



10 ESSENTIAL ITEMS TO KNOW

BEFORE YOU DESIGN AND BUILD





Building a custom home can feel exhilarating one day and downright scary the next.

You can't wait to have the home you've always dreamed about, but the choices seem endless and everyone seems to have a horror story they want to tell you. As one of the biggest investments you will ever make, you want to make sure you get things right from the beginning, which can send you down a rabbit hole of confusion, procrastination and complete overwhelm.

But it doesn't have to be this way.
As with most things in life,
preparation is key.

For the majority, building a home isn't something you commit to completely unprepared.

But there are some key things you need to know before you begin.

We've taken our years of experience helping clients create the home they've always wanted and put them together in this handy booklet.



1 Where do I start?

You've decided to custom build a home. You've got some ideas in the back of your mind: number of bedrooms, bathrooms, car spaces.

Great! You're ready to engage a Builder who specialises in Design and Build!

During the discussions with your builder, it is helpful to have a wish list of ideas of what you want your ideal home to look and feel like and an idea of a budget that you are wanting to spend.

Providing visual cues to your builder is a huge help at this time. It helps your builder to understand the style of home you want and the type of fixtures and fittings you like.

There are number of ways to collate this information:

- ⇒ Curate Pinterest boards for each room
- ⇒ Create mood/ vision boards for the overall layout and feel
- ⇒ Use a lever arch file with sections for each stage



ACTION

- ☐ Decide how you're going to curate your information - try to keep everything together in one place
- ☐ Look at different types of architecture/facades for what you like
- ☐ Take photos as samples
- ☐ Make a wish list

Designing Your Home

2



When building a custom home, you're going to need a design. And there's some key design questions you're going to need answers first:



Are there any major life changes expected in the future?

- adding to the family - bedrooms close together?
- teenage years - separate living and sleeping zones?
- empty nesters - multi- purpose rooms?



Is this your forever home or a transition/ investment house - are you building for what you want, or what the market needs?



Where do you want the main hub of the house to be-kitchen, living area, alfresco area?

A good builder already has answers to many of these questions and can help steer you in the right direction. Good builders live and breathe good design. They understand traffic flows and window placements. They know the minimum room size for the best home theatre experience. They've seen what works and what doesn't.

THINK:

- How long are you planning on living in the house?
- Are there any design requirements that need to be taken into consideration for this to happen?
- Where do you want the main hub of the home to be?
- Are there any features that are non- negotiables?

3 Budget Explained

If you've ever worked with a builder, you've probably encountered the question so many people dread:

"So, what's your budget?"

There are many different reactions to this question. Some clients know exactly what the figure is and happily provide the information. Others are wanting to play their cards close to their chest, not giving anything away while others find it confronting and refuse to answer.

But here's the thing...

Gone are the days where you approach a building designer who provides a beautiful design only to later obtain quotes and then come to the realisation that that design had blown the budget.

One of the best things about working with a design and build builder is that your budget is established right from concept stage which ensures this does not happen to you.

Answering this question is necessary if your builder is to design and build a home to fit your selections and fosters a relationship built on honesty and transparency.



THINK:

- What is your minimum budget?
- What is your maximum budget?
- What contingency have you allowed for out of scope work?

Knockdown for the win!

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When contemplating the construction of a custom home, some individuals believe their only option is spending weekends searching for a scarce parcel of land in their desired neighborhood. That is not the case!

There are lots of reasons to stay where you are, why wouldn't you look at knocking down your existing home and rebuilding one that suits your life today.

- Depending on the size of the block, you can:
- Knock down one home and build two - selling or investing options
- You can future proof your design, so it meets your needs through different life stages - providing mobility or different access options.
- You can rebuild around existing features you love e. g. garden or pool
- Re-orientation of your house can provide greater natural light and better heating/ cooling.
- Rebuilding with better materials makes your new home more energy efficient.



Knock down rebuild projects do differ significantly from standard home builds on vacant lots in new developments. They entail a demolition process, consideration of

neighbors, preservation of existing infrastructure, and adherence to specific council regulations. With numerous variables to oversee, selecting a builder with expertise in knock down rebuilds and designing aesthetically pleasing homes is paramount.

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Is a Dual Occupancy Knock Down feasible?

Becoming more and more popular is knock down on your existing block and to build a dual occupancy due to the many benefits.

- Cost-effective

In some cases, building two dwellings on a single lot can be more cost-effective than purchasing two separate properties. This is particularly beneficial in areas where land prices are high.

- Maximizing land use

Dual occupancy developments allow you to make efficient use of available land, especially in urban or suburban areas where land is limited and expensive.

- Property appreciation

Well-designed and constructed dual occupancy properties can enhance the overall value of your investment portfolio. They often attract a wider pool of potential tenants or buyers, increasing demand and property value over time.

For a successful dual occupancy development, it's crucial to make informed decisions from the outset and having a builder specialising in dual occupancy is a good start.

