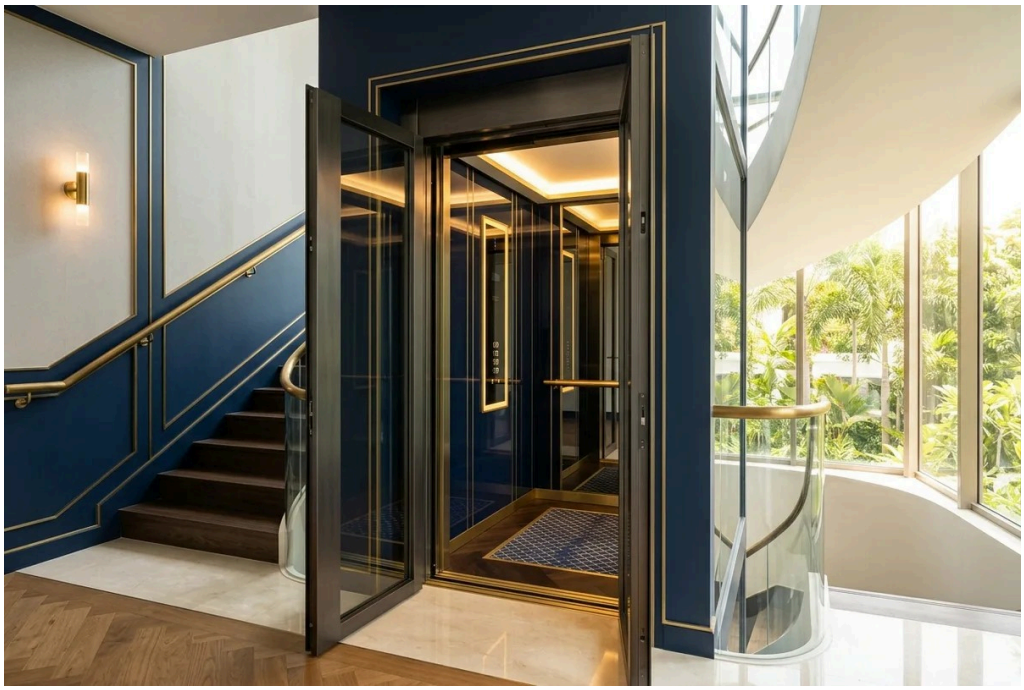
HOME LIFTS

Can a Home Lift Fit Inside Your Existing Staircase?

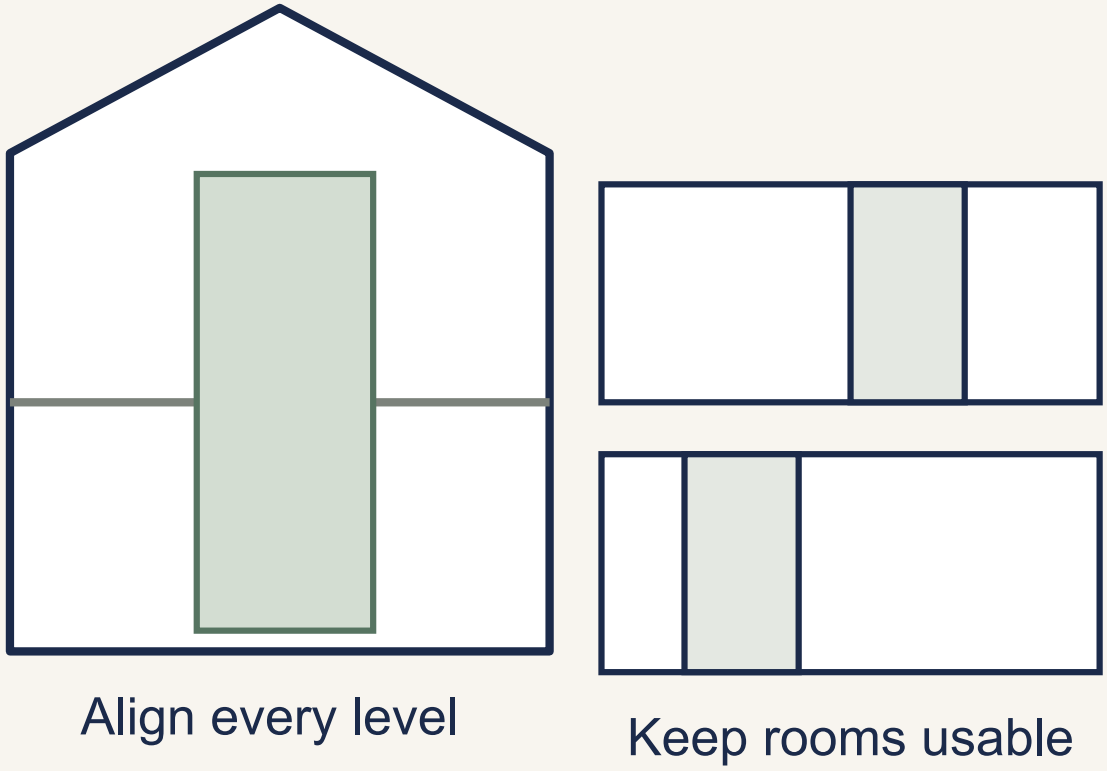
By DirectHome Team Updated 16 September 2026 7 min read Explore our home lifts service ↗

