



# 9 ESSENTIAL THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU DESIGN + BUILD

**RODA**  
NEW GENERATION BUILDERS





Overall, Design + Build can be a great way to save time and money and achieve a seamless, stress-free build journey.

# WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING YOUR NEW HOME THERE ARE MANY THINGS TO CONSIDER

*Who should I recruit to build it? Who should I enlist to design it? Is it possible for my home to look like one of those stunning homes on Instagram?*

Working with a Design + Build builder can help you resolve all of these questions. When you Design + Build your home, you'll work closely with your builder to turn your vision for your dream home into a reality.

As with anything, there are things you should know before you get started on a Design + Build project. Keep reading to learn more:

## 1. What is Design + Build?

Essentially, Design + Build means your builder is engaged from the concept stage through to completion of your new home. This means they are fully involved throughout the design process, as opposed to you approaching the builder with pre-prepared plans for your project.

One of the benefits of a Design + Build is that your entire home is crafted under the one roof. You have one project manager and one person to contact if anything goes wrong, or you simply want to chat through the build progress. It is far more convenient to contact one person who is all over everything, rather than two or three people who are only aware of a small part of the process.





## 2. The Design + Build Process

The Design + Build process is similar to a regular building process, but it is far more streamlined. The first step is to select your builder. Your builder will work closely with you at this stage to discuss your unique vision, determine a budget and establish expectations. From here on in, your builder should take care of everything. Once you supply the brief, your builder will select a design team they believe will execute your ideas well and work closely with them throughout the design stage, stepping in where necessary. This ensures the entire build journey is seamless and your home is constructed within budget and with all of your wish list items in mind.

The design team will work alongside your builder on your supplied brief to create a set of preliminary plans. Once you have approved these, it's time for the paperwork stage. This is when you will sign the contract, lodge an application for Development Approval and council approval if necessary.

Finally, your Design + Build team will get to work on construction your new home, while you can relax in the knowledge that everything is being centrally controlled and overseen under the one roof. Once construction is complete, you can move into your brand-new custom-built home.

### Budget

One of the best parts about Design + Build is that your budget is established from the outset. Gone are the days when you'd approach a building designer with a vision and they would create a stunning design, only for you to talk to your builder and realise you can't actually afford to build your dream home.



According to RODA Developments Director Dave Maiolo, nearly 50% of home designs are never actually built.



This is likely due to clients approaching builders with pre-designed plans that may look stunning on paper but are way over budget when it comes to actually bringing the design to life.

When you work with a Design + Build builder, everything is kept under the one roof and the design stage comes after you've established your budget. This means your house-plans will be custom designed to suit your unique financial plan. Your builder will also work closely with your building designer to reign them in if and when prices begin to get out of control.





### 3. Collaboration

Enlisting the help of a Design + Build builder means you will have one project manager for your entire build. This person will oversee everything and manage the entire team of tradies, contractors, designers, engineers and of course, your building designer. This collaborative approach means everyone who is working on your home will work together and makes for a more seamless build journey.

