

Is your Landlord Blocking Security Upgrades ?

Here's Why That Decision Is Costing Them.

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Landlords Keep Blocking Security Upgrade Approvals

Here's Why That Decision Is Costing Them

The Real Reasons Security Upgrade Approvals Are Still Being Refused

A practical look at why modern shopfront security no longer harms appearance — and why outdated objections are now creating more cost, risk, and churn than the upgrades themselves.

We keep finding that landlords block tenant security upgrades because they believe it will devalue the building. That assumption made sense years ago, when security meant welded bars, dark mesh, and shutters that dragged a frontage down. But modern security has changed. Some systems are completely invisible behind the glass; others are architectural features that make a shopfront look cleaner, sharper, and more contemporary. Meanwhile, we're dealing with desperate tenants trying to protect themselves, but their landlord or body corporate won't allow them to. The idea that security harms appearance is no longer true — but blocking it definitely harms confidence, increases repairs, reduces value, and causes churn.

In most refusals we see, the landlord is imagining the old-style bars and shutters from 20 years ago. Meanwhile, the tenant is asking for a modern system that either disappears entirely or improves the shopfront. Those two realities never meet — and the refusal usually wins by default.

Old Assumptions vs. Modern Reality

It's remarkable how often we still hear the same objections we heard twenty years ago. And to be fair, those objections made sense at the time. Bars looked harsh. Mesh looked industrial. Shutters made a shopfront feel lifeless.

But modern shopfront security — and the expectations around security upgrade approvals — have changed completely. Even organisations like Retail NZ have repeatedly highlighted the shift in risk and the need for updated approaches.

"It makes the building look cheap."

It used to. Modern systems don't — whether they disappear completely or present as clean, intentional architecture.

"It reduces natural light."

Old perforated mesh could noticeably darken a frontage. Transparent internal systems reduce visible light by roughly 5%, which is less than many standard glass tints.



“It disrupts the streetscape.”

A discreet internal system cannot disrupt anything. Plywood does — and that’s exactly what you get after an avoidable break-in. Recent reports of ram-raid damage show this clearly.

We’re on the ground with these systems every week, and it’s clear the old objections haven’t changed — even though the products have. The gap between perception and reality is now one of the biggest risks for commercial buildings.

Modern Security Comes in Two Forms Landlords Rarely Consider

One of the biggest gaps in security upgrade approvals is that many landlords simply don’t realise what tenants are actually requesting. They’re imagining heavy steel, but tenants are requesting systems that belong in today’s architectural landscape.

Transparent Internal Systems

These sit behind the glass line, completely inside the tenancy. They don’t touch the façade, they don’t interfere with displays, and from the footpath they look no different from plain glass. Unless you know what to look for, you won’t see them at all.

Systems like Invisi-Guard were developed specifically to give tenants real protection without altering the appearance of the building. The old conflict between security and aesthetics simply doesn’t apply to this category anymore.

Architectural Folding Systems

These aren’t designed to disappear — they’re designed to look intentional. Clean verticals, tidy geometry, and a fitted, architectural feel that often sharpens a frontage rather than cluttering it. In many retail layouts, the Expandoor folding system looks like part of the original design.

In many premium shopfronts, architectural security is now part of the design because it complements the fitout rather than detracting from it.

Some modern systems are effectively invisible. Others are architectural, adding clean verticals and order to the frontage. Neither resemble the heavy welded bars most landlords still picture when declining a request.

How Blocking Modern Security Damages the Property Instead

When a landlord refuses a security upgrade, the intention is usually to protect the building’s appearance. Ironically, the refusal often causes the very outcome they’re trying to avoid.

Repair Costs Spiral After Break-Ins

Once glass goes, damage spreads quickly — joinery, frames, flooring, lighting, even the tenant’s interior fit-out. Insurance absorbs some of it, but the excess, delays, and disruption add up fast. Guidance from the Insurance Council of New Zealand shows a clear trend: glazing alone is no longer enough protection.

The most expensive part of a break-in isn’t usually the glass. It’s the downtime, the damaged framing, the insurance delays, and the disruption to the tenant. A discreet internal barrier would have stopped the incident entirely.

Insurers Are Expecting More Than They Used To

We’re seeing more pressure from insurers for adequate secondary protection on vulnerable shopfronts. Declining an upgrade can weaken a building’s insurance posture without anyone realising it.

Downtime and Plywood Do the Real Damage

A damaged frontage instantly affects the entire strip. Boarded windows, temporary braces, reduced foot traffic — all far more harmful to “amenity” than any modern security system.

Tenants Lose Confidence and Start Looking Elsewhere

We regularly meet tenants doing everything they can to protect their business, yet still being told no — even when the upgrade won't change the building's look at all. These tenants don't stay forever. They negotiate harder or relocate to buildings where the landlord is actively reducing their risk.

We've met tenants who are paying premium rent, investing heavily in their fit-outs, and still feel exposed. Being told "no" to a security upgrade — especially when it won't change the look of the building — is one of the fastest ways to lose long-term tenants.

The Building's Value Slips Quietly

It doesn't take many plywood repairs or crime events before a property gains a reputation. That reputation affects tenant demand, leasing rates, and how lenders and insurers view the asset. Data from Stats NZ shows a clear rise in targeted retail incidents over recent years.

When the Product Doesn't Change the Look, the Objection Isn't Valid If a security system:

- » Doesn't alter the façade,
- » sits behind the glass,
- » doesn't block displays,
- » doesn't darken the frontage,
- » fits into architectural lines,
- » protects the tenancy without changing the building's character,

...then declining it on "appearance" grounds no longer holds up. Most refusals we see today are based on an outdated mental picture of what security used to look like.

Why Updating Security Upgrade Approvals Protects Asset Value

Updating approval guidelines isn't an inconvenience. It's a strategic move that:

- » Reduces repair cycles,
- » keeps tenants long-term,
- » improves insurance conditions,
- » preserves the visual quality of the strip,
- » and increases desirability for new tenants.

Modern security doesn't harm appearance. Blocking it harms appearance, confidence, and commercial value.

Our Conclusion: Outdated Thinking Is the Real Liability Now

Modern shopfront security is not what it used to be. Transparent systems disappear. Architectural systems elevate the frontage. Both protect against the kind of damage that genuinely makes a building look neglected.

Landlords and body corporates are no longer choosing between "ugly" and "safe." They're choosing between modern protection and avoidable damage.

Modern shopfront security isn't a downgrade — it's one of the simplest ways to keep a building looking sharp, stable, and fully tenanted. The old appearance objections haven't matched reality for a long time.