

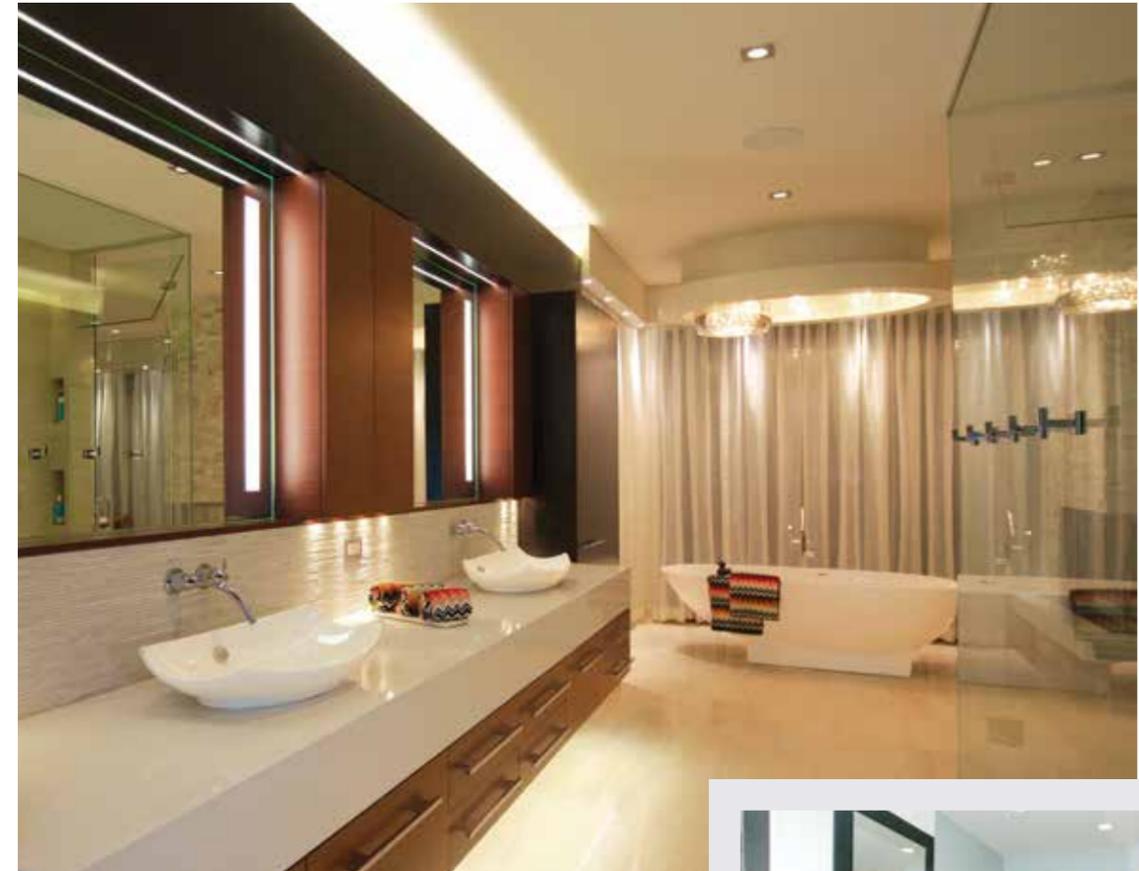
# Interior Designer Q&A

By Lynn Fenwick B.I.D. | Photography by Duality Photographic

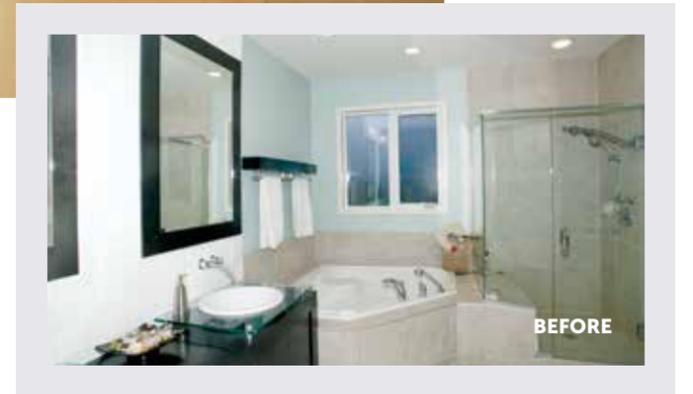
At the booth I designed for the Winnipeg Renovation Show (The Design Studio – Ask A Designer), I was faced with many questions from people wanting to renovate their homes. The people I spoke with seemed to have many of the same questions. For this reason, I would love to provide some answers to help with your future renovations.

## THE BIG QUESTION: WHERE DO I START?

The majority of people feel very overwhelmed when it comes to renovations, so if you're thinking that you just have no idea where to even start, you're not alone! Renovation TV shows make it look so quick and simple, but in reality it is a process that includes countless decisions that need to be made. That is why we, as designers, are here for you! We deal with these decisions on a daily basis and are here to make your renovation process as pleasant and exciting as possible!



