motel makeover guide

RENOVATING 3-4 STAR MOTELS IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA CATALOGUING-IN-PUBLICATION
Beall, Justin.
Motel makeover guide : renovating 3 & 4 star motels in regional Australia.
Bibliography.
647.94068

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
The Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, established by the Australian Commonwealth government, funded this research. The project was initiated by Tourism Tasmania and supported by the Hotel and Motel Association of Australia (HMAA) and AAA Tourism (AAAT).
AAA Tourism provided information for the chapter on star ratings and Ted Homer of E. Homer and Associates P/L, Hospitality Technology Consultants provided the chapter on Information Technology.
Acknowledgement is also due to Dr Zbigniew Bomberek and Gary Fleming of the University of Tasmania for assistance in preparing the guide, to Paul Whitelaw of Victoria University for his contribution to the data collection and analysis for chapter 2 ‘What do visitors want?’ and to Robert Mason of Victoria University for his assistance in the preparation of chapter 15 ‘Case studies’.
Foreword

The Hotel and Motel Accommodation Association (HMAA) network would like to recommend the Motel Makeover Guide to all owner operators of 3-4 Star Motels. This Guide has been compiled to assist businesses with property renovations in order to maintain the standard necessary to compete successfully in the highly competitive tourism and travel environment.

The Australian accommodation industry has undergone significant changes since the emergence of the popular motel accommodation facility in the 1970s and 1980s. At that time these developments met the needs of the travelling public, both for business and leisure requirements.

The demands of consumers, within the last decade, have developed and increased significantly, resulting in a far more discerning customer for accommodation operators to satisfy. The changes have largely been driven by the higher standard of living and considerable increase in investment by consumers within their homes by the provision of luxury amenities and the inclusion of high tech appliances. In essence, when away from home the average consumer will not settle for less than the quality of amenities enjoyed on the home front.

For accommodation operators embarking on newly constructed projects, the task of incorporating current trends and technical facilities has been relatively straightforward. However the passage of time, combined with low levels of profitability and other financial challenges, have resulted in many older establishments facing significant demands to meet consumer expectations in order to remain viable and stay in business.

The Motel Makeover Guide for renovating 3 & 4 Star Motels is presented as an all-inclusive resource for operators to examine their individual establishments and identify opportunities for developing cost effective renovation programs.

The HMAA network congratulates Tourism Tasmania for initiating the project and for the extensive work undertaken by the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre.

Dennis Winchester
CEO, HMAA
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1. INTRODUCTION

Motels provide a large percentage of commercial accommodation for travellers, particularly in regional areas. Many of the motels that were built in the 1970s and 1980s still operate today and there has been little refurbishment undertaken on a substantial number of these properties. As a consequence, they are failing to meet consumer expectations, which poses serious problems for agencies that have responsibility for promoting the regions in which these motels operate. In that there is a growing level of consumer dissatisfaction with some of the accommodation on offer. Whilst replacing these ageing motels may be a desirable outcome, this is often not viable due to the massive expense of such an exercise.

This project and subsequent Guide was initiated by Tourism Tasmania to identify the gap between what motels currently offer and what visitors expect. The intention was to find cost effective ways to refurbish and renovate motels to match these expectations. This Guide offers straightforward advice on the problems and solutions to renovation. Its target is primarily the owners of motels built between 1970 and the early 1990s in regional Australia, though many issues have broader application.

Who Should Read This Guide?

If you operate or own a 3 or 4 star motel in regional Australia, this Guide will assist you. It will be particularly useful if:

- You plan to upgrade your accommodation - even if you intend to use consultants, reading this Guide will help you understand important issues.
- You spend less than 5% of gross revenue on capital refurbishment each year. Figure 1.1 shows typical capital refurbishment patterns over the life of a building.
- You don’t have an ongoing refurbishment plan or have not refurbished for 10 years.
- Your star rating is dropping as the building ages. If this is happening you are not alone; it is a common trend in regional Australia but it need not occur.

You should also read this Guide if:

- You intend to refurbish, and plan it yourself. Good consultants are worth employing, but if you are contemplating doing it yourself, you must get all the information you can. You should not let any pre-conceived ideas take over from good practice.
- You think exposed brick walls are OK in rooms. Once again you’re not alone. Around 25% of rooms still have exposed brick or block walls; however, visitors don’t want them. The argument that they are hard-wearing is false.
- You think that your 1980s joinery still looks OK, sure, but many visitors don’t like it.

Figure 1.1: Typical refurbishment times and patterns

(Source: Capex 2000, International Society of Hospitality Consultants)
The Big Issues

What are the real concerns and where should you spend your money? (Refer to Box 1.1 re: costing studies.) Unfortunately there is no short answer as to the best place to start a refurbishment program, or even where you will get the best results. A lot depends on your location, target markets and property. A motel on a highway, for example, will usually be catering for a traveller with different expectations to those expected by a tourist in a resort area. Your property may rely on passing trade and a good street appeal while others have very limited street frontage. Chapter 2 provides advice on how to work out some priorities for your establishment.

The following questions may help when considering renovation.

Bathroom
- Should I install a bathtub and a shower (separate or combined) or just a shower?
- Should I install more mirrors?

Kitchenette
- Should I install a kitchenette?
- What equipment should I include in the kitchenette?
- Is a microwave oven sufficient or should I install a stovetop and regular oven?
- How do I deal with cooking vapours and odours? How can my concern over strong cooking smells being absorbed by the furnishings and grease accumulation on surfaces be addressed?

Furniture and Fittings
- Will a coat of paint be enough or will I need to replace the fitted furniture?
- If I remove the fitted furniture what freestanding furniture will be needed? (For example, would hanging space suffice rather than a wardrobe.)
- Should I install fitted carpets or an alternative, e.g. polished floors?

Space
- How do I create the appearance of space when my units are quite small? Points are awarded in the AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines for ‘free floor space’.

Seating
- How do I create the space needed to provide a sofa as well as making a second bed available? Would a sofa bed be satisfactory? AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines suggest there is a trend away from queen size configuration and a move toward a king sized bed with sofa and occasional seating.

Lighting
- How much lighting should I provide?
- How can I control the use of electricity if I provide extra lighting?

Box 1.1: Costing studies, how to use them

Throughout the guide there are costing studies showing renovations or changes to typical buildings. Costs estimates have been made based on the scenarios to provide indicative information. The values have been calculated by quantity surveyors and represent an average cost in regional Australia in late 2004. Most scenarios show a number of different changes and some may not relate to your property, simply exclude the components that don’t apply in the cost table.

The estimates are based on renovating one or two rooms and lower prices would be obtained for larger quantities of work and through competitive tendering. The costs are for comparing different options and budget indications, and in all cases professional advice must be obtained.
Universal Access
Access for the disabled is an important aspect of any refurbishment. Not only does the law require it but it may also provide a marketing aspect for your property. A refurbishment that includes a substantial part of your property may result in a building code requirement to improve the accessibility of some rooms and the reception areas and parking. Because of the importance of this issue it has not been dealt with in this Guide. Seek advice from access consultants (see Appendix A), your local council building department and the AAAT star rating body. Never add access rooms without reference to, and following, the applicable Australian Standards AS 1428 (2002) and the Building Code of Australia.

Sustainability
One of the biggest issues facing society is sustainability. Sustainable design may incorporate ‘deep green’ ideas or just energy efficiency. This Guide does not examine these issues in detail. Visit the Twinshare: Tourism Accommodation and the Environment website, twinshare.crc.tourism.com.au (see Appendix A), an excellent resource on sustainable motel and hotel design, which should be used in conjunction with this Guide.

The Guide
The way people view or derive satisfaction from buildings is complex and determined by many factors, including the market demography, visitors’ expectations, the location, the neighbourhood and the reason for visiting. Design has an important role to play. It is impossible to provide solutions that match any unique situation but good design principles can be applied anywhere.

The following chapters examine different parts of typical tourism accommodation buildings and provide key design ideas as well as practical solutions and costing studies.

The arrangement of chapters is based on the sequence of the guest’s movements from arrival, travel to the room and the parts of the room itself, as shown in Figure 1.2. All parts of the sequence are important.

It is hoped that the ideas presented here will show that major changes can be made to an ageing motel without massive expense.
Four short case studies are presented in the final chapter of this Guide to highlight the substantial benefits that moteliers can derive from refurbishment programs in terms of increased occupancy, increased tariff and increased value of the motel.
2. WHAT DO VISITORS WANT?

The Consumer Perspective

When it comes to finding motel accommodation in Australia, travellers usually have a choice. Except for the occasional peak period such as a holiday weekend, there are regularly more rooms than travellers to fill them. Supply exceeds demand on most occasions and operators are aware of this. They also know that if they are to have sustainable, profit-making businesses they must provide the type of accommodation that will attract both first time and repeat customers. This means that the range and standard of facilities offered by motels must keep pace with the changing needs of consumers and this requires constant investment.

So what do consumers want? This question was at the heart of the research that was conducted to underpin this Guide. The research involved extensive engagement with industry groups such as AAA Tourism, the Hotel and Motel Accommodation Association (HMAA), Best Western, Flag Choice and Tourism Tasmania, as well as focus groups and surveys of motel patrons. This chapter provides the results of the consumer research undertaken to identify what visitors wanted from their stays at 3-4 star motels. It is hoped that this will help moteliers identify the best refurbishment options for their key target markets.

Background

From their inception in the 1950s, motels have often been ahead of private homes in the provision of valued facilities and services. Motels led the way in providing such things as ensuite bathrooms, television (black-and-white, then colour), in-room videos and spa baths. Even the in-room telephone was novel in the 1950s. Motels offered relative luxury, ease and privacy. There were many occasions where people would stay at a motel just to try some of the ‘modern’ facilities prior to investing in such commodities for their own homes. For many, spending a night in a motel was a treat; it provided a range of facilities that were not available elsewhere.

But this is not often the case nowadays. Since the 1990s, the facilities available in the modern home have advanced substantially over what is on offer in most mid-market motel accommodation. There have not been any major advances in motel facilities during this period and it appears that motels are now trailing houses in terms of facilities rather than the other way around.

It is crucial that motels offer the services and facilities that travellers want, and consumers have become increasingly discerning. Tastes change, preferences alter and they can do so quite quickly. What is popular and desirable today can be passé tomorrow. This can affect a motel business dramatically. Even a motel built relatively recently is not exempt. Things can become dated quite quickly. Keeping an eye on renovation possibilities is essential if moteliers are to keep their customers happy and their cash registers ringing. This does not necessarily mean a full refit. However, it does mean being aware of motel facilities and customer preferences and doing what is needed to make sure the motel stays up-to-date and relevant in a changing market. Although there should be an ongoing refurbishment program to ensure that motels stay in line with market needs, this is often not the case and motels are allowed to fall so far behind consumer needs that a major refurbishment program is required. The high incidences of motel leases is likely a key reason for the lower than desirable ongoing refurbishment practices, as lessees often do not see their involvement with the particular motel as long-term.

Refurbishment of a motel is costly and it is not something most operators undertake lightly. Many times, moteliers will not have the funds to undertake a complete refurbishment. They might have resources to do only some of the units or, alternatively, only undertake some refurbishment options in all rooms. Either way, it is critical that moteliers have a sound understanding of what the consumer wants so that they can optimise the return they get from their refurbishment investment.
What the Consumer Wants

In order to better understand what consumers are seeking from mid-market motel accommodation, a major study was undertaken that involved focus groups with current customers as well as in-depth interviews with accommodation owners. Potential motel guests were also surveyed on the key factors that would influence their satisfaction with motel stays.

The overwhelming response was that motels are expected to be a ‘home away from home’. Consumers want the motel experience to replicate their home-based comforts as closely as possible (Box 2.1 provides information on housing trends over the past decade). It was not surprising that there was a strong view that many of the older mid-market motels did not do this. They were not homely in a modern sense. These motels were often seen to be very dated in appearance and in the standard of facilities offered. There was consensus that dark units with exposed brickwork and a cluttered feel were no longer acceptable.

To the customers, the key desirable physical features of motels are:

- spacious layout (or appearance of spaciousness),
- plastered walls,
- light colours,
- good lighting,
- comfortable seating,
- facilities for the latest electronic equipment,
- bright bathrooms, and
- modern kitchenette facilities.

Outdoor gardens or at least planter boxes with colourful, real displays were seen as important in softening the external appearance of motels. Outdoor seating near to the rooms was also considered highly desirable. There was no mention of additional facilities beyond those currently available in modern motels—except for connections for electronic equipment—even though the question was asked in a number of ways.

As one would expect, there was variation in the requirements for different types of travellers. This means that motels require different room types or flexibility in the way that particular rooms can be presented depending on their mix of customer markets. Business travellers have different requirements to leisure travellers and there are other variations depending on the length of time people stay at particular motels. Size and structure of the travel party as well as factors such as age and gender also have an influence on the facilities that are expected.
In the last decade housing trends have changed dramatically. From 1961 to 1994 the number of occupied dwellings in Australia more than doubled, from 2.8 million to 6.7 million.

Coinciding with an increasing and ageing population, changes in household family composition and size, there is an increasing shift toward inner city living. Australians are now expecting a different quality of life. Such tendencies have prompted immense change in Australian housing, with direct implications for the accommodation industry.

The population increased by 40% between 1971 and 1996, from 12.8 million to 17.9 million. During the same period the number of households increased by 70% from 3.7 million to 6.4 million. In 1996, more than half (55%) of these households contained only one or two people.

Despite the trend for smaller households, dwellings are becoming larger. The average floor area of new houses has risen from 162 square metres in 1985/86, to 209 square metres in 1999/2000. A 30% increase in the last decade and a half.

In 1999 alone, there were 1.7 million home renovations carried out on 7.2 million dwellings. The relatively high proportion of renovations from 2000 to 2002, is in part due to the post-GST (July 2000) building boom. In recent years the effect of ‘home’ shows on TV has increased the expectations of dwelling quality and may have an effect on guest satisfaction in motels.

Of the home renovations that were carried out in 2002, the largest proportions were upgrades of kitchen, bathroom amenity and external entertainment areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Renovation Type</th>
<th>Incidence of Renovation Type* (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other internal renovations</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling extension</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security doors/screens etc.</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pergola/deck/veranda/patio</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carport/garage</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other external renovations</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As a proportion of all renovated dwellings.

(Source: ABS Censuses of Population and Housing, 2003)
Consumer Study

A follow-up study was undertaken to find out just what features of a motel were most important to the various consumer groups. This knowledge is necessary if moteliers are to optimise the value of their refurbishment programs. Nearly 400 consumers participated in this follow-up study. In order to keep the study firmly anchored in the ‘real world’, price was incorporated into the study as a key factor. Price is critical because there must always be a balance between the standards of the facility on offer and the price the guest is prepared to pay.

Price and Value

Moteliers thinking about refurbishing must understand the relative importance of price in the mind of the consumer. A traveller might expect five star facilities in a three star property but if the customer is prepared to pay only three star prices then the addition of the extra facilities is not a viable option.

It was not surprising to find that price was a very strong factor for nearly all categories of consumers. More correctly, it was the issue of ‘value’ rather than ‘price’ that dominated. Many consumers were prepared to accept a lower accommodation standard provided that the tariff was appropriate to the room on offer. In some regions where room tariffs had risen sharply in recent years, there was substantial concern that older, less well-maintained motels were charging tariffs well above the level that could be justified based on the facilities offered.

Study Results

In the focus groups that were held with motel customers and in-depth interviews with motel operators, seven attributes were considered important in driving customer choice of motels and satisfaction with the experience. These attributes are described in Box 2.2.

**Box 2.2: Visitor expectations? The top 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISITOR EXPECTATIONS? THE TOP 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Price: universal endorsement of good value for money and preference by most groups for prices under $100 per night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seating: major support for additional seating with variation as to whether this should be in the form of an easy chair or a sofa bed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Furniture: a liking for traditional light-toned furniture or free-standing modern furniture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kitchenette: strong support for a compact, modern kitchenette with microwave oven and sink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lighting: preference for bright lighting using recessed fixtures throughout the room.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relative emphasis given to these features differed across the various types of travellers as follows.

**Groups**

Groups staying longer than a single night placed more emphasis on price than anything else. They also displayed a preference for comfortable, light-toned furniture and light-painted walls. The longer the stay the more this sector preferred the freedom of flexible furniture. If they were staying only a single night, however, the bathroom quality was the feature that most enhanced their satisfaction.
**Business people**

This was the one group for which there was a factor stronger than price, and that was space. Business travellers expressed a strong preference for space, and comfort—they wanted an easy chair—and other free-standing modern furniture. Lighting was also very important for them.

**Leisure**

Leisure travellers placed substantial emphasis on price; there had to be value. Interestingly, space was not rated as strongly for this group as were elements such as modern bathrooms, traditional light-toned furniture and light-painted walls. The addition of a sofa bed was also a strong preference.

**Age**

All age groups had seating, furniture and space in the same descending order of concern. However there were differences across the age ranges. The older the visitor, the more concern there was regarding price. The 55+ years group would trade off other benefits to keep the price low. The younger traveller, particularly those under 35 years, indicated a stronger preference for modern bathrooms.

**Gender**

Males were generally more concerned about the price than females who were more concerned about comfort, seating in particular. A sofa bed was a strong repeating theme for the women in this study.

**Couples**

Couples with children were not so much concerned with price as they were with the presence of free-standing modern furniture and light-painted walls. They appeared to want flexibility. The presence of a good kitchenette also featured heavily in their preferences. Couples without offspring expressed preferences for traditional, light-toned furniture and light-coloured walls.

**Income Level**

Not surprisingly, the higher the income ($104,000+) the less price was a consideration. Kitchenettes became important factors for people on higher incomes, which seems contrary to what one would expect. Those on lower incomes (less than $52,000) would trade off space and a kitchenette for a lower price. Relative to the other groups, middle income travellers ($52,000-$104,000) preferred space and free-standing, modern furniture and light-painted walls.

**Customer Trade-offs Between Motel Attributes**

Customer values are not always rigid. Although price was seen to be a key driver for most groups, there was evidence that this could be ‘traded off’ against some of the other attributes. Business guests were most appreciative of space, a kitchenette and good lighting for working, relaxing and eating. Couples with children were very responsive to a sense of space while high-income earners put a premium on having a kitchenette and space was important.

Although men were very concerned about price, they also placed substantial importance on good seating. The older age group in general was slightly less concerned about space, bathrooms and lighting. The people who stayed longer than five nights, however, were more concerned about free-standing furniture and the sense of spaciousness.
Survey Findings and Refurbishment

These findings suggest that mid-market motel customers are very price/value conscious although that is not always the case for business travellers. Visitors are looking to get value for money and they are conscious of the differences between prices charged and facilities and services provided. Motel users have distinct preferences and those choices are often influenced by their age, gender, income, family structure and reasons for travelling.

The results outlined above provide motel owners/operators with some direction as to where they can focus their refurbishment efforts for particular market niches. Refurbishment can help reduce the reliance on price as the critical factor in consumer choice between different forms of accommodation (e.g. B&Bs, hostels, self-contained units, caravan parks, hotels) and more specifically, between individual motels. Refurbishment can also:

- Allow for increased tariffs;
- Increase the number of guests;
- Add to visitor satisfaction; and
- Increase the resale value of the property.

It can also have more intangible benefits through such things as improved staff morale. However, refurbishment also raises many issues, some of which have already been flagged:

- Is it wise to try to make all the changes suggested in the research or concentrate on a few specific areas?
- Is it better to spend money on renovating all units or upgrade some to the relative detriment of others?
- Is initial investment best aimed at renovating the external appearance of the property or is the money better spent on internal refurbishment?

The answers to these questions will be very much determined by factors such as:

- The money available for refurbishment;
- The time available;
- Knowledge of the customer demographic; and
- Familiarity with guest usage patterns.

