

Hotel Owner's Guide to Renovating While Remaining Open

HOTEL OWNER PLANNING GUIDE

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Plan Around Hotel Operations

Renovating an operating hotel requires a coordinated plan for construction, guest service, staffing, and revenue. The central question is not simply whether the doors can stay open. It is which areas can operate safely and reliably while each phase of work proceeds.

This guide helps hotel owners, asset managers, general managers, and property teams prepare for that decision. Use it before requesting proposals, then revisit it as the scope, budget, and construction sequence develop. It applies to guest rooms, public spaces, amenities, and building systems in existing hotels.

How to use this guide

- Define the business objectives and non-negotiable operating needs.
- Review existing conditions and responsibilities with the project team.
- Build a phase plan that connects room availability to construction milestones.
- Complete the planning worksheet and phase-release checklist.
- Agree on guest communication, shutdown procedures, and reopening criteria.

> Planning tip
> Remaining open can preserve some revenue, but it also introduces temporary costs and operating constraints. Compare phased operation, partial closure, and full closure before committing to an approach.

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Define Priorities and Existing Conditions

Start with an organized property review. Combine guest feedback, maintenance records, brand requirements, and business objectives with a site assessment by the appropriate design and construction professionals. Record what is confirmed and what still requires investigation.

• Guest rooms: bathrooms, finishes, acoustics, furniture, lighting, and comfort complaints.

• Public spaces: reception, corridors, food service, meeting rooms, and guest circulation.

• Back-of-house: housekeeping, storage, staff routes, service access, and maintenance areas.

• Building systems: HVAC, electrical, plumbing, controls, and fire-protection interfaces.

• Existing conditions: available drawings, prior alterations, moisture issues, and concealed-condition concerns.

• Brand obligations: property improvement plan, approved products, design reviews, and deadlines where applicable.

Distinguish required repairs and approval-related work from discretionary upgrades. Ask which improvements must be completed together and which can be deferred without creating rework. Identify surveys, testing, or specialist assessments needed before demolition.

Planning tip
A cosmetic renovation may expose system or concealed-condition issues. Make the investigation scope and remaining assumptions visible in the estimate and schedule.

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Compare Operating and Closure Options

Keeping the entire hotel open is not the right choice for every scope. Evaluate the practical and financial effects of each option with ownership, operations, design, and construction representatives.

Phased operation

Keep selected rooms or areas available while work proceeds elsewhere. Review separation, guest routes, service continuity, and whether shared systems allow genuinely independent work zones.

Partial closure

Close a wing, floor, amenity, or larger area to create a workable construction zone. Evaluate buffer rooms, alternate services, event commitments, and the inventory needed for expected demand.

Full closure

Consider when the scope, shared systems, access constraints, or required protections make occupied operation impractical. Compare lost operating income with construction duration, temporary costs, and execution risk.

- Model rooms available by phase against bookings and seasonal demand.
- Include temporary facilities, restricted working hours, repeated mobilization, and guest recovery costs.
- Identify the conditions that would require a phase to pause or operating areas to close.

Planning tip
The operating plan must remain compatible with the work actually being performed. Reassess it when scope or existing conditions change.

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Build the Team and Decision Structure

Occupied hotel work depends on daily coordination between the construction team and the people running the property. Define roles, reporting, and escalation before the first work zone is established.

• Owner or asset manager: scope priorities, funding, business decisions, and authorized changes.

• General manager and operations leads: room inventory, bookings, staff readiness, and guest-service decisions.

• Architect, engineers, and specialists: coordinated design, existing-condition review, and requirements within their scopes.

• Construction manager or contractor: logistics, trade coordination, schedule reporting, field supervision, and agreed site controls.

• Brand, procurement, and suppliers: design approvals, product standards, furniture packages, and delivery commitments.

• Facilities, housekeeping, security, IT, and food service: operational interfaces, access rules, and reopening readiness.

Name one hotel representative and one construction representative for daily coordination. Establish who can approve shutdowns, change room blocks, authorize spending, and stop affected work when an unresolved condition creates a concern.

Planning tip
Select partners for relevant occupied-property experience. Ask for references, a sample phasing plan, supervision arrangements, and their process for reporting disruption or schedule changes.

