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Give Great Design:
Dwell's Exclusive
Gift Guide

AT HOME IN THE MODERN WORLD

Green Is Good

5 Sustainable Homes

Renovation 101

Planning—and Surviving—
the Process

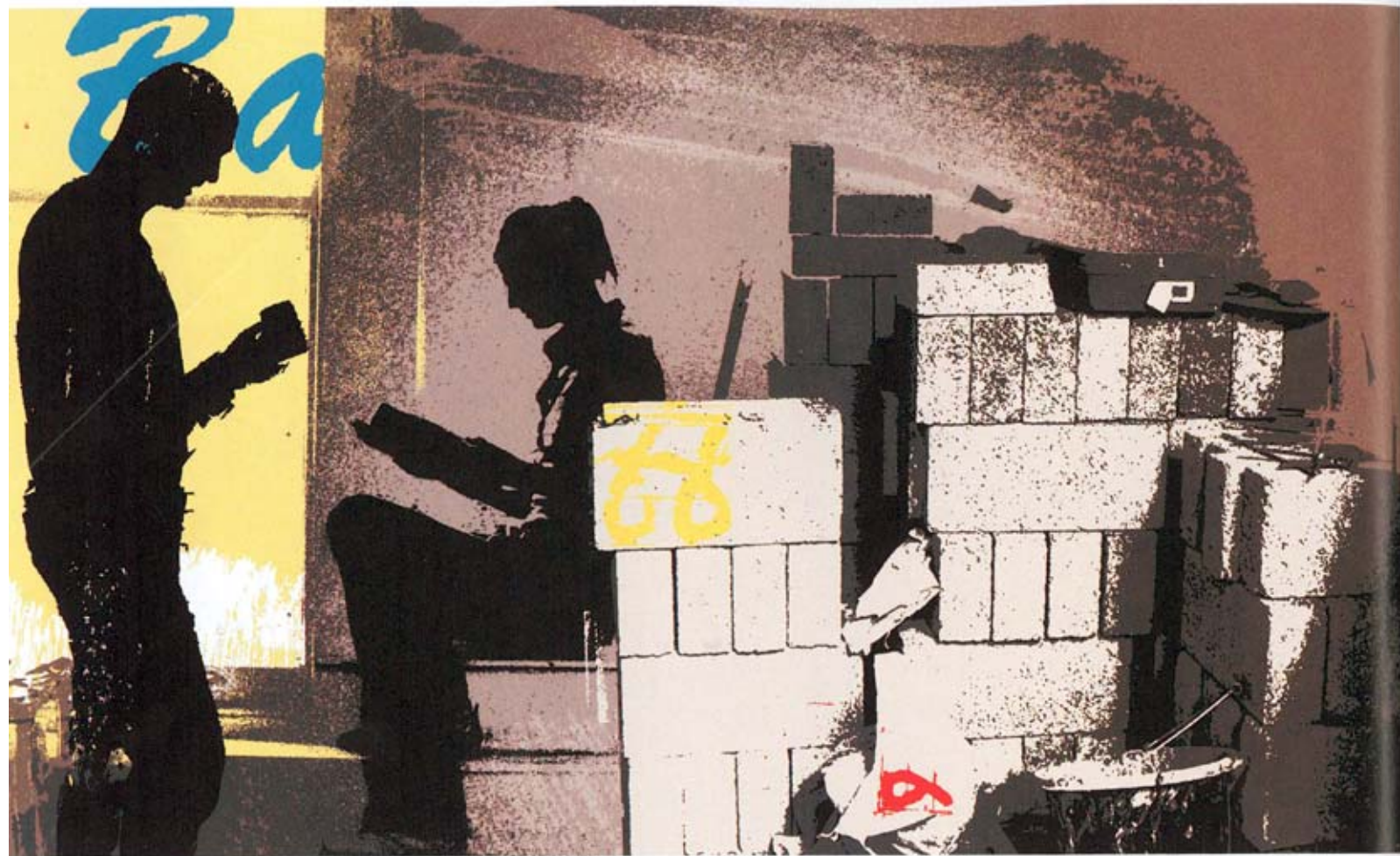
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Remaining Sane While Your Home Is Dismantled

Be Flexible

Sticking obstinately to the original schedule and budget is challenging, and sometimes unwise, especially during a gut renovation. Face this reality before you begin: Those who will not bend may break.

Get Out

Any designer or contractor worth their salt will tell you: The best way to not lose your mind during a renovation is to live elsewhere while you're doing it. Have a place to go, away from sweaty strangers, crumbling plaster, and daily surprises.

Be Early

Designer Oliver Freundlich of MADE urges you to make decisions down to tile, grout, and finish details and have everything your builders will need delivered to your door before they arrive. This insures that workmen won't sit idle or, even worse, disappear for a couple of days.

Schedule Some Quality Time

In *Good House Hunting: 20 Steps to Your Dream Home*, Dennis Wedlick recommends scheduling regular meetings with the entire team to review progress (or lack thereof), listen and communicate carefully and professionally, and update the construction schedule and budget. Avoid making decisions during the meeting; final decisions should be delivered afterwards—in writing.

Spend Time With Your Choices

Always request samples of your materials—countertops, light-switch plates, wall coverings, etc.—and make sure that, when you see them in combination, the elements correspond to each other and to your taste. You may be living together for a long time.

Be Resourceful

In *Good House*, *Cheap House*, Kira Obolensky suggests some clever ways to keep costs down without skimping on good design, such as renewing elements instead of replacing

them, compromising and splurging strategically, and using off-the-shelf products creatively (instead of costly customizations).

Ditch the Chips

Abandon the paint chip, all ye who enter here. Paint an entire wall and watch the paint dry, literally, before committing to a particular color.

Mock It Up

Just as you request samples from materials companies, don't be afraid to ask for mock-ups from your builder, full-scale or smaller.

Pause to Reassess

"If you gut your bathroom or kitchen, pause after the demolition to reassess the situation," says Freundlich. "This is a critical moment." Once you rip open your walls, you may need to adjust to the reality of rotten pipes and rampant mold—or you may discover a design opportunity inside. ▶