



# Our **ABCs** of Building

What you need to know before you build



**LEWIS BUILD**

EST 2010





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Chapter 1: *A*bout your build

Chapter 2: *B*uilding jargon explained

Chapter 3: *C*hoosing a builder



**CHAPTER 1:**

# About your build

Building your dream home and selecting your builder is a huge decision, and should not be taken lightly.



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## From concept plans to completion, we are with you the whole way, to bring your dream home to life.

Our service allows clients to go from concept to completion, having the convenience of dealing with their preferred builder the whole way through.

This streamlines the building process as we are more thoroughly involved and oversee the entire project. It ensures a more cohesive and cost-effective build process, resulting in a higher-quality end product. It also means you'll have far more control, transparency and open communication throughout your build.

The build process begins with a questionnaire and an on-site meeting. We can then establish what you hope to achieve from the project, your budget, and how we can bring your new home to life. Based on this, we will then create a preliminary agreement, which outlines what we have discussed and the costs involved. We will then start the design process, working with our team to bring your ideas to life.





We welcome the opportunity to work with new architects and designers.

## **Collaboration with your architect**

We've observed a common pattern among homeowners: they often begin by engaging with architects to develop their plans, spending a large amount of money to get their vision onto paper. But complications can arise when you wait to engage the builder in a home building project if the house design doesn't end up matching the budget.

Here at Lewis Build, we will work collaboratively with the architect right at the very start of the process. We can bring an architect and/or a Quantity Surveyor (QS) to the initial consultation meeting if required, to help understand what is possible for your project and make sure the design and budget are aligned.

Or, should your plans already be completed, we can engage with your chosen architect to bring your vision to life and make sure it is workable within your budget. We offer a personalised service that involves a detailed cost analysis of your proposed build, as well as tailoring your project to meet your budget and time constraints. Our goal is to create a luxury, high quality home that fulfils your needs and wants.





Once you're happy with your plans, we will provide a detailed cost analysis. This will empower you to make informed decisions about your home.

Instead of offering a free, single page quote, based simply on square-metre rates like some builders provide, we offer a customised and detailed cost analysis. This will include a breakdown of all the unique elements that will go into building your custom home. This is more than just an estimate of costs, it is a map of where your budget will be spent.

This process involves us working with our QS and contacting the relevant trades and material suppliers for their pricing and to review the proposed construction methods. Our QS will then compile a fully itemised and detailed cost analysis of your proposed home.

Once your cost analysis is refined and your budget is met, we'll present you with a fixed price contract. Then we handle all relevant documentation needed to get started on your new home. Once everything is lodged and signed, it's time to get building!





We will arrange an appointment with you on site, and bring along our QS and/or an architect if you'd like.

Ben will meet you on site to learn more about you, discuss the possibilities for your new home and explain the building process. By meeting on site, we can make a preliminary assessment of your land characteristics such as slope, orientation, views, and planning requirements.

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## High Performer Building

We are a High Performer Building Certified Partner, which means we are trained to understand the importance of using the innovative and sustainable High Performer products in our builds.

Benefits of building a High Performer home include lower lifecycle carbon emissions, lower running costs, improved indoor air quality, reduced waste in landfills, faster construction times and improved thermal performance.

We can take you to their cutting-edge Auckland showroom to view the products and learn more about the benefits of using High Performer products.



**HIGH PERFORMER  
BUILDING™**  
Certified Partner



## CHAPTER 2: Building jargon explained

The building industry is full of terms that you will be familiar with. Some you may have heard before, but not fully understood what they meant. The following list will help you understand the terms we use, and help you better communicate with us and others in the industry.







### **Building Code – *minimum requirements for building***

A set of standards and regulations that set out the minimum requirements for building design and construction in New Zealand.

The code is split into eight separate clauses, A-H, broken down into general provisions, stability, protection from a fire, access, moisture, safety of users, services and facilities and energy efficiency.

### **Building consent – *permission to build***

The process of obtaining permission from the council to build, alter or extend a building. It is a legal requirement and ensures that all building work complies with the Building Code and other relevant regulations. Building consent is required for any project that involves structural work, changes to the building's intended use or design, or work that affects the building's fire safety.

### **Resource consent – *permission for works that may have an impact on the environment***

Written approval from the council to carry out a project that has an impact on the environment, or could affect other people.