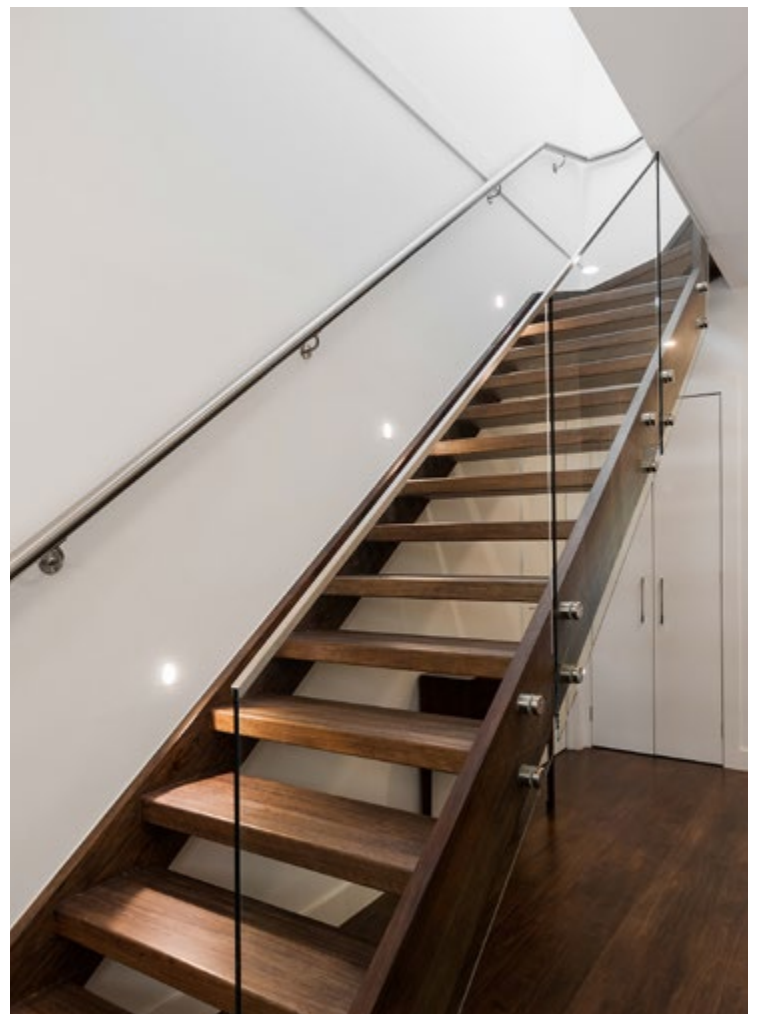
In terms of the designer-builder relationship, a Design + Build means these two parties can work collaboratively to achieve the best of both worlds. Your home will be influenced by your building designer's creative, conceptual background, as well as the technical, cost-effective influences from your builder. This will result in the best outcome possible – a beautiful custom-designed home that fits within your budget and suits your unique lifestyle.

### 4. Know What Your Builder Isn't Including

You should always check your Design + Build contract to ensure you know what you are responsible for and exactly what the impact of this will be. Unexpected additions can be costly to the home owner and quickly eat away any contingency funds.

#### Some things you should look out for

- Make sure the price you've been quoted on includes GST.
- Removal of leftover soil from excavations may be excluded from the contract, which can be very costly to remove.
- Inclusions like floor coverings, light fittings, bathroom accessories, paths, driveways etc. that you might think are mandatory can be excluded.
- Site cleaning is a must for most diligent builders but can catch out the unwary, which can leave you with a sizable wastage and truck hire bill.
- Landscape is sometimes assumed, and you need to either make sure it is included or have a contingency sum for this.







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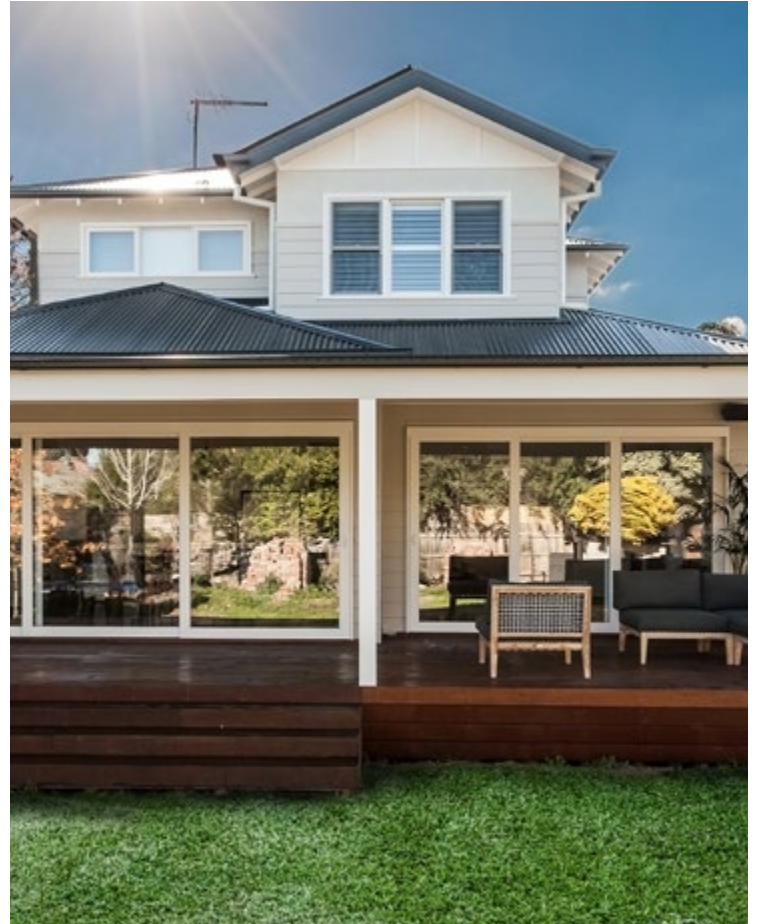


