STAIRCASE RENOVATION

What decides the cost of a staircase or banister renovation

By DirectHome Team Updated 12 October 2026 9 min read Explore our staircase renovation service ↗

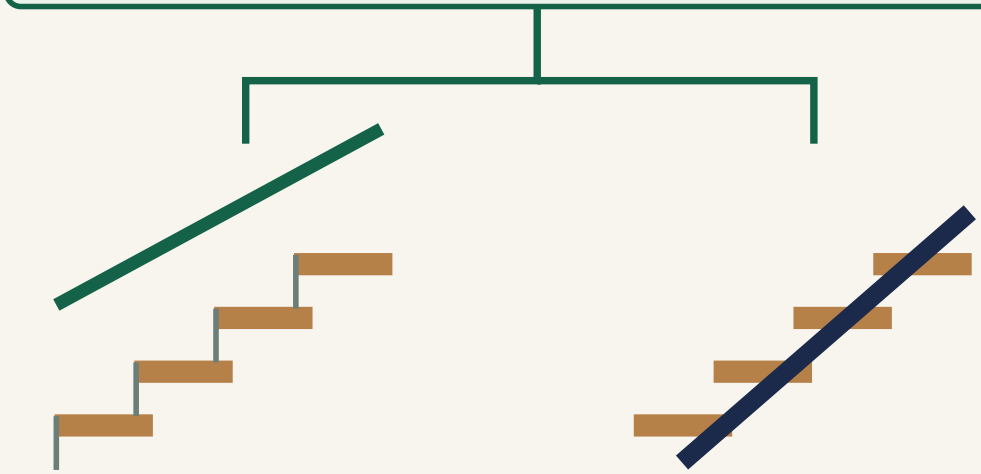
Redoing a staircase can mean refinishing worn timber treads, new treads over the old flight, a new banister or railing, or a rebuilt flight. We measure your stairs free at a site assessment, tell you which of these they need, and send you a fixed-price quote within 3 to 5 working days.

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Two scopes behind a stair price

What is being retained?



Overlay

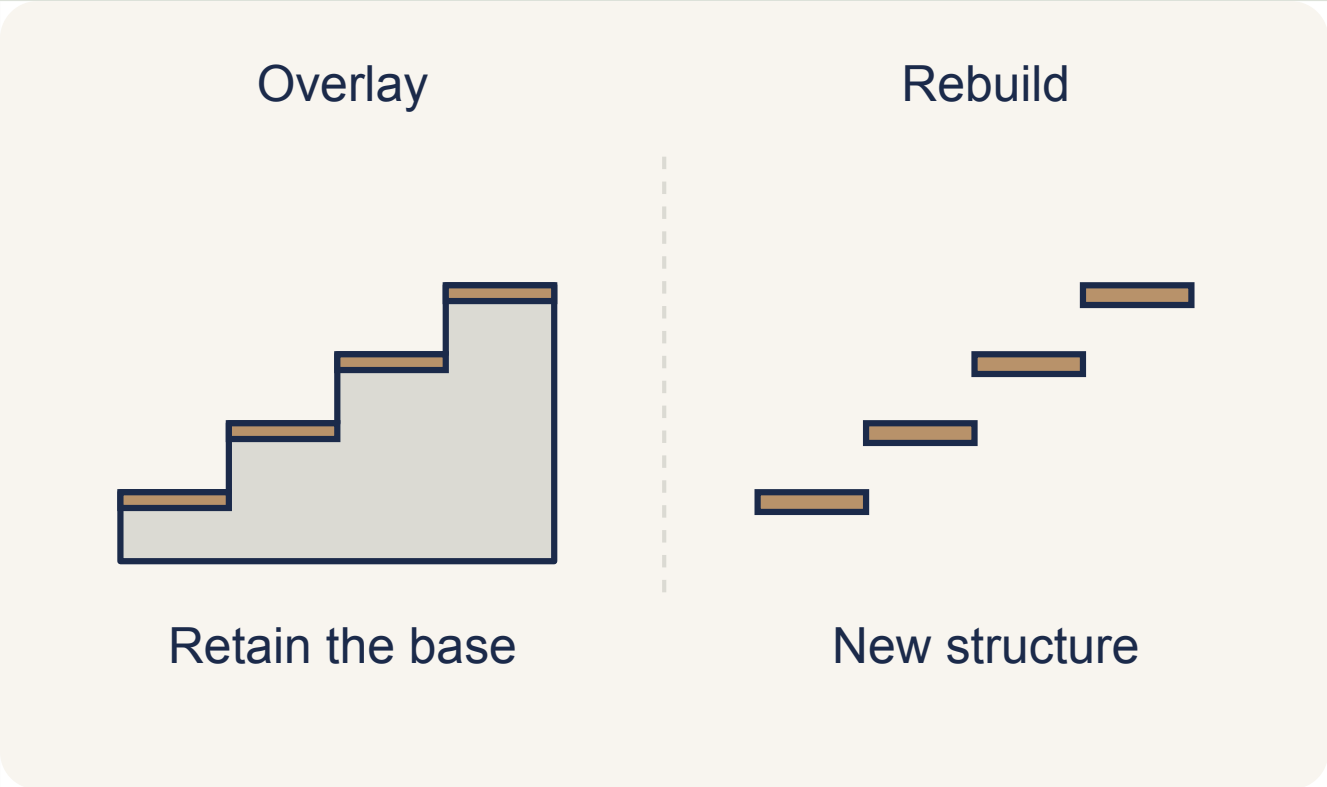
Existing support remains; finishes change.