The Questions for Refurbishment

As the level of funds available to undertake a refurbishment program is usually a major constraint, it is important to prioritise the refurbishment options. In order to do this, it is crucial to be able to identify your key target market and potential target markets. As was shown earlier, different markets have different needs in relation to mid-market motel accommodation. Knowing this will mean that one can then discern what they expect and what can be done to encourage repeat visitation and referrals. Without some idea of the profile of people who stay at the motel, refurbishment is likely to be a largely hit-and-miss affair. Refurbishment is costly and one cannot afford to waste money in this area. Knowledge of the client-base therefore is an essential forerunner to thinking about the best way to spend limited renovation funds. Talking to the local and regional tourism authorities can assist with this process as they may be trying to attract different markets to the region.

Rather than spreading their limited refurbishment funds across all units, some moteliers elect to renovate a smaller number of units extensively, which often results in having a property with units at two different star levels. For example, a motelier with 20 units and $200,000 to spend on renovation, may spend $20,000 per unit on 10 units rather than $10,000 per unit on all 20 units. As a result, the 10 renovated units may move from 3 stars to 3.5 stars for example. This has the potential benefit of being able to set two tariffs to cater for different markets and makes the operation more flexible. For this approach to be viable, however, the standard of facilities in the unrenovated rooms must meet at least a minimum level.

Upgrading a room in a substantial fashion has a much stronger impact on the motel guest than less significant upgrades in all rooms. Whilst progressive upgrades are the best way to keep a motel in line with market needs, they are not as beneficial for a motel that has fallen well behind market needs. In trying to bring an ageing property into line with the market, the cumulative effects of progressive upgrades may be lost. Shiny new bathroom plumbing may not be enough to counteract dowdy and dark walls in the minds of patrons.
It is also important to consider the relative merits of undertaking external versus internal upgrades. Which will have the most impact on business and in what order should they be done? There is no simple answer to this except to say that it is probably a balance of both. Whilst some would argue that an extensive external upgrade will enhance the street appeal of the property and attract more customers to stop, there is a great risk that this approach will lead to high levels of dissatisfaction when the customers find that the inside product is not consistent with the ‘packaging’. If all attention is focused on upgrading the rooms but the external appearance of the property remains poor, customers will tend not to stop at the motel and thus it will be difficult to get a return on the renovation expenses. Thus, it is finding a balance between the competing demands of internal versus external renovation.

Summary

The research underpinning this Guide indicated clearly that consumers felt that many of the mid-market motels available in Australia were somewhat dated and did not meet the needs of the market. Most indicated that they were looking for something akin to their own home in terms of the experiences that they were seeking in a motel stay. A spacious feel, light colours, comfortable furniture and a modern feel were seen as the key drivers of a motel stay. Value for money in terms of the tariff charged for the facilities provided was seen as the most important factor by most types of consumers.
3. **STAR RATINGS**

The star rating of a property is intrinsically linked to the quality of the property. Throughout this Guide suggestions for alteration and renovation are made but it is important to examine the way any changes will affect your star rating. Consult the AAA Tourism rating guidelines available on its website (see Appendix A).

**Standards**

As hotel development followed the expansion of the railways, so motel development followed the massive growth of car usage. Drive tourism has been around for over a hundred years but it underwent a boom in the second half of the twentieth century. The affordability of the family sedan after the Second World War encouraged a boom in tourist movement. This both stimulated and was stimulated in turn by an enormous expansion in the number of motels. Travellers promptly responded to this novel, comfortable and convenient form of lodging. Motels matched the Australian need for informality and quality service at a moderate cost.

In the early days of drive tourism, however, there was little information upon which travellers could base their accommodation decisions. Just locating lodgings could be a difficult business and there was little to guide the consumer as to trustworthiness and quality of such accommodation. As a consequence, tourists could not be sure they would find accommodation when they arrived at their destination. If they did then there was no way to assure its standard.

Classification systems were the obvious answer. They were often based on stars or similar graphic symbols such as diamonds that could be easily and simply displayed as a ranking to prospective guests. One star represented basic accommodation, five stars were world class and there were multiple levels in between. The AA ratings in the UK, the AAA in the USA and the Michelin guides of France are but three of the better known worldwide classification systems that have existed for many years. In Australia, the tourist accommodation assessment scheme (STAR ratings) has been operative since the late 1950s, a date that roughly parallels the arrival of the affordable family car in this country.

Originally, rating schemes began as a means of guaranteeing travellers some form of decent accommodation; they were really a form of consumer protection. The traveller could generally be sure that a starred ranking would deliver accommodation consistent with the level displayed.

The STAR ratings are consistent across Australia, a situation that is not common in the rest of the world. There is no unified definition of a three-star motel across Europe, for instance. Most of the ratings in Europe are provided by the government (or in some cases, such as Switzerland, by a volunteer organisation), and provide a quantitative measure used to determine the price range (and sometimes the tax obligation) of a hotel. This is not the case in Australia where the STAR ratings are provided by an independent organisation that is there to verify standards from one end of the country to the other.

**Australian STAR Ratings**

There are STAR ratings for a variety of accommodation types. The stars in the STAR rating scheme in Australia mean:

- **One Star.** Basic standard accommodation, simply furnished with a resident manager.
- **Two Stars.** Well-maintained with an average standard: average furnishings, bedding and floor coverings.
- **Three Stars.** Well-appointed with a comfortable standard of accommodation: above average furnishings and floor coverings.
- **Four Stars.** Exceptionally well-appointed with a high level of facilities: quality furnishings and a high degree of comfort, presentation and guest services provided.
- **Five Stars.** International standard with a high degree of facilities: outstanding appointments, furnishings and décor and an extensive range of first-class guest services. A number and variety of room styles and/or suites, choice of dining facilities, 24-hour room service, housekeeping, valet parking, porterage and concierge services.

  Half stars indicate that the establishment exceeds the base STAR rating allocated and usually has some additional quality or comfort features.

  STAR ratings have a twofold function. First, the ratings provide a quality assurance for travellers: the accommodation displaying a STAR sign has been inspected and approved by an independent agency. Travellers can assume that the accommodation they are considering will be of a standard consistent with the AAA rating displayed. Visitor confidence is largely based upon the long history and success of the STAR ratings. It is an accepted industry standard for providers and customers alike.

  Second, accommodation providers use AAA Tourism’s STAR ratings to help identify their target market. STARS are a major source of information for travellers when planning vacations or business trips. It appears that more than 70 per cent of travellers use the STAR ratings to assist in their selection of accommodation.

  There is typically a correlation between room rates and the STAR rating of hotels. Motel classification systems also provide a framework to investors in designing their facilities to attract the desired market groups, and can act as an incentive to motologists to upgrade their facilities to higher standards. The more the interest and concern for motel quality evidenced by improved ratings, the higher the possible tariff that can be charged and the higher will likely be the selling price of the property.

  There are STAR ratings for hotels, motels and apartments (as previously mentioned) and additional star ratings for:
  - bed and breakfast establishments and guest houses;
  - self-catering places;
  - tourist parks;
  - houseboats; and
  - backpacker accommodation.

**STAR Ratings - Requirements and Method**

STAR ratings represent independent assessments of tourist accommodation properties in Australia. Venues are awarded a rating between one and five stars based primarily on facilities, amenities, maintenance, and cleanliness. The latter two points, maintenance and cleanliness, are given very high priorities in the STAR ratings. Apart from those requirements there are two principal areas in which points are accumulated. They are the:

1. Motel-specific factors.
2. Core elements for all accommodation types: the bedroom, bathroom and general requirements.

  The motel-specific factors relate largely to the general standards of motel operation that are now widely accepted in the industry. These include the capacity of the venue to match government regulations, a resident manager, appropriate liability cover, business registration, adequate signage, security and 24-hour availability among others.

  The core elements relate again to the potential for refurbishment. Money spent with STAR ratings in mind would focus not only on the requirements of the travelling public, which have been outlined in Chapter 2, but would look at how a motel could either obtain or improve a STAR rating.

  The bedroom elements to be considered include the quality of the bed and bedding, floor coverings, wardrobe, drawers and hanging space, mirrors, luggage storage, lighting and bedside lamps, radio and clock alarms as well as the general layout of the free floor space.

  The minimum requirement for a bathroom is a shower or bath, toilet and hand basin. Most bathrooms run to such a base standard. Beyond that, attention is paid to ventilation, floor and floor coverings, towelling and racks, drawers and storage, mirrors and lighting and the general presentation of the total basin/toilet/shower area.
The general factors include entertainment units, armchairs and lounge seating, windows, drapes and blinds, dining and tea/coffee-making facilities, ironing equipment, lighting and switches, heating and cooling. There are also other factors such as privacy and soundproofing as well as the presentation of the reception and corridor areas.

Money spent on refurbishment would hopefully meet the needs of the travelling public and should result in the maintenance, if not an increase in the STAR rating of the property.

Qualified assessors carry out property visits and STAR rating assessments on a regular basis (approximately every 12-15 months) for and on behalf of AAA Tourism. The assessment protocols are known beforehand to the accommodation provider. A letter of notification is usually sent prior to the visit and, where possible, this is followed by a phone call to confirm the appointment by the assessor a day or two before his or her arrival.

**STAR Ratings—Assessment**

Accommodation assessors are trained and experienced personnel who carry AAA Tourism authorisation and identity. They have undertaken a comprehensive training program in all aspects of accommodation provision. This ensures national consistency in interpretation of guidelines and application of the rating system. A motel in Hobart will be assessed in the same way as a venue in Darwin and, all things being equal, would receive the same rating if their standards are similar.

An assessor will visit and verify information listed on the AAA Tourism database. They will review any consumer feedback, positive and negative, and then conduct the assessment. The assessor might then ask to look at selected sections of a property. Sometimes it is necessary to view and assess a wide variety of accommodation and facilities and property managers can be invited to accompany the assessor during this time. Assessments can take between 45 minutes to up to several hours, depending on property type and size. At the completion of the assessment, the assessor will provide a STAR rating(s) and discuss any issues arising from the assessment.

The assessor allocates points during the review with scores ranging from 250–1,000 points. The scheme places a significant emphasis on maintenance and cleaning in all areas. Maximum points will only be awarded where no defects/cleaning issues are evident. The assessment is completed in a manner that encourages discussion over areas of improvement or the possibilities for new developments.

At the conclusion of the review the assessor will conduct an exit consultation with the venue operator. At this stage the assessor may well identify where the property could achieve additional points, point out areas that require improvement and indicate how the property can maintain or elevate its rating in the future. A closure card is left at the property with an electronic report of some eight pages emailed to the property subsequent to the visit.

The actual STAR rating is allocated on the basis of achieving a specified point score, and in addition, satisfying a list of essential items relevant to the specific STAR rating. Essential items ensure that properties achieving the required level of points for a STAR rating also provide the essential items required for a specific STAR rating.

**Points Score - Marginal Areas**

The distribution of points for STAR ratings allows for a marginal zone between full- and half-star ratings. Properties that score in this zone can hold their rating for a period of 12 months. Should the property fall below the required points score needed to maintain the rating for two consecutive assessments (but remain in the marginal zone), then the STAR rating will be adjusted down.

When a property falls within the marginal zone above the current rating, the property will retain the current rating and not advance to the next STAR rating until positioned out of the marginal zone after the next assessment.

**Increasing a STAR Rating**

Should a property wish to increase its STAR rating, consultation should be sought by the manager/operator either prior to or on the day of assessment. A review of the assessment to
determine areas where points were not awarded will assist in undertaking property improvement programs.

**Displaying a STAR Rating**

Once the assessment is completed the assessor will present the property with a STAR rating decal. It is recommended that the STAR rating decal be displayed in a prominent position within easy view of guests.

**Geographical Allowances**

The assessor may permit a ‘geographical allowance’ and award points under certain circumstances such as location, extreme weather conditions and natural disasters. Where a law forbids the installation of certain facilities then on provision of evidence, a waiver may also be provided.

**The Ongoing Development of the Classification Scheme**

The AAA Tourism STAR rating scheme has been developed through ongoing consultation with industry and the travelling public. It is constantly under review. As the standards of the hospitality industry continually improve and consumer needs and expectations change, the assessment scheme is reviewed and modified to reflect those changes. The contribution made by operators and associations from all sectors has been and will continue to be an integral factor in the evolution of the STAR rating scheme.
4. **WHAT IS AN AVERAGE 3-4 STAR ACCOMMODATION BUILDING LIKE?**

Although all motels are different, most have many similarities. It is useful to know how your property compares with others in regional Australia. This chapter looks at typical property ages, size, construction and layout. All the data in this chapter comes from Identification of Innovative Strategies to Meet Visitor Needs: 3 and 4 star tourism accommodation infrastructure in Tasmania; an STCRC technical report.

**How Many Rooms Do Motels Have?**

During the motel building boom of the 1970s, many of the new properties were of a similar size of about 36 guest rooms. From the late 1980s building sizes became more polarised with one group having around 25-30 rooms and another group having about 50-60 guest rooms. The average total building size is 1,400 m². Refer to Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Average number of rooms for each star rating in typical motel**

![Average number of rooms for each star rating](image)

**How Are They Built?**

Overwhelmingly, regional buildings use a very simple mix of brick walls and steel roofs. On average, outside walls are painted, rendered or face brick or block, while walls are plasterboard. A large number of internal walls are still exposed brick, a fashion that was strong in the 1970s and early 1980s. Refer to Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: Finishes used inside typical motel rooms**

![Finishes used inside typical motel rooms](image)

**How Old Are They?**

The majority of 3-4 star properties were built in the boom period of the mid to late 1970s that was sparked by increasing domestic and interstate tourism. This growth continued in the 1980s with increased overseas visitors but declined with the recession in the early 1990s. Refer to Figure 4.3.
How Many Floors Do They Have?

Regional hotels and motels vary much more than metropolitan properties in relation to height and therefore in construction. Eighty-eight percent of all regional buildings are 1 or 2 floors only. Refer to Figure 4.4.

What Are The Guest Rooms Like?

For most properties, other than those that are period or ‘retro’ styled, visitors expect modern joinery for kitchenettes, bathrooms and fixed furniture. The age of the joinery indicates how frequently the rooms have been fully refurbished. Many of the properties have joinery that could be described as more than 25 years old or of poor quality. The tendency in many regional hotels and motels has been to ‘fix’ the finishes rather than renew the joinery.

How Much Do Others Spend?

An overall picture of the condition of the target buildings can be obtained by analysing the trends in capital expenditure. Constant expenditure is required to meet maintenance cycles and to modernise or upgrade in order to maintain market position. Refer to Figure 4.5. The Australian Bureau of Statistics industry summaries report an average of 3.2% of capital expenditure while the Australian Tax Office reported 2.5% for the same period. Suggested appropriate amounts by the International Society of Hospitality Consultants and James Lang LaSalle are between 4.9% and 6.5%.
Room And Building Layout

The majority of room layouts are consistent with only 3 basic layouts. Research undertaken for this study shows that in 51% of all guest rooms, you walk past the bathroom to get into the main room. The alternate layout with the bathroom at the rear of the unit is the other main approach. The layout is important in determining the renovation approaches that will be most effective. Figure 4.6 shows typical room layouts, while Figure 4.7 the main building arrangements.

Figure 4.6: Typical room layouts

1. Entry past bathroom 51%
2. Entry in main room 43%

Internal halls 28% of buildings

Figure 4.7: Typical building layouts

Type A:
Single storey with external entry, 34% of buildings assessed.

Type B:
2 or more levels with external access, 28% of buildings assessed.

Type C:
2 or more levels with internal access, 23% of buildings assessed.

Type D:
Single or double level separated units, 10% of buildings assessed.
What About The Land?

The location of building stock has been examined primarily to determine if the target buildings are in appropriate or conflicting municipal planning zones that may inhibit their ability to be upgraded or expanded. Planning zones are determined by local government and reflect the current and foreseeable use of geographic areas. Refer to Figure 4.8 for zoning information. Understandably, the land sizes vary. For the typical 30-year old property, the average block size is only 4,000 m². Planning zones vary considerably as well. Older buildings may have started in one particular planning zone (or none) and now exist in a zone that is not appropriate for the current use.

Figure 4.8: Typical planning zones for regional motels
5. STREET APPEAL

Street or kerb appeal is a decisive factor for most businesses, particularly for hotels and motels. This chapter discusses street appeal issues and puts forward strategies for examining and improving this aspect of your property. No formula exists to achieve favourable street appeal, which requires both skill and innovation, particularly during the renovation of an existing building. Since the relationships between the street, building, area and property are so individual, the intention of this section is to outline some principles that could be applied in many situations rather than to provide detailed solutions. Figure 5.1 shows a typical example where alterations to the street appeal could have dramatic effects.

Figure 5.1: A typical example where street appeal considerations could dramatically improve the property

Understand Your Market

Street appeal is an elusive quality that can provide potential guests with a favourable first impression. The term is used frequently in assessing properties for STAR ratings, insurance and valuing; but what is it and how can you improve it in a cost-effective manner? AAA Tourism assesses exterior appearance as part of the STAR rating system.

When is street appeal lacking? Some key indicators could be:

• The chain brand-owner or rating body tells you to make certain changes to maintain your rating or even to keep the brand listing.
• Common sense tells you that you are no longer competitive in your market.
• Your property is tired looking, particularly relative to your market competitors.
• The property’s street appeal does not match up to the type or quality of the product you are selling.

First impressions can be lasting impressions; it is easy for a potential guest to associate a poorly maintained or out of date façade with a poor quality room. An important tool is to try and see your property as your guest would see it; even better is to ask a consultant or dispassionate colleague to provide honest feedback on the appearance. Start by driving towards your property, what do you see? How does the sign read, is the building well maintained, are the colours fresh, does it fit in the street but still attract you? Pull up at the kerb or enter the drive exactly as a guest may. Are the grounds barren and unappealing, or lively and inviting; is the parking area well maintained and not overwhelming in terms of sparseness?

If ‘walk-in’ guests make up a high percentage of your visitors, street appeal is even more important. This may apply to many properties, particularly those on long haul routes or overnight stop off locations. It’s essential to understand how important this market segment is for your property in order to make a critical assessment about the amount of money to put
into façade and street front works. Just as location is important, kerb appeal is a crucial element when you renovate.

Deciding on the right type or form of street appeal also depends on the market your motel attracts. For example, one major chain requires its prototype buildings to have a clear street presence, a clear sense of arrival, and a sense of completeness, and landscape. These big-chain strategies, in a nutshell, address some key kerb-appeal issues; a clear arrival sequence, a building façade that has some visual interest or variation and quality landscaping. Your strategy for street appeal may differ from this. The opportunities are there, but depend on issues such as:

- The existing planning zones. You may have specific streetscape requirements for development applications. This applies particularly in residential planning zones.
- Building constructions and materials. The materials from which your building is constructed will affect the range of cost effective options.
- The existing planning and layout of rooms.
- Your approach to enhancing or protecting the existing character of the building and street.
- The relative quality of the accommodation you offer.
- The image of your property that you intend to convey.

Whatever approach is taken, try to understand your market and remember that many guests will not tolerate (for long) high kerb appeal behind which there are low quality rooms and facilities.

**Key Design Ideas**

As discussed previously, there is no right or wrong way to improve street appeal. The following issues are related to a general approach and not a specific case.

- **Readable function.** A commercial building should try to describe its function and character in the first street views. The selection of façade treatment, landscape, and even building materials and shapes all give a guest an instant impression. Is it a motel or a nursing home? As offhand as that sounds, it is sometimes hard to decide. Does the property offer a tranquil or an upbeat environment?

- **Legible arrival.** All buildings should have clear entrances or path sequences to the entry. The traditional porte cochère offers a distinct indicator of the entry. It also adds another layer to the building form. A clear entry to both the property and lobby are essential to make a motel welcoming.