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Develop a Workable Phasing Plan

Create a phase map showing construction zones, operating areas, buffer rooms, guest routes, service access, storage, and deliveries. A floor-by-floor sequence is useful only if the building systems and guest circulation support it.

- Define the exact rooms and spaces taken out of service in each phase.
- Coordinate adjacent, above, and below rooms affected by noise or shared systems.
- Sequence demolition, rough-in, inspections, finishes, furniture, testing, and release.
- Identify temporary reception, dining, housekeeping, or other service arrangements.
- Reserve protected access for guests, staff, emergency response, and deliveries.
- Show dependencies between phases, including inspections and system readiness.

Review the plan against booking patterns, group commitments, events, and staff capacity. Agree on work windows using actual guest demand and the nature of the activity; there is no universal quiet period that suits every property.

Complete a representative room or area first where useful. Review the finish quality, installation sequence, maintenance access, and realistic production rate before repeating the work across a larger room block.

> Planning tip
> Release the next room block through an agreed approval step. Do not remove inventory solely because a calendar date has arrived.

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Coordinate Approvals and Life Safety

The approval path depends on the property, location, scope, and affected systems. Have the responsible design professionals coordinate with the applicable authorities and identify requirements for both construction and continued operation.

• Determine required permits, design reviews, inspections, and occupancy-related approvals.

• Review temporary separation, accessible routes, exits, emergency lighting, and signage.

• Coordinate any effect on alarms, sprinklers, detection, or other protective systems.

• Establish authorized procedures for system impairments and required temporary measures.

• Review proposed temporary amenities, food-service changes, or use of alternate spaces.

• Document approval conditions that affect phasing or guest access.

Keep an approval log with the authority, responsible person, status, next action, and required date. Hotel staff and contractors should understand the current operating boundaries and emergency procedures for each phase.

Review relevant insurance and contractual requirements with the appropriate advisers. Where existing materials or conditions require assessment, arrange qualified evaluation before disturbance.

Planning tip
Temporary signs alone do not establish a suitable emergency route. Have proposed changes reviewed and approved through the appropriate project process before use.

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Control Access, Dust, and Noise

Treat construction separation and housekeeping as planned work, with assigned responsibility and routine inspection. Guest comfort measures support the operating plan; they do not replace construction controls.

• Provide appropriate secured barriers and controlled entry to work zones.

• Separate guest paths from trade access, debris movement, and material deliveries where practical.

• Protect finishes, elevators, corridors, and occupied areas along approved service routes.

• Plan dust capture, containment, ventilation, and cleaning for the actual activities.

• Coordinate noisy or vibration-producing work with operations and communicate changes promptly.

• Manage tools, equipment, odors, waste, and storage so public spaces remain usable.

Review potential pathways through shared HVAC, shafts, adjacent rooms, or corridors with the relevant professionals. Define inspection frequency and the response when containment, cleanliness, or noise arrangements are ineffective.

Set conduct rules for crews, including identification, guest interaction, approved access, and housekeeping. Record incidents and corrective actions in the daily coordination log.

> Planning tip
> If a control fails, reassess the affected work and operating area before continuing. Earplugs or extra housekeeping cannot compensate for an unsuitable work-zone arrangement.

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Plan Building-System Shutdowns

Water, power, HVAC, elevators, IT, and protective systems may serve more than the area under renovation. Trace affected services before scheduling a shutdown and confirm what the hotel can continue to operate during the interruption.

- Define the system, exact affected areas, and expected outage duration.
- Identify required approvals, provider involvement, and technical personnel.
- Confirm temporary services where feasible and appropriate.
- Coordinate guest relocation, housekeeping, food service, security, and booking restrictions.
- Set advance-notice requirements and a named authorization contact.
- Prepare a restoration plan, verification steps, and an escalation procedure if the work overruns.

Maintain a written shutdown register. Confirm readiness before each interruption rather than treating the master schedule as permission to shut a service down. Protective-system impairments require their own coordinated procedures and applicable temporary measures.

After restoration, verify performance with the responsible personnel and notify operations before returning affected rooms or services to use. Record any outstanding limitations.

