

A Step-by-Step Guide to Refurbishing your Property

Whether you want to do a full-scale refurbishment or get a simple refreshing job done between tenancies, below are some tips that you may want to consider.



Step 1 Funding your Refurbishment

Upgrading your house may at first seem like an expensive, time-consuming and tedious exercise, but if you plan it better and choose the right company you will find that it adds a lot of value to your life and can be accomplished quite quickly and painlessly. If you consider all the factors in advance you may find that you can save money. For example, you can use the following tax incentive to decrease the cost of refurbishment.

VAT

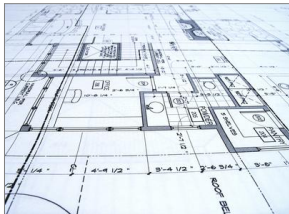
You may be able to claim reduced VAT rates on the refurbishment costs of bringing an empty property back into use. This could make the cost of refurbishing your empty property up to 20% cheaper (at the current VAT rate of 20%). You may also be able to take advantage of a reduced VAT rate of 5% if your property has been empty for more than 3 years. You may not have to pay any VAT at all on the costs of refurbishment if your property has been empty for over 10 years.

Equity release

Your lender may help to fund your refurbishment and you should check if you are eligible for any home improvement schemes such as the Home Improvement Trust for elderly owner occupiers.

Loan Assistance

There are several loans that are available in the market which can pay for the cost of upgrading your home. Some lenders specialise in lending for improving derelict homes and these are called brown mortgages. Interest free loans for essential works are available in certain circumstances directly from the Council.



Step 2 Planning and Building Consents

If you are planning to undertake more complex projects we will get in touch with a surveyor and an architect so that we can plan ahead. We may also need to apply for building or planning consents in advance if you are planning structural changes such as new access to a property or a considerable extension.

You will need to inform your managing agents and your neighbours before you start the building works.



Step 3 Initial Quote

We will need to fully inspect your property and have a detailed discussion with you before providing you with a free initial quote and anticipated timeline. We will give you a written quotation of the planned works with a detailed breakdown so that you can more easily compare our prices. We will enter into a written contract with you under which we take responsibility for performing works according to certain standards and conditions. The timelines and the works to be performed will be detailed in your contract with us.



Step 4 Before works are Started

If your property is empty while we are performing works on it we will advise you to install a good burglar alarm, to fit proper locks and to contact your local police station to request them for security measures.

We will source materials such as paint, wallpaper, tiles, bathrooms, kitchens for you if you prefer and provide you with options so that you can choose what is most suitable for you.

We will advise you on energy saving ideas such as floor insulation, a modern energy efficient boiler if you require one and double glazing that will reduce bills in the long term and are in accordance with our environment friendly principles.

Finally, we will finalise the designs, specifications and timelines with you in a clearly written contract and we will explain to you how we will invoice you and at what stages.



Step 5 Letting your property

If you are planning to let your property, you may want to consider the following tips.

Do not use your personal preferences when selecting fixtures and furnishings and when decorating. Use light and neutral colours so that spaces look larger and brighter.

Ensure that the kitchen and bathrooms look absolutely clean and modern as this will directly impact the value of the property.

Ensure that your property conforms to all the health and safety legislation. You must have a valid energy performing certificate and a gas safety check carried out every 12 months. We can arrange this if you wish.

Make sure all plumbing is in order and all the windows have locks. Also ensure that your fire alarm system is working.

Try to install energy saving devices in the property and keep your garden as low maintenance as possible to cut costs in the long term.

Remember that we manage properties through our sister company Rouse Property Services, so do consult us if you require our services and we will be happy to assist.



Step 6 During the Works

We will use our best efforts to minimise interrupting your daily routines while working in your property. We will keep as clean and tidy as possible and we will use our best efforts to protect any part of your property that does not need works.

At various stages throughout the project, you will receive detailed breakdowns of costs and updates so that you can control the improvements and your finances. Our project manager will be in touch with you throughout.



Step 7 Once works are completed

We will require your feedback once works are completed and we will advise you on how to best keep your property fully maintained. If you are planning to let your property, we will be happy to assist you as our sister company Rouse Property Services provides property management services at competitive prices. If you are planning to leave your property vacant, we can assist you also as we charge very low rates to ensure that your property does not fall into disrepair or attracts anti-social behaviour.

You should regularly inspect for the following factors to ensure that your property is being well maintained.

- Leaks and cracks in pipes and that gutters do not overflow
- Check windows and doors shut properly otherwise water can seep in and cause rot.
- Check all gas appliances regularly. We can arrange for a gas safety check for you. This should be done every 12 months.
- Check that lead flashings, roof and chimney are secure to prevent water from leaking into your property and causing damp and rot.
- Check for any signs of damp such as peeling paintwork or swollen wood.
- Regularly ventilate your property to prevent any damp and mould. If your property is unoccupied, we will be happy to inspect your property for you at regular intervals.

This guide was brought to you by Rouse Refurbs Ltd.

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