

7 MUST KNOW TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL BUILDING PROJECT

By
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ABOUT BREWSTER BUILDING

Dean Brewster is the founder of Brewster Building, a family owned architectural building company that specialises in energy-efficient new builds, residential new homes, extensions and renovations.

Our mission is to add value for each of our clients through bringing together people and ideas, creating solutions for unique projects. We use our knowledge and project management skills to ensure a smooth process, removing the complexity associated with building and providing clients with a clear course to realise their dream.

In July 2019, Brewster Building proudly won a bronze award at Master Builders' house of the year.

Although the thought of building or renovating is exciting, it can also be overwhelming. For a stress-free, enjoyable building experience, we have put together our top tips to make your project a successful one.



**TO START BUILDING YOUR
DREAM HOME TODAY CONTACT
DEAN BREWSTER ON 021 842 242**





7 TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL BUILDING PROJECT

1) Choose the right people for you and your project

There are many things to consider when choosing your architect or designer. Start with asking yourself a few questions.

- 🏠 Does the work of the architect or the designer you are considering resonate with you?
- 🏠 Can you easily check the references given by the architect or designer?
- 🏠 What services does your designer provide? For example, are council fees and engineers fees included?
- 🏠 Would there be any outstanding fees should worse come to worse, and you decide to change architect?
- 🏠 Is your architect or designer a good communicator so they can share their ideas, and clearly describe the stages involved in the building process?

Construction projects can take a significant amount of time. It is very important to think carefully before appointing a designer.

Brewster Building can assist you in finding competent architects or designers who will draw plans that take in to account both your ideas and your budget.

Choosing the right builder is critical to the success of your project. Your appointed builder is going to help you create the home of your dreams. You must choose a builder you can trust and with whom you can communicate openly. Someone you feel comfortable being around and sharing your ideas. After all, you are going to be dealing with this person a lot, making some hard decisions, perhaps making variations to the original plan and, of course, investing a lot of money.

Word of mouth is always a good place to start. Have any of your friends or relatives used a builder they would recommend to you?

Have you seen projects you like? Ask who did it and contact them.

Does your architect work with anyone in particular, or recommend a builder he or she uses regularly?

These are all good places to start when trying to find a builder for your project.



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2) Choose a Licensed Building Practitioner

The Licensed Building Practitioners (LBP) scheme was introduced in November 2007. From 1 March 2012, all building practitioners must be licensed in order to carry out or supervise work that is critical to the integrity of the building. This applies to homes or any small/medium sized apartment building.

You need to start thinking about Restricted Building Work (RBW) right from the start of your project.

If you are using an architect or designer, they must identify all the RBW on your job when they fill in their Certificate of Work, a part of the documentation required for building consent. They will do this when they draw up your building plans.

Restricted building work is everything that involves or affects the following:

- 🏠 Primary structure – for example, this work contributes to the resistance of vertical and horizontal loads (such as walls, foundations, floors and roofs).
- 🏠 Weather tightness – any work done to the outside of the building to protect it from the weather or elements.
- 🏠 Design of fire safety systems – this work involves elements intended to protect people and property from fire in multi-unit residential buildings (e.g. escape routes).

LBPs are designers, carpenters, brick and block layers, roofers, external plasterers, or site and foundations specialists who have been assessed to be competent to carry out work essential to a building's structure.

3) Be realistic with your budget

It is crucial to scope your project thoroughly as early as possible. It is impossible to gauge the actual cost of a project if you fail to capture the full extent of the build resulting in a budget blowout.

The pricing and contract should be accompanied with a detailed and specific break down of each element of your project, from design and consent costs to the components of the structure, cladding and roofing selections, exterior joinery, insulation, right down to door handles and carpet. Prime or provisional sums should only be used where it is not practical to quantify exactly.

Site management should be included to cover site establishment costs like setting up power and water supply, health and safety requirements, rubbish removal and site porta-loo. It does take more effort, but it provides clarity and certainty for everybody involved. Clients know what they are getting and trades-people know what they are dealing with from the get go.

Only do what you can afford. A premium kitchen or an alteration that gives better indoor/outdoor flow will add considerable value to your home, but they cost too. This is where you must consider what you plan to do, its' cost and what it might add to the value of your home.