- **Building coherence.** Not all buildings on the property need to be identical but they do need to show some coherence, particularly towards the street. Buildings that have no relationship to each other in terms of form, materials or details may look of a lesser quality and less appealing while a motel complex that uses consistent colours or materials, roof shapes or building forms will be visually more coherent and appealing.

- **Building façade articulation and texture.** Generally a flat unrelieved building façade will not stimulate much appeal; however, this is untrue where the entire aesthetic relies on exceptional minimalist design principles. A lively building that provides a good range of texture; light, shade and colour will probably be more appealing in most situations. The window treatment, sun shading, balconies and new finishes can enliven the building façade. The roof and eaves is also a crucial way to alter the entire appearance of a building.

- **Fitting to context and market.** The market and surrounding environment should be the key drivers for any street appeal renovations. Where possible, draw on local landscape, and fit the façade to the local context. While trying to advertise your function and character, you still can fit in with the neighbourhood, whether that be a beach, forest or highway roadside. People have expectations of what comprises good fit.

- **Parking.** Parking spaces are regulated by legislation in most places, but keep in mind that great expanses of asphalt visible from the road are unappealing for guests.
However, guests do like to park in close proximity to their units. Good parking design that visually reduces the size of the parking space is essential. For more information on parking refer to the AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines.

- **Lighting.** Night-time appeal is just as important as during daylight hours. Use lighting to emphasise good aspects. Don’t flood light, instead use carefully placed quality external fittings. Effective lighting from the car park to guest accommodation should be carefully considered.

- **Signage.** Customers expect good signage. Obviously brand recognition is crucial for chains but well designed signage that compliments the street and building is needed. The information must be readable and pertinent. A person travelling by car will have only a few seconds to read a sign and assess your property.

- **Value professional advice.** Seek the advice of professionals with experience in this area.

### Practical Ideas

In many cases cosmetic work such as re-finishing the façade, altering windows, improving landscape and signage will be all that is needed. In fewer cases additional work to alter the buildings may be needed. The most important rule is to leverage expenditure; make sure that each change, renovation or alteration solves more than a single problem or improves more than one aspect of the property. This section deals with some practical ideas and suggestions but not all will apply to specific properties. Consider the following scenarios and what direction you could take.

- **Are you about to renovate rooms?** Consider changing windows, adding balconies or extending rooms slightly on the street side. This gives you a fantastic opportunity to improve street appeal (for an example see the costing study in Box 5.1).

- **The motel entry is ill defined or hard to see.** Look carefully at the entry sequence, from the road to parking the car. Consider porte cochère, drive and car park changes, and landscape and façade treatment.

- **Façade looks tired and dated or does not fit the area.** Consider re-finishing the façade, altering eaves line, windows or using small additions.

- **Façade looks flat, boring or unappealing.** Consider re-finishing the façade; look at adding depth using mouldings, altering some windows, adding sunscreens or balconies; landscaping will help.

- **Building looks weak or out of place on the street.** Consider landscape elements, walls, good quality plants and trees, water feature. Improve signage type and/or location. See later section in this chapter on signage.
Box 5.1: Street appeal improvement in conjunction with room renovations

STREET APPEAL IMPROVEMENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ROOM RENOVATIONS

The building in this costing study has two levels and is constructed of face masonry that gives the impression of being dated. It has a poor street appeal and market research shows that kitchenettes, a general improvement of the bathroom, and slightly larger main rooms would enhance market acceptance. This would be considered a major renovation. The costings below provide indicative information on the components that would be suitable in your situation. Later costing studies look at minimum interventions. Plan 1 shows the existing floor plan and street façade.

The main room needs to be enlarged but it is not cost effective to alter the entire upper level access balconies and stairs, and thus extending in that direction is excluded. Since the current bathroom arrangement is the reason for the small unattractive windows on the street façade, a renovation that alters the bathroom is chosen. Extending toward the street will improve both the room and the street appeal and will be cheaper if the extension is kept to under 1,000 mm and the toilet (WC) stays in the same place.

Plan 2 shows the alterations and the new street façade. The actual ‘look’ can be whatever is required, and similar costs are involved. In this case, employing a small gable ended addition gives the example building a characteristic design, but this needs to be considered in the wider context of your entire property and the surrounding streetscape.

The bathroom is moved out by 900 mm to give the façade some depth or articulation. The WC is left in place and a small kitchenette is designed to enhance the main room (see the kitchen section for detailed ideas). The extension uses rendered board and the remaining brickwork can be rendered or texture-coated. New windows are installed in the original openings and large bathroom windows used. A steel shade structure is used between the extensions. A building application and possibly a development application would be required for this example renovation. Local councils determine the costs associated with applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item subtotal ($)</th>
<th>Section subtotal ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminaries</td>
<td>Amount required for builder to establish on site, pay fees, overheads and profit</td>
<td>3,569</td>
<td>3,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,459</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floors</td>
<td>Suspended concrete slabs, fixed to existing floors</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>Roof extension, and gutters in colorbond</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>Stud framed walls with fibre cement sheet with textured finish</td>
<td>2,669</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Aluminum framed domestic standard with metal sun shading screens</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General internal work</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,079</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls/doors</td>
<td>New bathroom stud framed walls lined with fibre cement sheet and plasterboard, reuse existing door, painting</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling finishes</td>
<td>Patch and paint plaster ceilings</td>
<td>639</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>Includes connections and installation</td>
<td>8,696</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom wall finishes</td>
<td>New lining to accommodate services, tiled throughout, painting</td>
<td>3,206</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shower screen</td>
<td>3 sided with pivot door</td>
<td>570</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New bathroom fittings</td>
<td>WC, shower, glass shower screen, vanity, exhaust fan, towels and other miscellaneous fittings</td>
<td>3,990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor finishes</td>
<td>Bathroom floor waste, screeds and tiling</td>
<td>930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette</td>
<td>Includes connections and installation and plumbing</td>
<td>5,550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette fittings</td>
<td>Microwave, refrigerator, ceramic glass cook top, range hood</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette joinery</td>
<td>Sink and fittings, bench and cupboards, including overhead cupboards</td>
<td>3,650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Floating timber floor</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical work</td>
<td>Modify light and power outlets</td>
<td>875</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>Demolish and remove where required</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs (notes only)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building applications</td>
<td>Determined by local council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and documentation fees</td>
<td>Architect and engineering fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL TOTAL per room</td>
<td></td>
<td>29,790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
Box 5.1: (cont.)

- New kitchenette
- Sofa bed
- Leave WC in place
- Glass corner shower recess
- Dining table
- Timber or alternate material
- Texture coat existing brick
- Replace windows, doors for lower level
- Landscape walls
- Steel shade devices
Altering Guest Rooms to Improve Street Appeal

If your marketing or improvement plan indicates the need to enlarge or noticeably alter a room to include a kitchenette, for example, try and use this opportunity to improve or add to your street appeal. If and how you do this depends on the layout and orientation of the unit. Ninety percent of properties have one of two simple layouts, either you walk past the bathroom when you enter the unit or the bathroom is at the rear of the unit. Table 5.1 shows the major arrangements in relation to the street and discusses the potential possibilities and difficulties for renovation.

Table 5.1: Unit layouts/street orientation, opportunities/problems with improving street appeal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layout</th>
<th>Street Orientation</th>
<th>Opportunities/Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Unit entry hidden from street, bathroom at entry</td>
<td>This layout provides the easiest and best opportunity to remodel the façade when renovating a room. Adding as little as 600 to 900 mm will allow enough space for a kitchenette for instance. Generally you should be able to extend by cantilevering from the existing structure removing the need for footings and earthwork. Guttering is cheapest if rainwater is directed back to the existing building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Unit entry hidden from street, bathroom on street side</td>
<td>Extending this layout is not as cost effective especially for upper level units. Bathrooms rarely need enlarging (see bathroom section) but space may be needed in the main room; in addition, the façade is often compromised by small bathroom windows. Extending back toward the entry side will not improve street appeal and may mean that upper level access balconies will need replacing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Unit entry visible from street, bathroom at back</td>
<td>This arrangement presents a number of difficulties for two level buildings. On an external walkway that forms the only fire escape, no windows should be lower than 1500 mm above the balcony (see Building codes). Any changes on the street side will mean altering the access walkways and window arrangement and will be relatively expensive. On single level blocks a small extension can make some major improvements. See the section on external spaces for a case study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Unit entry visible from street, bathroom on street side</td>
<td>This is a reasonably common combination. The major difficulty is the alteration of the access walkways on upper level units as noted above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Re-Finishing Façade To Improve Street Appeal

A number of different surface finishes can be used to rejuvenate a façade. It is important in every case to look at window frames and reveals and other openings as these may look tired when a new wall finish is applied. The trend has been to use acrylic or other polymer texture coatings for cost effective finishes and clean precise lines. The use of mouldings, made from cement based materials (or even polystyrene), has also increased and allows a rather flat wall to be given some depth. The costing study in Box 5.2 looks at a typical façade example.

The final choice of finish will be related to the existing wall material and condition, the effect you want and the finish or material life expectancy. Most commercial texture finishes provide a minimum protective and decorative service life of 10 years depending on coating thickness; some high grade finishes offer a 15 year service life.

Brick and Block Walls

Most masonry walls can be coated with one of the commercial acrylic based finishes. High build finishes are needed for uneven walls or walls with deeply raked brick joints; however, even high build finishes are only 3-4 mm thick and will require a pre-render finish first. Consider mixing textured coated surface with exposed parts of the existing brickwork. A variety of looks can be achieved with textured finishes, different trims, bands, accessories and colours.

Textured or Split Block Work

Although they were once a fashionable material, split face blocks now look dated. Finishing with a textured coat or even thick cement render is not practical; cement sheet over battens is the simplest solution. The cement sheet can be finished with mouldings and any type of paint or textured finish. As with any wall re-finish, the important areas are around openings, reveals and the wall to roof junction.

Clad Walls

Almost any type of new finish can be applied. Generally it is best to remove the existing cladding and fix a new walling material, such as cement sheet for a textured finish.

Signage

When visiting a motel, first impressions are significant. More often than not your guests’ first encounter with your motel is the sign. So often overlooked or left to the last minute, signage is an important element of the client’s perception of your property. This section gives some tips on what to consider and what to look out for in relation to signage as well as making some general suggestions.

If your motel is part of a chain, your signage will need to be consistent with other properties in the group. Usually several alternative designs and layouts are provided by the corporate body. However, options rarely go beyond the design of logos, layout and colour.

The major issues to be taken into account when considering signage are an understanding of your location, your accommodation type and your target market.

If you are considering an extensive renovation or upgrade, the following should be considered:

• Plan your signage at the concept, design and planning stages of your development. Consider the benefits of integrating your signage with expressive architecture.
• As well as identifying your property, your signage should provide cues to the entry of your motel.
• Your signage should reflect your location, e.g. if your property is on a busy highway your signage will be different than if you are on a quiet suburban street.
• Your signage is part of your image so it should be designed to convey the right message to your target market.
• How do people arrive? Signage directing vehicular traffic will have a different scale and message to that for pedestrian traffic.

• If your building has been well designed there should be minimal need for directional signage -
  • Keep wording to a minimum. We can generally only read 2 or 3 short messages at a glance. Hierarchy of information is an important issue to consider.
  • What is your street like? Too many signs can cause confusion. Consider integrating signage into professional landscaping. Relief and contrast can be as or more effective than competitive colouring.
  • Do you want people to see your property at night? Think of alternative lighting options and ongoing maintenance. Illuminated signage that is poorly maintained can detract from your property.

As well as improving signage effectiveness, there are several things that should be avoided if possible:
  • Keep temporary signage to a minimum. ‘A’ frame and sandwich boards add clutter and generally look untidy and tend to cheapen your street appeal. Also ‘put out, bring in’ type signage increases the risk of pedestrian injury. Local councils can provide information on regulations on this issue.
  • Avoid ‘lolly pop on a stick’ type signs. This type of signage rarely makes direct reference or connection to your property.
  • Don’t have clashing or competing combinations of signage on your property. Ensure that signage is coherent and consistent. Generally, less is better. If your signage is confusing, passing clients may not stop.
  • Don’t obstruct entries, exits and views with your signage. Also, blinking or brightly flashing signage can be intrusive and unpleasant for the occupants of nearby rooms.
  For information on exterior cleaning and maintenance, refer to AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines.

Codes

Local government planning regulations are the most relevant codes in this section. These vary considerably but are generally most restrictive in residential zones or special zones such as:
  • Scenic protection;
  • Landscape protection;
  • Skyline protection;
  • Coastal protection;
  • Heritage protection; and
  • Streetscape protection.

In more restricted zones, alterations to your building cannot be considered ‘as your right’ as may be the case in other places. In many cases, a development application, including advertising, may be required. This is generally the case for street front signage. At the earliest opportunity it is important to speak to your local government planning authority for advice.
Box 5.2: Street appeal, façade treatment

STREET APPEAL, FAÇADE TREATMENT

The building in this cost study is a typical 2 level face split block motel with a large metal fascia. A decorative lattice screen signifies the entry into the car park behind. Your market research has found that the motel’s appeal from the street is considered poor; the motel’s other facilities have good customer acceptance. The number of walk-in customers is expected to increase with some work to enhance street appeal.

Texture coating the façade is a simple and useful option if the brickwork is sound and in reasonable condition (cracking brickwork may look worse when it eventually cracks a surface coating). This can be emphasised with moldings designed to give the façade some depth and shadows. It is decided to renew the main windows and replace the dated metal fascia with a parapet at the same time.

The main entry will also receive some work with a porte cochère added to enhance the street impact and customer convenience. This will have large preformed columns, and a metal roof. At the same time, external lighting will be added and the signage improved. Other issues that should be considered in this type of minimal refurbishment are landscape works and disabled access to reception.

The costing can be broken down to reflect a scenario suitable for your property. For comparison, this example building has 8 rooms across the front and is around 45 m long. A building application would be required for this example but would not be required if the façade was texture coated only.

Cost estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item subtotal ($)</th>
<th>Section subtotal ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminaries</td>
<td>Amount required for builder to establish on site, pay fees, overheads &amp; profit</td>
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<td>8,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New porte cochère</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns</td>
<td>Steel posts &amp; concrete pad, columns 300 mm diameter, with moldings &amp; bases</td>
<td>4,480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>Colorbond roof and cement sheet soffit lining and gable</td>
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<td>Guttering</td>
<td>Stud framed walls with fiber cement sheet with textured finish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facade treatment</td>
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<td>37,770</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New parapet</td>
<td>Timber framing, cement sheet both sides, applied finish to both sides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rendering</td>
<td>Leveling split face brick &amp; applying finish (much lower cost on smooth finishes)</td>
<td>10,540</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decorative moldings</td>
<td>Moldings around windows</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof plumbing</td>
<td>Flashing parapet to existing roof, allowance for roof repairs</td>
<td>2,160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>New aluminum domestic standard windows throughout</td>
<td>18,630</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signage and lighting</td>
<td>Includes illuminated sign &amp; external decorative lighting to porte cochère</td>
<td>4,600</td>
<td>4,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plumbing and drainage</td>
<td>Connections &amp; repairs to ground storm water &amp; repairing any damage to landscape &amp; paths</td>
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<td>2,500</td>
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<td>Demolition</td>
<td>Demolition and removal of windows and fascia</td>
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<td>3,214</td>
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<td>Other costs (notes only)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design and documentation fees</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL TOTAL</td>
<td>Entire façade</td>
<td>64,445</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
6. GROUNDS AND EXTERNAL SPACES

The character of the grounds, the way you move from place to place, park or play are key parts of the memorable experience you are trying to create. Large expanses of car parks, exposed unit doorways, or even poor lighting can ruin a visitor’s otherwise positive impressions.

Looking at the external parts and grounds in a different way can help you envision or plan a different approach.

- **Consider the external areas to be made up of ‘outdoor rooms’**
  Each part of the external area has a role to play irrespective of whether it be a car park, recreational area or helps define entries to units. Think of them as separate areas and define them with landscape elements, to avoid the feeling of one large unstructured space.

- **Make the spaces enjoyable and connected**
  If you have a recreation or garden area for sitting, or even just some tables and seats, you can still make the space enjoyable. Good landscaping, a sense of enclosure or protection from other eyes (yet still safe), clear paths and connections to other areas, all help people enjoy the area. You can make a car park more enjoyable by simply making it less overwhelming; planting trees and shrubs to divide it visually into smaller parts.

- **Make it simple, and characteristic for your property**
  Make the outside areas simple and easy to maintain; nothing looks worse than poorly maintained gardens. Keep the high maintenance areas to small pockets such as lobby areas. A characteristic landscape is one that is coherent and suits the interests of your target market. If you are in a coastal zone and marketing to an environmentally conscious demographic, for instance, you may choose landscapes of poa grasses and timber boardwalks. A suburban motel with gum trees around it may opt for a grassed landscape with lots of small eucalypts as the character forming landscape.

- **Make them memorable and invoke an emotional response**
  This point follows on from the last. If the outside areas are well thought out (and this does not imply costly or extravagant), then guests will take notice and remember.

- **Make them safe**
  Feeling safe is a prerequisite for enjoyment.

- **Security**
  A feeling of security can add to the appeal of the property. Some issues to consider include good quality lighting, for example, the light should be sufficient to illuminate a person’s face at 10 m. Avoid dark spots and glare. Trees that allow visibility through them are preferable to dense shrubs. For example trees that have the bulk of their foliage above 1 m from the ground do not provide hiding spots, whereas low dense shrubs will. Also it is important to clearly light paths from car parks.

Some suggestions may sound vague or imprecise, but they can be applied to a number of practical decisions. The remainder of this chapter looks at three key areas, namely, car parking, outdoor recreational areas and unit entries.

**Key Design Ideas**

- **Reduce the visual impact of car parks**
  Car parks are essential; in fact the ‘motel’ is defined by the ability to park close to the unit door. The tendency in the 1970s was to build units around or up to this large asphalt space that dominates the outdoor space. Local government rules require 1 car park per unit; you need this amount plus some larger spaces for deliveries and visitors, however, if you don’t need additional asphalt, don’t provide it. Here are some good reasons:
  - **Asphalt requires maintenance.**
  - **The hard surface causes rainwater to run off rapidly causing environmental problems.**
You lose the opportunity to provide a more enjoyable outdoor area via the provision of recreational or character giving landscaping.

In a hot climate, vast areas of asphalt increase the ambient heat. Try to break car parks up into areas of no more than 8 cars, preferably fewer. To do this you may need to reconsider providing guest parking directly outside their unit door, but still provide a clear parking area for each group of rooms. Keep the connection paths clear and reasonably short.

Look for opportunities to provide usable external spaces linked to rooms

The single largest change in housing trends since the 1970s has been the development of outdoor areas, such as decks, directly connected to the house. Looking at housing trends can help you determine a level of guest expectation. Not all properties will have a design that allows you to even consider this. A traditional two level external access motel is an example where balconies would need to be used rather than cheaper landscaping. However, since 50% of all 3 and 4 star regional motels are single storey, many could consider adding external spaces at least to some rooms. See the section on adding external spaces. This is noteworthy and particularly useful as we move into non smoking rooms. Refer to AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines on non-smoking rooms.

Improve access to units

Make sure you have good clear paths and routes through your grounds between car parks, laundry, reception and any other key areas such as swimming pools. Making them resilient (pavers, asphalt etc.) will reduce room soiling. Another crucial area is the way you approach rooms, through access stairs, long hallways or exposed balconies. This must be an enjoyable experience as well, not just a route to a room. Passing bathroom exhaust fans or walking down darkened halls is not enjoyable. See the following section on unit access.

Work with the existing characteristics of the site.

As anything you do must be cost effective, try building on the elements and good points of your property; don’t be tempted into removing everything and starting again.

