

Eight issues you must resolve before you start a new addition to your home.

Careful planning and attention to detail are the keys to a success home addition.

As you plan your home addition, here are some important pitfalls to avoid:

Your Home's Resale Value

Consider not only your home's design, but the how it will fit into the neighbourhood. Ask a realtor what your resale prospects will be.

Your Mortgage

Does your mortgage lender need to approve any major addition? Your lender may foreclose if a required approval is not given before work starts.

Legal Requirements

New work must comply with provincial building codes, local bylaws and zoning requirements if you want to avoid penalties or fines.

For instance, you may be allowed to build an addition, but its size may be restricted. Or restrictive covenants may be in place to preserve your area's look and design standards.

Never consider this level of renovation without a building permit and the necessary inspections and approvals.

You will need complete scale drawings showing how the addition will connect to the existing house for your permit.

Existing Structural Issues

You must repair any problems found in the existing building, roof and foundation, especially moisture, as part of the renovation. Ask a qualified professional such as an engineer, architect or Renovantage Certified Contractor to assess structural issues as part of the planning process.

Check Your Insurance

Check your liability insurance: does it cover accidents due to the construction work? Even if you do your own work you need to have workers' compensation coverage for any casual labour you hire.

You should also be sure your existing fire insurance covers the new work during construction.

And don't forget to upgrade your coverage based on the increased value of your home and contents once the addition is complete.

Systems Upgrades

You will likely require significant upgrades to plumbing, heating, ventilation and electrical systems to handle increased demand. This is the time to consider energy-efficient upgrades.

Roof

You may find you have to refinish your entire roof when you build your addition, to provide water drainage, proper structural details and a pleasing finished roofline that ties in the new addition to the old structure.

Foundation

Pay special attention to how the foundation of the addition will tie into the existing structure. Check to any unusual loads that will have to be supported; and if you can continue to use the existing foundation drainage system or need a new foundation drain system.