Rebuild

Support and flight are part of the new work.

Overlay: Existing support remains; finishes change. Rebuild: Support and flight are part of the new work.

How an overlay and a full rebuild differ in cost



An overlay retains the base; a rebuild changes the underlying staircase.

A staircase renovation can change the surface you walk on, the barrier beside it, the supporting structure or all three. Decide which parts actually need work before choosing the finish. Otherwise a quote that keeps the existing stairs can look cheaper than a replacement quote simply because it leaves out most of the construction.

What you keep with each option, and what the quote needs to include. A site assessment establishes which options are suitable.

Work being priced	What you keep	What the quote needs to include
Refinish suitable timber	Existing treads and supporting flight	Surface preparation, repairs, finish and protection
Replace finishes or add an overlay	A suitable supporting flight	Removal where needed, preparation, treads, risers, edges and landings
Replace railings or handrails	Stairs, if suitable for the proposed fixings	Measured runs, posts, infill, handrails, fixings and making good
Rebuild the staircase	Only the parts specifically accepted for retention	Design, removal, supports, new flight, barriers, finishes and surrounding repairs

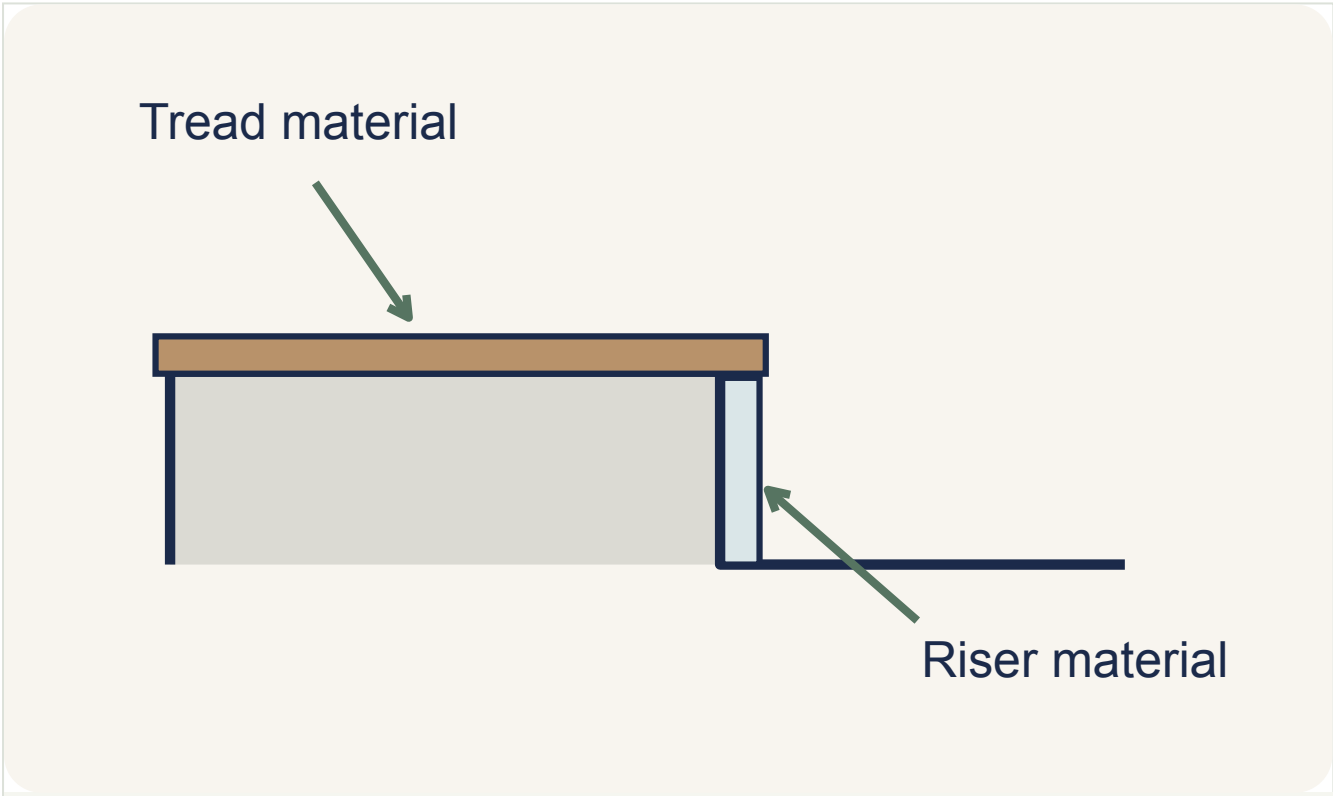
Each route suits a different staircase, and the site assessment confirms which one fits yours. Refinishing suits sound timber treads that are only worn on the surface. New treads or a new finish over the old flight suit a sound structure with a damaged surface, or a switch to a different material, as long as the first and last step heights are planned. Work on the banister or railing alone suits a loose or dated barrier on stairs that are otherwise sound. A rebuild suits a flight that is itself unsound, or stairs that need to move or change shape.

