

INVESTING IN STORAGE

We all know that storage is key in any home – **Louise Richardson** identifies the areas where you can create more in your rental.



LIVING

When it comes to best utilising storage space in living areas, builder Phil McDonald is a big fan of built-in furniture.

“I’ve worked a lot with rentals and you can make a dramatic difference if you construct a full wall unit with places for the TV, stereo gear, books, ornaments or whatever else tenants want to put in it. You could even incorporate a desk there for a simple home office set-up and it’s easy and inexpensive to do.”

While we don’t have (Swedish furniture giant) Ikea in New Zealand, he suggests having a look at wall units on their website for design inspiration.

He also advises building in window seats that are also storage boxes, where possible.

Allowing renters to hang their TV on the wall is another way of helping to avoid clutter.

KITCHEN

Any cook or entertainer will tell you that it’s impossible to have too much bench and cupboard space but sometimes this is hard to achieve. However, even with a fitted kitchen it’s often possible to add extra storage in the form of stand-alone trolleys which can be moved around if necessary.

While homeware stores usually have wooden versions, try companies retailing to business clients, such as restaurants, for cool, cutting-edge, hard-wearing industrial style steel models, adding extra bench space on top and storage below. It’s an extra that tenants wouldn’t normally expect from you, but they’re sure to appreciate it.

BEDROOM

A full wall unit can be good in bedrooms too – even if the room is small, and the wardrobe unit you put in is relatively shallow – tenants will still appreciate it. Another possibility is building shelves or cupboards above and around the bedhead. This is a common storage solution in Europe and it can certainly add a significant amount of storage space. The ultimate bedroom space saver – also popular overseas, is a pull-down bed, which allows the room to be used for other purposes during the day.

BATHROOM

This is another room where creative thinking can help add space for all those cosmetics and toiletries, shaving gear, towels and other ablution essentials.

Wherever possible, build shelves on the walls, put towel rails on the back of the door if there’s not enough wall space, and use features such as brackets for hairdryers inside the vanity unit. Explore the possibility of recessed wall storage to create alcove space ideal for storing shampoo, conditioner and beauty products.

RENO STORAGE

PROVIDING STORAGE SOLUTIONS ON THE WALLS OF YOUR GARAGE MEANS YOUR TENANTS CAN TAKE GOOD CARE OF BOTH THEIR GEAR AND YOUR GARAGE.

YOU GENERALLY WON'T NEED A CONSENT FOR ATTIC STAIRS, UNLESS YOU PLAN TO USE THE ROOF SPACE AS A LIVING AREA
- MARK LANDON



Most towns have specialty storage stores selling all kinds of useful gadgets for maximising storage potential in bathrooms, so take some photos with you and have a chat with the staff.

CEILING SPACE

Attic stairs are growing in popularity as people realise that ceilings can provide bonus storage space. They should be professionally installed, for safety reasons, and Atticman's Mark Landon says it's vital that no damage is done to the structural elements of the property.

"You generally won't need a consent for attic stairs, unless you plan to use the roof-space as a living area, but it always pays to check first though."

He says that being able to utilise roof space not only pleases tenants; it also adds value to a property.

GARAGE

Some people think that garages are wasted on cars and can be put to better use. If you and/or your tenants are of that belief, a garage provides many storage possibilities including simple



WASTED SPACE

If your rental has a separate laundry, consider condensing the space that's taken up by the washer, dryer and tub and conceal these in a cupboard with bi-folds or a roller door. Alternatively, you could relocate the laundry to the garage. This can free up a significant area for other uses – a separate study or storage room.



ones, such as building large basic shelves for housing suitcases, sports goods, tools and other items. Even with a car in situ, shelves can still be added.

More upmarket, and therefore more expensive, options include sophisticated cabinet systems – along the lines of kitchen joinery, featuring cupboards and drawers plus a bench-top for a handyperson. There are cheaper versions at some hardware chains, so shop around if you can.

If space in your rental is at a premium and there's a place outside for erecting a carport or even just hanging a shade sail for cars to park under, it would make sense then to let a garage work harder in the storage stakes.

UNDER HOUSE

This is another space that's often overlooked. If a house has a full or partial basement it can provide extensive storage space, but even if there's only a small accessible area, often referred to as 'crawl space', it's still worth considering what to do with it, starting with access. You may need to cut out some floor to make an access hatch and it would pay to consult with a builder in order to assess the best place for this.

Unless the crawl space is fully lined, suggest to tenants that anything they store in there should be in plastic lidded boxes, in order to protect it from damp or rodents.

OUTDOORS

A garden shed provides extra storage and will certainly attract tenants. Ricky Bessa from Riverlea Group whose steel sheds are sold at Bunnings, Mitre 10 and Placemakers, says that landlords can expect to pay anything from \$399 for a 3 x 2m* example to around \$990 for a larger version.

Beyond that are what he calls the "Rolls Royce" of sheds which can cost considerably more.

"Basically you would choose according to the size and standard of the house itself." ■