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## **GUIDELINES FOR RENOVATION OF APARTMENTS AT GAINSBOROUGH - SP 7596**

### **Document History and Revision**

<b>Rev</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Date</b>
R01	Original document draft	BCB	PLB/LG	Dec 2011
R01.1	Revised draft following review by Executive Committee	BCB	PLB/LG	Jan 2012
R01.2	Dilapidation Survey requirements added refer to Sections 1.3(4), 2.1	BCB		May 2012
R02.1	Programming renovation works Section 1.3.1; Noise during demolition Section 2.4.1	BCB		Oct 2013

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Objectives**

These guidelines are intended to provide assistance to owners wishing to carry out any renovations or other changes to their properties. They set out the basis on which the Executive Committee (EC) acting on behalf of the Owners Corp SP7596 (OC) will consider and approve works to be carried out within any apartment in accordance with Special ByLaw No.3 (SBL3). That bylaw reads as follows:

*An Owner of a lot proposing to carry out renovation works to the lot shall submit properly prepared plans documenting the full extent and form of all proposed works to the Owners' Corporation. The Owner shall not carry out any renovation works without the prior written approval of the Owners' Corporation which shall not be unreasonably withheld or unreasonably delayed. The Owners' Corporation will not approve any works that it reasonably considers may adversely affect common property or may cause nuisance. The Owners' Corporation may require change, additions, deletions and/or modifications to the proposed works.*

*The Owners Corporation will issue a set of advisory guidelines to assist Owners in the planning and execution of renovation works and may amend or vary those guidelines from time to time as it considers necessary.*

The objectives of this bylaw are as follows:

1. To provide a measure of control over works within an apartment that may adversely affect common property in terms of its structural integrity and/or its functional efficiency. Structural integrity relates the long-term capacity of the building to bear the loadings imposed on it by nature and by its occupants. Functional efficiency relates to the maintenance of the structure against the elements, such as for example the prevention of water penetration, and the quiet enjoyment of all owners, such as for example excessive noise disturbance.
2. To provide guidance to owners wishing to make changes through the collective experience of past renovations having regard to the problems and solutions that have been found to be effective.
3. To document the collective history of renovation works so that it will be available over time as a record for future owners.

### **1.2 Other requirements**

There are a number of logistics matters necessarily involved in carrying out renovations such as access, use of lift, parking restrictions, insurance and other financial considerations, control of workmen, noise, cleaning, waste disposal to mention just a few. There are separate requirements covering these matters, which will be provided to owners on request and as part of the approvals process. Approvals may also be necessary from external authorities such as North Sydney Council.

### **1.3 Approval Process**

The effect of SBL3 is that an owner is required to obtain the approval of the EC and must not carry out any renovation works without having first obtained such approval. The process is intended to facilitate rather than to frustrate and the operating principle is that by and large owners should be able to do what they want to do within their property consistent with appropriate respect for common property and other owners. However, it has to be recognized that the functions of the EC are performed on a voluntary and part-time basis by existing owners, whose lives apart from EC activities are also to be respected.

The process is as follows:

1. Inform the EC as soon as you have made a decision to renovate and have determined the general extent of the works and their timing. It may be appropriate at that stage to have a preliminary meeting with the relevant EC executive members to initiate the approval process independently of a scheduled EC meeting.
2. Prepare plans documenting the full extent of the works and submit a set to the EC for consideration by the approval panel for initial review. Subject to general acceptance of the plans by the panel the EC will consider the proposed works at its scheduled meeting and provide a response soon thereafter. The extent of documentation required will depend on the nature and extent of the works;

- for simple renovations a sketch and written description may suffice. For more extensive works architectural and engineering drawings and specifications as appropriate will probably be required.
3. When the proposed plans are approved, with or without negotiated amendments and/or conditions, the approved plan will be stamped as such and the works may commence.
  4. After approval of plans dilapidation surveys are to be carried out of apartments above and below the renovation unit to record, photograph and document the condition of adjoining apartments as a factual basis for determining whether any damage has occurred as a result of the renovations. Pre-commencement survey results are to be provided to the EC before any renovation works are commenced.
  5. It should be anticipated that there will be regular inspections of the works as they progress by the EC and/or its consultants as considered necessary.
  6. At the satisfactory completion of the works the EC will issue its final written approval.

### **1.3.1 Programming renovation works**

Renovation works are disruptive to the quiet enjoyment of residing owners and as a matter of principle it is an objective of the EC to curtail the extent and duration of that disruption. Accordingly, the EC may restrict the number of separate renovations and/or building contractors operating at any one time and may impose time limits on each renovation. As a general working guide the restrictions and time limits will be no more than two renovations simultaneously and a 3-month renovation period. However, the particular restrictions will depend on the nature of the works and will be determined on a case by case basis.