Practical Ideas

Car Parks

The number of car parking places is dictated by local government planning regulations while an Australian Standard determines the sizes. A nominal minimum size is set out in Figure 6.1. The Australian Standard AS 2890.1 sets out how a car park should be laid out. Trying to keep car parks smaller and contained is important but at the same time they should relate to a group of rooms so that each guest feels they have a defined car park area. As noted, about eight car spaces wide is the maximum comfortable width before you should break the parking area with a planting island but be careful not to plant trees that will drop fruit or sap onto cars.

Pedestrian paving should always be included between car parks and buildings. Kerbs, wheel stops or some other device is needed to ensure guests don’t have to avoid parked cars, or worse, injure themselves on a tow bar or some other protrusion (see Box 6.1 for an example of car parking and landscaping).

Car parking is covered in Australian Standard AS 2890.1 and it is important not to forget that you will need some disabled access parking places (normally 1 per 40 car parks). Advice can be obtained from your local government planning authority.
CAR PARKING AND LANDSCAPING
The original plan in this case shows a typical large, open space car park. The entire motel experience is dictated by the expanse of asphalt. The proposal is to keep the required parking places but break the expanse into smaller areas. It is assumed that there is external space behind the rooms for guest amenity.

This example has 45 guest rooms and requires a total of 52 car parking places. At the same time as the car park is altered, all new paved pedestrian walkways, landscape and external lighting will be installed. To improve the definition of the entry, the access road will clearly lead to the reception area and short-term parking will be added within a high quality, hard landscaped area. Appropriate access parking is added.

The costing should be adjusted to your own situation. It is assumed that the existing parking asphalt is in good condition but that new stormwater drains must be installed. You may also not require kerb and channel or other parts that have been included. This example covers around 1,200 m$^2$. A civil engineer may be required and advice should be sought from your local council over its requirements.

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Section subtotal ($)</th>
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<td>26,100</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete kerb and gutter</td>
<td>Excavate and install all kerb and gutter</td>
<td>12,305</td>
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<td>Line marking</td>
<td>High quality line marking throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excavating and demolition</td>
<td>Saw cutting asphalt for new works, removing and making good with new asphalt</td>
<td>9,395</td>
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<td>Landscape and improvements</td>
<td></td>
<td>24,620</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General landscaping</td>
<td>Complete high quality to 350 m$^2$, includes topsoil, ground cover, shrubs and automatic irrigation system</td>
<td>21,120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception landscape</td>
<td>Feature landscaping at reception</td>
<td>3,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storm water</td>
<td>New complete car park storm water drainage</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>12,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Bollard lighting to all paths and road entry lighting</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other costs (notes only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Building applications</td>
<td>Determined by local council</td>
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<td>Design and documentation fees</td>
<td>Engineering fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINAL TOTAL</td>
<td>Entire façade</td>
<td>80,400</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
Usable External Spaces Linked To Rooms

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that 100,000 households added pergolas, decks, verandas or patios to their house in the year 2000. For certain groups of guests, a small and partially enclosed or part private area where they can sit in the sun or shade as dictated by the local climate is important. Small areas, even if shared by several guest rooms, also help make the property more intimate and memorable.

This need not be expensive. The costing study in Box 6.2 shows how a low concrete block wall is used to make a strong disconnection from the car park planter box and the outdoor areas. In the correct situation this could be done with other materials such as treated pine sleepers or loosely laid concrete retaining blocks. The glass screen could also be replaced with other material and brick paving could be replaced with a timber deck or textured paving paints.

The solution must balance privacy with safety and accessibility. For a space to be comfortable, it generally must offer some enclosure or privacy. The space in the costing study (Box 6.2) provides some feeling of enclosure with a glass screen. Completely shielded areas may not be safe at some times of the day and this can discourage use. The balance between enclosure and exposure is also important when the area is to be shared by different
Adding external, room related amenity areas

In this scenario your guest survey may show the need for external areas to increase the average length of stay of guests. In many motels, the car parking area is large enough to allow some of it to be re-landscaped to provide casual but semi-private outdoor seating related to one or more rooms. In this example parking is right outside the unit door and it has been decided to take around 5 meters of this space, pave it and install a low wall and garden bed. A glass screen will be used to separate the car park so that the entry doors are still seen offering some security but a sense of enclosure is still afforded for the guests. Glass would be the expensive option in this case. The costing should be adjusted to your own situation. This example covers around 45 m² and provides a private area for 2 or 4 units. No building applications should be required but it is wise to discuss it with your local council.

**Cost estimates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item subtotal ($)</th>
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<td><strong>Roads, footpaths, paving</strong></td>
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<td>Paving</td>
<td>Concrete block paving (45 m²)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Planter beds</td>
<td>Includes concrete footings, block walls, remove part of existing asphalt</td>
<td>3,630</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Landscape and improvements</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>Topsoil, plants and irrigations</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>4,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass screen</td>
<td>Toughened glass in aluminum frames</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other costs (notes only)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater and lighting</td>
<td>Lighting for night use may be appropriate and storm water control may be required</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and documentation fees</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>2 amenity areas</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)

If an area is too enclosed or too strongly related to one unit it will not feel comfortable to guests from other rooms.

Landscape garden watering systems, although not covered here, may require backflow prevention devices. The local council plumbing department can provide more information on this issue.

**Box 6.2: Adding external, room related amenity areas**
7. GUESTROOMS

The guest room is the mainstay of your property; it must match your market group’s expectations and their functional needs. The market has probably changed since the motel was constructed and yet the guest room, and in particular its size, is considered the least adaptable part of an accommodation property. Room requirements may be easily summarised but the important ideas are in the detail of the room.

Holiday Inn Express for instance, reports that its prototype guest room was developed with ‘extensive research with consumers, owners, and industry experts’. Its guest room bottom line is; The result is a hotel that features three fundamental design concepts:

- Cleanliness,
- Timelessness, and
- Cost-efficiency

to ensure optimal use of space, ease of maintenance and a higher return on investment for owners. These distinctions ensure customer loyalty and longevity of the brand. Gone are the Formica counters in bathrooms, gold sconce lighting, and cheesy pictures of country gardens and evening sunsets (http://hotel-online.com/News/PressReleases2000_4th).

You should add to this list another criterion, which is spaciousness. If you consider that the average dwelling size in Australia is now 180 m², you can understand why an uncluttered feel is important to many guests. It’s also important to realise that the perception of spaciousness can be achieved without simply making rooms bigger; careful planning and design can achieve the visual appearance of a larger space. You may create a better room at a lower price with fewer disturbances by simply reorganising it.

Key Design Ideas

- **Understand your market**
  As with most planned changes, you should first re-examine your market demographic and what they expect. The room mix and the way you plan or alter a guest room should have a clear basis in your market plan and visitor expectations. See the section in this chapter on altering rooms.

- **Aim for a spacious, uncluttered feel**
  Look carefully at the room layout, the way furniture visually takes up floor space, the colours and textures of walls. See the section in this chapter on altering rooms and achieving a spacious feel.

- **Strive for good quality natural and artificial light**
  Can windows be enlarged or different window furnishings used to improve light? Can you change room finishes to encourage light reflection and penetration? Does the artificial lighting enhance the room? See the section in this chapter on room lighting.

- **Aim for efficiency in capital costs, energy costs, maintenance and cleaning costs**
  It doesn’t make sense to make rooms more complex and more expensive to maintain. When renovating, take the opportunity to change surface materials, that are hard to clean, and use rounded edge materials where you can achieve longer life and easier maintenance. Remove hard to clean areas or items such as desk lamps, by using wall-mounted sconces instead.

- **Aim to highlight external views and long room views**
  Simple approaches like encouraging diagonal views can improve the sense of spaciousness in a room, and will simply allow views outside through well-placed windows.
Security
Limit the opening width of operable windows at ground and balcony level. Also consider lockable screen doors to patios or balconies. Sensor lighting could be placed at all external doors.

Practical Ideas

Altering Rooms To Meet A Market Mix

Rooms can be reconfigured to meet other market requirements by re-arranging rooms or combining rooms. Table 7.1 shows various combinations that may be achieved within a typical 8x4 m² room and by combining two rooms into one or three rooms into two (see Box 7.2 & Box 7.3). Before considering combining rooms, look at the existing room layouts carefully. Consider the construction type of your rooms and look for rooms that are both easy to convert and in appropriate locations; not all rooms can be cost effectively altered or joined.

Some important general points should be considered:

- **Try and keep the bathroom in the same location**
  See the bathroom section for detailed information, but keep in mind that bathrooms can be expensive to move. This is particularly the case for slab on ground construction where new sewerage and drainage is required. Even moving a bathroom within easy reach of waste pipes may not be cost effective if new floor wastes need to be cut into existing concrete floors.

- **Modifying the bathroom and the entry zone may provide enough room for a kitchenette, a sofa or a cot**
  Most visitors appear happy with bathroom sizes and would tolerate a smaller bathroom if it is well designed and uses high quality materials. Altering the bathroom and the entry zone in units where you enter past the bathroom may create enough space for a good kitchenette or sofa. For units where the bathroom is at the rear, some other alterations may achieve the same result. The chapter on street appeal shows some design ideas for this situation.

- **Try to avoid removing large parts of structural walls**
  Removing structural walls may require you to install exposed supporting beams which are often unappealing to the eye. This is particularly likely to be the case for lower levels of two storey blocks. Since most room ceiling heights are at the lowest allowable height, beams of this sort could detract seriously from the spacious feel you want to create.

- **Add a well-designed and compact kitchenette**
  Kitchens don’t need to be large. A lot of retrofitted kitchens try to emulate the work triangle of domestic kitchens with H or L shaped bench returns, which requires a lot of space. Many others have small badly designed benches with little workspace and use poor quality materials. As in bathrooms, look for well-designed units with high quality materials in a small footprint. See the later chapter on kitchenettes (see also Box 7.1).

- **Acoustically treat all walls**
  This is not so much a good design point as a requirement. All walls need a certain level of acoustic insulation, particularly between bathrooms and habitable rooms. Unfortunately, some standard forms of construction used in the 1970s and 1980s will not meet current requirements. See the building code chapter for detailed information.
ALTERING ROOM LAYOUT WITH A KITCHENETTE

In some market situations a kitchenette, however small may add to guest satisfaction. This cost study takes two standard queen or double rooms and adds a small kitchenette in the most cost effective location. Whether the bathroom is at the front of the unit or at the rear makes little difference to the cost. The assumptions are that the floors are concrete and the walls are brick. The costing should be adjusted to your own situation. A cost is provided for either renovating the bathroom or leaving it substantially unchanged except for the altered wall. Building applications and design drawings will be required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td><strong>Modify bathroom wall, ceiling</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Renovate bathroom</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom wall finishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shower screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New bathroom fittings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor finishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kitchenette</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette fittings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette joinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electrical work</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demolition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other costs (notes only)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
CONVERTING 3 ROOMS TO 2
Combining 3 smaller rooms into larger studio type rooms or two-bedroom units with better seating arrangements may suit some markets. In most cases this is technically straightforward except when the lower levels consist of load bearing masonry and very large openings are cut through to join rooms. In these cases the cost will increase, as beams will be required to support the upper floor.

This scenario assumes 3 rooms are combined so that a separate bedroom is formed allowing for a large living area with good seating and a sofa. A small kitchenette is included and the bathroom is not renovated except for small changes round the door. Costs include new windows. It’s assumed that the dividing walls are brick and require plaster lining to improve the appearance of the room. Loose furniture is not included but all built-in joinery is new, including a robe and TV unit in the new bedroom. All wall and floor finishes are renewed.

Costs are for each new combined room and should be adjusted to suit your particular circumstances. Building applications, engineering advice and design drawings will be required. The ‘before’ drawings are shown in Box 7.1.

### Cost estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item subtotal ($)</th>
<th>Section subtotal ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminaries</strong></td>
<td>Amount required for builder to establish on site, pay fees, overheads and profit</td>
<td>2,660</td>
<td>2,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Window alterations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>406</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alterations to main room</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>8,307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New walls and doors</td>
<td>Timber framing, lining, reuse existing doors</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-plastering, paint and patch throughout</td>
<td>Plasterboard to cover all brickwork, battened-off to allow for new services, paint all interior and patch and fix as required</td>
<td>3,906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor finishes</td>
<td>New carpet and new skirting throughout</td>
<td>3,120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kitchenette</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5,590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette fittings</td>
<td>Microwave, refrigerator, ceramic glass cook top, range hood</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette joinery</td>
<td>Sink and fittings, bench and cupboards, including overhead cupboards</td>
<td>3,650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Floating timber floor</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electrical work</strong></td>
<td>Modify light and power outlets</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joinery</td>
<td>Built-in robes</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>Demolish and remove where required</td>
<td>1,361</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other costs (notes only)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building applications</td>
<td>Determined by local council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and documentation fees</td>
<td>Architect and engineering fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>21,324</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Contents are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
Box 7.3: Converting 2 rooms to 1

CONVERTING 2 ROOMS TO 1
This costing study combines two rooms into 1 room, based on the same precepts as the previous costing study. In addition a large operable wall (or concertina door) replaces the existing window to provide good access to a deck or balcony. Costs are for each new combined room. Some costs such as demolition are shared with adjoining rooms. Building applications, engineering advice and design drawings will be required. The ‘before’ drawings are shown in Box 7.1.

Cost estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item subtotal ($)</th>
<th>Section subtotal ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminaries</td>
<td>Amount required for builder to establish on site, pay fees, overheads and profit</td>
<td>2,551</td>
<td>2,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window alterations</td>
<td>Incl large concertina door at rear of unit ($4,000+ installed)</td>
<td>4,995</td>
<td>4,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alterations to main room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New walls and doors</td>
<td>Timber framing, lining, reuse existing doors</td>
<td>982</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-plastering</td>
<td>Plasterboard to cover all brickwork, batten-off to allow for new services</td>
<td>2,035</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint &amp; patch throughout</td>
<td>Paint all interior, patch and fix as required</td>
<td>990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor finishes</td>
<td>New carpet and new skirting throughout</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette</td>
<td>Includes connections, installation and plumbing</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette fittings</td>
<td>Microwave, refrigerator, ceramic glass cook top, range hood</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette joinery</td>
<td>Sink &amp; fittings, bench &amp; cupboards, incl o/head cupboards</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Floating timber floor</td>
<td></td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical work</td>
<td>Modify light and power outlets</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joinery</td>
<td>Built-in robes</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>Demolish and remove where required</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs (notes only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building applications</td>
<td>Determined by local council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design &amp; documentation fees</td>
<td>Architect and engineering fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>Per room</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>20,624</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
Combining Room Options

There are many options for altering and improving rooms by combining rooms. Table 7.1 describes a number of room types and how they may fit into different types of buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room Combination</th>
<th>Cost study diagram</th>
<th>Arrangement of room</th>
<th>Bathroom at front of unit</th>
<th>Bathroom at rear of unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper level</td>
<td>Lower or single level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 8 m x 4 m unit</td>
<td>7.1 A &amp; B</td>
<td>2x Queen</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding kitchenettes</td>
<td>7.1 A1 7.1 B1</td>
<td>2x Double + kitchenette</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combining 3 units into 2 units</td>
<td>7.2 A Deluxe Q sofa + sep. bedroom</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2 B 2xQ + sofa studio</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2 C 2xQ sep. bedroom, sofa</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2 D Deluxe Q studio + sofa</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combining 2 units into 1 units</td>
<td>7.2 E 2xQ studio + sofa</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.3 A 2xQ studio + sofa</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.3 B 3xQ sep. bed + sofa</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.3 C 2xQ studio + sofa</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.3 D 3xQ sep. bed + sofa</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table key
✓ Generally this type of alteration is straightforward and can be completed with little or no intervention externally.
X Cost study not suitable for this arrangement or existing rooms.
1 May have problems with adequate size living room windows on upper levels depending on configuration of upper level fire escapes

Removing Walls Between Units

If you are combining rooms then load-bearing walls must be identified. A builder will know which are load bearing but it should also be a consideration when planning.

Table 7.2 summarises the major issues with structural walls. In most cases a structural engineer should be consulted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single level, or the upper level, with trussed roofs</td>
<td>A trussed roof normally spans only between the external wall and does not load onto internal walls. Therefore you may be able to remove walls with no additional roof support. Trussed roofs became popular at different times in different areas but generally after 1975.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single level, or the upper level, with conventionally framed roofs</td>
<td>Conventional roof framing normally places roof loads on to internal walls. This can be overcome effectively with hanging beams located in the ceiling space. If you have no ceiling space, an internal exposed beam will be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower levels of two or more level buildings with no ceiling space</td>
<td>Most accommodation property floors are concrete, and hence most internal walls are load bearing. If the room ceiling is exposed concrete or does not have a ceiling space to hide the beam, it will be better to restrict any opening in the wall to less than 2m. Alternatively, arrange the room so that a beam can be hidden in a bulkhead above a kitchen bench or other joinery fixture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower levels of two or more level buildings with ceiling space</td>
<td>If you have a ceiling space to hide a beam, then removing walls should present no problems. As a rule of thumb allow 200 mm steel beam depth for every 4 m of opening (with a practical minimum of say 200 mm).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Making A Room Feel More Spacious

One design change alone will not make a room feel spacious; it’s a combination of many small design issues working together that delivers this effect. The converse appears not to be true, as it only takes one design flaw to make a room look too tight, cluttered or small. This section examines some important design components:

- Entering the room – the importance of first impressions;
- Improving joinery layout – and developing strong simple lines;
- Improving wall finishes – for light and spaciousness;
- Improving lighting and colours – using colours that expand the room size;
- Improving window treatment – removing clutter and maximising light.

Refer to AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines on free floor space in bedrooms and bathrooms.

Improving Room Entry

As was stressed in the chapter on street appeal, first impressions are important to visitor satisfaction and this includes the first room impression. The major problem with at least half of all rooms is the narrow entry next to the bathroom as you enter. The space is often tight, cluttered with joinery varying from robes, fridges, and luggage racks to the ubiquitous breakfast tray shelf.

Figure 7.1 (left plan) shows the typical arrangement. The items may change but the effect of both constriction of space and removing long diagonal views into the room provide a less than perfect entry to the unit. A number of solutions are available and most are used in new developments. The first is to simply skew the bathroom corner as shown in Figure 7.1 (right plan). This has the simple effect of shortening the apparent constriction and allowing better view lines into the room. It also allows a generally better entry to the bathroom. The joinery on the wall could stay in place.

Another approach being used is to simply alter the proportion of the bathroom to a longer and narrower shape, say 2.8-3.0 x 1.5-1.8 m (see also Box 7.4).

Figure 7.1 Typical room arrangements and view lines from entries
IMPROVING ROOM ENTRY

The room entry is a key part of the initial experience of a guest. In this study, the room lobby area restricts the view into the room and makes the room feel smaller or less spacious. The large bathrooms and a luggage rack and other joinery in the lobby area exacerbate the situation. The bathroom required renovation and it was decided to use the opportunity to improve the entry. Making a smaller but better designed and appointed bathroom has the effect of shortening the apparent constriction in the entry area and allowing better view angles into the room. The joinery on the entry wall is removed and placed on the bathroom wall. The alcove in the joinery above the built-in bar fridge has glass shelves and splash-backs that allow views and light through the corner; the bulkhead that edges and finishes the joinery unit defines the main room more carefully.

Costs are per new room and should be adjusted to suit your particular circumstances. General room refurbishment is not included. A building application will be required if the bathroom is altered; seek advice from your local council. ‘Before’ drawings are shown in Figure 7.1.

