

# The Interior Designer's Pre-Reno Checklist



*From Blueprint to Reality: 5 Steps to  
a Smoother, Smarter Renovation*

**BY LOREN NG**





# Introduction

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A smooth, successful renovation starts long before the first hammer is swung. It begins with a **clear plan — your personal blueprint for turning ideas into a space you'll love.** At **Loren Ng Designs**, we know this early stage is key to **avoiding stress, keeping to budget, and achieving beautiful results.**

This guide, walk you through **five essential steps to take before your project starts.** By following them, and you'll be ready to bring your vision to life — **the smarter, smoother way.**

*“Plan with purpose, design with confidence, and enjoy a renovation that’s as smooth as it is smart.”*

# Contents

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## Begin with Your Vision

Know the mood, style, and function you want before the design process begins.

04

## Design Beautifully, Budget Realistically

Include essentials, extras, and contingency.

06

## Pinpoint Your Musts and Maybe

Identify what's essential and what's optional.

08

## Gather Inspiration and Measurements

Pair your creative ideas with accurate dimensions.

10

## Consider Your Timeline

Plan with key dates in mind and allow room for delays.

12



# 01 Begin with Your Vision

Before engaging a designer, take time to **articulate what you want your home to feel like**. Think **beyond surface aesthetics** — consider **mood, atmosphere, and lifestyle**.

Are you leaning towards a **warm, cosy retreat** or a **clean, contemporary haven**? Do you want to **maximise light**, showcase art, or create **multifunctional spaces**?

When homeowners begin planning a renovation, they often fall into one of **two approaches**:

**Case 1:** Jump straight into **browsing social media**.

**Case 2:** Start by **defining their daily routines and lifestyle**.

From these two approaches, **the outcomes can be strikingly different**.

Image Courtesy of Maramani House Plans



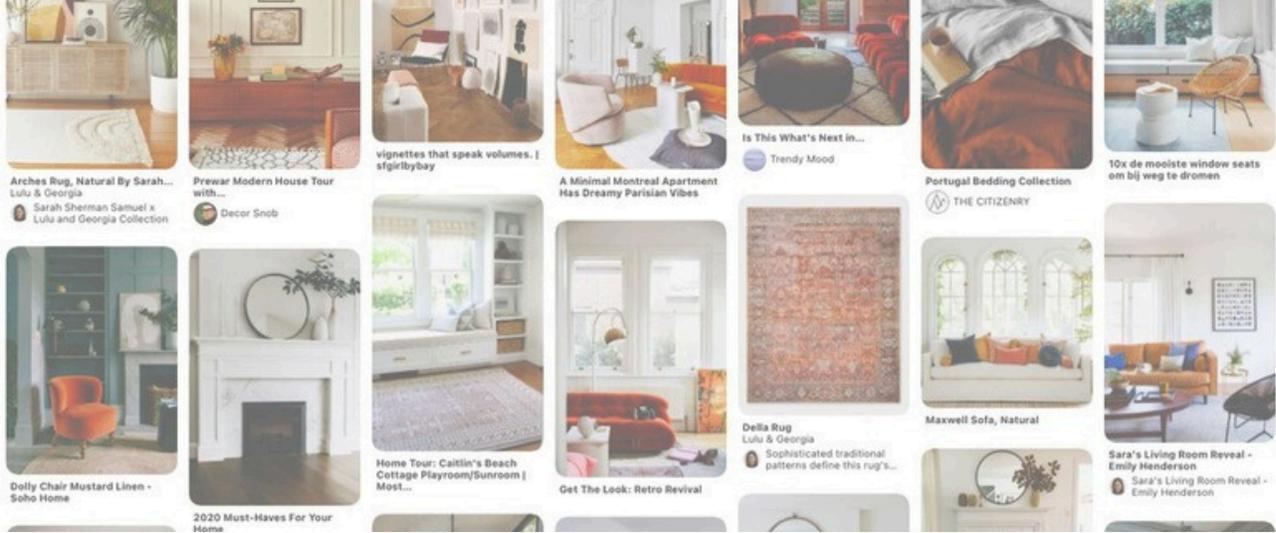


Image Courtesy of Skillshare

### Case 1 Outcome:

- A **“copy-and-paste”** version of your **Pinterest board**, designed mainly to impress visitors.
- A **lack of functionality**, with spaces looking beautiful but failing to support your day-to-day life.
- **Higher risk of costly reworks** down the line when the design doesn't match your real needs.

### Case 2 Outcome:

- A **clear, firm direction for the renovation**, with every decision anchored in your lifestyle.
- **Strong mutual understanding between client and designer**, reducing guesswork and revisions.
- A **balanced design that blends beauty with practicality**, creating a home that truly works for you.

