



Integrated

Building & Engineering Consultancy



Selecting a Building Consultant for Strata

Issue 3

Unit 22/10 Gladstone Road,
Castle Hill, NSW 2154

(02) 8814 5999
www.ibc.net.au
enquiries@ibc.net.au

Selecting a Building Consultant for Strata: What Experience Actually Matters?



Choosing a building consultant for your strata property can feel straightforward at first.

Get a few quotes. Compare fees. **Make a decision.**

But here's what many committees discover too late:

Not all "experience" is equal — and choosing the wrong consultant can cost far more than their fee.

Delays. Variations. Misdiagnosed issues. Contractor disputes.

So how do you choose confidently?

Let's break down what *actually* matters — so you can make a decision that protects both your building and your owners. Let's explore. how.

Visit Integrated
<https://www.ibc.net.au/> to see how
we can assist *or* contact Integrated
<https://www.ibc.net.au/contact-us/>
for a free quotation and start the
process of obtaining a structured
permanent solution.

Why This Decision Matters More Than You Think



Most strata buildings only engage a building consultant a handful of times over decades.

But when they do, it's usually for:

- Major defect investigations
- Waterproofing failures
- Maintenance or planned remediation

In other words, **high-stakes decisions involving significant spend.**

The right consultant brings clarity, structure, and control.

The wrong one can unintentionally create confusion, risk, and cost escalation.



The Common Mistake: Judging on Price or Availability



It's understandable.

Committees are busy. Quotes come in. Fees vary.

And often, decisions are made based on:

- Lowest fee
- Fastest turnaround
- Familiar name
- Referral without deeper review

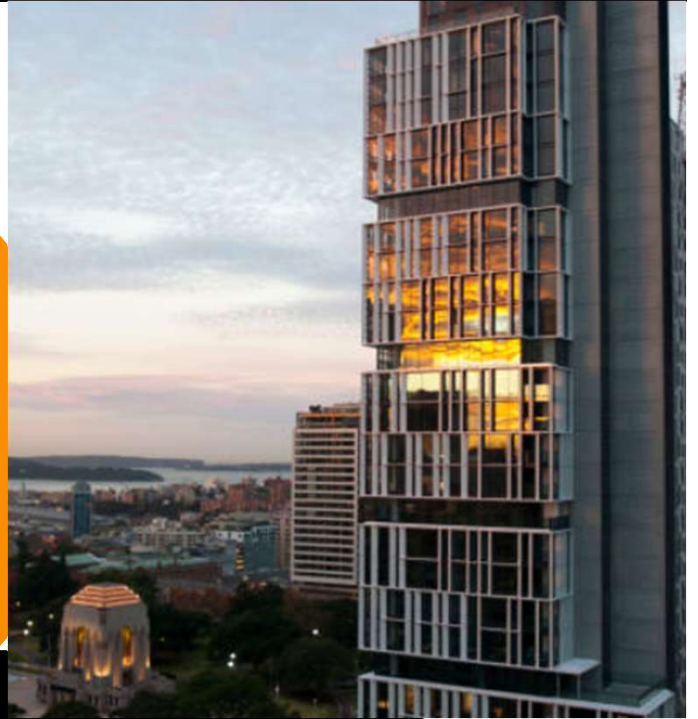
But here's the issue:

Consultant fees are typically a small percentage of the total project cost.

If a \$20,000–\$40,000 consultancy influences a \$500,000–\$2M remediation project, the real question becomes:

How much risk are you taking to save on the smallest part of the cost?

What “Relevant Experience” Actually Means



Experience isn't just about years in the industry.

It's about **relevance to your specific building and problem.**

Here's what to look for.



Integrated
Building & Engineering Consultancy

1

Experience With Buildings Like Yours

A consultant who primarily works on new developments may not fully understand:

- Age-related deterioration
- Legacy construction methods
- Long-term defect patterns

Look for experience with:

- 1960s–1980s strata buildings
- Similar construction types (brick, concrete, balconies)
- Comparable defect issues

Because older buildings behave differently — and require a different approach.



2

Depth in Remedial (Not Just Diagnostic) Work

Some consultants are strong at identifying issues.

Fewer are experienced in **seeing projects through to completion.**

This matters because:

- Diagnosis influences scope
- Scope influences cost
- Documentation influences contractor pricing
- Oversight influences final quality

Without end-to-end experience, gaps can form between:

- What's identified
- What's specified
- What's delivered

And that's where cost overruns happen.



3

Ability to Identify Root Causes — Not Just Symptoms

This is one of the biggest differentiators.

Reactive advice often sounds like:

- “Seal this crack”
- “Repaint this wall”
- “Patch this area”

Strategic advice asks:

- *Why did this crack occur?*
- *Where is water actually entering?*
- *Is this isolated — or systemic?*

Without root cause analysis, buildings enter a cycle of:

repair → failure → repeat

And each cycle costs more than the last.