Cost estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item subtotal ($)</th>
<th>Section subtotal ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminaries</td>
<td>Amount required for builder to establish on site, pay fees, overheads and profit</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify bathroom wall, ceiling</td>
<td>New wall timber framed reuse door, patch ceilings</td>
<td>1,904</td>
<td>1,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovate bathroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New linings to accommodate services, tiled throughout, painting</td>
<td>2,684</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New bathroom fittings</td>
<td>WC, shower, glass shower screen, vanity, exhaust fan, towels and other miscellaneous fittings</td>
<td>3,990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor finishes</td>
<td>Bathroom floor, screeds and tiling</td>
<td>510</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall unit joinery</td>
<td>Includes installation but not bar fridge</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling and bulkhead</td>
<td>New plasterboard bulkhead and ceiling</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Tile floor at entry</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical work</td>
<td>Modify light and power outlets</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>Demolish and remove where required</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs (notes only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building applications</td>
<td>Determined by local council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and documentation fees</td>
<td>Architect and engineering fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per room</td>
<td></td>
<td>16,725</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without bathroom renovation</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,567</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
ALTERING JOINERY TO IMPROVE ROOM LAYOUT

The motivation in this study is to replace the fixed joinery and improve the feeling of spaciousness. Currently the room wall is ill defined and bleeds weakly into the entry and bathroom lobby area while the complex line between the floor and wall visually encroaches into the room space. The TV sits on the desk. A guest using the remaining desk space faces a mirror with their back to the rest of the room.

The proposal places the main joinery within an area defined by a simple bulkhead. This room has enough space between the bathroom wall and the wall on the other side of the entry lobby. This strengthens and better delineates the back wall and provides a more defined entry or service area. The gap between the fridge and the hospitality cupboards is open and topped with glass. The adjacent mirror flows into the gap. A desk faces the room and provides a more functional workspace. The floor space is clear underneath so the floor lines flow underneath. The TV is wall mounted so it can be seen from the beds, chairs or desk and it will not take up valuable floor space.

The sidewall has a cleaner and less cluttered line. Washing this wall with light will make the room appear wider. This work would typically not need a building application unless related to other work; check with your local council.

---

**Cost estimates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item subtotal ($)</th>
<th>Section subtotal ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminaries</td>
<td>Amount required for builder to establish on site, pay fees, overheads and profit</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall unit joinery</td>
<td>Includes installation but not bar fridge</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby area</td>
<td>New plasterboard bulkhead and ceiling</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>1,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical work</td>
<td>Modify light and power outlets</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor finishes</td>
<td>New carpet throughout</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>Demolish and remove where required</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other costs (notes only)**

- Building applications: Determined by local council but typically not required
- Design and documentation fees

**FINAL TOTAL** Per room: 6,770

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
Improving Joinery Layout

Improving joinery, as it relates to the sense of space of a room, means looking at its colour, material, texture, and more importantly, the way it helps define the room edges (see Box 7.5). Two principles can be applied in this situation:

- Look for simple and strong lines at the wall/floor and wall/ceiling junctions;
- Aim for strong wall planes that define the room and using the correct colour, material and lighting on these faces will make the room appear larger.

Wall Finishes

It will not matter how carefully you layout a room, if the wall materials, paint colours and lighting don’t work together, the room may still look cramped. A crucial starting point is the wall finish and, in particular, look carefully at any exposed face brick or block wall. Wall finishes are a significant part of the star rating assessment scheme and their quality may impact on the appearance component of the assessment. Refer to AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines for more information.

In the Australian Hospitality Digest (Winter 2001), a paragraph appeared on ‘the awful costly refurb errors’. It read:

I know some will disagree, but I consider the greatest mistakes ever made as follows:
- Poor layout of rooms making expansion of room space up to modern day requirements almost impossible. …
- Bare concrete or face brick internal walls making conversion into a new modern appearance very-difficult.
- Reticence by the owner to bite the bullet and carry out a full refurbishment of a room instead of a quick makeover.

Exposed brick walls were acceptable in dwellings in the 1970s, where they were called the feature wall. It also seemed to make sense that fire rating, sound control and structural support could be achieved by building single skin brick or block walls. However, exposed masonry does inhibit a fresh appearance and inhibits strategies to improve the visual spaciousness of a room. There are other good reasons to cover them up; they no longer meet current acoustic separation requirements; they are difficult to clean, their maintenance robustness is really a fallacy and they don’t reflect enough light to brighten a room and to make it feel comfortable.

Adding plasterboard to these walls is not expensive and will instantly lift the room appeal. It will also provide a cavity for electrical wiring changes that are otherwise difficult and expensive with face brick walls.

Corners, walls and windows

A room is defined by its corners and junctions where walls, ceiling and floor planes meet. Sharp, clean and uninterrupted edges can give a room a more spacious and open feel. The clutter of curtains and framing around a window can distract the eye essentially affecting the perception of spaciousness.

An example of a typical room interior finish is shown in Figure 7.2. The exposed brick wall and dark floor covering make the room feel smaller. These types of finishes also ‘date’ the room; it is difficult to obtain a contemporary feel without changing finishes and details. The type of curtain shown is also typical for many 3-4 star motels. This arrangement more often than not looks untidy. The left over or ‘nothing’ spaces between the top of the curtain and the ceiling, and the edge of the curtain and the wall, are distracting and detract from the potential character of the room. Lining the exposed brickwork with plasterboard gives a more contemporary feel and offers more choice of finish.

A simply constructed bulkhead around the window opening can conceal the workings of a contemporary blind while providing a crisp edge where it meets the wall and ceiling. So when you enter the room the clean and sharp lines make the room appear larger and less cluttered.

The same rule applies to floor and wall junctions. A lighter floor covering or finish combined with a clean wall junction will make a room appear larger and brighter.
Colour
Using colours to create the impression that a room is larger is a common approach. Primarily it requires a simple palette of light colours based on pale or cold hues. Pale colours appear lighter and more distant than dark colours. Cold colours, such as blues and greens, appear more removed than warm colours and are good for contrast walls and fabrics. The important factor here is to seek expert advice, always ensuring that fabrics are selected for their commercial hard-wearing properties as well as their colour and patterns. Use light colours and look carefully at the way they can reflect light into a room.

Lighting
Use a lighting designer as the cost is not high; in fact some lighting companies will do it for you free of charge. Lighting can give a room a sense of depth and space. The lighting scheme must do at least the following:
- Provide general room lighting;
- Provide lighting at key contact areas such as doors;
- Wash some walls to increase sense of depth;
- Provide task lighting at desks or beds; and
- Model or highlight key decor elements.

Lighting must be a balanced part of other design ideas aimed at increasing the apparent size of a room. Lights also feature prominently in consumer complaints. Examples of such complaints include: not enough light on work surface (you need 300 lux!), not enough light in bathrooms, lights in wrong places, and switches that are difficult to find. The choice of lights has other important effects. For instance the colour rendering of some fluorescent lights can make a room less comfortable generating a harsh feel, while incandescent lights provide a warmer feel. See Chapter 11 on lighting for more detail.

Codes
The amount of daylight available to a habitable room is regulated in the building codes. All bedrooms or main rooms are required to get natural light; you cannot have a room with a window area of less than 10% of its floor area. At the same time, any room must have operable windows equivalent to 5% of the room floor area or have a mechanical ventilation system. Refer to your local council building inspector for advice.
8. **BATHROOMS**

Bathrooms are used by guests every day and will likely have both design and maintenance issues that will probably need addressing. This chapter provides a discussion of issues related to the type of bathrooms, construction and fit out you may have.

Some potential issues in any older bathroom are:

- **Finishes and fixtures.** Equipment will need maintenance or replacing when they become worn or obsolete.
- **Energy and water conservation.** Practices that have become the norm and expected by guests are not supported by older fittings that tend to use more water or energy as they age and cause unavoidable increases in running costs.
- **Building and safety codes.** Have altered putting more demand on the safety of bathrooms, in particular non-slip surfaces, anti scald hot water, acoustics and ventilation.
- **Maintenance.** Ageing compounded by inappropriate design substantially increases cost, time and effort required for maintenance and cleaning.
- **Design issues.** Poor design cramps a room and makes it appear small.
- **Ventilation.** High room moisture takes a toll on finishes, particularly walls, cabinets and floors and must be addressed in order to reduce cleaning and maintenance costs.

**Key Design Ideas**

Spaciousness and light are essential perceptions for a good guest bathroom. Naturally, cost effectiveness, low maintenance and robustness are important. The following are design ideas that help generate those perceptions in a small space.

- **Reduce intrusions into the space.** Anything that sticks out into the room can stop the eye and make your room ‘shrink’. Consider removal of all large protruding accessories, primarily solid wall shower recess and vanity units.
- **Room lighting.** Well designed lighting will ‘open up’ a space and also add interest. Recessed spot lighting is both visually appealing and has a low profile that is perfect for a small space. Skylights, larger windows or solar tubes are other alternatives for bringing more light into the room.
- **Exchange your vanity unit for a wall mounted, semi-recessed or pedestal sink.** It can be fairly inexpensive to replace a visually space hogging vanity with a pedestal or wall mounted basin. This look will add greatly to the spacious and contemporary feel of the bathroom. Most under sink storage can be provided elsewhere.
- **Choose colour carefully.** To give the illusion of more space, choose colour schemes that are pale rather than exciting. Pastel tones, neutrals and whites are good choices. You can use bright hues by mixing them with liberal amounts of white.
- **Avoid too many accessories.** Limit your accessories to fewer pieces to avoid the feeling of clutter. This includes using fewer towels and area rugs. Go for one larger rug, a few towels and store the rest neatly on open shelves or out of sight.
- **Lighten the floor.** While not every room needs a light floor, if your room is feeling too small and cramped, it may be a good idea to consider flooring that adds a lighter and brighter touch to a room.
- **Remove any visual obstructions.** The further your eye can travel through a space, the larger it will look. For example, if a small bathroom has a frosted glass tub enclosure or a big shower curtain strung across the room, your eye stops there and assumes the room is much smaller than its actual size. Switch to clear glass if possible, or pull the shower curtain to one side etc., so you can see all the way into the room.
- **Add mirrors.** Increase the size of the wall mirrors. Mirrors can give the illusion that there is more of the room around a corner and also serve to reflect light, colour and pattern.
- **Add depth to the walls.** Consider using opaque or translucent glass to an entire wall. The glass will reflect light and colour giving depth to the wall surfaces.
- **Hide the clutter.** Pare down clutter to the most essential items so things won’t spill out onto sinks and tub corners. The cleaner the look, the larger the room will feel.
- **Lead the eye outdoors.** Windows lead the eye outdoors creating the illusion of space. They also bring natural light into a room. Although not always practical for privacy reasons, they can substantially improve a bathroom and should be included in a wider refurbishment.
- **Security.** Reduce visibility into the bathroom by using obscure glass on external windows. Operable windows should stop at 150 mm maximum opening.

### Improving Layouts

There is no ideal layout for bathrooms; it depends on the particular motel room, the desired feel and, more particularly for refurbishment, the placement of waste pipes in the room.

The traditional 4-6 m² bathroom is adequate and smaller rooms are well accepted if the quality of materials, fittings and lighting is high.

### Bathroom Layout Tips

- **First impressions.** The first view into any room is important. The view is not ideal if it is cluttered, or perhaps is a direct view of the toilet pan. If a pan cannot be moved consider rearrangement so that a low frosted glass screen occludes the view.
- **A view to a well-lit wall is much more welcoming.** Windows cannot be moved economically but accent lights are cheap and can illuminate the wall opposite the bathroom door.
- **Consider relocating the bathroom door.** This can be an economical alternative to relocating the toilet pan and other planning problems.
- **Diagonal entry.** As a general rule, entering a room on a diagonal improves the perception of space. If it fits into an overall strategy and allows walls for services then it should be considered.
- **Holistic view.** Any changes to a bathroom layout should be considered in the context of the overall unit idea. Altering a bathroom wall will provide the opportunity to run services, improve a living room, add a kitchenette or improve the entry to a unit.
- **Size.** A well designed bathroom can often be reduced in size to under 4 m² and allow more space in the main living area for, say, a 600 mm deep kitchenette.

### Improving Spaciousness

#### Shower Recess

Spaciousness can be addressed by examining, amongst other things, the shower and basin as described below. The most widespread problem in bathrooms, although less common in newer constructions, is the built-in shower recess.

Figure 8.1 shows some typical flaws in a bathroom, namely:
- The shower recess wall intrudes into the view;
- The vanity shortens the room visually;
- The timber trims and skirtings look out of place;
- The bathroom has an overall cluttered feel.
The simplest approach is to replace the shower recess wall with a glass screen and fit a frameless shower door. This will require patching of the floor and wall tiles in some places. Where possible the recess itself should be replaced by continuing floor tiling into the shower or by using a low profile shower trough.

A glass screen, or a corner shower in the case of Figure 8.2, helps the eye to travel right around the room and improves the perception of spaciousness. Figure 8.3 shows an alternate but more costly solution, although it is one that allows the bathroom to be substantially reduced in size.

Glass shower screens are available in several variations including framed, semi framed and frameless.

Figure 8.1: Example of a typical built-in shower recess, which reduces the sense of space in the room

Figure 8.2: Allowing a line to continue through a glass shower screen improves the sense of space in a room

Figure 8.3: Physically smaller bathrooms appear larger through good design
Issues worth considering are:

- **Shower screens.** Glass screens must satisfy Australian standards and use 6-10 mm toughened or laminated glass. Property owners may be exposing themselves to greater risk of litigation and damages if glass on their property is non-compliant. Semi framed or frameless screens enhance the perception of spaciousness and are easier to clean. It may be better to design a screen to suit your needs than to use off the shelf products.

- **Shower bases.** When installing a new shower screen into an existing tiled recess, it is important to make sure that the waterproof membrane underneath the shower floor is intact to prevent water leakage through the shower floor. Shower bases are not required if a floor has been tiled and waterproofed correctly. Particular attention needs to be focused on floor/wall junctions.

- **Installing in timber walls.** Where frameless fixtures are fixed to timber framed walls use additional structural support in the wall.

- **Door swing and opening.** Ensure the toilet and vanity unit do not restrict the door opening or make access to the shower recess cramped and uncomfortable. Use an outward opening pivot door so in an emergency the occupant does not impede access to the shower recess.

- **Shower rose height and position.** To limit water spray problems, ensure that the shower rose is situated below the top or the shower screen. If possible do not position the shower screen door directly in front of the shower rose or you could have problems with water spraying out.

- **Handrails.** Handrails are not required unless the room is an access unit; however consider installing blocking for future handrails or other fittings if the wall lining is removed to install a new shower.

- **Taps and location.** Traditional screw down taps should be replaced with low maintenance 1/4 turn ceramic-seated taps while renewing a shower. This cannot be done easily later without destroying wall finishes. Make sure you can reach the taps from outside the shower screen so you don’t have to get wet while adjusting the water temperature. For useful information refer to AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines for bathrooms.

**Basins And Sinks**

Like shower recesses, basins can reduce the visual size of a bathroom. Ideally they should be wall mounted or counter mounted to allow the full floor space underneath to be seen. Vanity style cupboards reduce the perceived spaciousness. A basin arrangement such as shown in Figure 8.3 allows the bathroom floor to appear as large as possible.

Counter design depends on the bathroom layout and the feel you want to create. However some basic rules should be considered:

- Make the basin counter longer rather than deeper, that way it doesn’t impinge into the space while remaining functional.

- Do not let the counter appear to be squashed into a corner, try the following options instead: Take up the whole length of the wall; put a mirror over the entire length. A mirror will not cost any more than tiles. Consider adding a nib wall at one side of the basin to ‘contain’ the basin area. Keep it small, about 1,200 mm high and 300 mm deep, to match the counter top as shown in Figure 8.4. Waste pipes can be hidden behind a shallow false wall under the bench as shown in Figure 8.5. Use a smaller counter that can sit away from other objects.
Figure 8.4: Adding a small nib wall can effectively finish the edge of a vanity basin if it is kept small.

Figure 8.5: Waste pipes can be hidden behind a shallow false wall below a vanity basin.

Finishes And Lighting

Wall finishes play an essential role in the perception of the bathroom space. Some finishes such as exposed brick or block are patently not acceptable; however, other types of finishes need to be selected based on cost robustness and the ability to improve the perception and character of the bathroom.

The floor colour and quality is equally important to the feel of the bathroom. A lighter colour is safer but often a black or very dark floor can have a good effect. Often a very dark vinyl will look more acceptable than a lighter or slightly patterned vinyl. Ceramic tiles on the bathroom floor are the preferred finish. Use slip resistant floor tiles. Commercial manufacturers must conduct wet and dry slip resistance tests. This information is available from manufacturers.

The look of finishes, whether a bathroom is inviting and spacious, and the functional aspects of a bathroom are strongly influenced by lighting. See Chapter 11 on lighting for more information.

Ventilation And Moisture

Moisture control can be a major problem in a bathroom. Lack of adequate ventilation and improper installation and sealing of fixtures can lead to excessive moisture, which will result in damage if not removed. Indicators of moisture build up in the bathroom include; mould, mildew, failing grout, dislodged tiles, and water stains or rotted walls (see Table 8.1).

Small amounts of water penetrating the tiles in showers or bath surrounds will be absorbed by bricks, cement sheet or plasterboard substrate. Excess water can damage the framing, or be transferred long distances in brickwork, appearing in adjacent rooms and damaging linings and carpet. This water egress will also loosen tiles around showers and baths. Any suspected moisture control problems should be repaired during refurbishment. It is often due to poor installation rather than seals perishing.
## Table 8.1: Key checkpoints for ventilation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Rate      | The appropriate standard states that a minimum of 25 litres of air per second must be exhausted for each plumbing fixture or 10 litres of air per second, per square metre of floor area, whichever results in the higher figure.  
If the bathroom has both a toilet and a shower, the selected fan should be capable of exhausting a total of 50 litres of air per second.  
The standard specifies a minimum of 25 litres of air per second exhausted to ventilate bathrooms in motel rooms, which is generally too little. |
| Makeup air| The room requires an input source for makeup air as far away as possible from the fan. Door vents are often the simplest approach.                                                                        |
| Exhaust fans | Exhaust fans must not empty into a ceiling space and preferably not onto a pedestrian pathway.                                                                                                    |
| Window fans | Avoid placing fans into windows. Apart from being unsightly, they reduce natural light to the room and have poor acoustics and they allow other guests to hear everything in the bathroom.  
Consider using inline fans in the ceiling space ducting to a concealed external duct register. These fans are generally quiet and efficient. |

### Fittings

Generally fittings such as the WC pan, and taps have a life of 15-20 years but are probably replaced more often for aesthetic purposes. You should take every replacement opportunity to reduce water consumption and meet current building codes. Table 8.2 lists some important concerns.

- **Toilet pan.** This should be a concealed base pan with close-coupled cistern or in-wall cistern. Exposed pipes cause cleaning problems and are unsightly. Check that the cistern is low flush. Older 11 litre single flush cisterns must be replaced with dual flush 9/4.5 litre cisterns or the newer 6/3 litre type.
- **Water delivery temperature.** Australia wide legislation has been enacted for hot water temperature control and the safe delivery of hot water to ablutionary outlets in all new buildings. It requires hot water to be delivered to sanitary fixtures at a temperature not greater than 50 deg C.
- **Hot water storage temperature.** Hot water must be stored at a minimum temperature of 60 deg C to prevent the growth of Legionella bacteria.
- **Door.** The bathroom door may be required to be removable in case of emergencies - check with your local council.

### Repair Options

The bath and shower are often the areas in the bathroom that show the most wear. The maintenance and repair of a bath or shower will depend on its materials and fabrication. If the fixture is otherwise functional, rejuvenation work might focus on refinishing the surface. Bath and shower bases are generally homogeneous polyester, acrylic or steel and can be refurbished in place using various techniques.

### Bath or Shower Inlays

Baths and shower trays are manufactured from acrylic sheeting that can be made to fit exactly inside existing baths and shower trays without removal. Cost of installation is less than a third the cost of removal and replacement of a new bath or base because the tiles and wall linings are not disturbed. Surface perfection, longevity and durability are high.
Recoating

Urethane refinishing of bases and baths is conducted by professional refinishers on surfaces such as acrylic and china or other ceramic surfaces. Fittings are left in place, the cost is much less than renewal and any colour surface can be applied - no matter what the original colour was. The surface has a shorter life in commercial applications of about 4-10 years.

