DESIGN
PARTNERSHIP

2026

A GUIDE TO OFFICE REFURBISHMENT

Rethink to Rebuild

Understanding whats involved in an office refurbishment and how to prepare



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Introduction

Refurbishing your workplace is an exciting opportunity to rethink how your space looks, feels and functions. However, transforming an existing office comes with its own set of challenges, from managing daily operations to coordinating the various stages of design and construction.

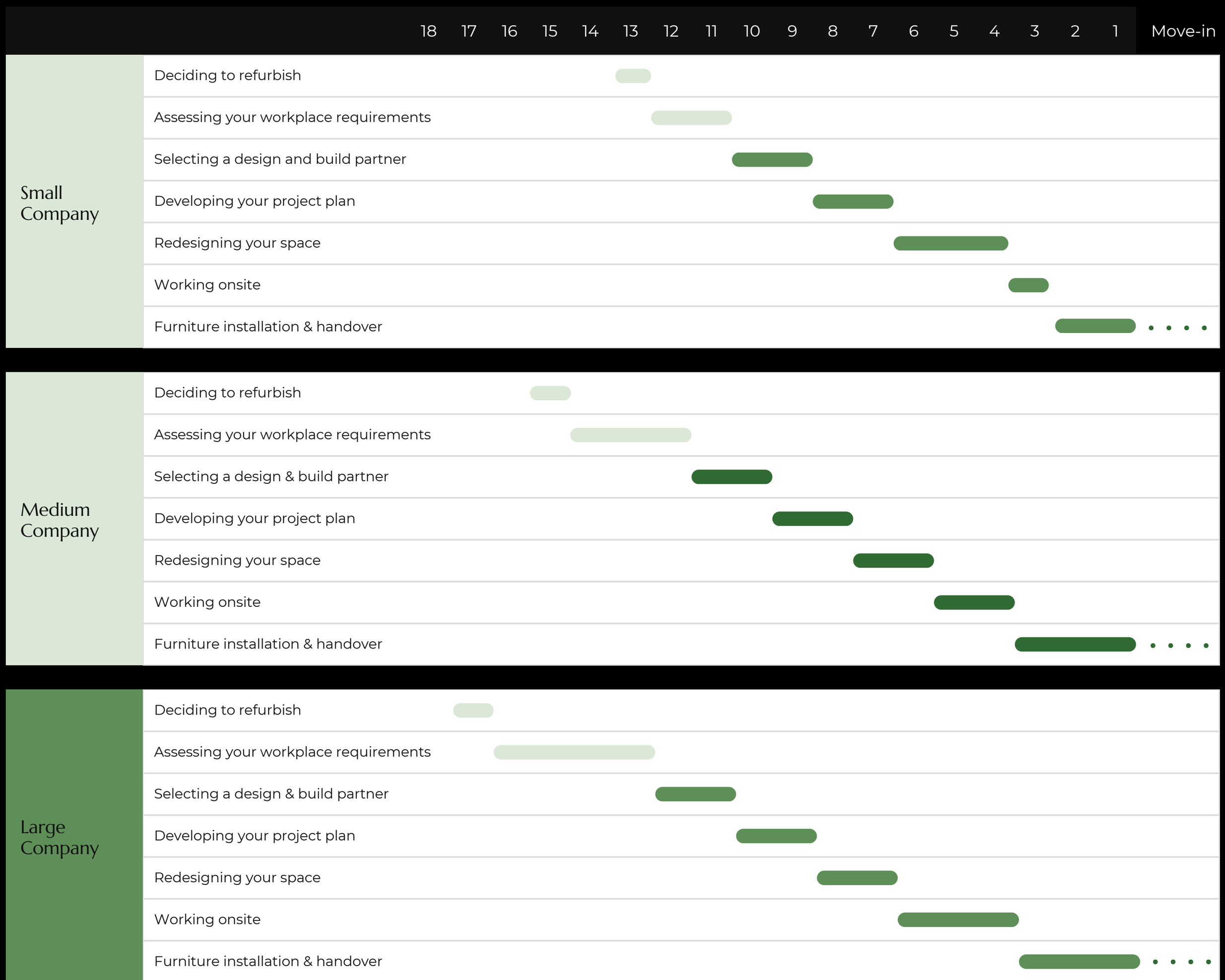
So, where do you start, and how much of the space actually needs to be refurbished?

It's easy to focus on the aesthetics, choosing new finishes, updating furniture and giving the office a fresh look. But a successful refurbishment goes much deeper than that. It's about looking at the foundations of the space, including lighting, air conditioning and mechanical systems, acoustics, furniture and how people use the office every day.

Whether you're making small improvements or completely transforming your workspace, this guide will help you understand what to expect, when to plan and how to make informed decisions along the way.

Timeframes

Early planning is key to a successful workplace refurbishment. While project timelines will vary depending on the size and complexity of your space, the fundamental stages of the refurbishment process remain the same.



Please note: These timelines are intended as a general guide. Certain stages may overlap or run concurrently.

Assessing Your Workplace Requirements

Before design begins, assess how your workplace supports people, teams and the way work is actually done. A clear view of today's environment creates a stronger foundation for refurbishment decisions.