A lift can sometimes be added within or beside an existing staircase, but it must leave a workable route upstairs and suitable space at every landing. The survey needs to consider the full lift structure, doors and building changes, not only the cabin. Compare layouts before choosing a model that appears to fit the central opening.

Need advice for your home? WhatsApp our team ↗



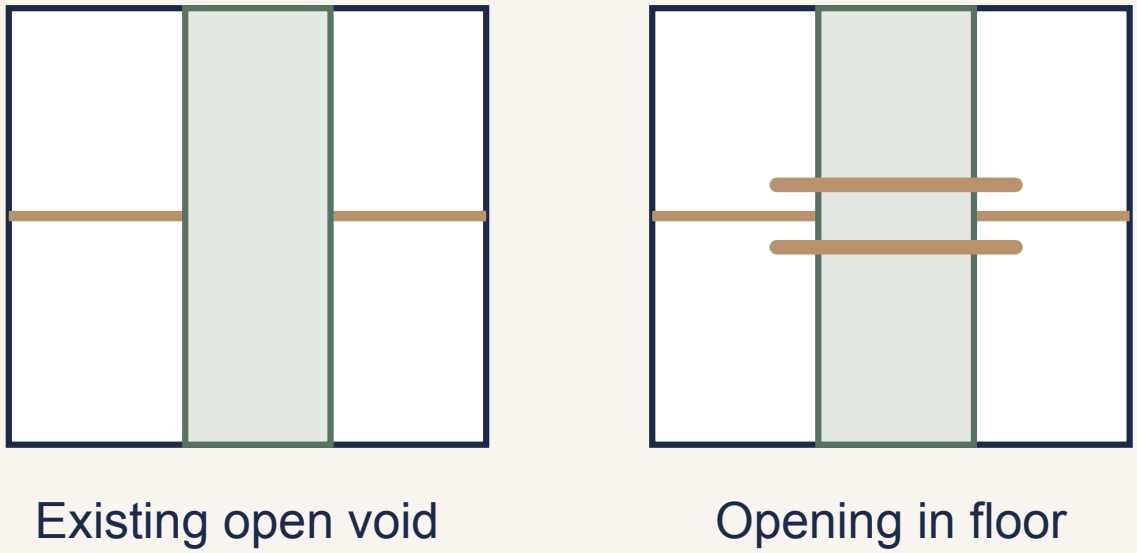
One position must work on every floor



Not to scale

A proposed shaft must align through the house while leaving useful rooms and approaches on every floor. The two plans show alternative layouts.