> Planning tip
> Every shutdown needs a defined beginning, an authorized scope, a restoration check, and a response if normal service cannot resume as planned.

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Keep Guests and Staff Informed

Give guests accurate information early enough to make an informed booking decision. Coordinate the hotel website, booking channels, confirmations, group-sales communications, and front-desk messages so they describe the same current conditions.

• State the affected dates or phase window and update it when forecasts change.

• Explain which spaces or amenities are unavailable and which remain available.

• Describe expected work hours or disruption only when the team can support that statement.

• Explain alternate services, routes, and the contact for questions.

• Brief staff before each phase and provide a process for resolving complaints.

Example pre-arrival message

We are renovating [area] during [dates]. Work is planned during [hours], and [amenity] will be unavailable. [Alternative] remains available. Some guests may hear construction activity during the stated hours. Please contact [hotel contact] before arrival if these conditions may affect your stay.

Replace every bracketed item with verified hotel-specific information before publishing. Set any relocation, refund, or service-recovery options through hotel policy and the applicable booking terms.

> Planning tip
> A positive renovation story should accompany a clear description of the current stay. Avoid promises of a disruption-free visit that the operating plan cannot support.

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Manage Room Inventory and Service Recovery

Connect the construction schedule to the property-management system and daily room-status process. Distinguish rooms under construction, buffer rooms, rooms awaiting inspection, and rooms approved for guest use.

• Assign who removes rooms from sale and who authorizes their return.

• Review arrivals, departures, groups, events, and accessible-room availability before each phase.

• Place guests according to actual construction impacts and available inventory.

• Confirm housekeeping, maintenance, and front-desk readiness for reopened areas.

• Document approved alternatives for unavailable amenities.

• Track recurring complaints and review whether the phase controls need adjustment.

Give staff clear authority and escalation limits for service recovery. Keep a shared issue log showing the affected area, guest impact, action taken, and construction response. Review patterns rather than treating each complaint as unrelated.

Temporary services should be evaluated for access, staffing, capacity, operating requirements, and guest suitability before being advertised. Confirm arrangements with any outside providers.

Planning tip
A construction-complete room is not automatically a guest-ready room. Keep commercial release separate from the contractor’s progress report.

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Budget the Full Renovation

Use a project-specific budget rather than a generic allocation chart. Separate construction costs from owner-purchased items and the financial effects of operating through the work.

- Investigations, design, brand review, permits, and professional services.
- Demolition, repairs, building systems, finishes, and contracted construction.
- Furniture, fixtures, equipment, technology, and installation responsibilities.
- Temporary protection, logistics, cleaning, off-hours work, and phased mobilization.
- Temporary amenities, staffing, guest recovery, and operational preparation.
- Reduced available room inventory, event displacement, and other operating effects.
- Risk-based contingency, allowances, exclusions, and unresolved scope.

Avoid counting the same item in both a room-upgrade package and a separate furniture or equipment allowance. Confirm taxes, freight, storage, installation, and disposal responsibilities in supplier proposals.

Set contingency with the team based on design maturity, existing-condition uncertainty, occupied work, and procurement risks. Compare operating scenarios using consistent assumptions and keep the construction estimate distinct from the hotel’s revenue forecast.

Planning tip
Track committed costs, approved changes, forecast cost to complete, and remaining contingency. A low initial proposal may exclude work the property still needs.

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Connect Procurement to the Schedule

Create a milestone schedule that connects approvals, purchasing, room blocks, fieldwork, and operational release. Identify who controls each decision and what the next activity depends on.

- Brand and owner design reviews, samples, and mockup approvals.
- Permit submissions, responses, inspections, and phase-specific approvals.
- Long-lead furniture, equipment, finishes, and building-system components.
- Supplier release dates, freight, storage, damage checks, and delivery access.
- Room-block turnover, trade sequence, and authorized shutdown windows.
- Testing, cleaning, staff orientation, and guest-ready release.

Verify that required materials and approved information are ready before taking the next area out of service. Track delivery forecasts and approved substitutions. Review whether an alternative changes durability, appearance, maintenance, brand acceptance, or installation requirements.

