel cold on the inside? Do they feel damp or show water damage?

### IF SO...

You may have to replace the insulation inside the walls. While this is relatively straightforward, it usually means removing and replacing the interior plaster or drywall.



Check for water damage

# Condition

- ✓ How much investment would be needed to fix up the house?
- ✓ Is renovation or customization feasible considering the price of the property and the features that are most important in your dream home?
- ✓ Is this house suitable for renovation?

If you are eager for a renovation focusing on redesign of the spaces, you may not want to spend significant time and money on shoring up the house's structure. We recommend looking in a few places:

## 1

### Look in the basement

Is it dry? Is it moldy, cold, or drafty? Water in the basement can be explained many ways; it always warrants investigation. When assessing feasibility for renovating a house, first confirm that the foundations have not been compromised by water. If the actual foundation walls have eroded or show major damage (erosion or cracking), get an expert opinion!

## 2

### Look at the ceiling throughout the top floor

To check for signs of water damage. Are ceilings stained or crumbling? A leaky roof could cause problems throughout a house that would require investment. Water damage could compromise wood elements in walls, or could foster mold. Although it may not be a deal-breaker, recognize that a leaky roof will almost always need to be replaced with a new roof.

## 3

### Look at the exterior walls from inside and outside

In a modern home, exterior walls must be sufficiently insulated and waterproofed. In winter, do the exterior walls feel cold on the inside? Do they feel damp or show water damage? If so, you may have to replace the insulation inside the walls. While this is relatively straightforward, it usually means removing and replacing the interior plaster or drywall.

## 4

### Consider hazardous materials that could be present

Hazardous materials such as lead paint and others. Some hazards are commonly found in any interior over a certain vintage. While specialists are readily available to address hazards efficiently, this does absorb resources.

## 5

### If you see signs of infestation, investigate further

Insects and rodents are unwelcome, and eradicating them from an older house will require time and money. Pests typically leave behind some damage and/or contamination that will require cleanup before renovation can begin in earnest- though pet damage is usually much easier to remediate than infestations.

## Zoning/regulations

Can this house fit your dream vision? When renovating an older house, an exterior addition can be the best catalyst for a more modern and comfortable floor plan, especially in the entertaining areas of a home. Not every house could be expanded. "Zoning" is the local regulatory framework that typically limits houses to particular shapes, heights, sizes, uses, etc.

🔍 Here are a few key questions to help you assess whether your dreams are compatible with this property:

- **Can this home be enlarged as per the zoning rules of the town/city it is in?**  
Zoning may limit the total size of the building. Zoning regulations may include mathematical formulas that are conditional upon the size and dimensions of the property, the heights of neighboring buildings, and/or the distance between neighboring houses, for example.
- **Can the house cover more of the lot than it currently covers?**  
If lot coverage is already maximized, then any addition to the house must be built on an upper floor.
- **Does the house have a garage or driveway?**  
If not, there may be a reason. Parking may be required, or prohibited, by zoning. An existing garage may not be convertible to living space.
- **How is the yard configured?**  
Does zoning allow for adjustments? Zoning may limit construction of amenities such as a pool, shed, deck, greenhouse, fence, porch or stoop.

Now that you've given it some serious thought, do you see a house that's a good fit for your renovation? We know you have a vision for your future dream home. We are happy to visit a house with you when you're making your final decision to buy, with renovation in mind.