When the Existing Staircase No Longer Meets the Need

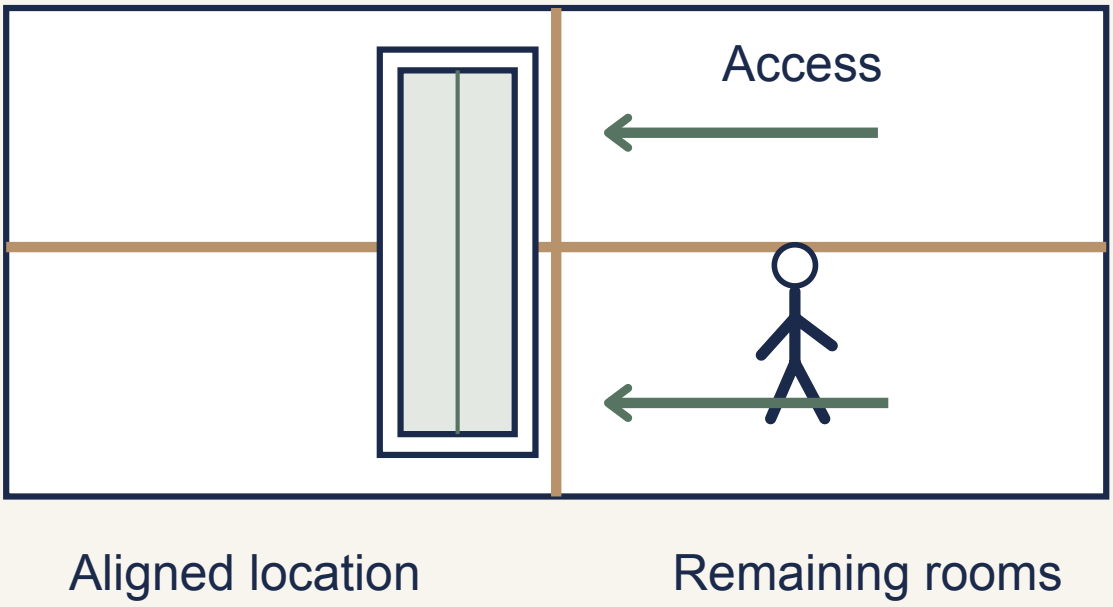


A usable void and a new opening through a finished floor create different retrofit work.

A staircase that worked well when the household moved in may become difficult as mobility needs change. Before choosing a lift, identify who needs access to which floors and whether a mobility aid or attendant must travel. Those requirements determine the usable carrier and landings, not just the desired brand.

Feasibility depends on the actual house: aligned space through the floors, structural conditions, landings, services and the work needed to prepare them. Some proposals will be unsuitable or disproportionate. Work through those constraints before treating a compact product image as proof that a retrofit is straightforward.

Step One: Find the Space



The proposed location needs to align through all served levels while keeping the rooms usable.

Trace an aligned vertical zone through every proposed stop, then test the required carrier and doors against it. The building opening, external enclosure and usable carrier are different dimensions. A footprint that fits within the stairwell may still leave inadequate approach or transfer space at one landing.

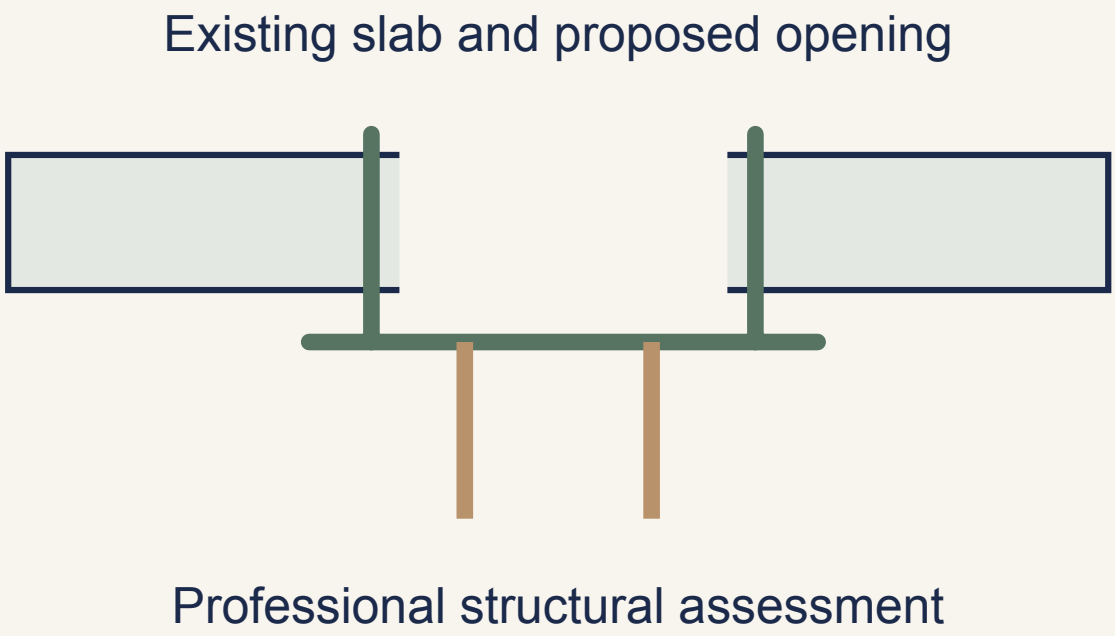
If the stairwell is solid, the next options are a converted storeroom adjacent to the staircase, a kitchen-utility corner that aligns vertically through three floors, or a bedroom corner where the lost floor area is acceptable. Each option has different cost and disruption implications.

