



# Where to start?

Building is exciting, but there are so many decisions to make. The most important is choosing a designer and a builder. Take your time; the more detailed your planning and research at the start, the more likely you are to get it right.

Reputable advice is available to help navigate the process, from government, industry and consumer organisations.

The MBIE (Ministry for Building, Innovation and Employment) website covers the lot, from consents, quotes, planning and design, to choosing "the right people" for your type of building.

Likewise, Consumer New Zealand offers valuable free information on the whole process.

Finding, communicating with, and hiring contractors is a big task, whether you ask friends for recommendation or enlist the help of trade organisations.

But remember, you must use a Licensed Building Practitioner (LBP) for restricted building work, and a qualified tradesperson if your work requires a building consent.

Discuss your project with at least three contractors. Ask to see past examples of work and talk to previous clients, to check their communication skills, reliability, integrity and workmanship.

Get detailed quotes, not just estimates, and get an agreement in writing regardless of the size or cost of the work. You must have a contract if your project will be cost \$30,000 or more.

The same advice applies when choosing a designer or architect; both sites cover this in depth, from shortlisting designers to signing a contract.

You can use registered architects, architectural designers, architectural draughtspeople, chartered professional engineers, builders, or building companies that provide design packages.

They all have different qualifications, and varying skills. Choose according to how much help you need deciding what to

build, and the complexity of the job. If you want to be hands-off, hire someone who can manage your whole project, including securing consents, hiring tradesmen, and organising the final council inspection.

Last, but definitely not least, your budget will dictate every decision, so be clear with everyone, from the designer to the plumber, what your budget is.

## For more information, see

- [building.govt.nz/](http://building.govt.nz/) (MBIE)
- [consumer.org.nz](http://consumer.org.nz)
- [lbp.ewr.govt.nz/publicregister/search.aspx](http://lbp.ewr.govt.nz/publicregister/search.aspx) (LBP register)
- [nzrab.nz](http://nzrab.nz) (New Zealand Registered Architects Board)
- [adnz.org.nz/](http://adnz.org.nz/) (Architectural Designers NZ)
- [ipenz.nz/](http://ipenz.nz/) (IPENZ Engineers NZ)
- [pgdb.co.nz/](http://pgdb.co.nz/) (Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board)
- [ewrbewr.govt.nz/](http://ewrbewr.govt.nz/) (Electrical Workers Registration Board)
- [nzcb.nz/](http://nzcb.nz/) (New Zealand Certified Builders)
- [masterbuilder.org.nz/](http://masterbuilder.org.nz/) (Registered Master Builders)



**Planning and research is the key to getting your house right. Photo: 123rf**