Patching

A ceramic-like epoxy can be used to fill cracks or pits on the surface of some baths and bases. Patching is only a short-term solution.

Taps, Fittings and Water Conservation

Any bathroom refurbishment is a good time to consider strategies for water conservation and replacing taps and fittings. Replace any taps that are difficult to operate. Most new fittings are ceramic seated and eliminate leaks from worn washers, they are easier to use and more modern looking. However, the entire tap needs changing and this is difficult when the tap is in the wall behind tiles. Some important notes are:

- **Reduce water usage with water flow regulators.** These are available for traditional screw down taps as well as ceramic seat valves. They ensure a strong steady flow but limit the total flow.

- **Replace showerheads with flow limiting devices to suit your water pressure and heating system.** These allow a firm effective shower spray, but use no more than 9 or 12 litres/minute compared to the usual 25-30 litres used by conventional showers. The obvious advantage of fitting controlled shower heads and tap outlets is that at the end of the year much less water has gone down the drain. This in turn means that usage of hot water is lessened so heating energy costs are reduced. Because hot water use is reduced, water stored in heaters is used at a slower rate. This has the same effect as increasing the heater size and allows heaters to ‘catch up’ more efficiently when water is drawn off.

- **Replace older toilets cisterns.** Use close-coupled low water usage cisterns (6/3 flushes). Older cisterns can have water limiters installed if the cistern must stay in place.

Refer to AAATGreen Star rating scheme for more information.

Codes

Any major refurbishment is required to satisfy contemporary building codes and standards. It is important to understand the implications during the planning and design processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Code / Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ventilation</td>
<td>A bathroom should have an opening window that is 5% of room floor area; or</td>
<td>AS 1668.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mechanical air change at least 8 changes per hour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterproofing wet areas</td>
<td>Water proofing is required within 1.5 m of shower fitting and should cover</td>
<td>AS 3740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>an area 1.8 m above the floor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot water</td>
<td>Hot water should be delivered to taps and fixtures at 50 deg.C and should</td>
<td>AS 3500.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be stored at a minimum of 60 deg.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non slip flooring</td>
<td>All wet areas are required to have a floor surface that satisfies the</td>
<td>AS 3661.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relevant code.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access bathrooms</td>
<td>Entire bathroom must comply completely with this standard.</td>
<td>AS 1428.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. **KITCHENETTES**

As with all other parts of your property, the target market should be the determining factor when considering renovation. A kitchenette can simply be an enlarged hospitality cupboard or a fully fitted kitchen. The best solution for 3-4 star categories probably lies in between. Obviously, a kitchenette will not fit comfortably in a typical 8x4 m room with 2 queen sized beds.

**Key Design Ideas**

- **Keep it small.** In most guest rooms, space is a premium and you can’t afford to create a kitchen with a return bench. There is also little evidence to suggest that a large kitchen is needed even if you had the room. Any extra space could be better utilised to enhance the spaciousness of the unit overall. Finally, 4 metres of kitchen benching and cupboards will cost twice as much as 2 metres of kitchen!

- **Keep it near an existing drain.** As with all renovations, utilising the existing drains close to the additions will save money. Adjacent to the bathroom is the obvious location to build a kitchen. Sharing a plumbing wall and wastewater outlets will save space and money. See Chapter 7 on guest rooms to get some more ideas.

- **Use high quality materials.** Visitors expect a certain level of quality. Since the level of quality in domestic joinery and materials has constantly risen over the past 10 years, you can be sure that guests will anticipate at least the quality of a modern house. More and more this means commercially orientated finishes, such as stainless steel and glass. Commercial type finishes are generally more durable and are easily maintained.

- **Enhance the perception of useful bench top space.** If a kitchenette has a small bench top, don’t clutter it. Use appliances that are small and compact, like single round bowl sinks and 2 hob ceramic glass cook tops. Don’t take up large sections of the bench top with a microwave. Appliance or hospitality cupboards are a simple way to ensure the bench top remains free of unnecessary clutter.

- **Ensure excellent ventilation, air extraction.** A kitchenette must have an exhaust fan. It’s not just the smells that are left behind and you can’t afford to set off fire detectors (that costs time or money), it’s a building code requirement. In small units without adequate air extraction, cooking fumes will affect the entire room. In single storey buildings fans can be ducted through the roof space to open air. (Note: not into the roof cavity). In multi storey buildings, ducting through external walls is acceptable providing the outlet is clear from access balconies and walkways. Another alternative is to run ducting through a bulkhead in the adjoining bathroom.

**Practical Ideas**

Many practical ideas discussed in the previous sections, apply to kitchens, particularly in relation to layouts and materials.

**Keep the Kitchenette Small**

A workbench needs to be no more than 2,100 mm in almost every case; reducing it further to 1,200 mm is still practical where space is limited. Figure 9.1 shows a simple plan for 1,200 mm long kitchenette with an adjoining robe.

Keeping the bench top clear with a simple line will make a small counter appear more usable and improve the spacious feel of the room. The microwave, for instance, obstructs the functional use of a small bench and seriously affects it visually, making it feel cluttered. It is best installed under the bench or above the bench but at a reasonable height. The face of
the person using the microwave should always be higher than the front of the door. All users should be tall enough to reach the microwave oven door, easily view the cooking area, and handle the food safely.

To increase the useable work surfaces, consider a pull out worktop, either as a drawer or a roll out cupboard unit.

**Figure 9.1: A simple plan for 1,200 mm long kitchenette with and adjoining robe**

![Figure 9.1: A simple plan for 1,200 mm long kitchenette with and adjoining robe](image)

**Table 9.1: Kitchenette comparative bench top costs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bench top material</th>
<th>Cost (Laminate =1.0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laminates (square edge)</td>
<td>1.0 (about $800 for 2100mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laminates (round edge)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid surfacing (e.g. Corian and Trezzini)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineered stone</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stainless steel</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bench Tops**

Laminated plastics are the standard and most economical bench top material, very hard, scratch and stain resistant but not impervious to cuts, hot pots and scratches. Laminate can look out of date in a motel room when many new homes are using alternate bench top and more commercially orientated materials. This may be one reason why average house kitchen prices have climbed steadily from $10,000 in 2000 to $28,000 in 2004.

Given that a bench top is typically only 10% of the total cost of a kitchen it is worth investing in better looks and lower maintenance costs. Table 9.1 shows a comparative cost between various bench top materials for a small 3 m long counters. A short description of the materials follows.

**Laminates**

Generally either square edged or post formed. Post forming allows the bench to be bull nosed and have an integral splashback. Post forming provides a more robust bench top but must be orthogonal in plan, while square edged benches can be curved in plan.

**Engineered stone**

Made from small pieces of quartz or granite, marble dust or glass chips mixed with a resin or polyester base. The surface is hard-wearing, naturally stain resistant and non-porous, heat resistant and comes in a range of colours. It is a good alternative to real stone. Edges can be curved in plan and still bull nosed.
Solid surfacing
Acrylic resin materials range from 3 mm to 10 mm thick and are hard-wearing and can resist heat (moderately) and are easily repaired. Scratches can be sanded out. They can also be formed with curves in plan and various types of edge treatment.

Natural stone
Natural stone is less impact resistant than artificial stone and is not as stain resistant. The lighter colours in particular can be stained by food, such as beetroot. Granites may be satisfactory in guest rooms but marble is generally too porous.

Splash backs
A renovation or new kitchenette needs a splash back. Traditionally, the splash back was 300 mm of ceramic tiles but now it is used as a whole wall effect. It can be of any resilient material but is often best made of the same material as the bench top. The use of glass splashbacks has become a growing trend and whole walls of glass are great ways to solve the splash back problem and create a reflective surface that enlarges the room.

Cupboard Doors
As with bench tops, doors and drawer fronts in kitchens wear and age with use and require maintenance and cleaning. Some issues to consider regarding kitchen doors are; avoid sharp and square edges as these damage and chip easily; choose a material and style that matches the overall feel of the entire unit; consider the accessibility of drawers and remember it is around handles and edges where the most wear and dirt occurs. A clean and simple finish is easier to maintain and will add to a contemporary feel. Once again, as with bench tops there is an increasing trend toward commercial finishes.

ABS edging
This type of door finish is available in several edge profiles. U profile basically gives a rounded edge to both sides of the door. L profile is round on the front only. Dura-edge has a separate edging strip and is more likely to suffer long term water damage.

Vinyl wrapped
Generally, applied over a fibreboard substrate, vinyl wrapping provides a waterproof, reasonably hard wearing low maintenance surface. It can be moulded to the contours of detailed doors allowing for soft edges and comes in many colours and a range of finishes.

Laminate or melamine
These types of door finish are generally cheaper and have been used extensively in domestic kitchens. However these materials ‘date’ a kitchen and are prone to water damage at the edges and in general have a relatively short life.

Lighting
Effective lighting can make a kitchenette more functional and appear larger. Consider focused task lighting that is contained within the work area. Avoid flood lighting the area as this can often detract from the rest of the room.

Drawers
The above ideas also apply to drawer finishes and materials. It is worth considering using deep drawers instead of cupboards. It is usually only the front part of under bench cupboards that is used, which means the remainder of the space is wasted and usually becomes dirty over time. Drawers are easier to keep clean and lend to a contemporary feel in a kitchen, although they generally have a high maintenance cost.
Floors
If your room has a kitchenette, it is advisable to have a resilient floor surface to the area adjacent to cook tops and benches. Good quality vinyl is reasonably hard-wearing and easy to clean; ceramic tiles or floating timber floors are good solutions.

Appliances
The choice of appliances should be based on quality, energy efficiency and space saving features. Bar fridges should have a high star rating of at least 3.5 and be connected to a power saving system that turns them off when the room is vacant. Hot plates have a range of options with the most energy efficient being induction models, however, these are expensive and require special cookware. The ceramic glass types are the next most efficient and provide easy cleaning tops. Ironically, the old loop type hobs are just as efficient but have a shorter life and look inappropriate in this setting.

Codes
If a kitchenette is installed it will need to have an extraction/ventilation system that satisfies AS 1668, parts 1 and 2. Hot water should be delivered to taps and fixtures at 50 deg.C. Refer to AS 3500.4 and seek advice from a plumber or the plumbing department of your local council (see Box 9.1).

**Box 9.1: Adding a kitchenette**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item subtotal ($)</th>
<th>Section subtotal ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminaries</strong></td>
<td>Amount required for builder to establish on site, pay fees, overheads and profit</td>
<td>2,595</td>
<td>2,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modify bathroom wall, ceiling</strong></td>
<td>New wall timber framed reuse door, drop ceiling in bathroom for exhaust ducts</td>
<td>1,904</td>
<td>1,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alter bathroom</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom wall finishes</td>
<td>New linings to accommodate services, tiled throughout, painting</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shower screen</td>
<td>3 sided with pivot door</td>
<td>570</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New bathroom fittings</td>
<td>Shower only</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor finishes</td>
<td>Patch only</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette</td>
<td>Includes connections, installation and plumbing</td>
<td>4,390</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenette fittings</td>
<td>Microwave, refrigerator, ceramic glass cook top, range hood</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen bench unit</td>
<td>Bench and cupboards</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen overhead unit</td>
<td></td>
<td>850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td>Floating timber floor</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electrical work</strong></td>
<td>Modify light and power outlets</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demolition</strong></td>
<td>Demolish and remove where required</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other costs (notes only)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building applications</td>
<td>Determined by local council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and documentation fees</td>
<td>Architect and engineering fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per room with bathroom renovation</td>
<td></td>
<td>14,106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per room without bathroom renovation</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,716</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Costs are indicative only and depend on individual circumstances)
Box 9.1: (cont.)

- Splayed corner
- Roll out or swing out unit with additional benchtop
- Drawer unit
- Ventilation
- Microwave
- Ceramic glass cooktop
- Storage
- Glass splashback and granite counter
10. FURNITURE

Furniture includes loose and fitted or fixed items in a room. In surveys, guests and reports constantly refer to furniture as being an important part of their experience; they often want more seating and better workspaces. Guest rooms with a queen or king sized bed with an additional sofa, desk or table also appear to be in demand by some market groups.

Improving a dated room probably means changing furniture. It is important to understand current trends and work within your budget to maximise the effect in a room.

For more information refer to AAA Tourism Motel Guidelines, armchair/lounge seating and dining facilities.

Key Design Ideas

- **Cost.** Loose furniture and fixed furniture (built in joinery items) generally last 3.5 to 5 years, so it must be designed to look good, perform well and be refurbished or replaced when necessary.
- **Enhance the room.** As repeated often in this Guide, ensure that everything you do enhances the room overall in terms of its spaciousness, the lighting, and the apparent quality. Simplicity is often the key. Try to keep the floor and wall lines simple and strong.
- **Match the market.** The requirements for seating, desks, and tables varies by market segment. Ensure you understand what your guests need. Chapter 2 covers these issues in detail.
- **Keep maintenance and cleaning costs down.** Buying good quality furniture will keep ongoing costs down if the item is commercial and of proven quality. However, cost is not always a good indicator of robustness in a motel environment.

Trends

Furniture trends tend to be led by the 5 star properties and by high quality properties in large chains. They tend to have a theme and work within it but always with good design principles. Since the 1970s, the trend for the dresser, TV, drawer area has been from fixed joinery and wall units (or armoire), to more recently low dresser type units. The wall unit and low dresser units allow more cost effective replacement over shorter cycles. For instance, changing built-in units may be feasible only every 10 years (and even then the trend has been just to renew the surfaces) but changing loose furniture could be done every 5 years or less. The trend toward the lower dresser instead of the higher wall units is related to the need to streamline rooms, or look for cleaner more horizontal lines, particularly in smaller rooms.

Practical Ideas

Built-in furniture with a traditional wall of bench drawers, refrigerator, hospitality shelves and desk, robes and luggage racks, have at least 3 negative impacts. They provide a dated appearance, have a poor effect on room spaciousness and there is difficulty in upgrading their appearance. The AAAT awards points for various wardrobe sizes, which is measured as free space. If ironing boards, spare blankets and the like are kept in the wardrobe, this will not be included as ‘free space’.

- **Appearance.** The look, shape and form of the traditional built-in furniture clearly stems from the 1970s. They may still be functional but have an appearance that many guests feel is not contemporary or perhaps even acceptable. Adding new finishes such as painting or re-laminating, which appears to be a common approach, is not effective in many situations. Changing the colour or surface finish will not change the way the shapes and forms are perceived.
- **Effect on the room.** Maintaining a spacious feel is discussed in a previous chapter. Keeping furniture simple, letting the floor be seen underneath and keeping simple and strong wall/floor junctions are important factors. Traditional built-ins are probably the worst offenders in detracting from that important sense of space. The chapter on guest rooms shows how built-in joinery can help define a room rather than detract from it.
• **Upgrading.** An important consideration for fixed furniture should be a future renewal plan. This will influence the design, positioning of furniture in a room, the materials and construction methods used. Figure 10.1 shows an example.

![Figure 10.1: Use joinery designs that enable easy panel replacement](image)

A fixed joinery unit is placed on the back wall of the bathroom. It contains a refrigerator and glass-topped bench with glass shelves above it. The two adjoining sliding doors cover the hospitality items, microwave and luggage rack and robe space. The interiors of these cupboards should be white low-pressure laminate with a solid 2 mm ABS edging for robustness, easier cleaning and protection from chips. The mini-bar fridge has a fitted joinery door. All visible panels would be round edged custom made door panels that are extremely cost effective and easy to replace.

**Finishes And Materials**

Up-market properties tend to use natural timbers for loose furniture and expect to re-finish them about each 3-4 years. However, laminated furniture, if well designed tends to wear better and have a lower initial cost. Choosing lighter colours without strong patterns or strong wood grains can enhance the apparent size of the room. Edges should be rounded where possible to avoid sharp points and small areas or raised lips that may be hard to clean should be avoided.

**Loose Furniture**

The selection of loose furniture is so dependent on the look and feel you are trying to create that it is impossible to comment in detail here. However, some general principles should be considered.

- **Try to use lighter timber or panelling colours.** There may be a trend in up-market hotels back toward darker furniture, but in smaller rooms stick with lighter colours.
- **Use commercial quality fabrics with darker colours.** Select all materials for the lowest cost over time, that is, use high weight fabrics with the lowest maintenance requirements.
- **Try to keep the items off the floor.** Selecting furniture with raised legs allows easier cleaning, stops bump damage from vacuum cleaners and helps the lines of the room.
- **Use benches.** Where practical, install benches rather than solid units that extend to the floor.
- **Avoid placing desks so that the user faces a wall.** Facing away from the wall makes a desk more useful for other simple tasks. If it is well placed, others can sit around it. Make sure it is near a wall for data or phone outlets.
- **Consider shelves rather than drawers.** Sometimes you need drawers, however, they do have a higher maintenance cost over time.
- **Consider using flat panel TVs.** These will greatly improve the amount of bench space, although it is unlikely they could be afforded except in major renovations.

**Codes**

There are no codes relevant to this section, however, do consider using 'Furntech' approved furniture or furniture tested and marked as having passed pertinent standards. These furniture standards cover safety and longevity.
11. FINISHES AND LIGHTING

Wall Finishes
Wall finishes must be selected not just on initial cost but also on the expected life and maintenance costs. Most interior paints, have a life of around 5 years or more depending on the quality of the paint, but retouch or recover times will probably be closer to 2 years. Many other wall finishes are available but not practical or cheap enough to replace or refinish on the short cycles needed. Very high wear materials are likely to be removed for aesthetic reasons before they wear out, unless they have a simple colour and timeless appeal. A material with a strong pattern or colour will have a shorter life.

Always choose high quality washable acrylic paints, as they provide a longer life, better resistance to stains, marks and cleaning. Use low sheen or flat paints and check for mould or damp as this may indicate problems that must be corrected before painting. This is particularly the case if the damp is on a wall that backs onto a bathroom.

Glass has become a popular walling material but should be used in a small proportion compared to paint finishes. Fixed correctly, it is extremely resilient and useful as skirting as well as wall panels, particularly in bathrooms, and for splashbacks.

Timber can also be used in small areas such as a feature component behind the bed head. Veneers are cost effective and can be refinished or touched up fairly cost effectively. Always use a good quality polyurethane or epoxy finish.

Wet Area Finishes
Wet area finishes require careful consideration. The substrate (what the finish is applied to) is just as important as the finish. A wet area plasterboard or cement sheet is essential, as are proper seals and wall/floor junctions. Without proper substrates and preparation, the finish will fail much earlier. Ceramic tiles or glass give walls depth and increase the sense of space; costs are similar and both provide a clean crisp look, although glass provides a more modern aesthetic.

Most finishes in damp environments have shorter lives and resilient materials need the joints at fittings and wall/floor junctions to be re-caulked every 1 or 2 years. Table 11.1 covers some issues relating specifically to wet areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Ceramic Tiles</th>
<th>Glass</th>
<th>Vinyl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Select tiles generally 150 mm x 150 mm or larger and of good quality. Tile to at least 1,800 mm above floor.</td>
<td>Use ceramic backed glass as recommended by a manufacturer. A wide range of colours and translucencies is available.</td>
<td>Wide range of colours, including cushioned back and soft feel walling. May have an institutional feel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>Grout requires re-doing every few years; any caulking should be replaced every 2 years. Moist air will encourage growths in joints. Individual tiles can be replaced.</td>
<td>Easy to maintain but entire sheets must be replaced if damaged. Most glass is laminated or toughened.</td>
<td>Welded joints are impermeable and walls can be patched. Shower recess should be made with purpose vinyl mouldings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substrate</td>
<td>On mortar bed on solid walls, but may be better on cement sheet or wet area plasterboard on furring channels to provide better waterproofing and acoustic control if needed. Only use battened fixing if structural movement is suspected.</td>
<td>Best on furring channels fixed to wall.</td>
<td>On cement sheet or wet area plasterboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junctions</td>
<td>Use tile skirtings.</td>
<td>If continues to floor may have problems with floor slope. Use colour-matched silicone.</td>
<td>Continuous coving at floor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Floor Finishes**

**Carpet**

Carpet should be the first choice for guest rooms. Only commercial carpets should be used and nylon is preferable to wool based on cost and wear. Always ensure the carpet meets flammability and smoke indexes required by building codes. Nylon has excellent wearing characteristics, and abrasion resistance; solution dyed nylon is also resistant to sunlight fading and cleaning chemicals. Solution dyeing is preferred because the colour pigment is inserted into the melted polymers during extrusion. Select a colour that will not show the soiling prevalent in your area and use low, or no, patterns and texture.