Need advice for your home?

Tell us what you need on WhatsApp and send a few photos. We'll arrange a free site assessment, then give you a fixed-price quote within 3 to 5 working days.

WhatsApp us Try the free cost estimator

Step Two: Structural Engineering

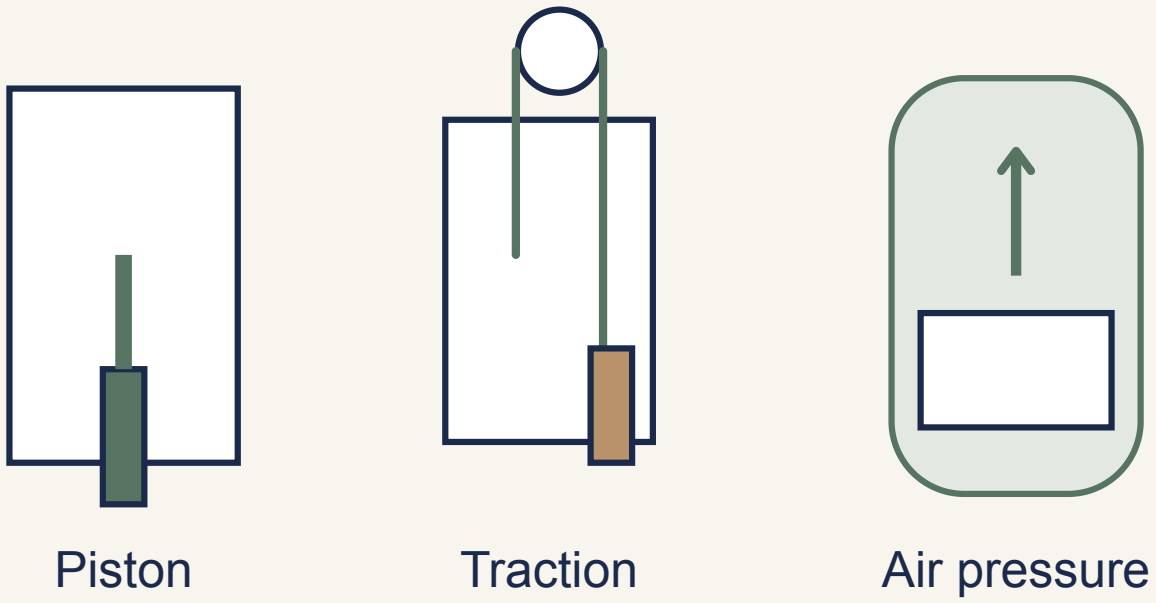


The opening and its supporting structure must be considered together by the project professionals.

Cutting or altering a structural slab needs the appropriate structural QP to assess the existing building and design the work. Confirm the structural-plan approval and permit process for the proposal. Obtain the professional scope and fee separately, including investigations and any further design needed if concealed conditions differ.