Be careful and thorough in your budget. You can work with your builder to get preliminary costings before you commit to a design to prevent you from being in possession of consented plans you love but cannot afford.





When considering and comparing quotes, money should not be the only factor in choosing your builder. Compare quotes on more than just price; think about their levels of experience and reliability, what fixtures and fittings they suggest and check their references. Look at the details and make sure that they cover the same scope of building work and the same materials and fixtures so you are comparing 'like with like'.

If any part of the quote is unclear, ask for more details. It is important to understand 'contingency' or 'PC sums'. On the quote could be either provisional sums or prime cost sums.

- 🏠 A provisional sum sets aside money for specific building work when there is not enough detail to provide a fixed price (e.g. the item has not yet been purchased or chosen and the installation cost is unknown). Ask the contractor to confirm that the amount quoted will be adequate for the quality of goods you are expecting.
- 🏠 A prime cost sum sets aside a fixed amount for a certain item (e.g. kitchen sink) so that you can choose these yourself. If you choose a product that costs more than the allocated prime cost sum, you will need to pay extra to use these in your home. A prime cost sum does not include any installation costs.

4) Ask lots of questions

Communicating your vision clearly to your architect and builder will result in your dream home becoming a reality.

Clear and transparent communication between you, the architect and the builder is critical for the successful outcome of your project.

You are all connected and involved in making the project a success.

A builder who makes you feel at ease and who will listen to your concerns is crucial. If you trust your builder, it is easy to talk to them about any concerns you have and vice versa.

If you have a clear vision of what you want your dream home to look like, it is a great start! However, if some aspects of the build are not clear to you, your trusted builder will be able to answer any questions you have. Good communication between the team you have put together will result in your house evolving into the dream home you have always wanted.

5) Have clear communication channels

Being an effective communicator starts with listening. This is especially true when building your dream home. Having everything in writing can assure everyone is listening to one another and that everyone involved in the project is on the same page.

6) Use an experienced Project Manager

For a successful build, be it big or small, you must have your project management nailed.

There are literally hundreds of products, merchants, sub-trades and materials to bring together on a construction project. To manage this process, you need to have experience and know what you are doing.

You need to have good organisational and communication skills to get the correct people and materials in the right place at the right time. The project manager needs to be professional when dealing with architects, engineers, and council.

Understanding the building process and the sequence of events required, which often changes from job to job, will prevent mistakes and increase the efficiency for all trades on site.

Good product knowledge is important for many reasons. A correct handling and installation of building products is imperative to preserve their warranty. You must be aware of the limitations and intended use of products. Knowing what you are dealing with also increases efficiency on site.

7) Have a contract with your builder

The importance of a contract cannot be overstated. For your own protection, you must have a written contract between you and your builder. The builder, as main contractor, is responsible for organising all the sub-contractors.

Before you sign a contract with the builder, you need to look at the work history of those on your short list. If possible, visit other projects they have done, or that they are currently working on. This is a quick and easy way to see if you like their level of workmanship, craftsmanship and their attention to detail.

If you are managing the project yourself (perhaps under a labour-only contract with the builder), you will have to arrange contracts with each of the sub-contractors, i.e. electrician, plasterer, painters and plumbers.





What your written contract should cover

Written contracts are mandatory for certain work. From 1 January 2015, you must have a written contract if your residential building work will cost \$30,000 or more (including GST). Your contract must include the following:

- Names, physical and postal addresses (including the address for the delivery of notices) of both parties, and all relevant contact details (e.g. phone numbers and email addresses).
- The address or location description of the site where building work will be carried out.
- The date(s) in which both parties sign the contract.
- The expected start and completion date and how possible delays will be dealt with.
- The contract price or the method by which the contract price will be calculated (e.g. fixed hourly rate with materials invoiced separately by supplier).
- A description of the building work that your contractor will complete including the materials and products to be used (if known).
- Which party will be responsible for obtaining building consents, and any other approvals required, to carry out the building work.
- Who will be carrying out and/or supervising the work.
- How notices and certificates will be given by one party to the other.
- The payment process, including dates or stages for payment and how payments will be invoiced, made and receipted.
- How defects in the building work will be remedied, including reference to the existence and application of the implied warranties in section 362I to 362K of the Building Act.
- The dispute resolution process to follow if there is a disagreement.
- How variations to the building work covered by the contract will be agreed before work continues.
- An acknowledgement that the client has received the checklist and disclosure statement from the contractor.