Once the construction set is completed, we send it off to at least two contractors for bidding. The successful contractor then starts the building process. Through the building phase we set up periodic walkthroughs with the contractor so we can ensure that everything is being built the way we have planned it and that everything is running smoothly so you end up exactly with what you imagined!



Before we meet with you, we always suggest that you start by giving us visual examples of what you like, or different aspects of what you like. Like the cliché, a picture is worth a thousand words. This will give us a good indication of your style and is a great tool to build the concept of your renovation on.

The most important thing in any renovation is the plan of the space. Like the construction of a house, if you don't have a solid foundation to your design, it's going to fall apart. We always start with concept plans and work from there. We create multiple options with different features so you can see what variations you have for your space. Once a plan is chosen, we start creating concept elevations and details of the space to give you a visual of how everything is going to look vertically. This gives instruction to contractors on how each detail is supposed to look so that everything turns out as we've discussed and imagined it would look like. From there we begin selecting finishes for your house.

When it comes to materials, we tend to begin with the cabinetry finishes and the main area flooring because these are two of the greatest expanses of materials that will be used through the renovation and are typically used in more than just one room. All other materials are usually selected to coordinate with the cabinets and flooring and fit into the concept of your home.

From there we select appliances, plumbing, and lighting and begin to finalize the drawing set to send out to contractors. This entails creating ceiling/electrical plans, finalizing all plans, elevations and details, and creating assorted schedules. Once the construction set is completed, we send it off to at least two

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## I WANT TO OPEN UP MY CLOSED OFF FLOOR PLAN. HOW DO I START WITH THIS?

This is a very common request for renovations. It is almost always doable, but it all depends on the structure of your house. There is usually one main support wall running through your house that bears the structural load. With this being said, your first step is to find out which are your load bearing walls. As designers, we can usually tell which walls are load bearing, however we like to consult with engineers and contractors to ensure which walls can be removed. Usually, support still may be needed where you want the space open but we have several creative ideas to support the load.





#### **I WANT TO ADD A BATHROOM TO THE SECOND FLOOR OF MY HOUSE. WHAT ARE MY LIMITATIONS WITH THIS?**

First of all, you need to know where your plumbing stack is. Usually in homes if the bathrooms can be in the same location on both floors, the plumbing stack can run directly up. If this is done, there is typically no problem at all adding this bathroom into your house. However, stacking the bathrooms isn't always possible or in the location you want. You can typically run a horizontal pipe 10 feet from the plumbing stack without any issues but any plumbing farther away than that may cause issues. With the help of a designer, we can usually find a way to make it work!

#### **I WANT TO FRESHEN UP MY SPACE, BUT DON'T HAVE THE BUDGET FOR A LARGE RENOVATION. WHAT ARE SOME LESS EXPENSIVE OPTIONS I CAN DO TO CHANGE THINGS UP?**

It's amazing what a new fresh paint colour can do to a space. Not only is it an easy change to make, it is very affordable. A fresh colour scheme can change the entire feeling of a room. Pair this with new accessories, artwork and small furniture pieces and you'll feel like you're in a brand new space!

You can also check under your wall to wall carpet to see if you have any buried treasure – hardwoods! In many older homes, hardwood has been covered over. You can lift the carpet and refinish the floor if necessary and add an area carpet to create a new look.

If you're looking for a bigger change than just paint, you can look into cabinet re-facing. This is where they use your existing cabinet boxes and refinish them and replace just the doors of your cabinetry. Although you may not have as many opportunities for change in regards to the layout of your cabinetry, it is much more affordable than replacing all of your existing cabinetry which may still be in good condition anyway.

#### **I'M LOOKING TO RENOVATE/UPDATE MY HOUSE BUT THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT STYLES THAT I LIKE – HOW DO I CHOOSE ONE STYLE TO GO WITH?**

Lucky for you, we are in the age of anything goes. It is becoming more and more common to see multiple dissimilar styles used in one design to create a unique look. We are loving this trend! However, there is always a limit to how much you can throw into one concept. Try to limit yourself to two styles, or three at the most and stick with those through the house. Like with paint colours, if you have too many different styles, it will look chaotic and overwhelming and won't feel cohesive. A good designer has a background in art and design and knows which styles complement each other and will always suggest what would look best for your space.

Overall, any renovation – big or small – can be stressful and always entails a lot of decision making, but at Fenwick & Company, we are always ecstatic to help you out and calm your nerves. We deal with these obstacles every day and have the experience to lead you in the right direction. We would love to show you how to take the stress out of your renovation and create a positive and fun renovation experience!



#### **Lynn Fenwick**

*Fenwick and Company Interior Design*

*Tel 204.489.5151, Fax 204.487.0719*

*E-mail [lynnfenwick@shaw.ca](mailto:lynnfenwick@shaw.ca)*

*Web [www.fenwickinteriordesign.ca](http://www.fenwickinteriordesign.ca)*

*Blog [fenwickinteriordesign.blogspot.com](http://fenwickinteriordesign.blogspot.com)*

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