

## Inspect Before You Renovate

***A professional building inspection by a qualified engineer can help you separate the NEEDS from the WANTS.***

The time has finally come. Your cramped kitchen and dining room is making way for the state-of-the-art dining and entertaining center. But first that wall has to come out. Is it load bearing? What about the electrical service – can it handle the SubZero fridge?

The best person to answer these questions is your friendly neighborhood building inspection engineer. While it may seem like an odd call to make, hiring an inspector to check out the house systems before you start ripping things apart makes sense when you stop to think about it.

One unpleasant aspect of home renovations is that doing what you want almost always leads to doing things you weren't planning. Sometimes it's because hidden problems are found when the work progresses. Often it is because it makes sense to do one thing while you are in the middle of doing another.

Your building inspection engineer is trained to treat the whole house as a living system. He or she is uniquely qualified to understand the impact doing work on one part of the house will have on the others. The engineer can also help you sort out what additional work should be done, and what would be okay to avoid or defer.

### ***Mechanical Systems***

You may have to decide that the electrical service, heating system, or plumbing should be upgraded to support the new work. The inspector can guide you.

### ***Structure***

Changes to interior walls may compromise structural support. An inspector can help you determine if a wall is load bearing, and how you may work around it.

### ***Roof***

Adding onto a house or simply providing a dormer or skylight will require roof work. Should you replace all the existing materials, or is it safe to tie in the new work with the old? The inspector can illuminate your options.

### ***Basement***

Finishing a basement in an old house can be the beginning of an experiment in mould growth. A professional inspector can advise you on how to reduce or eliminate dampness, often with easy to implement and low cost suggestions. He can also prescribe how to install basement finishes to minimize the risk of water damage and mould growth.

### ***Pre-Purchase***

The renovation consultation is a different service than a pre-purchase inspection. The inspection before you buy determines the big picture of the house condition, focusing on the major systems like roof, furnace, plumbing and wiring. It's a must in the purchase of any house, new or old.

The pre-renovation consultation has a scope that is defined more by the homeowner, the work planned, and the details of the house. It is a less rigid inspection, and requires an experienced inspector.

By taking stock of the house before you get started, you will be able to plan your work better. This will mean fewer unexpected repairs as the job proceeds. And you have the chance of making improvements to corollary systems as you go, increasing the efficiency of your upgrades.

Whether you are establishing your roost in a previously enjoyed house, or you are upgrading the family estate, a pre-renovation consultation with a professional inspection engineer can smooth the transition.

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