



Planning to build or renovate?

Building is exciting. And scary. So many decisions, and the most important of those 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, www.building.govt.nz, covers the lot, from consents, quotes, planning and design, to choosing "the right people" for your type of building.

Likewise, Consumer New Zealand (www.consumer.org.nz) offers a raft of valuable free information on the whole process.

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

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

Before you sign on the dotted line, present your project to at least three contractors and review all quotes. And ask for detailed quotes, not just an estimate.



Then discuss your project with them to see whether they will be a good fit. Ask to see past examples of their work and talk to people who have used them, to check their communication skills, reliability, integrity and workmanship.

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 (including GST).

The same advice applies when choosing a designer or architect; both sites cover this in depth, from shortlisting designers to signing a contract. Who you get to help you, and the decisions you make now, will determine what and how you build, and the

final cost.

To help you design your project, 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 and abilities. Choose according to how much help you need deciding what to build, and how complex the job will be. A designer who is an LBP must design any restricted building work. 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 all of your decisions, so be clear from the start with everyone, from the designer to the plumber, what your budget is.

For more information:

building.govt.nz/
consumer.org.nz
nzrab.nz (New Zealand Registered Architects Board)
adnz.org.nz (Architectural Designers NZ)
nzcb.nz (New Zealand Certified Builders)
masterbuilder.org.nz