Refinishing works on the existing timber surface. Replacing a finish removes the old material, while an overlay adds a new layer over a suitable base. Keeping the structure avoids replacing that part of the staircase, but preparation, loose finishes and awkward edge details can still make the surface work substantial.

An overlay also changes the finished step levels. If the adjoining floors remain at their old heights, adding the same thickness to every tread changes the first and last rise differently from the rises between them. Have the whole flight and both landings measured before ordering finishes; the first and last step after an overlay deserve particular attention.

A rebuild becomes a different budget because it includes the flight and its supports. Changing the stair position can also affect the floor opening and nearby rooms. A request to “redo the stairs” needs to settle those choices before a price for one flight means anything useful.

Material costs for treads and risers



Treads and risers are separate faces to include in the material scope.

Treads are the horizontal surfaces underfoot; risers are the vertical faces between them. A per-step allowance needs to say whether it covers both, the front edge or nosing, and installation. The landing is a separate area, even when it uses exactly the same finish.

For timber and other staircase materials, compare the exact product, dimensions, finish and edge detail. Solid timber and an engineered product are different specifications. A species name or photograph on its own leaves too much of the installed scope undecided.

Stone and terrazzo bring cutting, finished edges and fitting into the price as well as the material. Wide treads, turns and matching landings need their own quantities. The stairs also have to carry the stone's weight, and the finish needs to grip when wet and when dry, so a price for the slab alone doesn't cover that work.

A tile or resilient finish also needs a stair-suitable edge and compatible base. The material saving is only meaningful after removal, levelling and fitting have been included. Request the installed total for each alternative so a low supply-only rate does not decide the budget.

