

Renovations

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There are three types of renovations for strata homes:

- cosmetic work
- minor renovations, or
- major renovations.

Cosmetic work

Owners can do cosmetic work without approval. This includes day-to-day work such as:

- installing or replacing hooks, nails or screws for hanging paintings or other things on walls
- installing or replacing handrails within your lot
- interior painting
- filling minor holes and cracks in internal walls.

The owners corporation can declare other types of work as 'cosmetic' if they pass a by-law.

Minor renovations

Owners need approval, over 50 percent of the votes in favour, before doing any minor renovations.

Minor renovations include:

- renovating a kitchen
- changing recessed light fittings
- installing or replacing wood or other hard floors
- changing internal walls
- sustainability measures (such as a clothesline or reverse cycle air conditioner).
However, these cannot involve changing the outside appearance of a lot or structural changes.

The approval process may need the owner to give details of the work. This may include:

- any plans of the work
- when the work will be carried out (times and dates)
- qualifications and details of the tradespeople who will do the work.

Speeding up the approval process

The owners corporation can pass a by-law which allows the strata committee to approve minor renovations.

The owners corporation can also pass a by-law to define other kinds of work as minor renovations.

Major renovations

Major renovations include:

- structural changes
- waterproofing
- changes affecting the outside appearance of the property, such as an access ramp
- work that needs approval under other laws (for example, council approval).

Approval for major renovations

The work needs a special resolution vote. Then the owner must give the owners corporation at least 14 days written notice before the work starts. This should describe the proposed alteration.

The owners corporation cannot delegate approval for major renovations to the strata committee.

Renovations and common property rights

If an owner needs to use part of the common property, like attaching an air conditioning unit to a common property wall, they must get approval through a **common property rights by-law**.

The common property by-law must state who is responsible for maintaining the common property. This responsibility would either:

- stay with the owners corporation, or
- go to an owner or owners.

Before the by-law can be passed, the lot owner or owners must first:

- agree to the by-law.
- consent to maintaining the common property (if the by-law includes this).

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