### **1.4 Concrete repair works**

Owners will generally be aware that it is necessary to inspect and, as found necessary, repair floor slabs when renovations are carried out. This work is done by and at the cost of the OC because the floor slabs are common property. It involves the removal of the magnesite layer that was installed as part of the original construction of the building and which contains chemicals detrimental to the reinforced concrete slabs in the presence of water or moisture. The magnesite is removed completely throughout the apartment, which is a dusty and intrusive procedure, requiring a clear work area with the removal all floor coverings, and/or the protection of furniture and possessions. Kitchen and bathrooms areas are not included. Repairs to the concrete slab are carried out as necessary and the floor is topped to give an even finish suitable for carpeting, which is then treated with a moisture-proofing compound so as to prevent further deterioration of the concrete slab. It is essential there be no interference or penetration of the slab and topping after this treatment. As a guide concrete repairs commonly take at least 3 weeks depending on the condition of the floor, which cannot be properly determined until the magnesite has been removed. Vacant possession is required by the OC for the duration of the repair work.

## **2.0 RENOVATIONS**

There are five general categories of areas where the OC has a particular interest in relation to the effects of proposed renovations on common property and resident amenity. They are:

1. Structural integrity
2. Fire safety
3. Water penetration
4. Noise transmission
5. Service reticulation

### **2.1 Structural integrity**

Gainsborough was built as a concrete framed structure with concrete floor slabs and a concrete roof and the maintenance of the structural integrity of the concrete structural elements [floor slabs, columns and roof] is absolutely essential. That requires that there is to be no, or no significant, change to these elements without very careful consideration and very specific approval. That means the following works are almost certain not to be approved:

- Chasing or cutting into floor slabs and balconies for pipework, electrical connections or other services
- Drilling holes or cutting into any concrete member including columns, slabs and balconies
- The balcony slabs are an important structural element and care is required where any works are to be carried out on them. In particular it is not permitted to retile or resurface the balconies if that

adds to the weight on the slabs. Where retiling is proposed it will be a requirement that the old tiles are removed, any concrete repairs carried out (by the OC) and the new tiles laid on a suitably installed waterproof membrane with appropriate drainage measures. An approved specification for the membrane and drainage measures will be provided by the EC.

On the other hand most internal walls are not load bearing and are potentially capable of being removed subject, of course, to EC approval. Note that dilapidation survey results will serve to provide a factual basis for assessing whether any damage has occurred during renovation or whether damage pre-existed.

## **2.2 Fire safety**

Gainsborough, like all apartment building, is subject to very strict requirements in terms of fire safety, which is administered by NSC and NSWFB generally in accordance with the Building Code of Australia. Fire rated fittings such as apartment entry doors, emergency light fittings, fire detectors are common property and must not be interfered with in any way by owners or residents.

Our practice during renovations is to disconnect detectors because they can be triggered by dust and other renovation works leading to unnecessary emergency calls to the Fire Brigade. The disconnection is made by the contracted fire safety company at the direction of the OC but at the owner's cost.

There are 3 sets of vertical risers within each apartment that carry services such as sewerage etc. There is one in the kitchen and one in each of the bathroom and the ensuite. They are fitted with removable access panels. It is a requirement that the risers do not provide a pathway for a fire to spread vertically through the building and hence that the risers are properly sealed. The implications for renovators are that:

- The access panels are not altered or built in during renovations without specific approval.
- There are adequate fire seals between the pipework in the risers and the concrete floor slabs. This is an OC matter that should be checked by the OC during renovations and corrected as necessary.

## **2.3 Water penetration**

The exclusion of water from the interior of the building is a major concern because it is the primary ingredient in the damage to structural concrete elements from concrete cancer. It is not an oversimplification to say that if the concrete can be kept in a dry state then concrete cancer will not occur. Considerable effort is directed by the EC to preventing water penetration because to do otherwise is to incur considerable costs in maintenance.

There is a number of sources of water penetration including the following:

- Windows particularly the large window in the dining room, which typically is compromised in terms of the conditions that it is exposed to. Windows are an owner's responsibility but it is essential that owners ensure that leakage during storms is not allowed to persist.
- Sliding balcony doors are an owner's responsibility and are a common source of water penetration. The original doors are often inadequate in the face of severe weather conditions and replacement by more appropriately robust units is an important issue for owners.
- Folding balcony doors have been installed in some apartments and although susceptible to leakage can with diligence be made properly watertight. Particular attention will be given to the proposed use of such doors to ensure that they meet the relevant Australian Standards.
- Water heaters are a common source of internal leakage. The preferred approach is for the heater unit to be placed within a tray that is plumbed to the floor waste so that chronic leakage and tank rupture effects can be minimized.
- Leakage from the originally installed water pipes and from revised piping layouts has been experienced in a number of instances. The preferred approach is that when renovation is being carried out the water connections be redirected into a false ceiling.
- Leakage from bathrooms can occur through fittings such as shower/bath mixers and through defects in the waterproof membrane. Where bathroom renovations are carried out waterproof warranties will be required and are to be submitted to the Strata Manager for inclusion in the strata records.