**Timber**

Floating timber floors are popular and may have a place in some guest rooms but must be selected to fit the overall feel that you are trying to create. Installation costs will be similar and a range of commercial, high indentation resistant laminated finishes are available. These floors are noisier and may require that rooms have additional acoustic control; in addition the daily maintenance schedule should be carefully examined as they may require mopping as well as vacuuming or dry mopping.

**Lighting**

Good lighting is an essential part of making any room look inviting and spacious. It also needs to be functional and cost effective to operate. Accent lighting gives spaces a sense of depth and dimension and can be used to draw attention to special features in a space and set objects apart from their backgrounds.

Ambient light refers to a room’s general lighting. Aim for a low glare soft light that fills the entire room. This light generally comes from ceiling mounted lights or wall mounted lights. Ceiling mounted lights don’t need to be a single source fluorescent. Flush lights (set into the ceiling) are preferred but ensure they won’t allow moisture into the ceiling space if fitted in a bathroom. Keep glare to a minimum by using recessed fittings or fully covered fittings. Don’t use the older approach lighting soffits or pelmets as they look out of date.

Check the energy usage, the life of the bulbs and the work required to change a bulb.

**Light Colour**

This is the apparent temperature colour of a light source and is crucial to the way a space is perceived. A cool-bluish light from a fluorescent tube will present a bright, light feel; while a yellowish light from a halogen fitting will impart a warmer more intimate feel. If using fluorescents look for high temperature colours. Light manufacturers such as Thorn and GE can offer advice on the best choice of lights to balance colour and energy use.

**Task Lighting**

Mirror or desk lighting needs to be bright but not glaring. The best mirror lighting surrounds the face with light. This provides light from all sides that minimises shadows under the chin. This does not mean that you have to use ‘makeup room’ style lighting. Desk or bedside lighting must be chosen to avoid shadows being cast over the task area. Mirror lighting must be well shielded to reduce glare. Some low voltage lights can be mounted directly onto the joinery and require only a 20 mm depth.

**Energy For Lighting**

Lighting is one of the largest energy consumers in guest rooms and should be considered during any refurbishment. Researchers have found, for instance, that bathroom lights consume more than 75 percent of the energy used in lighting guest rooms. This can be reduced significantly by using motion sensors (with long delay times so as not to
The selection of lamp types is another important factor. Table 11.2 shows the relative efficiency of different light sources. A compact fluorescent light draws about 60% less power, and last 5 times longer, than an incandescent bulb. However, as noted previously guest comfort also determines lamp choice. Often halogen fittings can have their life extended considerably by using a dimmer with a lower preset maximum setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lamp type</th>
<th>Efficacy (light output per watt of power)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incandescent (GLS)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halogen (low voltage)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compact fluorescent</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubular fluorescent</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. **EXISTING BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND EFFECT ON DECISIONS**

Look carefully at the construction of your building, as each construction type has positive and negative aspects that will influence refurbishment decisions. Wall constructions tend to be one of four types:

1. Solid brick or block (without cavity);
2. Cavity brick or block;
3. Brick veneer;
4. Framed and clad.

The major aspects of each type are listed in Table 12.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Cavity brick/block</th>
<th>Brick veneer</th>
<th>Solid brick</th>
<th>Timber framed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acoustics</strong></td>
<td>Generally meets all current acoustic requirements</td>
<td>Generally meets all current and planned acoustic requirements</td>
<td>Probably will not meet the current requirements when used as dividing wall unless battened and lined</td>
<td>Will require battening and acoustic lining when used as dividing wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demolition or moving</strong></td>
<td>Difficult to demolish particularly if supporting concrete floors above</td>
<td>Generally on external wall of single level buildings only; Relatively easily removed</td>
<td>Difficult to demolish or move if load bearing; Non-load bearing walls easily removed</td>
<td>Removal of both internal and external walls is generally straightforward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electrical</strong></td>
<td>Cables can be re-routed through cavity to relocate switches or lights</td>
<td>Generally easy relocation of electrical fittings</td>
<td>Difficult to re-route cabling; Consider rewiring with wall re-lining</td>
<td>Generally easy relocation of electrical fittings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plumbing</strong></td>
<td>Difficult to relocate water pipes</td>
<td>Generally easy relocation of water pipes; Wall linings usually require replacement</td>
<td>Difficult to relocate water pipes</td>
<td>Generally easy relocation of water pipes; Wall linings usually require replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finishes</strong></td>
<td>No difficulties - often best to batten new linings</td>
<td>No difficulties - cheaper to leave existing plasterboard in place</td>
<td>No difficulties - often best to batten new linings</td>
<td>No difficulties - cheaper to leave existing plasterboard in place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Internal Alterations**

When considering an internal renovation refurbishment or re-fit, your construction type will also determine some of the options you may have. If your motel was built during the 1970s, it is likely that the external walls will be brick veneer (single storey) or cavity brick or block (multi-level). Internal walls will most likely be exposed or painted single brick or block. Non-load bearing walls will probably be timber frame with plasterboard cladding.

Figure 12.1 shows some typical construction types and where they typically occur.
If the internal walls are brick and you want a more contemporary look and feel, a cost effective solution is to batten the brickwork and line with plasterboard. This approach also provides opportunities to conceal services.

Figure 12.2 shows how battening a brick wall will provide enough space to re-route services such as plumbing and wiring. Brick veneer construction will also allow for easy re-routing of services, particularly if the internal lining is to be replaced. Figure 12.3 shows a cross-section of a typical brick veneer wall.
Some motels have exposed concrete ceilings that can be very unsightly if past wiring has meant that the conduits are exposed of the concrete soffit. There are options for improving this unsightly look but these depend on the existing ceiling height. The minimum requirement for habitable rooms is 2,400 mm, whilst for kitchens, bathrooms and corridors the ceiling height can be 2,100 mm (the entry lobby is considered a corridor in this application). By lining or suspending the ceiling, in say the bathroom or by constructing a bulkhead over the kitchen and entrance area, most additional services can be concealed while adding to the feel of a room. Figure 12.4 shows how services such as wiring, plumbing and ducting can be concealed in a bulkhead or ceiling space.
When moving or reconfiguring a bathroom, services or waste outlets can be problematic depending on your construction type. Figure 12.5 shows some options on how floor drains and toilet outlets can be dealt with.

Ground floor apartments with a sub-floor space are generally straightforward when re-routing pipe-work. If the unit has a concrete slab directly on the ground, waste outlets will need to be either re-routed through an exterior wall or if possible cut into the slab itself. The latter generally doesn’t allow for enough fall on the pipes and can be difficult to inspect and maintain.

Moving bathroom and kitchen plumbing in upper level units depends on the ceiling height of the rooms below. If there is enough space for a bulkhead or suspended ceiling, services can be re-routed to a service duct.

It should be noted that a bulkhead or suspended ceiling that conceals plumbing from the unit above would need to be acoustically separated to meet code requirements. This can be achieved by lining the bulkhead with 2 x 16 mm sheets of plasterboard. Access will need to be made for repairs and maintenance.
Figure 12.5: Altering floor drains and WC’s
13. BUILDING CODES

One potential constraint to upgrading or renovating existing properties is the requirement to meet contemporary building standards. As properties age coincident with a reduction in quality, are they still compliant with contemporary building codes? Building codes are not static and are often amended to reflect changes in community expectations or improvements in building science. Although codes are not retrospective, there are a number of trigger points that will require a property, when being upgraded, to meet the codes in full.

The Australian Building Code

The Building Code of Australia (BCA) was introduced in 1990 in an attempt to bring together the individual building codes of each State and Territory. At times each local government in Australia could enact its own by-laws resulting in hundreds of differing building codes and regulations. In 1970, the first national uniform building code was published and States and Territories were encouraged to adopt the code and change some provisions as required. Most authorities that adopted the code made substantial changes to meet what they considered to be local needs. The forerunner of the current regulations was developed nationally in 1990 and included only minor regional variations.

The revised building code was published in 1996 (called the BCA96). That version was adopted by all States and Territories between July 1997 and January 1998. Since 2004, the BCA is updated annually. The BCA is brought into operation by legislation in each State and Territory. This legislation calls up the BCA to fulfil any technical requirements, which have to be satisfied in order to gain building approval.

How Do the Building Codes Affect Alteration and Refurbishment?

Properties that were constructed prior to the publication of the current code could be deemed non-compliant in their present state. Although the BCA does not operate retrospectively, existing buildings will need to satisfy the building codes in relation to the following circumstances.

Change of Function

A change of function may trigger the change from one BCA class to another class; it may also trigger the change to a ‘specified building’ under most state based general fire regulations. If the function changes, the implication is that a new set of building regulations applies to the building as the level of risk to occupants changes with each class. Although a general refurbishment or upgrade is unlikely to change the function or class of an existing building, any new work is a likely source of other issues.

Renovations and Refurbishment

Basically any planned work that requires a building application must satisfy the current building codes. This could mean that the refurbishment work will trigger a requirement for the entire building to meet the relevant codes. This is particularly the case for older buildings.

New Work to Alter or Make Repairs to an Existing Building

All work must comply with current codes unless a building surveyor deems that the risk to occupants will not be substantially affected. Some States require that any structural repair or renewal of more than 25% of a floor, wall, roof or ceiling area will need to have a building permit.
Triggers that Could Require an Entire Building Upgrade

The entire building will need bringing up to current standards if:
- The building work encompasses 50% of the property area; or
- The new work plus the work carried out over the previous three years is 59% or greater; or
- There is a significant increase in property value or change in the nature of asset due to the alteration.

Change of Legislation

State governments have previously amended Acts to retrospectively force building operators to upgrade their buildings to meet current building codes. These legislative changes have been generally for class 3 buildings, backpacker hostels, nursing homes and similar types, and as a result of catastrophic fires.

Lapse in Accommodation Licence

Tasmania is the only State that has licensing regulations for tourist accommodation operators. If an accommodation licence lapses, or a new licence is required for an existing building, the building function, and subsequently the building class, is deemed to have changed. This is often the case when demand dictates that a hotel that has been predominantly an entertainment venue, reverts to an accommodation property.

Building Issues

There are many specific issues that will require code compliance when any significant renovation or refurbishment is carried out. The following issues relate in particular to buildings constructed before 1990.

Acoustic Separation

The BCA requires acoustic control between units and between units and public areas. Prior to the adoption of BCA90, no acoustic control requirements existed. This has been exacerbated with the 2005 release of the BCA. Currently up to 95% of 3-4 star motels do not comply with current acoustic separation levels. Table 13.1 gives an indication of required acoustic separation levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wall or floor</th>
<th>Rw (Weighted sound reduction index)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between units</td>
<td>Rw 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between units and public areas and hallways</td>
<td>Rw 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between a unit living area &amp; bathroom in another unit</td>
<td>Rw 50 with discontinuous construction (i.e. cavity wall)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13.2 shows indicative construction systems required to meet the Rw rating. Almost no existing motel building would meet these criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cavity Brick (2 leaves of brick) with insulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single clay brick wall with stud wall, plasterboard and insulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 mm block wall with 13 mm cement render both faces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber walls with two rows of studs (with 30 mm gap and insulation), plasterboard both sides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fire Separation
The BCA requires fire separation levels that depend on the type of construction required. Construction types are dictated by number of floors; structural materials used and exit distances. Construction Type A demands a greater level of fire separation and construction Type C lower. For hotels and motels of building class 3, the construction type can be A, B or C going from high levels of fire separation for a type A to lower levels for a type C. Generally the taller the building the higher the required level of fire rating.

Fire Protection - Egress Paths
Fire separation between units is not likely to pose a problem in any situation. In most cases fire separation between units will already meet the current codes. The main area of non-compliance is an exit route that passes in front of the door or window to another unit. In this case, doors are required to be solid core 35 mm thick and have automatic closers; and windows must be more than 1,500 mm above the floor level. Up to 35% of units have non-compliant doors and 25% have windows facing egress paths that are below 1,500 mm from the floor level. Figure 13.1 shows typical areas that would be affected should codes be made retrospective.

Figure 13.1: Typical areas that would be affected should codes be made retrospective

Stairs, Handrails and Balustrades
In BCA96, handrail height requirements were altered to be 1,000 mm above the floor. Almost all pre-1996 buildings would have the older required height of 900 mm above floor level. In addition the allowable opening sizes in balustrades were altered from 125 mm to 150 mm.
Stair handrail heights increased at the same time as well as the design of run-on and run-off sections of handrails. Almost all upper level units will need handrail and stair handrail upgrades. The number of properties that would require balustrade modifications is estimated at 50%.

Glazing
Changes in the requirements for the safety of glass may also force some building operators to replace glass doors and full height windows. Any glassed opening that can be mistaken for a doorway generally must have laminated glass installed.
Standards Australia states that property owners with glass installed prior to the 1994 release of AS1288 may be exposing themselves to greater risk of litigation and damages if glass on their property is found to be unsafe or non-compliant with mandated Standards.
It is likely that many older hotels and motels will have glass, particularly on units that have entire glazed walls, which will need replacement.
Implications

In many cases a planned refurbishment or renovation will require many changes to the existing building in order to satisfy the current codes. Additional to the issues mentioned above is the potential reduction in natural lighting and views. For example, if a unit has the bathroom at the back, (the opposite end to the entry) it is likely that most of the glazing is on the entrance end of the unit. If the entrance balcony passes other units on the level, the requirement for any windows in the front wall to be 1,500 mm off the floor, will result, in many cases, in a significant reduction in daylight penetration and views. It is also possible that the window area will not be the required 5% of unit floor area required for ventilation.
14. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

As older style properties begin to refurbish it is important that an investment in technology is
seriously considered.

The following are key information technology applications that need to be evaluated
when deciding on refurbishment or renovation.

Security

Security, both of visitors’ belongings and for their personal safety, can be addressed in a
number of ways.

Firstly, with the large percentage of females travelling on their own, and the ever
increasing threats of terrorism and burglars, motels need to consider moving to electronic
door locks (EDL) rather than the old manual key. EDLs offer a more secure environment for
motel guest room doors and, more importantly, provide a full electronic audit of all
movements in and out of the room in the event of any theft of items from the room.
Furthermore, these same systems can control who has access to motel common areas such
as gyms, pool areas, and car parks and even lift access to floors.

Secondly, another item worth considering is an in-room safe. These days, many guests,
whether travelling for business or leisure, carry valuable personal possessions like laptops
(make sure the safe is big enough to store a laptop), digital cameras, video players and
apple IPOD’s, and need to secure these items in their rooms. An in-room safe provides a
perfect way of meeting this requirement.

Energy Management

Security systems can also convey other benefits like reduction in energy costs. The magnetic
striped cards that are used as part of the EDL system can also be used to control the usage of
power in guest rooms by installing energy saving units whereby the insertion or removal of
these magnetic striped cards on entry or exit from the guest room turns on or off the lights, air-
conditioning and other appliances, so reducing power consumption.

Property Management Systems (PMS)

How old is your current Front Office System? Does it have the following features?
• Is it a ‘Windows’ based product?
• Has it the capability of being linked to your website to allow online bookings?
• Is it interfaced to your PABX, Point of Sale to facilitate transmission of charges to guest
  accounts?
• Can information in the system be easily exported to Microsoft Office products, namely
  ‘Word’ (for marketing letters etc.) or ‘Excel’ (spreadsheets)?
• Do the reports give you a clear daily picture of your motel’s performance?

If the answers to these questions are mostly ‘no’, then perhaps it is time that you looked at
investing in a new PMS system. There are many suppliers in the marketplace but it is advisable
to select a vendor who specialises in properties of your size.

Broadband or High-Speed Internet Access (HSIA) in Guest Rooms

High-speed Internet access is now considered by many as ‘an essential guest room amenity’
and without it many business travellers will not even consider your motel. Today, broadband
is more than just incremental revenue; it is strategic and as important as the telephone.

Business travellers are increasingly dependent on Internet-based resources whilst away
from the office. Already, 75% of business travellers use laptops all the time, and over 62%
access the Internet from hotels with an average log-on time of 30 minutes.

In a refurbishment program, it is time to consider investing in the necessary cabling (Cat5e
or Cat 6) for every guest room to enable HSIA to be installed.
There are a number of specialist vendors in the market offering vendor finance and revenue share models but it is crucial to study the terms of the agreement and not to be locked into long contracts.

**Wireless (or Wi-Fi)**

In Australia, wireless is on the way to becoming a multi-million dollar industry over the next few years, and it has already attracted thousands of users. Motels have a unique opportunity to increase the value of their core products and services by providing a wireless infrastructure particularly in public areas, like in the lobby, conference and function areas, for customers to connect to the internet, check email and utilise corporate applications.

Ideally, wireless is worth considering in public areas in conjunction with fixed broadband connection in the guest room, and if this approach is adopted, all the options will be covered for Internet savvy guests into the future.

**In-Room Guest Entertainment**

Over the past few years motel operators/owners, especially in the 4-5 star market segment, have been considering how they can offer a guest room environment that equals, if not exceeds, what consumers experience at home.

So what in-room technology do guests want bearing in mind the greater expectations of both leisure and business clients?

- **LCD or Plasma televisions** for guest rooms is now the next thing. The ‘wow factor’ combined with great content is what guests are looking for. Today, one of the hottest selling consumer electronic items is a flat screen Plasma or LCD Screen as part of a full home entertainment system. Why wouldn’t guests who have these systems at home expect to see them in motel guest rooms?

- **Digital entertainment choices are expanding.** Guests have shown a real liking for on-demand in-room movies and, today, expectations have increased to include games, music, shorter form options like previously aired TV episodes and video magazine content. Now guests want the value added convenience of pause, skip and save features as they have at home with their DVD and CD players. There are vendors in the marketplace who are willing to finance these systems on a revenue-share model.

**Summary**

If you are intending to refurbish your motel rooms, you should seriously consider investing in broadband and the next generation of in-room guest technology that incorporates flat screen plasma or LCD screens combined with Digital Video on Demand Systems and more advanced stereo systems than the standard clock radio.

If you want to gain a competitive advantage, it is important to realise that the Next Generation of IT savvy business travellers, who are the main adopters of new technology, will be likely to patronise motels with technologies that are designed to enhance their overall experience while using the facilities. We are not far away from these types of guests deciding on their choice of motel based on the technology that is installed in individual motels.

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15. CASE STUDIES

Although a refurbishment of a motel can be a costly and disruptive exercise, it can have very substantial financial benefits for the motelier that far exceed the cost of the exercise.

The following four short case studies of actual moteliers who have undertaken refurbishment programs in recent years highlight the benefits that can be derived from these investments.

Case Study 1: Comfort Inn on Raglan, Warrnambool, Victoria

Contact: Roger Whyte, Manager
Phone: (03) 5562 2755
Website: www.comfortinnonraglan.com.au

The Comfort Inn on Raglan, in Warrnambool, is part of a worldwide network of accommodation facilities under the Comfort Inn banner. Located on a principal thoroughfare in this ocean-side city in south-western Victoria, the Comfort Inn on Raglan has a largely business clientele; company representatives, visiting executives and corporate guests and visitors. The Inn also has a significant weekend leisure clientele but when a refurbishment was considered it was the needs of corporate guests that were targeted. To serve their visitors the Inn features 21 studio-spa, executive and standard rooms.

