



heirloom
LONDON

STICK OR TWIST?

Deciding if Jewellery Remodelling
is the right course of action for
your unworn items.





Whether you are looking to remodel an engagement ring, or a pendant – it is a big decision, and feels like a bit of a leap of faith. You wouldn't even be considering this course of action if the piece wasn't already precious to you. So it makes sense to have your rationale for remodelling clear in your own mind, to ensure you are making a decision you can live with.

For the purpose of this document, the assumption is that the piece of jewellery you are considering changing (sometimes called jewellery upcycling) is something you aren't comfortable wearing in its currently design. We are going to consider some of the other elements to help you decide.



1 - Value

First thing to consider is the origins of your jewellery. Certain designer brands are highly sought after, and if you are keen to preserve their value, it may make more sense to retain the piece in it's entirety.

The earrings pictured came to me from a client who wasn't going to wear them. However, on closer inspection they were found to be original Tiffany earrings. The precious stones on their own were not particularly special, but the brand and design made them valuable. This value would be lost because of the cost of work and quality of components. In this instance my client retained her earrings in their original format.



YOUR CHECKLIST

Will the piece value be unaffected or look to increase with remodelling?

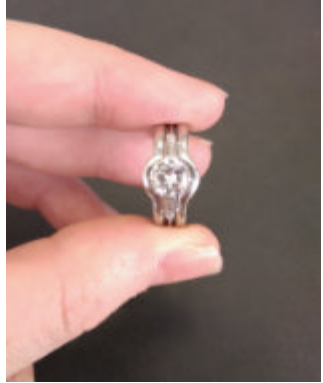
YES NO



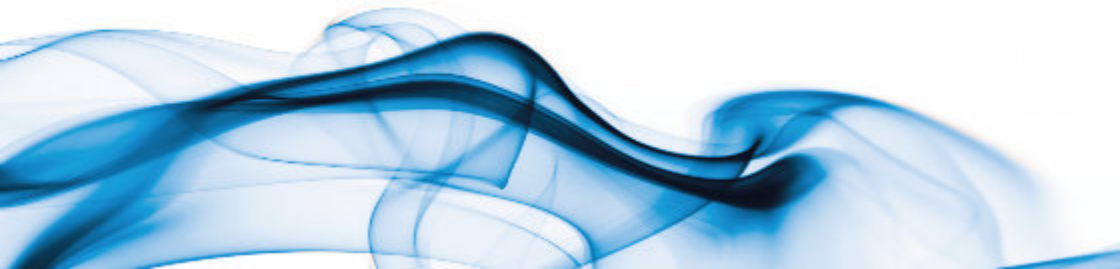
Recommendations

If you think that your jewellery value is going to significantly decrease if remodelled, then it might be worth looking into selling the piece, or finding a different way to wear it.

Here, my client had been given her mother's antique engagement ring, however she already had her own. She didn't want to wear something that felt like an engagement ring, but the ring design itself was a beautiful 1950s style. So we kept the ring, and made two contoured bands to sweep around, giving the ring a more cocktail feel.



Some antique pieces are also significant from a design/craftsmanship perspective even if you don't recognise the brand. Have a dig online and check that the design you don't like is not selling for thousands elsewhere. It doesn't make sense to pull apart a masterpiece, you are better off selling it and using the income to make or buy a piece of jewellery you will love.



2 - Materials

We alluded to this in the first section, as the quality of the materials may have an impact on what can be achieved (and whether the piece is worth working on. Obviously sometimes you'll need an expert eye to check, it depends on how much you know about your jewellery. The key point is that if the elements are non precious, the case for remodelling is weaker.



I was initially very excited about this 'emerald' as it was amazing clarity and a lovely colour.. However, despite an appraisal from a leading London auction house, when we checked in more detail it was actually a green cubic zirconia – a man made stone worth a few pounds. Popular in antique jewellery, 'paste' or glass stones used to be very common. They make lovely bright pieces of jewellery but these are not worth remodelling, the majority of pieces having little value

For every precious stone there is a semi precious stone that can look quite similar. A red stone could be garnet rather than ruby, green may be tsavorite rather than emerald, and yellow could be quartz rather than sapphire. And of course there are several diamond imitators.

TIP : Glass or 'paste' stones often have tiny air bubbles in them, an easy way to tell what they are.

YOUR CHECKLIST

Are the components of the ring worth remodelling?