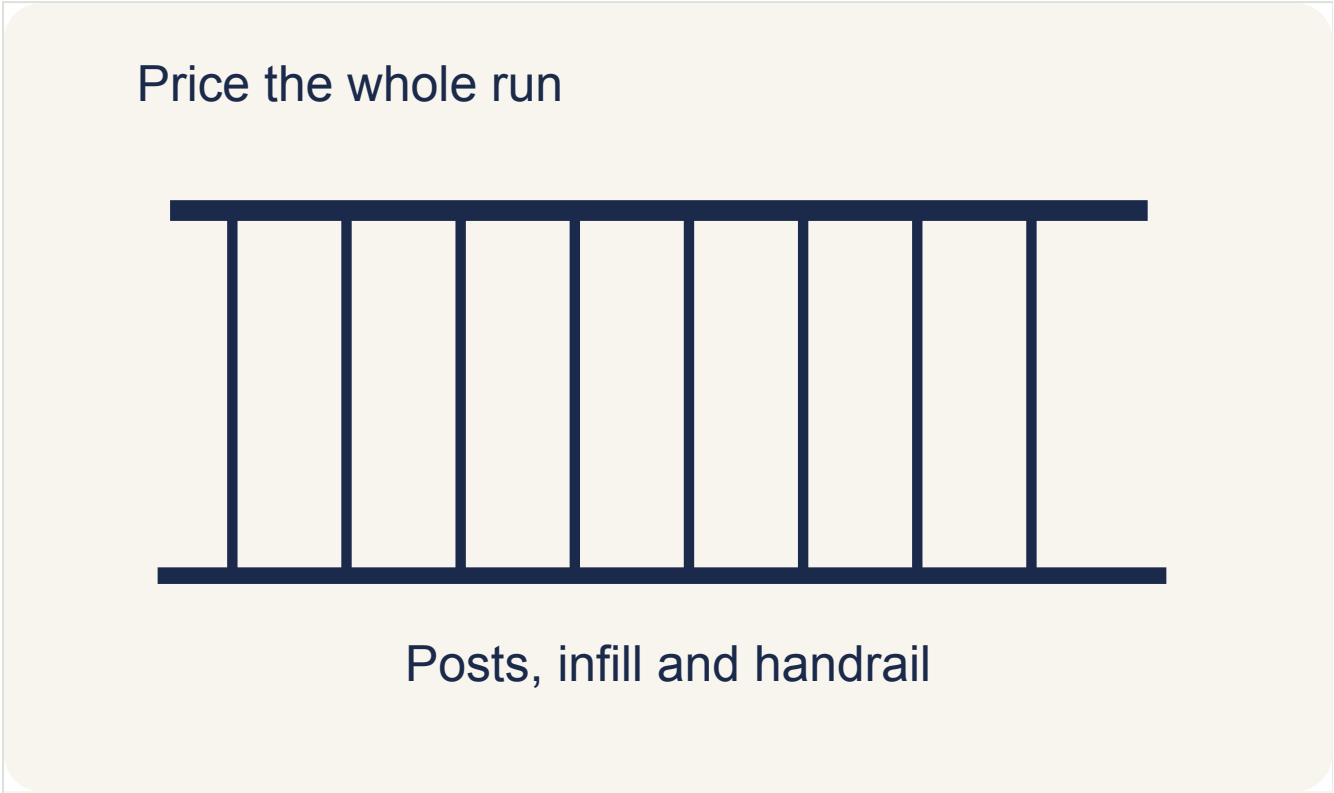
Say your flight has 16 treads. Ask the quote to list the treads, the riser faces, the nosings and the landing separately, rather than one per-step price multiplied by 16.

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Banister, Railing and Balustrade Costs



Price the complete balustrade run, including its handrail, infill and supports.

A staircase railing price needs the measured stair and landing runs, the chosen infill, posts, handrail and fixings. There is no reliable installed total to take from a glass-panel or timber-rail price alone. Keep the complete balustrade scope separate from the tread work so you can see what each quotation buys.

The balustrade is the barrier at an open edge. The handrail is the part a person holds, and a wall-mounted handrail can be a separate item. “New banister” is therefore too vague for pricing unless the quote says whether it means the handrail alone or the full barrier, including the landing.