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From 1 January 2015, the contractor must give you information about their business and a standard checklist before you sign a residential building contract if:

- 🏠 Your building work will cost \$30,000 or more (including GST) or
- 🏠 You ask for these documents.

It is important to clarify roles and responsibilities for your building work upfront when getting your quote and signing your contract. For example, the homeowner is responsible for obtaining any required building or resource consents, although often people ask their contractor or project manager to get these.

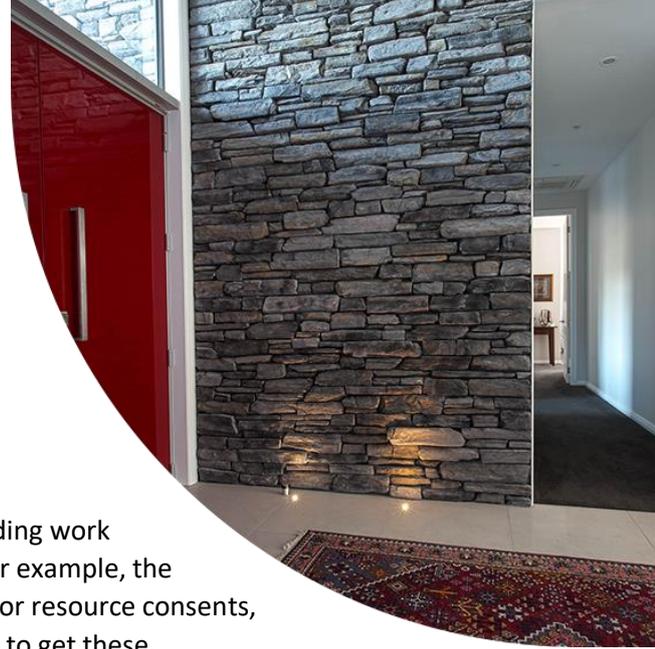
It is also a good idea to make sure both parties are clear on expected outcomes for the project.

Keep a clear record of what has been decided and agreed. Any change to the building work listed in your contract is a contract variation and needs to be put in writing to your contractor. It is important to check on the price and timeline implications of any variations.

By law, the contractor must give you a disclosure statement that includes:

- 🏠 The name of the contractor and/or the legal name of their business entity; whether they are trading as an individual, partnership or Limited Liability Company; the business address and contact details and when it was formed.
- 🏠 Information about the key contact person (e.g. the project manager or site foreman) who will be involved in carrying out or supervising the building work, including their relevant qualifications, skills and experience.
- 🏠 Information about insurance policies the contractor has, or intends to have, in relation to the building work. This must specify the amount of the cover and any relevant exclusions on policy coverage.
- 🏠 Information about any guarantees or warranties the contractor offers in relation to the building work. This must specify the period of time the guarantee or warranty is offered for and any limits or exclusions on coverage.

Only the party you are contracting with has to provide this information (i.e. your contractor may have hired other workers to help complete your building work, but they do not need to disclose this information). If any of the disclosure information seems unusual, query it with the contractor.





Anyone who knowingly provides false or misleading information, or who knowingly leaves out information, is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$20,000.

From 1 January 2015, there is a new defect repair period of 12 months, starting from the date of completion of your home.

If you let contractors know about any defective work before the 12 months are up, they must put it right within a reasonable timeframe from receiving written notification. It is the contractor's responsibility to prove that any defects are through no fault of their own (or their product) if there is a dispute.

You must notify your contractor of any problems in writing. It is up to them to arrange and manage the repairs, including any defects in work done by subcontractors. If you have contracted other tradespeople directly, you will need to contact them yourself (in writing) about the defective building work.

When does the clock start?

The completion date is when all the physical building work agreed by you and the contractor has been finished.

Once the defect repair period ends, implied warranties in the Building Act apply for up to 10 years. The contractor is still obliged to fix defective work after the defect repair period ends; however, it becomes your responsibility to prove the defects are the contractor's responsibility.



WHAT NEXT?

If you would like more information or to discuss your project with a Licensed Builder, call Dean on 021 842 242 or email him at info@brewsterbuilding.co.nz.