If the proposed opening conflicts with beams, reinforcement or other critical structure, the team may need another location or a different scope. Compare those options before finalising the equipment order. A smaller redesign at this stage can avoid committing to a carrier that the safe opening cannot accommodate.

Step Three: Choosing the Right Lift Type

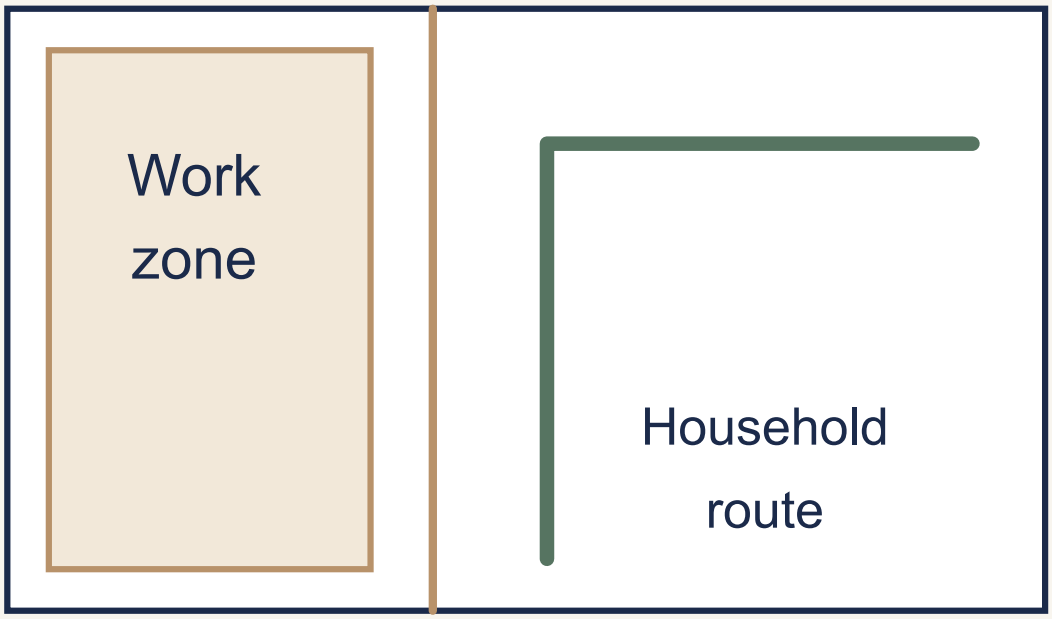


Drive arrangements have different physical relationships with the house; compare the selected models against the site.

Compare exact models against the surveyed constraints. Some integrated enclosures reduce conventional shaft construction, while other systems need a separately prepared shaft or machinery space. Their support, opening, pit and overhead requirements still need to be reconciled with the building.

Choose using the intended user’s cabin, doorway and control requirements as well as the construction. A compact system is not a useful saving if it cannot carry the mobility aid or support the landing transfer. Ask each supplier to price the equipment and mark the required openings, supports and electrical work on the same set of plans.

