



RENOVATION:
FENCES AND DECKS



OUTDOOR **APPEAL**

Continuing our renovation series, **Sharon Newey** explains how decks and fences make your property more liveable, more appealing, and more rentable.



**THE
RESENE
EASY
DECORATING
GUIDE
PART NINE**

**WE LOVE DECKS...
EVEN A TINY BALCONY
ON AN INNER CITY
APARTMENT WILL
ENHANCE ITS
RENTABILITY**

A HOUSE SITTING in the middle of a barren piece of land may be easy to maintain but it's unlikely to be that appealing to prospective tenants. Likewise, one with scruffy, broken fences won't have them flocking to your door.

And with the Kiwi love affair with outdoor living, a deck is definitely going to improve your chances of tenancy and increased rental stream.

Whether you are adding either of these external items or renovating existing ones, here are some of the aspects to consider.

FENCES

First of all, consider what a new fence is for – is it for security, safety (for instance, keeping toddlers or pets in), to better define a boundary between neighbouring properties, or for privacy.

Its purpose will obviously determine the style and height. There are an infinite number of fences materials and styles – from steel, corrugated iron, rock, block, and timber – all in a variety of forms. Let's assume that for a rental property, you're looking for something that's more serviceable and less high fashion.

One of the easiest options if you are more of a DIY landlord are pre-made panels, which now come in a variety of styles from the less substantial trellis through oriental screens to timber palings. These can be bought at larger hardware outlets and specialist suppliers, and fixed

against posts that have been concreted into the ground.

Generally you do not need a building consent for fences that are up to two metres high but check with your local council before undertaking any building works. Also check for any covenants and/or bylaws that restrict the style and height of your fence. For example, in older city suburbs you may only be allowed to build a low traditional-style picket fence on your front street-side boundary. Some newer suburbs ban front boundary fences completely, and some restrict how far forward any side fences can extend.

WHO PAYS?

If the fence is on shared boundary, you can ask your neighbour to share the cost of a new fence or upgrading an existing one. You can expect the neighbour to pay half of what is termed an 'adequate' fence under The Fencing Act. That is one that is 'reasonably satisfactory' for the purpose it is intended to serve. And, if this is a standard rental property in a mid to low-end neighbourhood, a basic fence is probably all you are after.

You could negotiate a different share of the costs depending on what side of the fence you see, for instance, a paling fence has a nice smooth front and a not-so-nice back with the cross-rails showing. If you have initiated the process you might offer to pay more to have the more visually pleasing side visible from your property.

Talk to your neighbour before you start and try to keep the proposal reasonable. They are entitled to object if they disagree about what is appropriate.

If you can't reach an agreement, or your neighbour refuses to pay half, you can serve them a 'fencing notice' (remember to sign and date it) which details where the fence is to go, what it looks like, when it's to be built and an estimate of costs. Your neighbour has 21 days to object to the proposal and/or suggest amendments. If they don't get in touch within 21 days, they are deemed to have agreed and must share the cost.

Or it may be that your neighbour has approached you about sharing the costs of a fence. Good communication is always the key to avoiding problems but if you have been served a fencing notice, make sure you reply within 21 days. If you can't agree, you can resolve the dispute through mediation, arbitration, a Disputes Tribunal or the District Court.

For more information or samples of fencing notices, you can find a copy of the Act online at www.legislation.govt.nz.

FINISHING OFF

Timber fences can be finished in a number of ways. You can leave them raw and let the timber silver off but the fence can end up looking patchy, and as soon as the taggers hit town, you'd have to paint it anyway. Generally a painted fence or wall is easier to keep graffiti free because any further



Fences offer many uses from security to privacy.



DETECTING THE TAGGERS

PLANT SHRUBS OR a tree against walls and fences exposed to tagging or plant climbing shrubs or hedges. Species with prickles provide additional protection.

Consider coating your front boundary fence with an anti-graffiti system, such as Resene Uracryl GraffitiShield. Once cured you will be able to quickly clean away graffiti with Resene Graffiti Cleaner without damaging the paint finish.

Don't throw out any unused fence paint: keep it in case you need to use it again. Keep a small pot of your fence paint and a brush handy for quick touch-ups if needed.

Install security nightlights in graffiti-prone areas.

Do an informal audit of your property. Can people jump on your rubbish bin and onto the roof? Is there a dark wall that doesn't face the street and is poorly lit? Are there bins or bushes that might provide visual shelter for taggers while they graffiti?

For more information, visit www.resene.co.nz.

tags can simply be painted over in the same colour as the original. Using a roller instead of a brush will make painting rough-sawn timber palings easier.

If you are painting an already aged fence, you will need to use a preparation system to bond the paint to the surface better, such as Resene Timber Lock.

To blend any timber fence against a background of greenery, paint it either a near-black, like Resene Bokara Grey or Resene Gravel, or deep muddy green, like Resene Waterloo.

DECKS

We love decks. If you're a long-term landlord, you'll know that even a tiny balcony on an inner city apartment will enhance its rentability.

A deck is an easy, low-maintenance way of providing good outdoor living. If you're building a new one, the first thing to do is check out the regulations and building codes. You may need building consent if your proposed deck is more than 1.5 metres off the ground, or within 1.2 metres from a drop of more than 1.5 metres. The deck needs to be within one metre of a boundary. If it's more than a metre off the ground, it will need a child-proof balustrade, of a certain height and with spaces between the railings of less than 100mm.

Note that even if the deck doesn't need a building consent, it must still comply with the Building Code.

Think about the orientation of the deck – one that is open to the sunny north or west will be well-used and appealing whereas there's pretty much no point building one on the south-eastern side of the house.

Make it large enough to put an outdoor table and chairs, and for people to move around on comfortably. And make it easily accessible to the indoor living areas. You

may be also installing new French doors or sliders.

There are many types of timber now available for decking, aside from the traditional kwila. There are even eco-decking materials that look like timber but don't have the maintenance issues associated with timber. Whatever you choose, a ribbed profile will give a safer, less slippery surface.

A timber deck can be left to weather, or can be finished in a specialised stain, like the Resene Woodsman series or Resene Kwila Timber Stain (a kwila deck should be left to weather for four to six weeks first though). Hardwood timbers do not last forever and after 12 to 15 years, they will eventually rot where they sit on the deck joists. Staining with Resene Kwila Timber Stain on the underside before fixing the decking timber will help resist rot.

Resene Lumbersider and Resene Non-Skid Deck and Path are also good options for pine decks.

SPRUCE UP TIPS

If you have an old deck that has stained or become mossy, rather than waterblast it, which can damage the timber, use Resene Timber and Deck Wash. Get rid of mould with Resene Moss and Mould Killer.

In most cases older, well-weathered stains simply need treating for moss and mould followed by thorough scrubbing before applying further coats of penetrating stain. If the surface is badly deteriorated it should be sanded with 100 to 150 grit garnet sandpaper to remove the worst detritus.

If the stain is peeling and/or flaking, it will be a surface-forming (as opposed to penetrating) stain and will probably need to be removed before applying a penetrating stain like Resene Woodsman. ■