For a new handrail, the installed cost includes its length, bends, end details, brackets, fixing surface and making good. Replacing a banister or railing adds the posts and infill where those are part of the scope. Ask for these quantities and the installed total together.

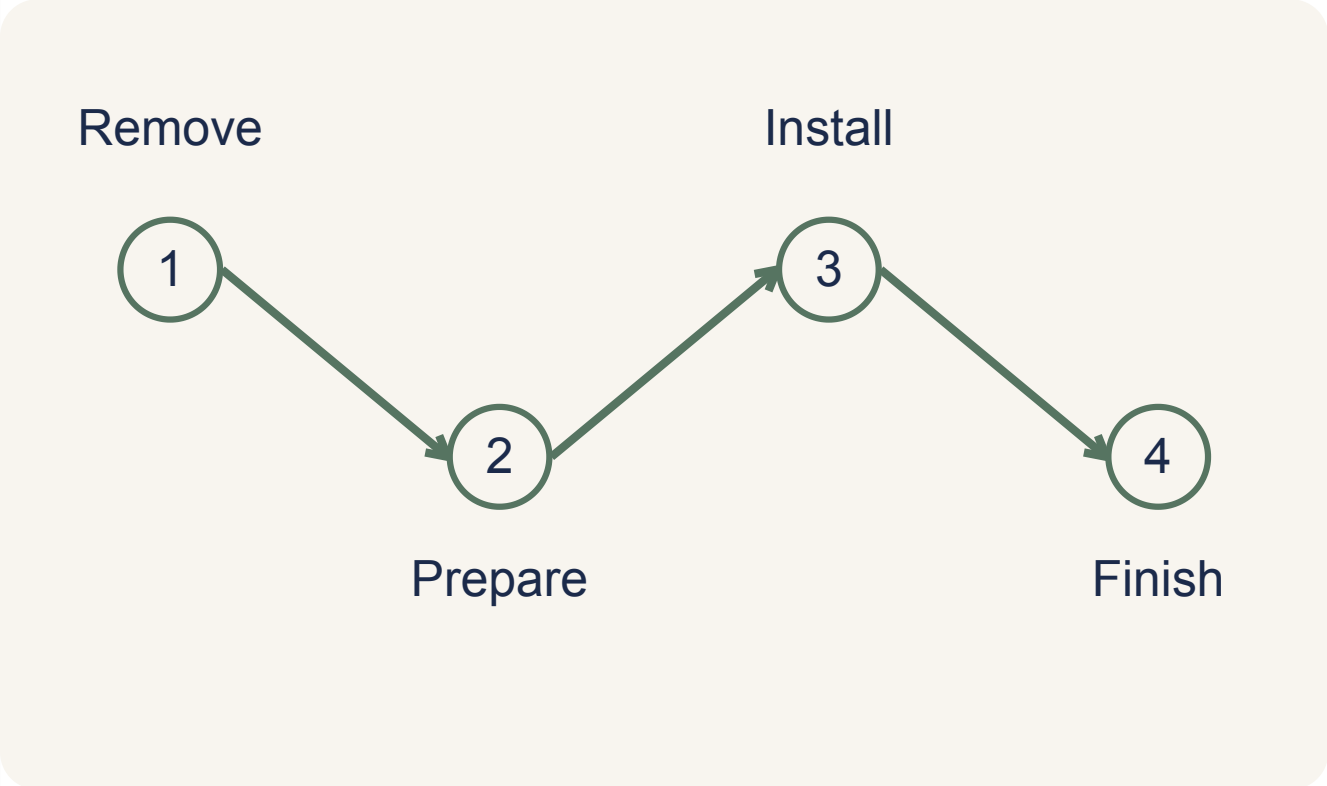
Singapore installers advertise a handrail on its own, in metal or timber, from about S$50 to S$260 per metre on their own websites (checked October 2026). They're advertised starting prices for the rail alone, not quotes, so check whether fitting is included. For a full banister or railing, compare measured quotes for your own stairs.

Balusters are the repeated members between the rail and the stair or landing. Replacing them involves each member and its connections, plus any repair where the old ones are removed. A decorative profile, curved section or finish that must match retained parts adds work that a loose baluster price does not show.

