

Renovations

In a strata scheme

There are three types of renovations to strata homes:

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

An owner must gain permission before doing any minor or major renovations. Otherwise, they may have to change their place back to how it was before the renovations.

You are responsible for the repairs if you damage common property.

Tenants must gain their landlord's permission before making a change to their rented home. Refer to our general information for tenants: Asking to make an alteration.

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 are 'cosmetic'. They would need to pass a by-law to do so. Such work must not be a major or minor renovation (as defined by the law).

Minor renovations

You need approval before doing any minor renovations. An owner must get the owners corporation to approve these renovations by general resolution (over 50% of votes in favour).

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 delegate permission for minor renovations to the strata committee. It would need to pass a by-law to do so.

The owners corporation can also choose to define other kinds of work as minor renovations. It would need to pass a by-law stating the other work to be included in the 'minor renovations' definition. However, the owners corporation cannot include something that belongs to another category of renovations (such as waterproofing).

Major renovations

Major renovations may seriously affect the common property.

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

First, the work needs a special resolution vote before it can move ahead.

Next, the owner must give the owners corporation written notice at least 14 days before the work starts. This should describe the proposed alteration.

The owners corporation cannot delegate approval for major renovations to the strata committee (unlike for minor renovations).

Renovations and common property rights

Sometimes, a renovation may involve use of common property. Examples are:

- an air conditioning monitor being attached to a common property wall, or
- a parking space needed due to renovations.

An owner may receive the right to exclusively use a part of common property. They would do this 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).

www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au
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