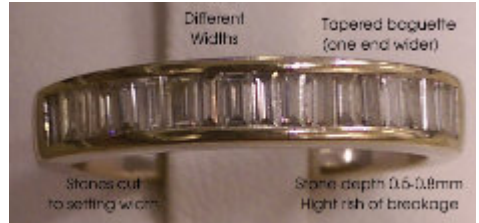
YES NO



Recommendations

Fake/glass stones are a lot of fun, but they are not particularly good for everyday wear, and they are plentiful, they have little value. If you would still like to create something with the piece, have it made in silver – you can always have it gold plated, but it will save a lot in costs.

In the case of this eternity ring we received where the client was hoping to use the diamonds to create another ring, you can see from the zoom that the stones were different sizes and widths, and the depth of each was less than 1mm.



We didn't recommend remodelling - it was too high a potential for diamond damage. Instead we gave the ring a good clean, and re-plated the gold with a thick rose gold plate which bought everything to life for the client.

A good jeweller/designer will advise on the perceived value of the stone, and it's suitability for remodelling

If you aren't sure, have your pieces checked. It doesn't mean you can't incorporate these in a new design, but it will help you make a decision.



3 - Condition

Old stones can break when being taken out of their setting – so it is worth paying particular attention to the parts of the piece you wish to remodel.

If a diamond is damaged it can be rendered worthless, it won't sparkle as much. A large stone can be re-polished to a smaller carat weight, but smaller ones if cracked or chipped are little use to jewellers.

Sometimes, these defects are often only perceptible under magnification too. However a good company will advise you of anything they find, before starting any work on the piece.



Old tanzanite rings often have a lot of wear showing on the centre stone. The stone pictured here on this 1950's cluster ring shows a lot of wear on the facets which meant it looked dull and lifeless. Before we started our commission we had the stone re-polished which restored it's beautiful lustre.

A caution here is in the case of smaller stones, below certain sizes they become too small to restore easily.

YOUR CHECKLIST

Is there any damage to the stone?

YES NO



Recommendations

If your stone is damaged, the location of the damage and its severity will influence whether the stone is suitable for remodelling as well as the options to repair it.



In the before and after shot of a client's Aquamarine Engagement Ring update – the stone came to us scratched and with two chips on it. However, as it was nearly 20 carats, polishing the damage out made very little impact to the overall size and we actually improved the appearance of the stone, by adding some extra facets to the base, to improve light refraction.

Where the stones are small, although it may still be feasible to repolish them the difference in size is likely become more noticeable and will influence design. For very small stone, it is going to be very difficult to polish out chips and if the stone is broken in half, it is not repairable. A good workshop will advise, but don't be surprised if they are reluctant to handle major cracks or chips in the jewellery, as they will wish to avoid any further damage.



4 - Reality Check

Second hand jewellery had two values – one is for resale and one is for replacement.

Resale value covers the costs of the piece if you were going to sell it. Second hand jewellery is VAT free, and design and materials will determine value. These are the costs if you are thinking of selling your jewellery.

Replacement value is the cost of having the piece remade. It covers the previous, but from the perspective of a new purchase. It also includes workmanship. This is what insurers work with.



It is best to view jewellery remodelling budgeting as accounting for the replacement value if you are paying to have a new piece made.

So keep in mind that if the remodelling cost for your jewellery is £1,200, but the piece value is £200, you are comfortable that you would have wanted the new piece, even if there was nothing to remodel. A bespoke design, with the addition of

elements of your existing jewellery is very special – if it is perfect for your style.

YOUR CHECKLIST

Does it make financial sense to have your jewellery remodelled?

YES NO

Recommendations

If you have mainly checked 'No' on your checklist, then potentially remodelling your jewellery is not the right option for you to take. But there are some less dramatic interventions still available;

Polishing/Restoration can provide old pieces with a new lease of life. Whether it is just a deep clean to give stones back their sparkle and metals their lustre, or a re-sizing rings or chains and a deep polish, sometimes this is all it takes to fall in love with your piece again.

Restyling pieces can also create new looks for old designs. Layering pendants or bracelet inspires new looks, and mixing up different rings is also appealing.

Finally, for the right pieces, keep them safe or sell them to buy exactly what you'd like to wear. Your pieces were given with love; and if selling them enables you to buy a piece of jewellery you are going to cherish and wear daily, it is unlikely the giver would begrudge this!



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GET IN TOUCH

If you have an item of jewellery you would like to discuss with us, there are several ways that you can get in touch:

Call	020 7952 1797
Email	concierge@heirloom.london
Use Our Form	Click to get in touch

Our office hours are non-standard, so it is likely there will be a time that will be convenient to talk or meet.

Fine Jewellery Made Simple