



BUILDING YOUR DREAM HOME

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START.





"Trust the process" - Joel Embiid

You've probably had a vision of your dream home in your mind for most of your adult life, maybe even for some of your childhood too. Perhaps it has a wooden staircase leading down to the front door. Or a kitchen island that you picture your family eating pancakes around. Or, maybe it's a quiet corner surrounded by bookshelves? Whatever your dreams, you need to start off by articulating these, either by writing them down, drawing up a vision board, or speaking to a professional.

Once you have some ideas in your head,
it's time to get started.

Here are
some top tips
that we've
learned after
many years
in the industry.

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Do your research

- Before you get over excited designing that mansion of yours, you need to see if you can actually afford it. Meet with a financial planner and prepare your budget constraints and documentation.
- Chat to them to get a real understanding for how a home loan works, if you haven't taken one out before. It's vital that you can afford the repayments each month.
- Now it's time to find a possible area (known as "the site"). It's worth spending time doing proper research including location, value and opportunities (read our booklet Choosing the Site of your Dream Home – 6 Top Tips).
- Check any site constraints and zoning – it's important to know if your dream home can fit in with these restrictions.

Choose a project team

The right team makes all the difference. And one of the most crucial members of that team is your architect – they'll act in your best interests, bringing hugely valuable knowledge and experience that can not only save you money (on costly mistakes), but also help you achieve the end result you've been dreaming of. Read our booklet 'The Value of an Architect' to see more ways they can help.

- Other members of your professional team include an engineer, a contractor, a quantity surveyor, landscape consultant, interior designer and more. Many of these are optional and will depend on the exact requirements of your dream home.
- It's important to check that any professionals such as your architect are registered with the relevant professional bodies.
- Once you've decided on your team, ensure that you get specific costs from them, plus that you understand your contract agreements with each consultant.
- Always design your home so that there are possibilities to make changes as your needs change in the future. For example, once your kids are older, they may want their own rooms – does your design allow for this?

Submit building plans to your local council

All plans will need approval from council before you can start building. These are the documents you will need to submit:

- Title deed
- Identification of site owners
- Surveyor General diagrams of the site
- All relevant plans must conform to National Building Regulations (BNR) and must be signed off by a registered professional
- Registered professionals are those who belong to organisations including the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNSP) and South African Council for the Architectural Professions (SACAP). These organisations ensure that these individuals take responsibility for their respective profession.

Plans will then be circulated at council. Give them enough time to scrutinise your plans – around eight weeks is typical for this process, so do build this time into your overall timelines.

After plans are approved, make sure that you're aware of how long these plans are valid for, in order for construction to take place.

The construction process

Your professional team will then kick the process off, doing what they do best.

Bear in mind the following:

- **Health and safety:** as the client, you're obligated to have health and safety protocols in place on site.
- **While the contractor builds your home, he or she will be in possession of your site and you would have to get permission from them to enter the building site.**

In between the moment the contractor begins the process and gets near the end, there are many things to bear in mind. With guidance from your architect during the process of construction though, numerous pitfalls and costly mistakes can be avoided.

'Practical completion' is the phrase used to describe the stage once the contractor is finished with your house, up to a point where it is liveable. Small snags can still be repaired in this time period.

The contractor will then issue you with a **Certificate of Compliance**, once all the work has been completed. This will include all the sub-contractors like electricians, engineers, plumbers, gas installers, glass fitters and other specialised items. After final completion of your house, you'll have a period of **five years** to inform the contractor of defects you pick up while living there. These items then have to contractually be fixed by your contractor.



Thinking about building your dream home?

As experienced, innovative architects,
we can help convert your vision
into a lasting reality.

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