Step Four: The Disruption Reality

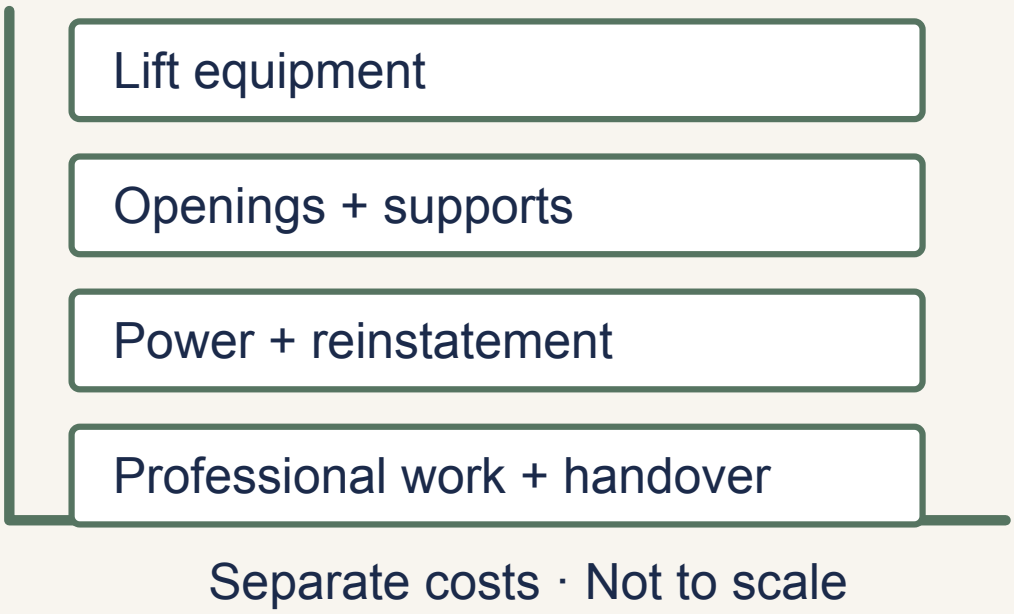


The work area and the household circulation route can compete for the same space. Agree access arrangements around the actual construction scope.

Slab alterations, supports, shaft work and electrical changes can affect more than the immediate lift footprint. Agree protection, dust control, access restrictions and inspection points with the building team. Noise and the period when routes are unavailable depend on the actual scope.

Plan essential rooms and access for every household member before work starts. Remaining in the house may be possible in some arrangements, while others need temporary accommodation or a different sequence. Do not base that choice on a universal number of noisy weeks; use the contractor’s specific work and access plan.

Step Five: Realistic Cost and Timeline



A retrofit budget includes the house alterations and finishing as well as the equipment.

Request a retrofit quotation separating the selected lift from openings, supports, shaft preparation, power, finishes, professional services, testing and the PTO application. Agree the programme for the actual scope. A regulated lift must have a valid PTO before use.

For a three-stop retrofit through an existing stairwell, price the selected lift together with the openings and supports it actually needs. Ask for separate quote lines for access arrangements during the work, protecting the rooms you're living in and moving any pipes, wiring or other services in the lift's path.

Add up the lines in your quote to get the subtotal, then add tax and any applicable official fees. If an existing, assessed opening avoids some of the structural work, take that work's quoted cost off the subtotal. That saving belongs to the confirmed building scope; it is not a discount guaranteed by choosing a particular drive type.

Project phase	Time basis
Design, survey and applicable approvals	Project-specific; complete before dependent work
Equipment production	Savaria general guidance: 4 to 5 weeks; highly customised equipment 10 to 12 weeks
Shipping and local delivery	Additional supplier-confirmed period

Project phase	Time basis
Building preparation	Contractor-confirmed; may overlap production after applicable approvals
Equipment installation	Savaria general guidance: usually 4 to 8 working days
Examination/testing, complete PTO submission and handover	Separate stage; BCA gives 7 working days for complete, error-free new/recommissioning PTO applications

