

10 considerations for building a new home





Discover 10 helpful considerations when building your new home

Are you interested in building a home that is at the same time comfortable, sustainable and healthy to live in? Then you'll find inspiration here.

This short guide will help you get started with useful considerations and insights: such as how to work with an architect, how to build sustainably and how to manage the costs. ROCKWOOL's purpose is to improve the quality of life for everyone who uses our products. As a future new home builder, we hope these 10 tips help you do that.

1

Develop your wish list and priorities

Start by exploring design, building and product ideas to know what you want. Make a wish list and prioritise it into those things you won't compromise on, and others you would like, but which aren't essential. Your list should embrace size, orientation, room distribution, interiors, exteriors, lifestyle features, sustainable features, how you interact at home, and much more.

Take inspiration from your local area, homes you've seen, family input, and of course, the websites of product manufacturers, suppliers and your turn-key builder's portfolio.

2

Check for subsidies or grants in your region

Credit, rebates or subsidies can help to reduce the cost of building your new home. There may be many types of grant and assistance available, and they often change frequently. Check with your local authority to know what you're entitled to. Your authority may also offer incentives to new home builders who install energy saving measures in their home such as insulation or an energy efficient boiler.

3

Know how to work with your architect

If you are working with a turn-key house builder, check how much flexibility you will have over the chosen home design and how much of an architect's time, if any, you will be able to access.

If you are self-building your new home and need the services of an architect, begin researching in your area, and ask friends or neighbours if they have contacts. Check what local architects are charging, and how they charge: typically a percentage of the contract value or an hourly fee.

Look at architects' portfolios online and judge if their work is appropriate to your build. Make a shortlist and allow enough time in your plan to meet with several architects – then arrive with a clear brief for the requirements of your new home, and how it will operate and function.

Whether you are self-building or having a turn-key home built, most issues of working with an architect arise out of poor communication, so it's important that you get on. The architect should suit the build you have in mind, and listen to your views. However, once a plan is agreed, do stick to it, unless you're prepared to pay additional architectural fees.



4

Know your numbers

How much will it cost? It's a question that can only be answered by having clear, final project plans for your new home. Start with online cost calculators to get an indication of what an 'average' home costs, built to a given specification and size. This will give you an idea of where your budget sits in a range from 'basic' to 'best'. An architect can also advise if your ballpark figure is realistic based on their experience.

Once you have construction designs, your budgeting must be more precise. Your contractor, if you are using one, will be responsible for providing many of the main building costs in a detailed estimate. Use this as a starting point to create an itemized list of all costs of the new build, including those that people sometimes forget like the cost of temporary accommodation, fencing, setting up utilities and landscaping.

Collate everything into a final budget, and add a contingency sum (10% minimum) for unexpected costs. Keep all of your figures in a budget spreadsheet and update costs during every stage of the construction process.

5

Allow enough time

Building a new home can be a pressured experience. It's why most people hire a building contractor whose responsibilities include hitting deadlines and managing the process. Other home builders may have construction skills of their own and are comfortable dealing directly with planners, tradespeople and materials suppliers.

Whichever option you choose, you need to allow enough time to manage the process, even if it's simply chasing the builder to ensure everything is completed on time, or having enough hours in the day to discuss issues that arise on-site.

As part of organising your time, you should also allow plenty of scope for dealing with planning permission (unless your architect is given the task), and also ensure that if finance is being raised, it is released in a timely manner which matches the construction schedule.

6

Consider longevity and resale values

This is your opportunity to control the quality of build and its longevity. That means focusing on construction materials that are durable, safe and which contribute to energy savings. High-quality structures add longevity to your home that can last for several lifetimes. These don't have to be brick or stone – insulated wall systems offer excellent insulation and load-bearing capabilities and due to their flexibility may also save construction time. And for better resale values, don't just add more bedrooms to the build – future buyers want to see great design, sustainable thinking and energy efficiency in their homes too. In fact, research shows that a majority of homebuyers are willing to pay a premium for a sustainable home.



7

Think about building sustainably and how to achieve it

Creating a more sustainable, energy efficient house can take many forms. While wind power and solar panels still have a place, they are often an expense you can avoid, since a more efficient building design needs less energy generation to begin with.

Create a well-insulated building envelope with walls, windows and roof that don't suffer from heat loss. This means moving away from structures that suffer from cold bridges (which occur when there are gaps between two or more building elements), to solutions that have insulation levels built into the structure of the wall itself, combined with triple glazed windows and effective roof insulation.

During your build, always look for sustainable products that can be used for as long as possible – and even reused when they reach the end of their service life. Nowadays, certain types of insulation, acoustic ceilings and external facades can be recycled indefinitely.

8

Consider indoor comfort

Temperature, air quality and acoustics all affect our well-being, quality of life and even productivity. The choice of materials used to build your new home have a great impact on creating the perfect environment. Insulation has a major role to play since the use of more effective materials, such as stone wool, can add benefits beyond high energy efficiency – such as excellent acoustic performance and fire-resistance.

Modern wall materials can also be airtight, yet breathable for indoor comfort. Choose efficient HVAC systems too – they play an increasingly significant role in balancing energy efficiency with indoor air quality, through proper ventilation and air exchanges.

Finally do not forget about the safety of your family. Today maximum indoor comfort can be achieved in the home without sacrificing the safety or well-being of the people living in it. Your home can be highly fire-resistant, and impervious to issues such as damp, mould or rot.

9

Be smart with design

No matter what style of home you build – traditional or highly sustainable – it doesn't have to be boxy, stuffy or dull. Modern construction materials ensure that you don't need to compromise on your design ideas, inside or out. Smart design features include using low-maintenance materials and appliances with high energy efficiency ratings to reduce your home's energy consumption.

Being smart with your design can also minimise energy use well before you actually connect an energy supply. Natural heating and cooling can be achieved not only with smart wall design, but also by considering the orientation, ventilation, window placement and shading of the home you design.

10

Build for the future

At a time when many nations are considering the impact of construction on the environment, those who choose to self-build homes are paving the way as innovators and pioneers in new ways to build sustainably. So whatever you build, from a large traditional house to a small natural eco-home, consider its impact on the environment and build it for future generations too. Make it last, make it stand for something, and wherever possible, harness the natural world for your comfort.

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Stone wool is a versatile material and forms the basis of all our businesses. With over 11,000 passionate colleagues in 39 countries, we're the world leader in stone wool solutions, from building insulation to acoustic ceilings; external cladding systems to horticultural solutions; engineered fibres for industrial use to insulation for the process industry – as well as marine and offshore.