The refurbishment took place in 2004 and the Inn was closed for three months while the major renovations took place. The renovations have not been finished as yet and one or two rooms are being completed at a time. The Inn is at pains to minimise the external evidence of renovations, however, as it is believed this can deter custom.

As Roger Whyte, Manager, says, ‘The facility was pretty basic beforehand. We made massive changes inside and outside. All the rooms were gutted and stripped to the bare walls and the whole building was re-plumbed, re-wired and re-roofed. Everything went in brand new and we modelled the changes on the requirements set out in AAA standards.’ The improvement included the restaurant and reception areas, gardens, even down to new signage. The building was completely rendered and painted in modern tones.

The response has been ‘all positive’, says Roger Whyte, ‘The tariffs have been lifted in the new rooms. We’ve lifted the STAR rating from 3 to 4. We’re picking up new business clientele and in this corner of Victoria, where representatives might once have made stops in three different towns over three days, we’re now getting people stay the whole time with us and commute out and back to their clients daily.’ Whyte attributes this mainly to the renovations but in part to the decision to include wireless broadband in the rooms. This enables people to access their laptops, a boon for corporate guests. The refurbishment was costly but it is paying off in improved tariffs, new custom and extended stays by regular customers.

Case Study 2: Pioneer Way Motel, Faulconbridge, New South Wales

Contact: Carolyn South, Manager
Phone: (02) 4751 2194
Website: www.bluemts.com.au/pioneerway

This is an independent motel in one of the heartland holiday destinations of Australia, the Blue Mountains. Pioneer Way has a mixed clientele; it gets its share of business visitors during the week but it can often be busier on weekends with leisure groups. It is one of the only motels around for some distance. The motel features 20 guest rooms, all of approximately the same
size but with different set-ups to suit diverse requirements.

New owners took over the motel in 2003 and at that stage its condition was, ‘Very, tired, very old, very 70s. It was difficult to sell the rooms’, says Carolyn South, Manager. The first decision was to demolish the restaurant and replace it with three new guest rooms. While the restaurant was operative and profitable it was decided a better use of renovation funds would be to provide new accommodation facilities. The owners were well aware that guests could find cafes and food outlets within walking distance and licensed clubs and hotels are not far away.

The three new rooms were completed first and since then rooms have been refurbished two at a time. As they are worked on, the rooms are completely stripped down to the bare walls and rebuilt with new and very modern bathrooms and facilities, new walls and new, mainly free-standing bedroom furniture. The motel has had an outside rendering and repaint and the roof replaced. The venue is close to a main road and the railway so it was decided to replace the windows with thicker, more soundproof glass. This has made a noticeable difference to guest comfort and overall the motel has risen to 3½ stars in the STAR ratings.

From an old and tired red brick facility, it’s now, ‘Beautiful, modem,’ says Carolyn. ‘These days it’s a pleasure to show people the rooms. Some old customers can’t believe the changes. They just say, “It’s lovely!” Mountain tourism has been in a bit of a trough lately but we seem to have increased our clientele as a result of the changes. It most definitely has increased the overall value of the motel itself.’

Case Study 3: Bali Hi Motel, Tuncurry, New South Wales

Contact: Andrew Mierendorff, Owner
Phone: (02) 6554 6537
Website: www.mypage.tsn.cc/bali_hi

Located in the town of Tuncurry in the coastal region of north-eastern New South Wales, Bali Hi Motel is situated on one of the principal north-south transit routes of Australia. Traffic volume through the community is significant as tourists ply their way back and forth from Victoria, Queensland and other parts of New South Wales. The Bali Hi is not the only motel in town; there are bigger venues that provide for more corporate accommodation. The Bali Hi clientele is mainly visitors ‘travelling north’, and workers from local construction companies involved in ongoing and extensive roadworks in the area.

The Bali Hi Motel is L-shaped with 14 rooms. It was built in the 1960s and when the new owners took over in 2003, it had deteriorated severely. Very little maintenance work had been done and, as Andrew Mierendorff, one of the new owners says, ‘It was in a state of total disrepair when we got here. We had to close it down for two weeks just to clean it. The facilities just weren’t good enough.’ Consequently, the motel was attracting a rather transient population; people just looking for a bed for the night.

As a result, refurbishment was a high priority. ‘We looked at what we’d invested, what we needed to get back, and considered how we were to do that. But we didn’t want to go over
the top with the new décor. What we wanted was a neat, tidy, clean, comfortable, well-presented venue - a “professional” motel’, says Andrew.

The Mierendorffs have been taking it one room at a time as funds have become available. It has meant completely stripping every room and putting it back new, even down to putting in larger water pipes so that guests ‘could actually get the hot water’. The motel was painted outside; the car parking area was bituminised; the pool surrounds upgraded and a new sign installed as well.

The results have been significant and justified the hard work and cost of the restoration. The STAR rating went from 1 to 3. Room tariffs have been increased by 50 per cent in most cases. More importantly, guests are now staying over for more than one night and the steady clientele has been boosted. The property has also increased significantly in value. As Andrew says, ‘One of our clients commented, “The rooms are lovely. It’s clean and fresh and comfortable. It’s not just another motel room.” And that’s what we were aiming at.’

Case Study 4: Grove Motel, Cairns, Queensland

Contact: Barbara Lamont, Co-owner
Phone: (07) 4051 4499

The Grove Motel is in the Queensland city of Cairns, one of the principal holiday destination areas of Australia - with a significant international visitation as well. The motel is located between the airport and the central business district. The clientele is mixed but nowadays with a strong local attachment; people coming in from the Tableland country to the west, sales representatives working the North Queensland coastal route, and visitors from the south booked in by local people. The Grove sees itself as serving local people with its modern restaurant and function rooms.

The Grove, a substantial motel with 31 rooms, was built around 1970. The day after the new owners took over in early 2003, the local council condemned and closed the restaurant. That was an early warning of changes that had to be made to bring the motel and its facilities up to standard. ‘It was a totally derelict hangout with a bad reputation, just unbelievable’, remembers Barbara Lamont, one of the new co-owners. ‘And the clients could be as problematic as the premises.’

The decision was made to refurbish one floor at a time of the motel’s two storeys. That meant that half the rooms would be unusable but with a venue of that size it was believed the income would be adequate for the time being. When one floor was finished and ready, the other one was commenced. The rooms were completely gutted. Everything was replaced. New bathrooms with new tile floors, new walls, beams, ceilings and lighting and new furniture; it was a major operation. And it wasn’t just the interior. The exterior was improved and the garden and surrounds were brought up-to-date and new fountains installed. An additional floor was added in one section to include a type of Queenslander safari bar and open deck, which has become very popular with visitors and locals alike. The restaurant is now an award-winning venue and attracts a regular and dedicated clientele.

The results have been very encouraging. Tariffs have been increased, the customer base has become very loyal. Ninety four per cent of customers are returnees, only one in fifty is someone who hasn’t been to the motel before. The motel is now displaying a 3½ STAR rating and is looking to improve that as soon as possible. The refurbishments have paid off.
APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

DESIGN AND CONSULTING PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Selecting the correct consultant is important. Choose, where possible, consultants skilled in the type of work that you wish to perform. Always try to determine the outcomes that are important to you and your marketing stance before engaging consultants and keep the renovation and design focused on those outcomes. The following organisations can offer support in locating consultants.

THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ARCHITECTS (ACA)
The ACA represent architectural practices throughout Australia. The national association has an online ‘find an Architect’ service.
Web: aca.sitesuite.ws/
Tel: (03) 9650 8577
Fax: (03) 9650 8577
Email: nat@aca.org.au

THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF BUILDING SURVEYORS (AIBS)
The AIBS is the peak professional body representing building surveyors in Australia. They evaluate and assess plans, conduct inspections and issue building permits. They have offices in each state.
Web: www.aibs.com.au
Tel: (02) 99603475
Fax: (02) 99603488
Email: admin@aibs.com.au

THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA (ACEA)
ACEA firms provide services on matters that include building, communications and IT, project management, environmental management, water engineering, electrical, geotechnical, energy, and acoustical engineering. They provide an online ‘search for an engineer’ service.
Tel: (02) 9922 4711
Fax: (02) 9957 2484
Email: acea@acea.com.au

THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (AILA)
The AILA is the peak professional body for Australia’s professionally qualified landscape architects throughout Australia. A landscape architect listing service and a guide to selecting a professional landscape architect is available from their web site.
Web: www.aila.org.au/
Tel: (02) 6248 9970
Fax: (02) 6249 7337
Email: admin@aila.org.au

THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF QUANTITY SURVEYORS (AIQS)
AIQS is the national body of the profession of Quantity Surveyors. Quantity Surveyors estimate and monitor building construction costs, from the feasibility stage of a project through to the completion of the construction period. Their web site has nationwide ‘find a member’ service.
Tel: (02) 6282 2222
Fax: (02) 6285 2427
Email: contact@aiqs.com.au
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS (RAIA)
RAIA is the peak body representing architects in Australia. Their website contains a lot of useful information including a guide to selecting an architect, a national building designers database and a ‘find an architect’ search. The RAIA has offices in all states and is the parent body for the Archicentre advisory service.
Tel: (02) 6273 1548
Fax: (02) 6273 1953
Email: national@raia.com.au

DESIGN INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA (DIA)
The DIA is a national organisation of the design professions in Australia. Relevant disciplines covered include Interior Design, Interior Architecture, Graphic Design, Visual Communication and Furniture design. Their website provides a referral service.
Web: www.dia.org.au/
Tel: (03) 8662 5490
Fax: (03) 8662 5358
Email: admin@design.org.au

THE PLANNING INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA (PIA)
The PIA is the peak body representing professions involved in planning. Consultant planners can assist in interpreting and working within local, national and state planning regulations. The PIA has an online consultants directory.
Web: www.planning.org.au
Tel: (02) 6262 5933
Fax: (02) 6262 9970
Email: info@planning.org.au

CODES AND STANDARDS

THE AUSTRALIAN BUILDING CODES BOARD (ABCB)
The ABCB is the national body that develops and publishes the Building Code of Australia (BCA). Their website contains information on the BCA, changes that have taken place, and explanatory documents for many aspects. Copies of the BCA are available to purchase through the ABCB.
Web: www.abcb.gov.au
Tel: 1300 857 522
Fax: (02) 6293 8388
Email: bca@abcb.gov.au

STANDARDS AUSTRALIA
Standards Australia is the body responsible for developing and maintaining standards in almost all aspects of building manufacture and business. They provide an online service for the purchase of relevant standards and maintain offices in most states.
Web: www.standards.org.au/
Tel: 1300 65 46 46
Fax: 1300 65 49 49
Email: sales@sai-global.com
FURNITURE

**The Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute (Furntech)**
Furntech is an independent not-for-profit technical organisation providing standards, testing, product certification and research for buyers and sellers of furniture in Australia and New Zealand. Their website provides information on certified furniture.
Web: www.furntech.org.au
Tel: (03) 6326 6155
Fax: (03) 6326 3090
Email: info@furntech.org.au

BUILDERS

Builders are required to be registered and insured in all states. The HIA and the MBA are two bodies with national membership.

**Master Builders Association (MBA)**
The MBA is the major Australian building and construction industry association. They have branches in all states and provide a ‘Find a Master Builder in Your Area’ service on their website.
Web: www.masterbuilders.com.au
Tel: (02) 6202 8888
Fax: (02) 6202 8877
Email: enquiries@masterbuilders.com.au

**Housing Industry Association (HIA)**
HIA is the voice of Australia’s home building industry. HIA represents the interests of the whole housing industry - from trade contractors, builders, and suppliers through to product manufacturers.
Tel: (02) 6249 6366
Fax: (02) 6257 5658
Email: enquiry@hia.asn.au

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

**Twinshare: Tourism Accommodation and the Environment**
A resource directory covering a wide range of issues that need to be considered throughout the development process of building an accommodation facility. It features examples of commercial success based on sound environmental practices. Provided by the Office of National Tourism.
Web: twinshare.crc.tourism.com.au

**Australian Greenhouse Office**
Department of the Environment and Heritage website provides some practical information on energy and resources reduction.
Web: www.greenhouse.gov.au
INDUSTRY GROUPS

THE HOTEL AND MOTEL ACCOMMODATION ASSOCIATION (HMAA)
HMAA is recognised as the leading authority in the Accommodation sector within Australia. HMAA represents accommodation establishments ranging from 5 Star hotels and motels to bed and breakfasts.

AAA TOURISM (AAAT)
AAA Tourism is the national tourism body of Australia’s auto clubs, managing the national STAR Rating Scheme.
Web: www.aaatourism.com.au
Tel: (03) 8601 2200
Fax: (03) 8601 2222
Email: listings@aaatourism.com.au

THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND RESOURCES (DITR)
The DITR provides a useful website with a wide range of tourism industry research and statistics.
Web: www.industry.gov.au

TOURISM AUSTRALIA
Tourism Australia is the Federal Government statutory authority responsible for international and domestic tourism marketing as well as the delivery of research and forecasts for the sector.
Web: www.tourism.australia.com
References

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Glossary

**accent lighting.** Directional lighting to emphasise a particular object or its immediate background.

**ambient lighting.** Lighting throughout an area that produces general illumination.

**amorphous space.** A space without any specific shape or focus.

**backflow prevention device.** Safety device used to stop polluted water from flowing into the building plumbing system.

**balustrade.** Framed enclosure between handrail and floor level at the open side of a stair, ramp, landing, balcony etc.

**batten.** Timber or steel framing piece of small cross-sectional dimensions used as support for wall or roof lining.

**BCA.** Building Code of Australia, enacted set of uniform technical requirements and standards regulating building industry in all States and Territories of Australia, its principal objective is to maintain structural sufficiency, fire safety, health and amenity of buildings.

**brick veneer wall.** External wall type, usually built as timber or steel frame, which has an external (non-structural) protective layer of bricks or blocks.

**bulkhead.** Part of a ceiling lowered to cover projecting elements of structure or services.

**capital refurbishment.** Renovation, refurbishment or work intended to bring an asset up to a new standard. Not routine maintenance.

**cavity wall.** Wall, usually built of bricks or blocks, which has two solid external leaves (layers) separated by a hollow core.

**ceramic seated tap.** Modern type of water tap, which does not require sealing rings and does not develop leaks.

**cladding.** External covering attached to the wall structure for appearance and weather protection.

**concealed base pan.** Type of toilet bowl with its pipe work covered and hidden from sight.

**concertina doors.** Folding doors consisting of several elements running on rollers in ceiling and floor mounted tracks.

**conduit.** Small size tubes used as casing to collect and protect otherwise exposed electrical wires or other services.

**conventionally framed roof.** A type of roof structure that uses a framework of beams and rafters rather than trusses to support the roof cover.

**cosmetic work.** Maintenance and repairs and renovations that renew surface finishes without improving or altering the underlying materials or substrates.

**earthworks.** Any activity in site preparation for building or grounds work, comprising excavation, moving, depositing, compacting and shaping of ground, for instance cut and fill.

**eaves.** Part of the roof projecting horizontally beyond the wall face, its purpose is to protect the wall from weather and to provide shading.

**exposed beam.** Horizontal element of roof or floor structure deliberately left visible.

**external space.** Open areas on the outside of the building functionally and visually linked to its interior.

**façade.** Part of the building visible from the outside, generally the cosmetic component relating to the main street or access.
face brick/block wall. Wall with brick or block external skin left visible, i.e. not covered by render, plaster or cladding.

fitted furniture. Built-in joinery or furniture, such as cabinets, wardrobes etc. required for functional or ornamental purposes in buildings.

floating floor. A floor that is laid loose, i.e. without gluing or nailing it to subfloor system, generally timber or timber-like laminates.

floor waste. Floor mounted drain required in all wet areas.

footings. The lowest load-bearing part of a building, generally concrete and varying in depth and size depending on the height of the building and the soil type of the building site.

footprint. The ground area covered by a building.

frame wall. A type of wall, which uses internal framework of timber or steel studs for load-bearing purposes.

freestanding furniture. Moveable articles, such as tables, chairs, desks, beds.

furring channel. The metal equivalent of the batten.

grout. Mixture of cement and additives, used to fill spaces between ceramic tiles.

hanging beam. Deep beam used to suspend ceiling joists. Generally hidden in a ceiling and used when walls are removed.

incandescent light. A standard tungsten filament light bulb.

inline fan. An exhaust fan mounted inside a duct and generally hidden from view. Tend to be quieter than exposed exhaust fans.

joinery. Name used for a range of building elements such as doors, windows, stairs, and cupboards.

joinery layout. Overall design of joinery elements in relation to each other and to other prominent elements of the building.

landscape/landscaping. Functional and visual design (and ensuing treatment) of grounds including surfacing, vegetation and ornamentation of outdoor spaces to make them more attractive.

masonry. Clay bricks, concrete blocks or similar building materials.

mechanical ventilation. Any air supply or exhaust devices to control flow rates and distribution of air.

moulding. Profiled material used internally or externally for decorative, such as concealment of joints, shedding water or casting shadows.

nib wall. Short protrusion from the wall face and extending half way or full distance from floor to ceiling.

opaque glass. Coated, frosted or rough-cast glass.

operable window. A window opening or sash.

plasterboard. Board made of gypsum plaster contained between covering layers or paper.

render. Thick wall finishes of cement-based materials. Sometimes refers to thick acrylic texture coated surface treatments.

sanitary fixture. Any of the devices, such as washing basin, shower or toilet pan or sink.

shower tray. The base of a shower.

single skin or solid wall. A wall containing no cavities.

skirting. Profiled strip of timber or plastic, used to conceal of floor wall junction.
splashback. Part of the wall behind and above kitchen bench or bathroom vanity usually covered with some protective material, such as tiles or glass.

**structural or load-bearing wall.** Wall designed to transfer loads from building elements above.

**sub-floor space.** Space between the a floor and the ground undeneath.

**substrate.** Layer making a base to which coat of paint or other applied finish is applied.

**suspended ceiling.** A ceiling system that hangs from the structure above it, allowing spaces for services or enabling varying ceiling heights.

**task lighting.** Lighting directed to a specific area to provide illumination for tasks such as cooking or reading.

**texture coating.** Thick acrylic based paint coatings that can be worked into rough, irregular or characteristic pattern surface over a wide range of substrates.

**trussed roof.** Roof structure where loads are generally applied to the external walls rather than internal walls.

**wall-mounted sconce.** Light fitting installed to protrude from the wall for task or specific lighting effects.

**water flow regulator.** A built-in water saving tap device that ensures steady and relatively strong flow while limiting total volume of water.

**waterproof membrane.** Layer of the waterproof material laid to contain water, water vapour and other forms of moisture in the space designed to cope with moist conditions.

**wheel stop.** Kerb put at parking places to mark the extent of space available to the car and preventing it from rolling onto, e.g. footpaths.
AUTHORS

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The Motel Makeover Guide is targeted at moteliers considering refurbishment of their property. This Guide combines consumer perspectives with refurbishment options to allow motel operators to match the needs of their target consumer.

The extensive research carried out by the Sustainable Tourism CRC (STCRC) to produce the Motel Makeover Guide, was initiated to identify the gap between what properties currently offer and what visitors expect. The intention is to find a range of options to refurbish and renovate properties to match these expectations.

This Guide offers straightforward advice on the problems and solutions to renovation and is applicable to all parts of Australia.

The Motel Makeover Guide is available through STCRC’s online bookshop. Alternatively complete the online order form at STCRC’s web site (www.crctourism.com.au/bookshop) and send to STCRC.

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