

RENOVATION VS REPAIR HOW TO DECIDE WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOUR BUILDING

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INTRODUCTION

Ownership of a building or any property also comes with a management duty, which is maintenance of the building. Proper maintenance helps preserve the building's good appearance and prolong its life span. However, simply keeping the building in good shape is sometimes not enough; it's crucial to recognize when it's time to upgrade or improve the property ^[1]. Hence, understanding the difference between renovation and repair, as well as knowing when to apply each, is essential for effective building management. This article help the reader to understand the needs and implications of renovation and repair work that required for their own buildings.

DEFINITION AND KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RENOVATION AND REPAIR

What is Repair?

Repair work can be categorised into two levels, which is minor repair or overhaul. Minor repairs involves repairing or rebuilding a damaged structure, component, or system to restore it to its original condition or proper working order ^[2]. These repairs typically focuses on short time frame. In contrast, overhauls on the other hand, focuses on more complex and longer time frame and detailed planning to restore overall functionality ^[3]. Therefore, understanding the scale and complexity of the repairing work able to give better planning for the overall process and time required.

What is Renovation?

While repairing, the focus is on damaged structure to make it functional again. In contrast, renovation on the other hand does not necessarily involve addressing damage, instead, it aims to remodel the space, add new elements, or change the intended use of the building ^[4]. Hence, renovation does not necessarily meant be done when there is damaged or non-functional structural component. It depends on the owner's desire for a new sense of environment or to change the overall purpose of the building.

Key Differences

To paint a clear picture of the difference between repair and renovation work, table 1 below summarises various aspects to note the difference between repair work and renovation.

Table 1: Key Differences between Repair and Renovation ^{[1][2][4]}

Aspect	Repair	Renovation
Purpose	Aims to fix something that's broken or no longer working properly.	Focuses on improving or upgrading what's already there.
Scope	Usually limited to specific issues or parts of the building.	Involves broader changes, or altering or modifying a building or structure.
Cost	Generally lower since you're only addressing a problem spot.	Often higher due to extensive work, materials, and possibly design changes.
Objective	Restores function and safety.	Enhances aesthetics, usability, or compliance with current standards.
Example Works	Fixing leaks, repairing plumbing issue, or addressing electrical problems.	Redesigning interiors, upgrade flooring, or purchase newer appliances.

SIGNS OF BUILDINGS THAT NEED REPAIRS

By understanding the difference between renovation and repair, it is also important to recognize the signs that can help us indicate when a building needs repair work. Most of the time, it starts with small signs, such as cracks in the wall, dripping ceilings, or flickering lights. While these issues might seem minor at first, but they can grow into bigger problems if not addressed promptly. This is where repairs comes into play, providing quick fixes to restore things back to working order without the need for major changes.

i. Cracks in Structure

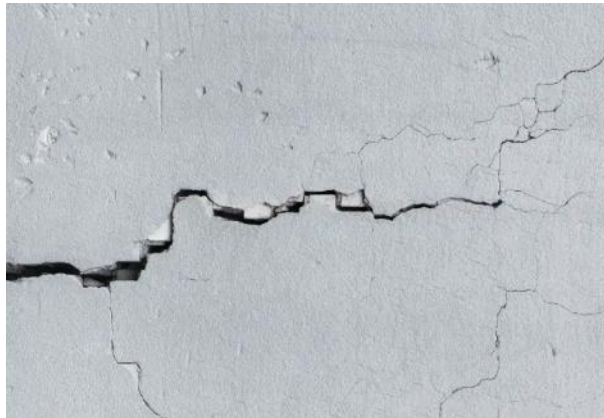


Figure 1: Crack in Wall^[5]

Building defects often manifest as cracks in walls, ceilings, or foundations. This crack can be categorised into two types, which are hairline and structural cracks. Hairline cracks are typically non-critical and are confined to the surface, while structural cracks can compromise the building's integrity of the building^[5]. Surface cracks may be manageable with DIY repairs, but significant structural cracks usually require professional intervention to ensure safety and stability.

ii. Roof Damage



Figure 2: Damaged Roof^[6]

The roof can be considered as first line of defence against water seepage from above. One of its main functions is to prevent rain from infiltrating the building. Typical signs of roof damage include missing or broken tiles and a sagging roof structure, both of which can result in significant structural problems if left unaddressed^[5]. The repair work can often be as simple as replacing the missing tiles to cover the gap from water infiltration. On the other hand, if the issue involves sagging roof or major damage, then professional help is required.

iii. Pipe Leakage



Figure 3: Burst Pipe ^[7]

Leaks occur when water pipes within a building are damaged or compromised, allowing water to seep into walls, ceilings, and floors ^[8]. If addressed promptly, this damage can be considered minor, however, if left unattended for a prolonged period, the leaking water can cause significant issues as it seeps through and damages the surrounding structure.

iv. Electrical Malfunction



Figure 4: Repairing Distribution Box ^[9]

Electrical malfunction can be challenging for those who attempt to repair them on their own because it requires a basic understanding of electrical systems before they can initiate the repair work. Electrical faults may arise from improper handling, excessive loads, or environmental factors such as lightning ^[10]. If not addressed properly, electrical damage can create a fire hazard. For this reason, most repair work is carried out by licensed electricians to ensure a safe working environment.

SIGNS THAT A BUILDING MAY BENEFIT FROM RENOVATION

Not every issue in a building can be resolved with a quick repair. Sometimes, a building may feel outdated, lack functionality, or simply not meet current needs. In such cases, a renovation might be the smarter move. Renovation isn't just about making things look better, it's about improving how a space is used and giving it new life.

i. Outdated Design or Layout

Design plays an important role in the appeal of a commercial building, whether for rent or owner-occupied. An outdated design can pose significant downsides for tenant or owners

of the building. The property should also have modern heating and cooling systems, up-to-date electrical infrastructure, and reliable connectivity ^[11]. Hence, renovation is necessary to enhance building's appearance and occupant experience, keeping it relevant in market.

ii. Declining Property Value

If you're looking to boost your business value, renovations can help increase the rental appeal and overall worth of your commercial property ^[11]. Renovation helps to make the appearance of the building more appealing to buyers or tenants which will help to keep it relevant in the market, helping to prevent it from falling into decline and losing its property value.

iii. Lack of Space

Older buildings often have underutilized areas due to outdated designs or planning. Insufficient space in the workplace can hinder productivity and efficiency ^[11]. Renovation can breathe new life into these spaces, giving them a fresh purpose and improving the overall functionality of the building.

iv. Noticeable Deterioration

While minor repairs may help improve certain damaged components of a building, excessive deterioration is best addressed through renovation rather than repair work. Neglecting significant deterioration can lead to accidents, serious structural damage, or even collapse ^[12]. Therefore, renovating the building is a wise choice to mitigate unnecessary incidents and create a safer environment.

CONCLUSION

Deciding between renovation and repair isn't always easy, but understanding the purpose behind them can help in choosing which one is better. If the building has specific issues like leaks, cracks, or electrical faults, repairs are usually enough to restore safety and functionality. But if the goals are to improve appearance, create more space, or adapt to new needs, renovation might be the better option. In the end, knowing when to repair, and when to renovate helps facilitate building care, protect its value, and make sure it continues to serve its purpose well into the future.

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