To price baluster replacement, request the count, material, finish, removal, fixing method and repairs to the retained rail or base. If that retained material cannot accept the proposed connection, replacing the infill alone may not be a suitable option. Have the complete barrier assessed before deciding to keep it.

Retaining and refinishing a suitable barrier, using a simpler repeated design and keeping serviceable handrails are practical cost-saving options to price. Compare them against full replacement for the same required protection. A new coating can improve the appearance of a sound barrier; it cannot repair an inadequate attachment.

Labour and Installation Costs



Installation includes removal, preparation, fitting and the final finish.

Installation starts before the first new tread goes in. For a finish change, include protection, removal if required, base preparation, fitting and the final finish. Ask how the stairs will be kept inaccessible during any unsafe stage and how the household will reach the rooms it needs.

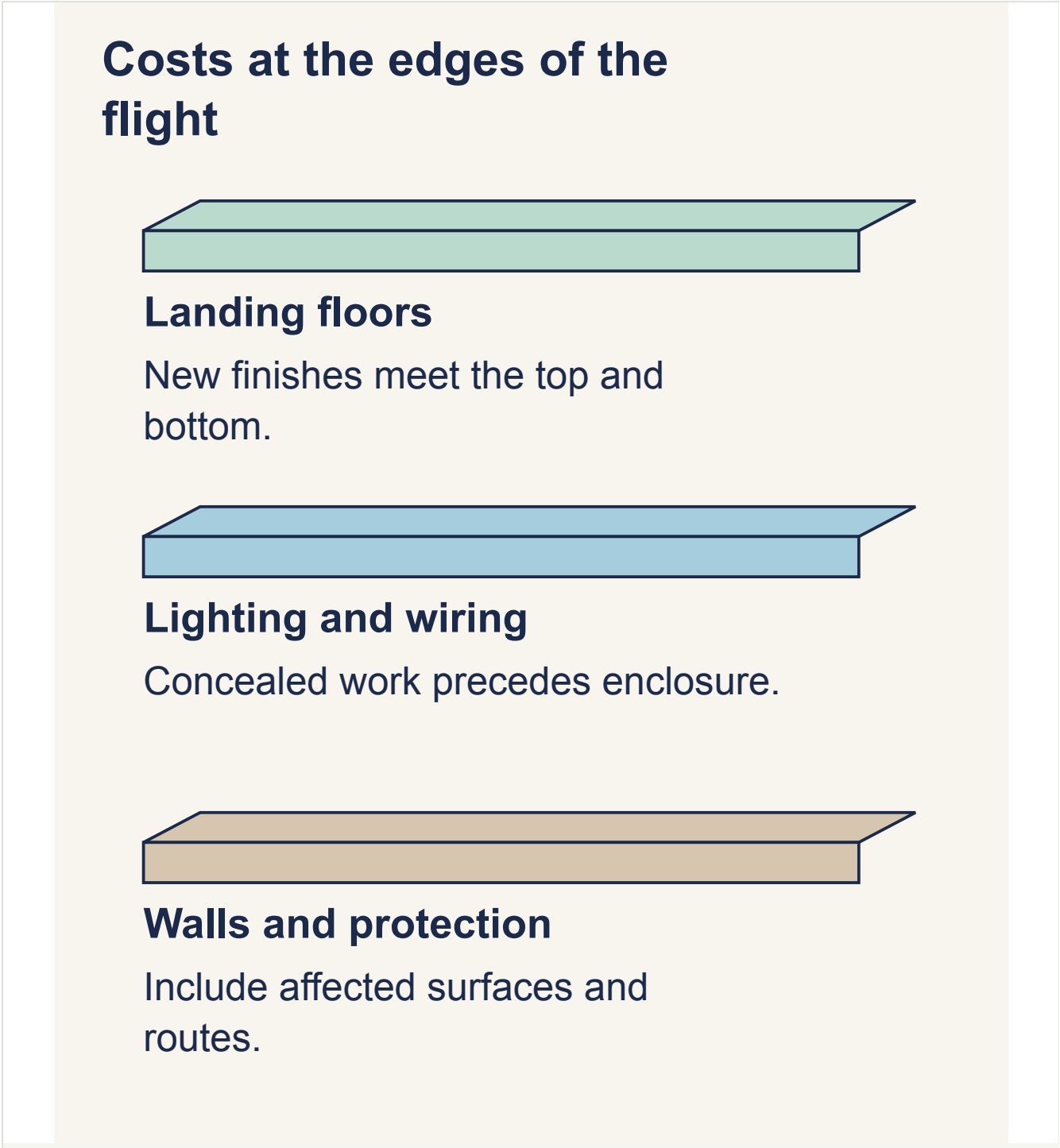
A rebuild adds removal of the old flight, any designed temporary support, the new structure and surrounding repairs. The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) distinguishes building works that need plan submission from exempt insignificant works; have your Qualified Person establish what applies to the intended alterations. Professional appointments and submissions, where required, belong beside the construction quote rather than in an assumed allowance.

