

The letting agent

I need to get my rental flat completely refurbished, with a new bathroom and kitchen. Never having done anything like this before, it fills me with worry! Where do I start?

AX, by email

With any refurbishment project, you need a detailed specification list. A good tradesperson will be able to work from this to provide an estimate. Ask for the labour and materials costs to be shown separately – this will help you to make a fair comparison – and obtain two or three estimates. The contractor quoting the lowest price may not necessarily be the right person for the job – ask neighbours or local surveyors if they can offer a recommendation. A good builder will project-manage the whole renovation: get references, and ask whether you can see actual work they have completed. Finally, ensure that the contractor has sufficient public liability insurance.

Frank Webster is a director at the Oxford branch of the lettings agency Finders Keepers; finders.co.uk



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