Visit Integrated
<https://www.ibc.net.au/> to see how
we can assist or contact Integrated
<https://www.ibc.net.au/contact-us/>
for a free quotation and start the
process of obtaining a structured
permanent solution.

4

Structured Investigation and Reporting

Clarity reduces stress.

A capable consultant provides:

- Clear condition assessments
- Logical prioritisation of issues
- Plain-English explanations (not just technical jargon)
- Visual documentation (photos, diagrams, mapping)



You should walk away from a report thinking:

“We understand what’s happening, what matters most, and what to do next.”

Not more confused than when you started.

5

Commercial Awareness — Not Just Technical Knowledge

Good consultants understand buildings.

Great consultants understand **buildings and budgets**.

They consider:

- Fund constraints
- Levy tolerance
- Staging of works
- Cost vs risk trade-offs
- Impact on occupants

Because the best solution isn't always:

“Fix everything immediately.”

It's often:

“Fix the right things, in the right order, at the right time.”



6

Experience Managing Contractors and Variations

Even well-documented projects can drift without proper oversight.

A consultant with delivery experience helps:

- **Define clear scopes of work**
- **Reduce ambiguity in tendering**
- **Minimise contractor variations**
- **Maintain accountability during construction**

Without this, projects can experience:

- **Budget blowouts**
- **Scope creep**
- **Disputes between stakeholders**



The Often-Overlooked Factor: Communication and Strata Governance



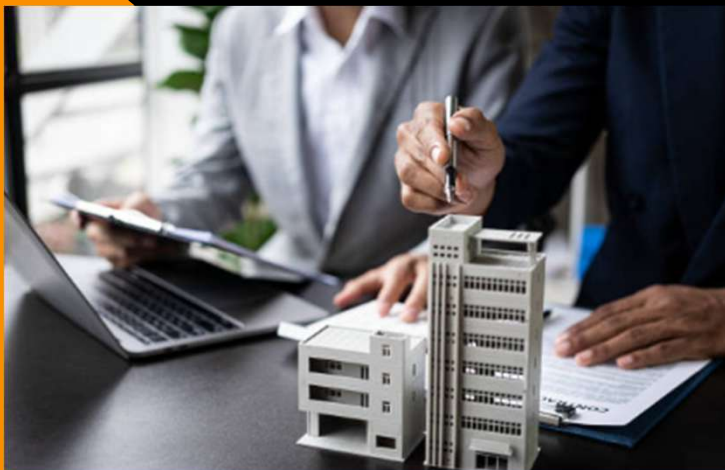
Technical expertise is essential.

But in strata, **communication is what determines whether that expertise actually translates into outcomes.**

Because strata projects don't operate like typical construction jobs.

They involve multiple stakeholders, each with different roles, responsibilities, and priorities.

If this isn't managed well, even a well-designed project can stall.



Understanding the Strata Structure (And Why It Matters)



A typical strata building includes several key parties:

- ✓ **Owners Corporation**
The legal entity representing all owners. They approve budgets and carry financial responsibility.
- ✓ **Strata Committee**
A group of elected owners who review options, liaise with consultants, and help drive decisions.
- ✓ **Strata Manager**
The coordinator who manages communication, compliance, and implementation of decisions.
- ✓ **Building Manager (if applicable)**
Handles day-to-day operations and assists with site coordination.
- ✓ **Consultant (Your Advisor)**
Acts as the bridge between all parties — not just a technical advisor.



Integrated

Building & Engineering Consultancy



Where Projects Often Break Down



Without clear communication and alignment, issues quickly emerge:

- Conflicting instructions to contractors
- Delays due to unclear decision authority
- Misunderstood scope of works
- Frustration between stakeholders
- Residents feeling uninformed

In many cases, the technical solution is sound.

But the **delivery fails due to poor coordination.**



The Consultant's Role as a Central Point of Clarity

An experienced consultant goes beyond reports.

They create structure across people, decisions, and delivery.



1

Translating Technical Issues Into Clear Decisions

Committees need clarity, not complexity.

A good consultant explains:

- What the issue is
- Why it matters
- What the options are
- What to do next

All in plain English.



2

Establishing Clear Communication Pathways

Who instructs the contractor?

Who approves variations?

Who communicates updates?

When this is unclear, risk increases.

When it's defined, projects run smoothly.



3

Supporting the Strata Manager

A strong consultant makes the strata manager's role easier by:

- Providing concise updates
- Aligning with meeting cycles
- Reducing administrative burden



4

Guiding the Committee Through Decisions

Committees often face:

- Differing opinions
- Budget concerns
- Risk uncertainty



A skilled consultant keeps discussions focused and decisions moving forward.