Look beyond desks and floor area. Consider movement, collaboration, focus, technology, wellbeing and the experience of arriving, working and meeting in the space.

What should your workplace do better?

01

Understand current use

Observe how teams move, meet, focus and collaborate. Map the rhythms and routines that shape the day.

02

Identify constraints

Surface friction in the existing space: noise, capacity, storage, technology, comfort and underused areas.

03

Define future needs

Align the workplace with business growth, culture, flexibility, wellbeing and the experience you want to create.

04

Set refurbishment priorities

Turn the findings into a clear brief, with priorities that guide scope, budget, phasing and design decisions.

Key Considerations for Your Refurbishment

01

Space

Plan for growth, maximise every square metre and support a flexible workplace that adapts as your business evolves.

02

Staff

Ensure your people have the right resources, facilities and support systems to work effectively.

03

Culture

Align the refurbishment with your company's culture and brand, promoting diversity and encouraging collaboration.

04

Mechanical

Assess your air conditioning, electrical systems and fire compliance to provide a safe, comfortable working environment.

05

IT/AV

Review and upgrade your IT and AV systems to meet your team's needs, support seamless collaboration and encourage technology.

06

FF&E

Ensure furniture, lighting and equipment are fit for purpose, ergonomically designed and suited to the needs of your team.

THE NEXT STEPS TO TAKE

Plan of Action

A successful refurbishment starts with careful planning. Work through the key steps below to help you make informed decisions and keep your project on track.



- Meet with your landlord early to understand building rules, approved contractors, refurbishment allowances and any restrictions that could impact your project.
- Establish a realistic budget taking in to consideration design fees, construction, furniture, IT and AV, mechanical and electrical upgrades, professional fees, temporary arrangements and contingency.
- Choose the right design-and-build partner to guide your refurbishment from initial planning through to completion, ensuring a seamless process, considered design and a successful outcome.
- Establish your ideal completion date and work backwards. Allow time for design, approvals, procurement, long-lead items and construction. If your office will remain operational, factor in additional time for phased works.
- Will staff work from the office during construction? Can the project be completed in phases? Consider noise, dust, safety, temporary workstations, access and business continuity before work begins.
- Decide what to keep, replace or reuse. Not everything needs to go. Assess existing furniture, fittings, lighting and materials to identify what can be retained, refurbished or repurposed. It could save money and reduce waste without compromising the final design.

Shaping Your Space

DON'T JUST MAKE THE OFFICE LOOK NEW. MAKE IT FEEL CONSIDERED.



Brand Identity

Does your office reflect who you are as a business? Consider how your brand colours, values and personality can translate into the interior without making the space feel overly branded.

Colour Palette and Materials

Choose colours, textures and finishes that work together and complement the existing space. Consider what can be retained and where new materials can bring a fresh perspective without clashing with the original design.

The Look and Feel

Think about the atmosphere you want to create. Should the space feel warm and welcoming, professional and refined, creative and energetic, or calm and understated? Use lighting, furniture, textures and finishes to bring that feeling to life.



Nature and Texture

Introduce natural materials, greenery, timber tones and tactile finishes to add warmth and depth. These elements can soften corporate environments and make the workplace feel more welcoming.

Consistency Across the Space

Make sure the reception, workstations, meeting rooms, breakout areas and kitchenettes feel connected. Each area can have its own personality while still belonging to the same overall design story.

Timeless vs Trendy

Trends can be inspiring, but consider how the design will age. Invest in durable, timeless foundations and introduce bolder colours, patterns and trends through elements that are easier to update later.

Employee Communication Plan

A refurbishment can create uncertainty. A clear communication plan helps employees understand what is changing, when it is happening and how they will be supported throughout the process.

01

Explain the why

Share the business drivers, workplace goals and expected benefits before decisions start to land.

02

Set expectations early

Outline the likely programme, key milestones, disruption and what employees should expect at each stage.

03

Create regular touchpoints

Use consistent updates, team briefings and a visible project hub so information is easy to find.

04

Invite questions and feedback

Make space for concerns, listen to what people need and close the loop on the feedback received.

05

Support the transition

Provide practical guidance on temporary arrangements, new ways of working, move-in and settling into the refreshed space.

MOVE-IN DAY

Move-In Day Plan

Congratulations - your refreshed workplace is ready. A well-planned move-in day helps everyone arrive with confidence, settle quickly and start using the space as intended.

01 **Welcome and orientation**

Open the space, share the plan for the day and help teams find their new zones.

02 **Technology check**

Test connectivity, screens, meeting rooms, access systems and shared equipment.

03 **Settle in**

Unpack essentials, label storage and make sure every workstation is ready to use.

04 **Refresh the details**

Add plants, signage and finishing touches that make the workplace feel complete.

05 **Listen and adjust**

Capture early feedback, resolve issues quickly and support people through the first weeks.



Who We Are.
What We Do.
(and love doing)

We are Design Partnership. We create commercial interiors for workplace, hospitality and retail environments, combining design strategy, interior architecture and turnkey delivery.

Combining design expertise, strategic insight and a deep understanding of how spaces influence people, we've been transforming commercial interiors for over 30 years.

"We create places that are meaningful, memorable and connected to the people who use them."



GET IN TOUCH

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