### **Code Compliance Certificate (CCC) – *certification that the building complies with all codes/standards***

A document issued by the council to certify that a building has been constructed in accordance with the building consent and complies with all relevant building codes and standards.





### **Design brief – *what you need from the project***

Here's where you let us know what you want from your project, and perhaps what you don't want. It is helpful to prepare a list of what you would like, and sort these into sections, such as "must haves" and "dream inclusions". This can help us know what level of priority to place on your requests.

### **Existing site plans sketch – *a rough plan of the site***

This involves a site visit to record the existing conditions at the property. This work is just for the initial concept plans – a full survey of the site will be needed for the detailed plans.

### **Concept plans – *brainstorming***

Initial design sketches that showcase the basic layout and style of the proposed project. They are used to convey the vision and overall aesthetic of the project and will give you an idea of the layout of your new home.

### **Feature survey – *a detailed plan of your property***

A licenced land surveyor will be engaged for this work. This includes the accurate location and dimensions of all structures, trees, fences, neighbouring structures and slope of the land itself. This is necessary so your plans are accurate and compliant with council requirements.

### **Working drawings – *to communicate with others and us what you want to build***

The working drawings are detailed plans that provide a comprehensive guide for the construction process. They include dimensioning, and reference the site conditions from the survey. They will include site plans, existing floor plans, proposed floor plans, elevations, and various special details. These plans are used to ensure that the design "works" on the site, and aligns with the existing structures, floor and ground levels. It is at this stage we can start working towards a detailed quote for the project.





### **Engineering plans – *the structural parts***

This involves designing and specifying the structural elements of the building. This includes specifying the main load-bearing components of the frame. Engineering is necessary for a detailed quote to be prepared. The work involved in engineering varies depending on the final design, soil test, existing structure and site conditions.

### **Soil test report – *how stable is your site?***

A geological technician will extract a sample of your site profile for analysis. The samples are extracted using either a hand auger or drill unit mounted to a vehicle, depending on site access and depth of test. The report is then used to design the footing system.

### **Energy report – *insulation requirements***

The building materials and design are analysed to find the energy performance of the proposed structure. This information is then used to determine the rating of insulation required in the ceiling, walls and floor. The minimum performance requirements for the window frames and glass are also provided in the energy report.

### **Electrical plan – *lights, cameras, alarms...***

The electrical plan will show the proposed location of lights, switches, power points, TV points, data points, CCTV, alarms and appliances. The specific products used will generally not be noted here. This plan is to ensure an accurate quote to be provided by the electrician, and to show compliance with current regulations.

### **Cabinetry plan – *kitchen, vanities, laundry etc.***

The cabinetry plans focus specifically on the finer details of your cabinetry. This includes exact dimensions, locations of drawers, doors and other specific features, such as details of cabinetry finishes. It will also include elevations and possibly section views to best communicate all aspects of your cabinets. Depending on the complexity and style of your project, you may or may not need detailed cabinetry plans.





### **Specifications and selections – *making the house your home***

Project specifications and/or a schedule of finishes provide the finer details that are usually not found on the plans. This can include references to industry standards, general guidelines and a list of items specific to your project. The schedule of finishes includes items ranging from paint colour through to roof tile selection and everything in between. For a project to be quoted accurately, completed on time and delivered to a high quality, it is essential to have as many selections made as possible, prior to works commencing.

### **Prime Cost and Provisional Sum – *allowing for what hasn't been selected or priced***

On your detailed cost analysis, you might come across the terms Prime Cost (PC) and Provisional Sum (PS). A Prime Cost refers to an item that has not been specified or selected yet. The builder will add in an allowance for this item to ensure it is included in the quote, despite not knowing the exact details at the time of contract signing.

A Provisional Sum refers to works and materials that cannot be specifically determined at the time of analysis. Again, an allowance is put in place for this cost. If the cost is less than estimated, the difference will be returned to you, whereas if the cost is more, you will be required to pay.

### **Passive house – *an energy efficient building***

A type of high performance building that is designed and constructed to be incredibly energy efficient, comfortable and healthy. Passive houses typically use up to 90% less energy for heating and cooling compared to traditional buildings. To achieve passive house certification, a building must meet strict energy efficiency and comfort standards and must undergo rigorous testing and verification by an independent third-party certifier.



