

The Renovation Planning Guide

How drawings and Building Regulations keep a refurbishment on budget.

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In this guide: your approval routes, what trips people up, what it costs, how long it takes, a checklist you can work through, and answers to the questions we are asked most.

1. Your approval routes

Route	When it applies	What you submit
No planning needed	Most internal works and like-for-like refurbishment	Nothing, but Building Regs still apply
Building Regulations	Structure, drainage, ventilation, insulation, electrics	Technical drawings and building control notice
Full Planning	External changes, listed buildings, conservation areas	Full application with drawings

2. What trips people up

- Not needing planning permission does not mean not needing approval. Building Regulations still apply to structure and services.
- Moving a kitchen or bathroom means drainage, ventilation and often structural work.
- Decisions made on site are the expensive kind. A coordinated set prevents them.
- Without a proposed set, every builder prices a different job and the quotes cannot be compared.

3. What it costs

Typical UK market ranges, so you can sanity-check any quote you receive. Exp|Arc quotes one fixed written price after a free route check, and flags the third-party costs below up front.

What	Typical UK range	Who it is paid to
Planning drawings	£1,200 – £2,500	Your drawing practice
Full set incl. Building Regs	£2,500 – £5,000	Your drawing practice
Council application fee	£548 (householder, England, from April 2026)	Local authority
Structural engineer	£700 – £2,000	Engineer, where structure changes
Measured survey	Up to £450, or £0 with a guided self-survey	Surveyor

4. How long it takes

Stage	Typical time
Free planning-route check	Same working day

First draft drawings	10 working days
Revisions until you are happy	Unlimited, usually 1 to 2 rounds
Council decision	6 to 8 weeks from validation
Building Regulations set	1 to 2 weeks after approval

5. Your checklist

- ☐ List every structural change, however small
- ☐ Map the existing drainage before redesigning
- ☐ Get proposed layouts drawn to scale
- ☐ Prepare a Building Regulations set
- ☐ Fix the scope before fixing the price
- ☐ Keep the completion certificate for resale

6. Questions people ask

Do I need drawings if I am not extending?

If you are moving walls, drainage or services, yes. They are what keeps builders pricing the same scope and building control satisfied.

Will I need a structural engineer?

Where you remove or alter load-bearing elements, yes. We flag it up front so it is in your budget rather than a surprise.

How long does it take?

First draft drawings within 10 working days, with a Building Regulations set following once the layout is settled.

Get your free planning-route check

Send your postcode and what you are planning. You get the route confirmed in writing, the drawings you need, and one fixed price, usually the same working day. If any application we submit is refused, you get a 100% refund within 5 days.

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