

6 Things People Always Regret Skipping During A Renovation

They can be expensive mistakes.

By [Quincy Bulin](#) | Published on June 18, 2025



Credit: Photo: Laurey W. Glenn

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Smart storage should never be an afterthought—it's the little conveniences like deep drawers and pull-outs that make daily life smoother.
- A well-thought-out design plan helps avoid headaches down the road and ensures your home can grow with your needs.
- Invest in quality materials and layered lighting—they hold up beautifully and make your space feel more polished and practical.

[Home renovations](#) aren't for the faint of heart. Even with the best of the plans, [they can become expensive](#), logistical nightmares full of unwelcome surprises. When you're trying to juggle a million decisions a day, it makes sense that the ball inevitably gets dropped somewhere. Below, two design and construction pros share the things people often skip and always end up regretting during a renovation.

MEET THE EXPERT

- **Meredith Sales** is a designer at [Block Renovation](#).
- **Michael Winn** is the founder and president of [WINN Design + Build](#) in McLean, Virginia.

Thoughtful Storage

Though not always as exciting as new paint and hardware, storage has the most impact on your daily life. “It’s not just about more cabinets, it’s about [the right cabinets](#)—deep drawers for pots and pans, hidden pull-outs for spices and trash, and integrated organizers that make daily use easier and clutter-free,” explains Meredith Sales, a designer at Block Renovation. Though she says that kitchens are especially critical, proper storage in closets, playrooms, and [mudrooms](#) can also transform functionality.

A Comprehensive Plan

There are some things you can go with the flow with, but a renovation isn’t one of them. “Skipping a comprehensive design plan can lead to unexpected changes or scope creep,” Michael Winn, founder and president of WINN Design + Build in McLean, Virginia, says. “We prioritize a detailed design and permitting process to set clear expectations and reduce surprises.” Winn’s team also encourages clients to consider future needs—from aging in place to hybrid work setups—so their home grows with them.

Quality Materials

“Trying to save on high-touch items like [countertops](#), cabinet hardware, or [plumbing fixtures](#) often leads to faster wear and unexpected maintenance,” Sales insists. Though durable, well-made materials may cost more upfront, they hold up better and make a noticeable difference in both feel and function. You’ll end up saving money in the long run and enjoy your everyday life just a little bit more. It’s a win-win.

The Outdoors

If your home needs a lot of love, it may make sense to batch your renovations instead of tackling them all at once, for financial and functional purposes. That said, when the inside of your home gets a dramatic upgrade, a ho-hum exterior can feel deflating. If you can, Winn recommends prioritizing the outside of your home as well, if needed and possible. “We help clients think holistically, so their yard, patio, and landscaping feel like a natural extension of the interior,” he explains.

Layered Lighting

According to Sales, [lighting](#) is one of the most underrated aspects of a renovation. “Layered lighting brings in the depth, mood, and functionality that make a space truly work,” she says. “Relying solely on overhead lights leaves kitchens and bathrooms feeling harsh or dim.” A mix of ambient, task, and accent lighting makes the space more inviting and dramatically improves usability. Often, you don’t even have to spend a lot more money to incorporate layered lighting—it’s mostly about being strategic with placement.

Energy Efficiency

When you’re making your selections, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed by all the jargon and forget to check for a universally useful feature like energy efficiency. “From upgraded insulation to HVAC zoning and high-performance windows, we help clients prioritize comfort and efficiency,” says Winn. “These are the kinds of upgrades people rarely regret—but they do often wish they’d known more about them sooner.”