Update the forecast when a dependency moves. Show the effect on room availability and event commitments so operations can respond promptly. Agree which milestones require an ownership decision.

> Planning tip
> A target opening date is a business objective. A reliable forecast also shows the approvals, materials, work, and checks needed to reach it.

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Manage Changes and Reopening Quality

Existing conditions and owner decisions can alter the scope. Use a written change process that describes the issue, proposed response, cost, schedule effect, and authorization before commitments are made.

- Record concealed conditions with photos and appropriate technical review.
- Keep approved changes aligned across drawings, scope, estimate, and schedule.
- Inspect repeated room details early to avoid repeating defects.
- Track punch-list work with responsibility and completion dates.
- Complete appropriate testing and verification of affected systems.
- Collect agreed manuals, warranties, record information, and maintenance instructions.

Use a joint walkthrough involving construction, facilities, housekeeping, and operations before releasing each phase. Review finishes, cleanliness, equipment operation, room setup, access, and outstanding limitations. Confirm any required approvals for the intended use.

Maintain a list of open items after release and a process for reporting defects without unnecessary disruption to guests. Identify who receives closeout documents and manages warranty follow-up.

> Planning tip
> Define release criteria before construction begins. One person should authorize the room-status change after the required reviews are complete.

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Present the Renovation and Measure Results

Promote completed improvements using accurate photos and descriptions. Update room categories, amenities, meeting-space details, booking channels, and sales materials as each area becomes available.

- Photograph approved, guest-ready spaces and protect guest privacy.
- Coordinate reopening promotions with confirmed availability.
- Inform group planners and returning guests about relevant improvements.
- Train staff to explain the new features and operating procedures.
- Recognize the hotel and project teams involved in the work.

Prefer previews of completed, approved areas. Any access to active construction areas requires a controlled project-specific arrangement; a marketing event should never override work-zone controls.

Review outcomes against the objectives set at the start: guest feedback, maintenance issues, operational performance, room availability, and financial results. Compare equivalent periods and account for seasonal demand and other market changes before attributing results to the renovation.

> Planning tip
> Continue reviewing the property after guests return. Early feedback helps identify operational adjustments and remaining construction issues.

PROJECT TOOLS | COMPLETE WITH YOUR TEAM

Hotel Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to begin the planning discussion. Attach the room-block map, scope, budget, shutdown register, and a fuller risk log.

Property, owner contact, and operating decision-maker

Scope priorities, brand requirements, and existing-condition concerns

Operating approach, rooms affected, and alternate services

Budget assumptions, exclusions, and procurement risks

Target dates, approvals, shutdowns, and phase dependencies

Open decisions: responsible person, next action, and due date

PROJECT TOOLS | BEFORE RETURNING AN AREA TO SERVICE

Phase-Release Checklist

Review each phase with the responsible team. Document the release decision and any remaining limitations. This checklist supports the project-specific approval process.

- ☐ Required inspections and approvals for the intended use are confirmed.
- ☐ Affected systems are restored and appropriately verified.
- ☐ Guest access, exits, signage, and operating boundaries are reviewed.
- ☐ Finishes, equipment, furniture, and room setup are checked.
- ☐ Cleaning is complete and the area is ready for housekeeping and operations.
- ☐ Punch-list items and any limits on use are recorded and assigned.
- ☐ Staff are briefed and guest / booking information is current.
- ☐ The authorized hotel representative approves the room-status update.

Phase / release date / authorized representative

YOUR NEXT STEP

Plan Your Hotel Renovation With Broad Reach

Planning a hotel renovation while maintaining operations? Bring your property improvement plan, available drawings, room inventory, booking constraints, and target schedule to a discussion with Broad Reach Construction.

We can discuss the current scope, identify planning gaps, and outline next steps for pre-construction, budgeting, phasing, procurement coordination, and construction oversight. The operating strategy should be developed with your hotel team and the responsible project professionals.

Call (984) 332-3927

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Commercial Construction Resource Library

Charlotte office

4108 Park Rd, Suite 215
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Planning tip
Begin with the information available today. A clear scope and operating plan help the team evaluate what can remain open and how the work should proceed.

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