If your rebuild needs plans approved by BCA, its plan fee table, last updated in March 2026, puts the fee for addition and alteration works on a home at S$200 per storey. That's BCA's own fee, not the cost of the architect or engineer who prepares your plans or of the building work, and any added floor area is charged separately.

Spiral and curved stairs need a quotation for the actual design, including the opening, supports, treads and barrier. If a compact stair is being proposed, compare its installed scope and everyday use with the straight-stair alternative before treating the smaller footprint as a saving.

> Plan fabrication and work on site around the household's need to move between floors. staircase renovation sequence →

Hidden Costs Most Homeowners Miss



Landing floors: New finishes meet the top and bottom. Lighting and wiring: Concealed work precedes enclosure. Walls and protection: Include affected surfaces and routes.

The edges of the job are where two apparently similar prices can diverge. A quote may finish at the top tread while the adjoining landing floor still needs changing. Mark the top and bottom junctions, affected walls and any ceiling below on the same drawing, and identify who reinstates each surface.

Resolve new stair lighting before the finishes close off the cable routes. EMA advises that electrical wiring and lighting-point work should be carried out or supervised by a Licensed Electrical Worker. Include the light fittings, drivers, controls and making good where applicable, so an attractive tread-light price does not omit the work needed to connect it.

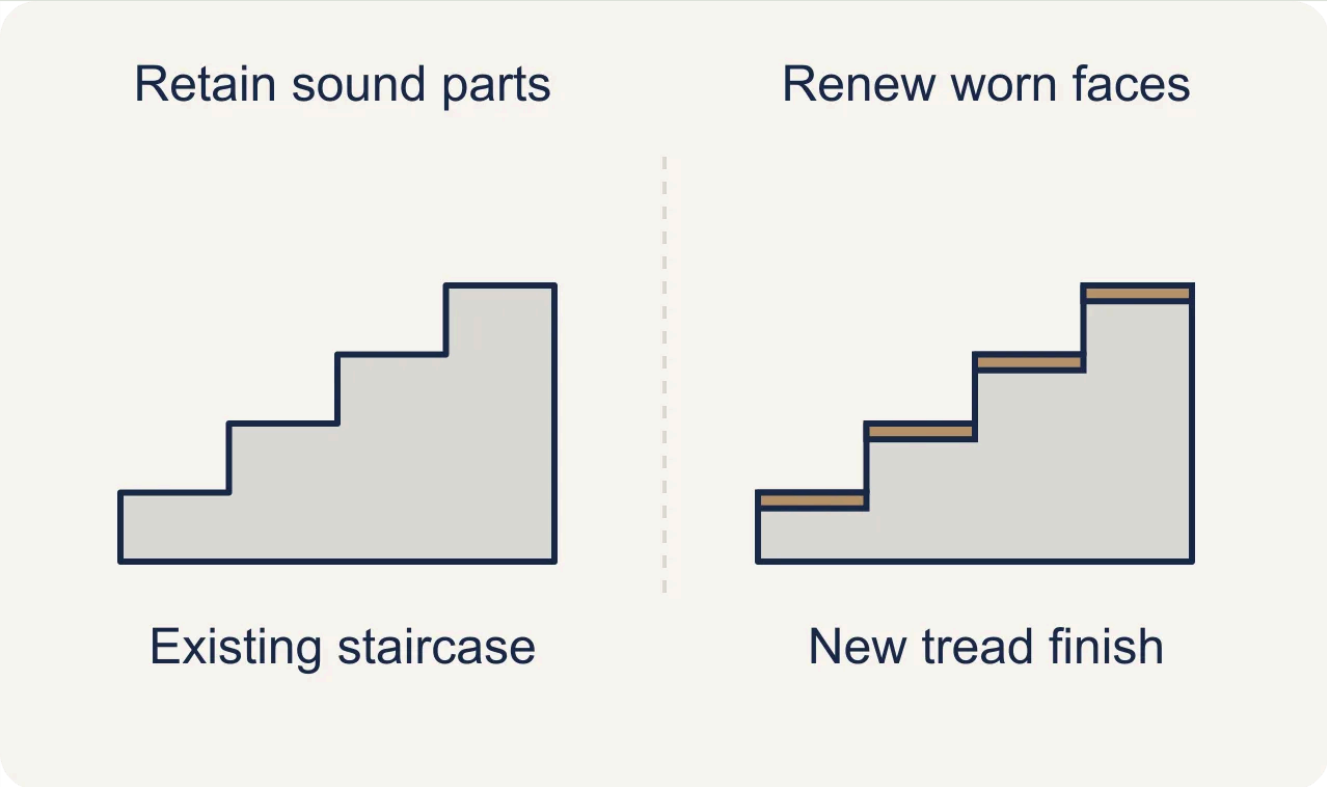
Protection, disposal and cleaning also need an agreed scope, especially where materials travel through occupied rooms. If the only safe route upstairs must close, temporary living arrangements become a household cost. Agree the access plan with the contractor before choosing a start date; the stairs cannot be assumed usable throughout the work.

