

Understanding the Stages of the Building Process.

1

Before the Build

2

The Build

3

Interior

4

Landscaping

5

Completion

ArchiPro.

03

Understanding the Stages of the Building Process

04

Stage 1: The Planning Phase

07

Stage 2: Deciding how the Project will be Managed

08

Stage 3: Design and Building Consents

09

Stage 4: Building to the Consent

10

Stage 5: Sign Off and Completion

Understanding the Stages of the Building Process.

While every building project is different, there are some essential stages that apply to every project to make it a success. Before embarking on any building project, it's important to understand these basic stages so you understand what is required to undertake the project in line with regulations and procedures.

Stage 1: The planning phase

Stage 2: Project Management

Stage 3: Design + Building Consents

Stage 4: Building to the Consent

Stage 5: Sign Off + Completion

Stage 1:

The Planning Phase.

The location of the land and the position of the building site on that land can have a significant impact on the overall cost and duration of the project, as well as the design options.

Some of the key things to think about include where the building will be sited on the section and how it will be orientated in terms of:

- Sun
- Wind
- Boundaries
- Neighbouring buildings
- Access to the site (including driveways and paths)
- Hills or slopes
- Existing features such as trees, streams, undulations of the land
- Whether a septic tank is required if it's a rural build

Key questions to consider in the planning phase

Make notes underneath each of the questions below to ensure you've covered off key elements. If you're not sure, these are great questions to discuss with your architect or designer during the planning phase.

1. Where does the sun come up in the morning and depart at the end of the day?
How much sun do you want to capture in the house what light effects are you trying to achieve in different parts of the house? For example, will you need skylights and/or clerestory windows in the darker parts of the home?

2. Where do the prevailing winds come from and how strong are they? To mitigate wind, will you need to block off certain areas or arrange the home in a certain way, for example.

3. How does the house sit in relation to the services, such as water, electricity, waste and internet cabling, etc? Will these be easy enough to connect?

4. Are there any boundary requirements or issues that you need to take into account? Consult with a registered surveyor to better understand your boundary.

5. Are there geological issues that you need to consider, such as potential flooding from a nearby river or stream, soil or coastal erosion or, perhaps, you are sited within a seismic zone? What is required? It is also a good idea to understand the soil conditions as these may impact on your design.

6. What effect will the neighbouring properties have on your house and, likewise, how will your build affect them? Will you need to screen or block off areas of some elevations, for example?

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7. How do you access the site – down a driveway, a path or right from the street? And how does the street frontage interact with the street?

8. Are there slopes or hills on the site that will affect what you can build as you may need to consider particular foundations or level changes in the building, as examples?

9. Are there existing features on the site that you want to retain, such as trees and plants, outbuildings, and rocks or boulders?

10. If you're planning a rural build, then you may also need to consider where you need a septic tank and where that would be sited. Is there a water supply for emergencies, such as fire?

11. Consider the saleability of the design. Is the house a long-term project to cater for your family and generations to come, or a short-term project you plan to sell on? Some investments may cost more upfront but make you money in the longer term, such as paying for a reputable or named architect or designer, or incorporating sustainable elements, such as solar power or passive design.

Stage 2:

Deciding how the Project will be Managed.

Considering how a building project will be managed is an important consideration that should be decided early in the process. Deciding how involved you want to be from the outset will have an impact on the overall project budget and potential success. It's important to assess this decision realistically and based on your skills, available time and other commitments.

Many people undertaking a building project choose to use an architect or a project manager to manage the project for them.

Work through the checklist below to make sure you have made the best decision for your project:

- ☐ **Is my project likely to be a complex build with bespoke features? If yes, it may be the best option to opt for architect-led project management.**
- ☐ **Could my project work well with an independent project manager running the build? This can be the best option if your house is a complex or unique build and your architect is not local to your site.**
- ☐ **Do I feel comfortable managing a project, do I have the time to do so successfully and do I feel I have the required industry knowledge to manage a project seamlessly? If you're experienced in the and have the time to carefully manage a build, it may be that managing the project yourself could be a viable option.**

Stage 3:

Design and Building Consents.

Before you apply for a building consent, it's important to ensure the plans have been finalised by your architect or designer and represent the final design aims. If there are any changes to be made, it's best to make them before documents are submitted for consent. Once consent is approved, there is a process that must be followed to have changes approved. Variations must be applied for and a fee is payable along with applications to vary a building consent. In some cases, applying for variations to the building consent can slow down the building process and cause costly delays.

It is essential that the person completing the paperwork understands how to make a good application, which involves including all the requested information, such as detailed drawings and evidence of compliance with the Building Code.

If you have restricted building work, then you need to name your licensed building practitioner in the building consent application or as soon as someone is appointed.

☐

Check this item off when you have read the Building Consents section and feel comfortable with your knowledge about what is required.

Stage 4:

Building to the Consent.

Once you have received your building consent, construction can begin! This is an exciting milestone in your design and build journey where you start to see your vision come to life.

Construction must begin within 12 months of consent being received and must be finished within two years.

The council must be informed of the construction start date and the project manager/architect/builder must keep the council informed as work progresses, organising inspections and ensuring that they happen on schedule.

If, for any reason, the work is not progressing as planned, then it's important you talk to your council to identify and document any variations or amendments to your building consent.

Ensure that you pay bills as milestones are met and as you've agreed in your contract, and collect certificates for any electrical and gas work as it is finished. Keep them on site with your other vital papers in case your council wants to see them before they sign off with your **code compliance certificate**.

Stage 5:

Sign Off and Completion

What's next?

When construction is complete, make sure everything has been done as detailed in the building consent documentation and contracts. Ensure you or the project manager are aware of all council fees and that these have been paid so council sign off can be completed and a code compliance certificate issued.

If any additional inspections were required or they took longer than anticipated, there may be additional fees that will be calculated after the final inspection but will need to be paid before you receive your code compliance certificate (CCC).

Make sure you keep any warranties and guarantees related to materials and products installed by your contractors in case any maintenance is required in order to deem these effective.

The CCC is typically the end of the inspection process for most single residential dwellings, however if your house has a specified system, such as a lift or cable car, then it will require regular monitoring for safety reasons.

Where to from here?

Read about Understanding your rights and obligations during the building process

TBC other relevant checklists