



SORT & ORDER

An Organiser's Guide to Renovation Planning

Get the storage, layout and everyday details right before building begins.

HELEN DEAR | PROFESSIONAL HOME ORGANISER

sortandorder.co.uk

Plan the finished home around real life

A renovation gives you a rare opportunity to decide how your home needs to function, how your family moves through it and where the things you use every day should live.

Flooring, paint colours, handles and worktops all matter. A beautiful room can still be frustrating when the storage is the wrong size, everyday items are too far from where they are used or one cupboard is expected to support several different routines.

As a professional home organiser, I look at renovation plans through a practical lens: the belongings, habits and pressure points that need to be supported once the builders have gone.

THE CORE QUESTION

How should this space support the people who will use it every day?

Use this guide before layouts are signed off, cabinetry is ordered and storage decisions become expensive to change.

Plan for what actually happens

Plans often show a clean room with carefully positioned furniture. Real homes also contain school bags, laundry, food shopping, recycling, paperwork, dog leads, sports equipment, chargers and the things that arrive through the front door every day.

Useful functional zoning begins with routines rather than room names. A cupboard is only useful when it is close enough to the activity it supports.

Questions to work through

- Who uses this space and when is it busiest?
- What is usually carried into, through or out of the room?
- Which items are used daily, weekly or occasionally?
- What tends to collect on the nearest surface?
- Which items need to stay visible and which should be put away?
- Does anyone need easier access, lower storage or a clearer route?
- Can doors and drawers open when several people are using the room?

SORT & ORDER TIP

Walk through a normal morning and evening in your head. The missing details usually reveal themselves in the busiest moments.

Declutter before calculating storage

If every existing item is automatically included, new cabinetry can become an expensive way to preserve things you no longer use. Decluttering before the final design gives you a more accurate picture of what the finished home needs to hold.

Group belongings by category and record where they are used. This is particularly useful for kitchens, utilities, wardrobes, boot rooms, playrooms and home offices.

Category audit

- Keep: used, loved or genuinely needed
- Move: useful, but currently stored in the wrong place
- Reduce: duplicates, expired items and things that no longer suit your life
- Rehome: donate, sell, recycle or pass on
- Measure: record the real volume of every category that remains

THE RESULT

Shelves, drawers, hanging rails and cupboards can be designed around the contents instead of hoping everything will fit afterwards.

Plan every cupboard properly

A line marked 'storage' on a floor plan does not explain whether that storage will work. Deep shelves hide smaller items. Fixed shelves waste vertical space. A beautiful wardrobe can provide too much hanging space and too few drawers.

Cupboard planning sheet

- What exactly will live here?
- How much of each category do we own?
- Who needs to reach it?
- How often will it be used?
- Would shelves, drawers, dividers, hooks or hanging space work best?
- Are shelf heights adjustable?
- Will small items disappear at the back?
- Do doors and drawers open comfortably in a busy room?
- Are sockets, lighting or ventilation needed inside?

Write the intended contents on every cupboard shown on the plan. Any cupboard without a clear purpose deserves another look.

Make the easiest action the sensible one

Good room configuration supports the natural journey of belongings entering and moving around the home. When the layout ignores those journeys, items gather in the gaps.

Map these everyday journeys

- Coats, shoes, post and school bags from the front door
- Food from shopping bags to storage and preparation
- Laundry from bedrooms and bathrooms to washing and back to wardrobes
- Bins and recycling from use to collection point
- Chargers and devices from use to a safe charging home
- Sports kit, dog equipment and outdoor items after use

TRY THIS

Draw arrows on the floor plan to show how people and belongings move. Repeated crossings, awkward turns and missing landing points are worth solving now.

Family life crosses between rooms

Renovations are often planned one room at a time. Family routines move between them. Think about the morning rush, homework, charging devices, packed lunches, sports clubs, cleaning, recycling and the end-of-day reset.

Routine prompts

- Can breakfast be made without crossing the main cooking area?
- Where will bags, shoes and coats land after school?
- Does homework have supplies, charging and paperwork nearby?
- Can laundry be sorted and returned without creating piles?
- Can each family member put away their own belongings?
- Is cleaning equipment stored near the areas it supports?
- Where will deliveries, returns and outgoing items wait?

Small practical decisions have a large effect on how much time and headspace the finished home requires.

Ask the organising questions early

Interior designers, architects, kitchen companies, carpenters and builders each bring valuable expertise. A professional organiser adds detailed knowledge of how possessions, routines and storage systems interact once the family is living in the finished space.

Useful points to review with the project team

- Drawer depths and internal dimensions
- Pantry, utility and boot-room zones
- Wardrobe capacity and the balance of hanging versus drawers
- Furniture placement and clear walking routes
- Sockets for devices, appliances and charging
- Hooks, rails, shelves and everyday landing points
- Storage heights for children and different family members

BEST TIMING

Raise these points before the design is signed off and materials are ordered.

Set up the finished home properly

The end of building work is rarely the end of the project. Belongings still need to be returned, categories assigned and the new storage set up so that everyone understands how to use it.

Before work begins

- Declutter before packing
- Label boxes by category and intended destination
- Keep essential items separate
- Create an inventory for stored belongings
- Plan which complete zone will be set up first
- Avoid using completed rooms as unplanned holding areas

Once you are living in the space

- Notice where items gather naturally
- Adjust shelf heights and internal dividers
- Label categories where it genuinely helps
- Book a Back to Order reset if the systems need refining

Before anything becomes expensive to change

- Walk through the family's real daily routines
- Declutter and measure the belongings that will remain
- Assign a purpose to every cupboard and drawer
- Map the journey of everyday items
- Review internal storage, sockets, hooks and shelf heights
- Share practical requirements with the design and build team
- Plan the packing, return and final home set-up

SPACE FOR YOUR PRIORITIES

The three areas that most need to work better: 1.

2.

3.

One decision to raise with the project team this week:

PLAN YOUR RENOVATION AROUND REAL LIFE

If you want the finished home to feel as good to use as it looks, send me your plans, photographs or a short video.

We can arrange a free introductory chat and decide whether an in-home Space Planning session would help.

sortandorder.co.uk | helen@sortandorder.co.uk | 07488
600127

Homes that hold you up.

Based in Tring and working across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and surrounding areas.