- Moisture penetration through the brickwork sections of external walls due to the presence of construction debris in the wall cavities from the original construction. As a matter of course the EC undertakes the opening and cleaning out of wall cavities as part of its concrete repair works and at the OC's cost. This involves the removal of a number of bricks just above slab level, the removal of debris, the repair of flashing and the reinstatement of the wall ready for painting by the owner.
- In a number of instances the original position of the balcony doors on the south facing balconies have been moved outwards. This necessarily involved the replacement of the concrete hob on which the door sits and unless particular care was taken in sealing the new hob to the slab water penetration can occur. In this situation the practice has been to water test the relocated hob by ponding water on the balcony for a 24-hour period. Where seepage is detected the hob is sealed internally but at the owner's cost.

## **2.4 Noise Issues**

The impact of noise generated either during renovation works or as a consequence of the works themselves is a major factor affecting owners. Some noise is inevitable during renovation and particularly during the demolition phase of the works and the following requirements are an attempt to balance the differing interests of owners renovating with those residing.

### **2.4.1 Noise during demolition**

It is a basic tenet of community living that owners are entitled to the quiet enjoyment of their property. Owners also have the right to expect to renovate their property. The following requirements attempt to balance the competing claims where significant noise and disturbance occurs during renovation works.

Where the level of noise generated by demolition or other building works is likely to cause to concern or discomfort to residents the renovator is required to carry out the following:

- i) Submit with the application to the OC for approval of the proposed renovation a statement setting out the nature, extent, timing and duration of noise generating activities.
- ii) Provide written notices, at least 2 business days in advance, that such work is to be carried out starting on a particular day and the estimated duration of such work
- iii) Notices are to be affixed to the basement notice board and displayed in each lift and notices are to be placed in the mail boxes for apartments on the floors immediately above and below the work site
- iv) The OC may impose restrictions in relation to any aspect of the works where considered necessary
- v) Dilapidation surveys are to be carried out prior to the commencement of any such work for the apartment immediately above and immediately below the work site. The survey results including an appropriate report with photographs are to be provided to the executive of the Executive Committee for approval prior to the commencement of such work. Dilapidation surveys are to be carried out at the completion of the works and are to be confirmed by the EC or independently verified.

### **2.4.2 Noise transmission issues**

The issue of noise associated with timber flooring is a contentious matter in residential buildings. On one hand there is a current trend towards the installation of timber floors and on the other there can be great sensitivity to noise by neighbouring owners and residents. The technology associated with acoustic timber flooring has and probably has improved to a stage where the use of such flooring systems can be considered subject to significant controls.

Where a proposed renovation includes the installation of timber floor the OC requires the following as a minimum before approval can be considered:

- A sound transmission test by an approved acoustics consultant to AS/NZS ISO 140.7: 2006 Acoustics—Measurement of sound insulation in buildings and of building elements Part 7: Field measurements of impact sound insulation of floors (ISO 140-7:1998, MOD). This test is carried out on a specimen of the proposed flooring system installed directly on the existing floor slab with noise attenuation measurements in the apartments above and below.
- The measured impact sound levels are used to calculate single number ratings of the floor impact sound insulation of the various acoustic underlays installed on the floor system, in accordance with the Australian Standard: AS ISO 717.2-2004 Acoustics - Rating of sound insulation in buildings and of building elements - Impact sound insulation.

- The test result is quoted as the weighted, standardised impact sound pressure level ( $L'_{nT,w}$ ), which is a single number rating of the sound level in a floor/ceiling assembly in terms of its ability to control structure-borne sound in a receiving room when excited by a standard impact testing machine, as measured under field conditions. The lower the  $L'_{nT,w}$  value the better the acoustic performance.
- A test result of 45dB or less is considered the maximum acceptable based on the current interpretation of the available flooring system. The acceptable result may be revised from time to time by the EC as the technology changes and experience with installed flooring develops. This is intended to represent a high quality flooring system with above average sound insulation properties.

It is important to note that noise transmission can be upwards as well as downwards and the attenuation of noise is assisted by the presence of properly design and acoustically insulated false ceilings in the adjoining apartments. The cost of the acoustics testing is to the owner's account.

## **2.5 Service reticulation**

There are significant advantages in repositioning the water and electrical services from the original floor mounting into a false ceiling and this is recommended to owners intending to renovate their apartments.

Where the renovation works involve changes to the existing plumbing it will generally be necessary for work to be done in the apartment directly below the one being renovated and suitable arrangements for access should be made with the affected owner. This work will likely require access through the ceiling of the underlying apartment for the work and repair on completion.