Build the budget by adding the accepted stair-work quote, railing or handrail work, necessary professional fees, and repairs to adjoining floors, walls and services. Then add protection, disposal and applicable GST only where they are not already included. Keep unresolved items visibly unpriced, and approve changes against an agreed scope instead of hiding them in a guessed total.

Fill this with your own quotations. Missing prices remain missing.

Budget line	Amount to enter	Avoid counting it twice
Stair finishes or new flight	The accepted installed quote	Do not add separate labour if already included
Barrier and handrail	The accepted retained or replacement scope	Check whether the stair package includes them
Design and submissions	The applicable professional proposal	Check who pays any separate submission charges
Landings, walls, lighting and protection	Each agreed additional scope	Remove items already included elsewhere
Tax and household arrangements	Applicable unbundled tax and your actual arrangements	Keep personal accommodation separate from construction

Cost-Saving Tips



Retain suitable parts where assessment supports it and renew the surfaces that need work.

The first option to price for a cosmetic change is refinishing suitable retained material, because it avoids buying and installing replacement parts. It is not automatically the cheapest workable answer if the stairs need significant repair. Compare the final installed totals after the condition assessment, not the cost of the finish alone.

Keep the layout and serviceable components where they meet the household's needs and the final design. Ask for a simpler railing pattern or finish as a separately priced alternative if the first proposal exceeds the budget. That shows the actual saving without reducing the barrier scope by accident.

Coordinate the stairs with planned flooring, lighting and landing work, then check whether the combined proposal actually removes repeated work. A larger contract is not automatically better value. The staircase-renovation buying guide helps put those choices in the order they need to be settled.

Bring DirectHome photographs of the stairs and both landings, any available plans, and a note of what you want to keep or change. Include whether the house will be occupied and whether the staircase is the only route upstairs. Those details make the first discussion about the work specific enough to identify what still needs measuring and pricing. We then measure the stairs at a free site assessment, and the fixed-price quote follows within 3 to 5 working days.

More on staircase renovation

Article Staircase Overlays: Don't Overlook the First and Last Steps

Article Safer Stairs for Children and Older Parents: A Practical Guide

Article Staircase Handrails: How to Choose a Comfortable Grip

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Our service

Staircase Renovation 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 staircase renovation buying guide →

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