Why is this so important?

Simply knowing that the neighborhood has numerous units or that a friend completed a similar project isn't enough. Development regulations evolve, with councils often implementing specific overlays for different sites.

It's essential to think ahead and ensure your design is the most cost effective design to maximise your development potential.

THINK:

- What is the percentage of home- owners / renters in the area?
- Where is the block located? What council?
- What are the zoning rules of multi- dwelling?
- What are the restrictions on design?

Quoting Explained

By their very nature, custom homes come with custom designs, which therefore have custom selections and costs.

Some builders will use a standard specification list when providing initial estimates.

While this is fine to obtain initial budgets, it is always best to choose a builder that you are able to sit down and go through your plans and selections and work through exactly what you would like to include.

This will ensure that you obtain an accurate all inclusive quote based upon your specific requirements.

ACTION

- ☐ Are these items accounted for?
 - ☐ Demolition
 - ☐ Driveway
 - ☐ Heating and Cooling
 - ☐ Type of floor coverings
 - ☐ Landscaping
- ☐ Identify other inclusions to be added or excluded from the costings
- ☐ Is the quote detailed enough to enable a proper comparison?

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Researching a Builder

When embarking on a construction project, whether it's building a dream home or development, one of the most crucial decisions you'll make is choosing the right builder. Central to this decision is the builder's reputation - a reflection of their professionalism, reliability, and craftsmanship. Here are a few tips to researching builders and ensuring you select the perfect fit for your project.

First and foremost, delve into the builder's online presence. In today's digital age, social media platforms serve as valuable tools for assessing a builder's reputation. Review their social media profiles to gauge their activity, engagement with clients, and the quality of their work showcased. Pay particular attention to client testimonials and reviews. These firsthand accounts provide invaluable insights into the builder's performance, communication style, and overall client satisfaction.

Next, don't hesitate to ask questions. A reputable builder will welcome inquiries and be transparent in their responses. Ask about their experience, qualifications, and certifications. Inquire about their approach to project management, timelines, and budgeting. A builder's willingness to address your concerns and provide detailed answers is indicative of their professionalism and reliability.

Furthermore, assess the builder's reputation within the industry. Seek recommendations from trusted sources such as friends, family, or local construction associations. Verify if the builder has a track record of delivering projects on time and within budget. Additionally, inquire about their adherence to safety regulations and ethical standards.

Thorough research is essential when selecting a builder for your project. By reviewing their online presence, client testimonials, and asking pertinent questions, you can make an informed decision. Choose a builder with a proven track record of professionalism, reliability, and excellence - someone you can trust to bring your vision to life.



Communication is Key.

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Effective communication is the cornerstone of any successful project. Clear and open communication fosters trust, transparency, and ensures that both parties are on the same page every step of the way.

One crucial aspect to evaluate is whether the builder communicates effectively. This involves not only conveying information but also actively listening to the client's needs, concerns, and preferences. A builder who communicates effectively, takes the time to understand the client's vision and ensures that their expectations are met.

Moreover, the builder's ability to provide substantial and detailed responses is paramount. Clients rely on builders to provide them with accurate and comprehensive information regarding project timelines, budgets, materials, and any potential challenges. A builder who is forthcoming with information, addresses queries promptly, and offers detailed explanations instills confidence in the client and demonstrates their commitment to transparency and professionalism.

In essence, effective communication between a builder and a client is non-negotiable. It sets the foundation for a collaborative and successful project outcome, ensuring that both parties are aligned in their goals and expectations from concept design to handover.



9 Which Contract is best?



When engaging with a home builder, clients typically encounter two primary types of contracts: fixed price contracts and cost-plus contracts.

A fixed price contract, as the name suggests, entails the builder quoting a specific, fixed price for the entire project as per exact inclusions and selections. This price encompasses all aspects of construction, from materials to labour costs. With a fixed price contract, clients have the advantage of knowing the total cost upfront, providing clarity and predictability throughout the project. These contracts are supplied by the Housing industry associations such as the HIA and MBA and are written in plain english and easy to understand.

On the other hand, a cost-plus contract involves the client paying the builder for the actual costs incurred during construction, plus an agreed-upon percentage or fee for the builder's services.

This type of contract offers some flexibility, as clients have greater control over material choices and can make adjustments to the project scope as needed. However, the lack of a fixed price may result in uncertainty regarding the final cost, especially if there are unforeseen delays or changes in materials and in addition, finance companies don't generally fund these types of projects.

Guarantees and Warranties

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Homeowner warranty insurance is mandatory when entering into a contract for any new build.

This insurance serves as a safeguard for the homeowners against losses caused by death, disappearance or insolvency of the builder during the construction period.

This insurance also covers the homeowner for up to 2 years after the completion for non structural defects and 6 years on structural defects.

A certificate of currency will form part of the application for the building permit along with the contract and building documents.



We'd love to connect

Do you have any questions or would like to find out more?



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