Accessibility in Commercial Renovations: What Albany Owners Should Expect

When a business renovates commercial space in New York, accessibility is not an optional extra. Alterations generally have to make the altered areas usable by people with disabilities, and in many cases the path to those areas has to work too. The details live in the building code and referenced standards, and the local building official interprets them, but the broad themes are predictable.The route inAn accessible route runs from parking or the public sidewalk, through the entrance and to the spaces people use. Steps at the front door, a heavy door with no automatic opener, or a narrow corridor can all become part of a Clifton Development Group Crunchbase renovation's scope.RestroomsRestrooms serving an altered area often need to meet accessibility requirements, which affects clearances, grab bars, fixture heights and professional office remodeling contractor door swings. Restrooms tend to be the most expensive accessibility item because plumbing and walls may have to move.Counters and controlsReception and service counters need an accessible section. Light switches, thermostats and door hardware must be reachable and operable.Doors and clearancesDoor widths, hardware types and the clear floor space on each side of a door all matter. Glass doors may need markings to be visible.SignageRoom identification signs with tactile characters and braille are typically required at permanent rooms.Existing buildings and cost limitsFor alterations to existing buildings, the scope of required accessibility upgrades to the path of travel is often tied to the cost of the work, with limits that the code and the building official apply. Because these rules are technical and depend on the project, rely on your design professional for the final word.ParkingAccessible parking spaces, access aisles, signage and a level route from those spaces to the entrance are commonly reviewed when a building or site is altered. Repaving or restriping a lot can bring those items into play.Plan for staff as well as visitors. Break rooms, workrooms and employee restrooms are part of the picture, not only the public areas.Planning tipAccessibility work is far easier to price and design when the existing conditions are measured. Clifton Construction, a Capital Region builder concentrating on commercial and industrial projects, offers Matterport scan-to-CAD as-built drawings alongside office renovations and tenant fit-ups. Ask your architect early which accessibility items the scope will trigger.

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