## CHAPTER 3:

# Choosing a builder

It is important to research your builder, but it is difficult to know how to do this. Not all builders are suitable for all projects.

The following information can help you decide who is the most suitable builder for your project.







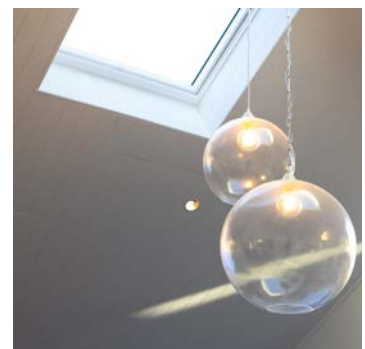
## Reputation

Looking at completed projects is one of the ways to assess a potential builder. But there is more to this than just looking over glossy photos of stunning homes.

**Google reviews** and testimonials are a great way to gauge a builder's reputation among clients, suppliers, tradespeople they work with and other industry professionals.

Take note of **testimonials** that describe how past clients found the day-to-day dealings with the builder, and the builder's commitment to the project. Did they feel the builder took a personal interest in their home, or was it passed off to subcontractors? Were they confident in the builder's experience and ability?

There may be many builders who can deliver a great finished product, but ensuring it is done with no stress, no surprises and on budget is just as important.







## Relevant experience

Building custom homes today is more complex than ever. Styles and materials change rapidly, and new technology is constantly evolving. Make sure your builder has experience that is **relevant** to your project.

No two custom homes are identical, but your builder should be able to show you examples of **similar homes** they have completed successfully. These previous projects may also help you with budgeting, so don't be afraid to ask what these other projects cost. We have a range of past and present projects that we can take potential clients to by special request.

If you are building a **passive** or **eco-friendly** home, make sure you find a builder who is qualified and experienced in building these types of homes, as they are very specialist.





## Licensing and insurance

Your builder must be a Licensed Building Practitioner (**LBP**). This is a professional who is licensed by the government and assessed as competent to carry out certain types of building work in New Zealand. You can check out the requirements for LBP here: <https://www.lbp.govt.nz/>.



The builder should also be **registered** with either Registered Master Builders or New Zealand Certified Builders.

Make sure the builder has public liability **insurance** for at least \$10 million. Construction insurance covers risks up until the handover process. From handover onwards, you will need to take out your own insurance coverage, so you are covered in case of fire, theft, vandalism, etc.







## Comparing quotes

Many people fall into the trap of comparing quotes, without understanding that two different quotes could result in two different project outcomes. These omissions can be accidental, intentional, or simply mean that some builders do not offer certain services. But by the time the client finds this out, it is too late.

For example, a builder may present what appears to be the lowest price. But the quote excludes scope, such as driveway concrete works, as they assume the client will handle this at a later date. Or, a material may be substituted, so the quote is more competitive, but it is not what was noted on the plans.

Or, other builders may try to tempt you using lower margins, but this is very risky. They may be struggling to keep their business afloat, or not know their numbers - either way, presenting big risks to the client.

We provide a transparent and detailed cost analysis. This will give you the confidence and certainty that your project will be completed to your specifications, on time and on budget.

We start by contacting the relevant trades and material suppliers for their pricing, negotiating accordingly. We also look at construction methods to ensure they have been designed with the most efficient methods possible.

Our QS then goes to work, conducting a detailed bill of quantities for the project.

**Once all of the information has been compiled, we put together a fully itemised and detailed cost analysis of your proposed home.**

When choosing your builder, look for someone who provides a comprehensive breakdown of exactly what's included in a quote. They should be happy to answer any questions you may have. A single page quote with a total figure is not enough for you to make one of your biggest financial decisions.





## Quality control and project management

Building a custom home requires the coordination of dozens of trades and personnel. Between each of the hundreds of processes, from the outset to handover, quality control and oversight is essential. Regardless of the individual skill of the builder, this is a task that requires a fantastic project management approach. Something that can only be obtained through years of experience.

### When choosing your builder, ask them the following questions:

1. How long have you been operating in the building industry?
2. Can you give a brief outline of your work history?
3. Can you provide testimonials?
4. How many projects do you take on at any one time?
5. Do you have a dedicated Project Manager to look after my project?
6. Can you explain provisional sums/prime cost items?
7. How do you keep track of variations?
8. Are your quotes itemised in detail?





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