5

Acting as the Interface With the Remedial Builder

This is where real value is delivered.

The consultant should:

- Clearly define scope
- Respond to contractor queries
- Assess and control variations
- Ensure works meet specification



Without this, committees are often left managing builders directly — which increases risk significantly.

Why This Matters Financially

\$



\$

\$

Poor communication doesn't just create frustration.

It creates cost.

- Variations from unclear documentation
- Rework due to miscommunication
- Delays from slow decisions
- Inefficient contractor mobilisation

These can easily add **10–20%+ to project costs.**

Clear communication is not a soft skill.

It's a financial control mechanism.

\$

\$

\$



\$

Questions You Should Ask Before Appointing



Before making a decision, consider asking:

- **Can you share similar projects you've completed?**
- **Do you manage projects through to completion?**
- **How do you identify root causes of defects?**
- **How do you stage works over multiple years?**
- **How do you manage communication between all parties?**

The answers will quickly reveal depth.



What a **Strong** Consultant Relationship Feels Like



When you engage the right consultant, you'll notice a shift.

Instead of:

- Confusion
- Reactive decisions
- Ongoing uncertainty

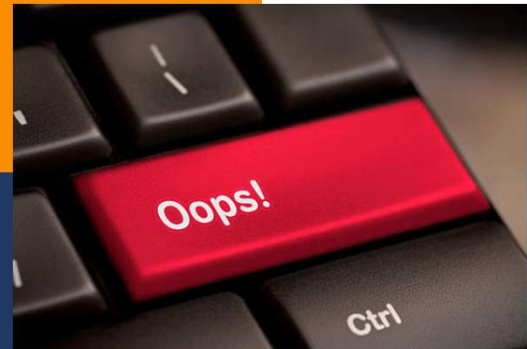
You experience:

- **Clear direction**
- **Structured planning**
- **Confidence in decisions**

Everything becomes more predictable.



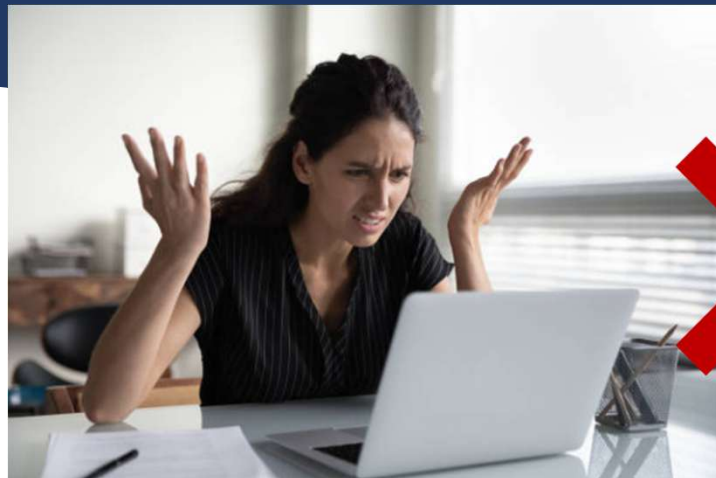
What Committees Often Get Wrong



Common patterns include:

- Choosing based on lowest upfront fee
- Overvaluing speed over thoroughness
- Assuming all consultants offer the same service depth
- Relying solely on contractor advice

These decisions often lead to higher costs later.



What the Right Decision Looks Like in 5 Years



A well-advised building typically sees:

- **Fewer unexpected defects**
- **Predictable capital works planning**
- **Reduced emergency spending**
- **Better contractor outcomes**
- **Stronger property values**

It's not about perfection.

It's about control.



A Simple Framework for Choosing With Confidence

Step 1: Shortlist Based on Relevant Experience

Focus on similar buildings and proven outcomes.



Step 2: Assess Depth, Not Just Fee

Look at thinking, communication, and structure.



Step 3: Choose for Long-Term Partnership

You're selecting guidance, not just a report.



Final Thought: Experience Is a Risk Filter



In strata, every major decision carries risk.

The role of a consultant is to:

- Reduce uncertainty
- Structure decisions
- Protect outcomes

And the right experience does exactly that.



One Action You Can Take This Month



Before your next consultant engagement, ask:

“Are we choosing based on fee —
or based on the level of guidance we actually need?”

That one question can reshape the outcome.



If you're unsure whether your current approach is setting your building up for success, it may be worth stepping back before the next major decision.

Clarity upfront always costs less than correction later.



Integrated

Building & Engineering Consultancy

Unit 22/10 Gladstone Road,
Castle Hill, NSW 2154

(02) 8814 5999
www.ibt.net.au
enquiries@ibt.net.au

