



CONDO RENOS ON THE RISE

Solutions for the renovation challenges in condos



BY BRYAN TUCKEY

Condo renovations are becoming increasingly fashionable as more and more people across the GTA move to condos.

"The most popular targets of condo renovations are kitchens and bathrooms," says RenoMark renovator and BILD Board member Brendan Charters. "The most common projects revolve around upgrading and customizing finishes like cabinets, backsplashes and countertops.

"Typically we install new finishes in the same locations as the original, although in some instances we are able to get creative and shift things around something that is not easy in condos with common elements, such as plumbing, gas, phone and cable lines, which can't be moved," says Charters of Eurodale Developments in Toronto.

Upgrading flooring, trim and paint are other popular renovations that allow condo owners to improve the esthetic appeal of their suites.

Charters says that the key to a successful condo renovation is in the design, planning, and hiring of the right renovator. It's important to work with a professional contractor who is familiar with the structural and service ele-

ments of condos, someone who can plot a course for condo board approvals and work around potential challenges.

The condo board will want to make sure that your project doesn't affect any of the building's common elements. You must also adhere to the board's renovation-specific by-laws, like sound-transfer standards, as well as the expected time frame for the renovation, before approval is granted.

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Much like renovating a detached home, a major renovation may require building permits. While significant structural renovations are uncommon in condos, permits are still necessary if you're working with electrical or changing plumbing locations. This is where it's important to ensure that you are working with a professional renovator that can help you navigate through the permit process.

The RenoMark website has a searchable database of professional renovators. And you can customize your search by neighbourhood and renovation type.

All companies on the website have agreed to a renovation-specific Code of Conduct, which includes things like providing a written contract; offering a minimum of two million dollars in liability insurance; providing a two-year warranty on all work; and possessing all applicable licenses and permits.

Make sure you ask the renovators lots of questions about their experiences working with condominium projects. Good luck on your renovation.

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