## 5. Your Builder's Reputation

There are many Design + Build businesses out there, but not all are created equal. Do a little research to find out which builders have the best reputation. The best referrals are those from previous clients, so you should ask to see testimonials and organise to walkthrough some houses that they have completed. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

You should also investigate your builder's social media presence – those with a strong following and consistent posts are generally the most trustworthy and reliable builders as it means they take all aspects of the business seriously and have a solid reputation to uphold.

One of the biggest issues when it comes to new home owners is that they have no knowledge of the building process. Many builders use this to their advantage with fee variations and exorbitant rates for things that were thought to be included. Often the home owner can feel mislead and trapped and this is a major contributor to breakdowns between builder and client.





Here are some questions you can ask your builder.

**A. What is your license number?**

Ask the builder for their registration and check it against the company name on the [VBA website](#).

**B. What insurances do you have in place?**

Make sure the builder has public liability for at least \$5,000,000. Construction Insurance can be a job-by-job cover or an annual policy; construction insurance covers the cost of the building up until handover to the owner.

Home Warranty Insurance is required before any work commences. The insurance covers structural defects on the building for 6 years, however, the insurance company does not pay unless the builder is insolvent, missing or passed away.

**C. How much deposit do I need?**

Maximum deposit allowable by law is 5% and this will be in any home building contract. This question will check the integrity and knowledge of your builder.

**D. Do you have a quality control policy?**

Most quality driven builders will have a structured plan for ensuring quality. This is always a priority.

**E. Are you compliant with all occupational and health requirements?**

This is relevant to you because if a work cover inspector closes down a construction site, you may be waiting a few more months for your home to be completed. A conscientious builder will have a full system in place.

**F. May I get a list of references from previous Design + Build homes you have completed?**

Take the time to read through references and check them. Look for a builder who has established good relationships and an underlying trust with their clients.

**G. How do you handle variations?**

Some builders look to take advantage of this process so make sure everything you've asked for has been noted down in the specifications and ask your builder what their variation process is.

Open communication  
is the key to success  
in building any  
project!

## 6. Contracts

It is important that yourself and the builder are very clear on what is covered in your Design + Build contract and specifications. If these are being developed from a 1 or 5 page quote, how accurate and specific do you think the documentation will be? This is one of the most, if not the most, important document that will be created; it needs to be clear and accurate.

Once you have finalised all working drawings, are happy with your budget and have decided on a builder, the landowner will need to sign a residential building contract. Beware if a builder uses their own 'custom made' contract.

Housing industry bodies such as the MBA and HIA all have standard plain English contracts for their members to use that protect both the builder and homeowner. These documents have been drafted by lawyers and updated over many years as legislation changes.

**The two most common contract types are a Fixed Price Contract and a Cost Plus Contract.**

A Fixed Price Contract is where you have a quote from a builder and this amount will be the total amount of the contract.

A Cost Plus Contract has a set margin on all expenses. Here you will receive an invoice from the builder once a fortnight for all expenses plus the builder's margin (which could be around 10-20% depending on the size of the build).

Be aware that most finance companies will not finance a cost plus type of contract.







## 7. Communication

Communication plays a key role in any project. It is very important that you and your builder have effective communication skills so that you can fulfil your needs and wants for the project. The more detailed information you give your builder the better they can understand what it is you want to achieve and translate this to the entire team of designers and contractors working on your home.

Remember that positive relationships will lead to positive outcomes.

## 8. Guarantees + Warranties

Home Warranty Insurance is designed to protect homeowners against losses caused by death, disappearance or insolvency of their builders during the construction period. It also covers the homeowner for 2 years on non-structural issues and 6 years for structural issues against losses to the builder mentioned above.

Home Warranty Insurance is compulsory to be taken out on all projects over \$3,300. A certificate of currency will form part of the application of a building permit.

## CONTACT US

If you're planning a Design + Build project, why not partner with RODA? Contact us on **9460 RODA** to find out how we can assist in making your Design + Build project a successful one.



**REGISTERED**  
Building Practitioner