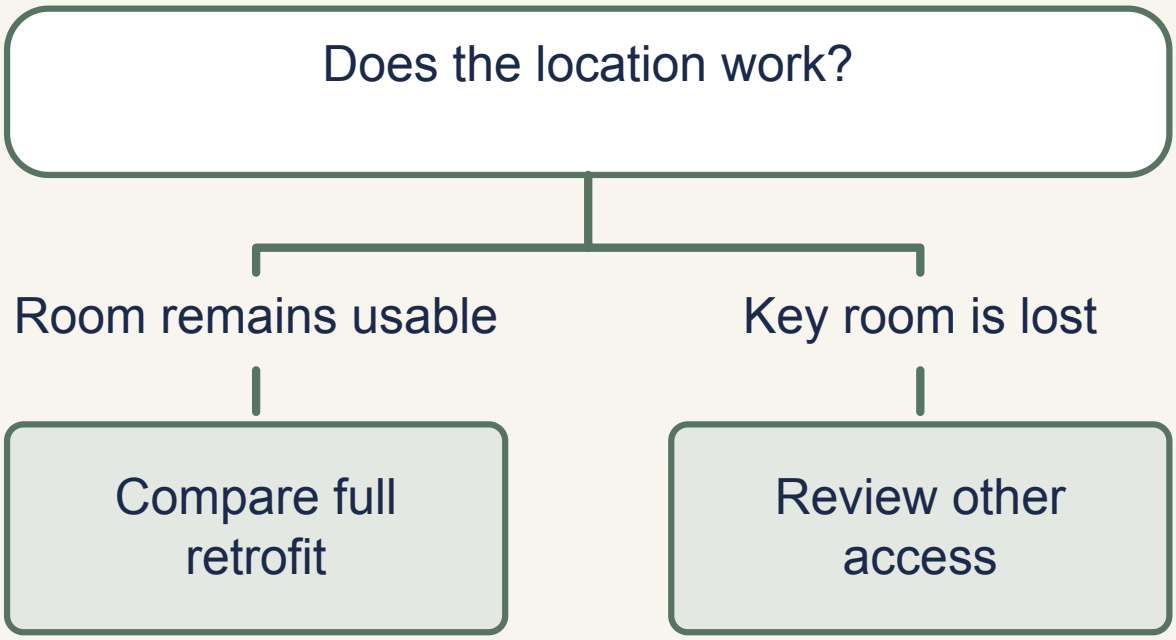
The production and fitting periods describe that manufacturer's equipment programme, not every home lift or a complete Singapore project. In a hypothetical schedule starting after design approval, five weeks of production plus two assumed weeks of shipping gives seven weeks to equipment arrival. If the approved building work takes six weeks in parallel, installation waits for the later date: max(7, 6) = 7 weeks, not 13. Add fitting, examination/testing and the PTO stage after that; do not promise usable access on equipment-delivery day.

If the house cannot provide safe daily access during openings or stairwell work, temporary arrangements need their own dates and costs. The relevant period is when rooms and routes are restricted, which may be much shorter than manufacturing but cannot be inferred from it.

Assess value through the access it restores, the space it consumes and the years the household expects to use it. Compare feasible alternatives, including changing room use or a suitable stairlift. Do not rely on an assumed property-value uplift or a claim that moving house is always more expensive.

> Compare the equipment price with the building work and other items in the installation budget. home lift installation costs →

When Retrofit Does Not Make Sense



A lift position that sacrifices essential living space deserves comparison with other ways to resolve access.

A retrofit may be disproportionate if the only feasible location removes essential room space or requires extensive structural changes. A suitable stairlift or reorganised daily living arrangement may address a more immediate need. Compare the actual consequences for the household rather than a generic resale-price threshold.

A stairlift requires a separate user and site assessment and its own Singapore operating and contractor checks. It may reduce building work but still needs a safe transfer and a workable rail route. Include installation, making good, maintenance and any future removal in that comparison.

Get an Honest Retrofit Assessment

Bring to the assessment	What it helps settle
Plans and photographs	Candidate locations and known alterations
Required floors and occupied mobility-aid dimensions	Carrier and landing needs
Equipment drawings and site findings	Work that can be priced and further investigation

Prepare photographs, available plans, the proposed stops and the user’s requirements for the initial enquiry. A credible feasibility assessment then needs site information and the appropriate professional input; a telephone estimate cannot confirm concealed structure or the final layout.

Ask for the next decision in writing: which locations remain feasible, what investigations are needed, who coordinates the lift installation with the building work and what scope can be priced now. This creates a clear route from an access problem to a reviewable installation proposal without promising an immediate survey result or an unsupported budget range.

More on home lifts

Article Buying a House with a Home Lift? What to Check First

Article 7 Things to Check Before Accepting a Home Lift Quote

Article No-Pit Home Lifts: Can You Install One Without Digging?

Related service Staircase Renovation

Related service Stairlifts

Need help with your project?

Tell us what you need on WhatsApp and send a few photos. We'll arrange a free site assessment, then give you a fixed-price quote within 3 to 5 working days.

WhatsApp us Get a quote

Our service

Home Lifts for your home

Explore the service, then discuss what your home needs with our team.

View service details ↗
Still weighing your options?

Plan with the buying guide

Bring the choices, costs and questions together before deciding what to do next.

Read the home lifts buying guide →

More home lifts articles →