## Your Key Takeaways:

**1** You define before you design – Understand your daily routine and lifestyle before creating any mood board or gathering visual references.

**2** Decide what “home” means to you – Identify the atmosphere you want to live in; this is the foundation of a functional, long-lasting space.

# 02

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## Design Beautifully, Budget Realistically



Image Courtesy of Simply Home  
Decorating

# “

*A smart budget turns dream designs into beautiful, achievable realities.*

**Budgets** aren't about limiting your dreams — they're about **making them achievable**. A well-structured budget should account for **design fees, construction or renovation works, materials, furniture, lighting, and soft furnishings**.

At **Loren Ng Designs**, we guide clients through every step of the budgeting process, ensuring they **allocate funds for essentials, extras, and a 10–15% contingency**.

This foresight **allows them to handle surprises** without sacrificing the quality, beauty, or function of their finished home.

## Let's Look at an Example:

### Case 1:

- A **kitchen renovation** began with only a **vague budget**.
- Costly design splurges left no funds for **unexpected plumbing issues**, forcing compromises on appliances and storage.
- **Result: The space looked good but lacked daily practicality.**



Image Courtesy of Benjamin Franklin Plumbing

### Case 2:

- A **living and dining renovation** was **planned** with a detailed budget, including a **15% contingency**.
- When **wiring problems arose**, the **buffer covered it** without stress.
- **Result: The project finished on time, cohesive, and fully functional.**



*Proper budgeting meant better functionality, lower stress, and a more satisfying finish.*



# 03

## Pinpoint Your Musts and Maybes

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*Clear priorities keep your renovation focused, functional, and free from costly detours.*

## Clarity = Smart Priorities.

**Know your must-haves** (daily comfort items like a walk-in wardrobe, home office or storage) **versus your nice-to-haves** (luxuries like statement lighting or a wine cabinet).



Set these early so your designer can make the right trade-offs, avoid delays, and keep the project on track.

### Key Takeaway:

- ⊗ **Save on:**  
Easy-to-swap items like accessories or accent paint
- ✓ **Splurge on:**  
Daily-use features or signature elements like custom carpentry or statement lighting.



# 04

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## Gather Inspiration and Measurements

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*Inspiration sets the mood, but  
measurements make it  
possible.*



**Measurement matter.** Alongside sharing inspiration with your designer, provide accurate room dimensions, window and door placements, and ceiling heights to ensure your ideas are realistic.

- **Don't Overlook Lifestyle-Specific Needs.**

like seating for guests or space for collections.

- **Blend Vision with Facts:**

creative ideas + facts = stunning results.

## Key Takeaways:

**1** Pair your creative vision with precise measurements so your design fits perfectly.

**2** Factor in lifestyle needs for a home that's both beautiful and practical.



# 05

## Consider Your Timeline

In renovations, **time is as crucial as budget — yet it's often overlooked until it's too late.** A **well-planned schedule** not only keeps the project on track but also **ensures your decisions are thoughtful, not rushed.**

At **Loren Ng Designs**, we work closely with clients to **map out realistic timelines from the start**, aligning every phase of the project with your milestones. This foresight prevents costly delays, last-minute compromises, and unnecessary stress.



## 5 Lead Time Factors to Watch Out For:

- 1 Custom Furniture & Joinery:** Bespoke pieces often require few weeks for design, production, and delivery.
- 2 Imported Material:** Shipping delays, customs clearance, and supplier schedules can add weeks to your timeline.
- 3 Permit Approvals:** Local regulations may require permits for structural changes, plumbing, or electrical works, which can take weeks to secure.
- 4 Specialist Trades:** Skilled craftsmen and subcontractors may need booking well in advance, especially during peak seasons.
- 5 Finishing Touches:** Lighting, soft furnishings, and décor can have surprisingly long delivery times, so order them early.



*At Loren Ng Designs, we believe a beautiful space starts with a smart schedule — every week saved prevents regret.*

# Conclusion and Next Steps

**A successful renovation is as much about timing, clarity, and preparation as it is about design** — set your vision, budget, and priorities early for a smoother, more rewarding journey.



Ready to **plan with purpose?**  
Let's create a home that's truly yours.

**RENOVATE NOW**

*Plan with clarity.*

*Build with purpose.*



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DESIGNS

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*My background in design and built, combined with years in client experience and project management, allows me to bridge vision and execution—delivering spaces that are not only aesthetically refined but also intuitively aligned with how people want to live.*

- LOREN NG

