

Never Stand Still

Built Environment



Beecroft Apartments (Source: Google, 2009)

### The Case:

The 12 unit building was built in the late 1960s and is well situated close to a primary school and train station. The building has many families with school-aged children, and the majority of units are rented. As the building is many decades old, the Executive Committee (EC) considered retrofits to reduce electricity costs by replacing inefficient technology.

**Challenge:** Implementing energy saving retrofits in an old building.

### Challenges

### Details

#### Costs

A member of the Executive Committee (EC) had to look into what lights might remain as fluorescent but go onto timers, and what could be LED. They explored having an independent energy access audit done, but struggled to find an auditor who understands older buildings and small body corporates. EC members also had concerns that security needed to be upgraded on top of the retrofits, as there is the potential that the LED fittings could be stolen. Ultimately the decision made was that the costs for changing lights were hard to justify, given costs of installation and replacement.

#### Support

The EC had difficulty garnering support from owners to undertake the retrofits. Only three people attended the most recent Annual General Meeting. Ultimately other more immediate building issues took precedence over furthering the retrofits projects.

#### Communication

EC members were worried that they couldn't obtain independent advice on retrofits that weren't biased by commercial interests. There were concerns around which energy auditors and workmen to hire to do the work. In particular, that they wouldn't take into account old circuits and the need to upgrade the security in determining costs and pay back periods.

#### Completed Retrofits:

- Transition to gas hot water unit
- Replaced flood light with energy-saving bulb
- Motion detector lamp installed in corridor

#### Planned Retrofits:

- LED lighting

### Outcomes:

- Some, but not all retrofits were completed
- Planned retrofit projects have been stalled or abandoned
- An EC member suggested that information about the costs and benefits of sustainable retrofits for smaller and older blocks should be more easily accessible