BUILDING/RENOVATING YOUR HOME-CHECKLIST

This brochure has been prepared as a simple checklist/guide, assuming that you have purchased a land or an existing house and are now preparing to build your new home or renovate.

Whether building new home or renovating, always check for any visible or latent site conditions, constraints or planning restrictions that may apply to your property. Your local council and agencies such as Sydney Water, Dial before you dig and Rural Fire Service if the property is in bush setting is a good starting point.

If renovating or extending ensure that the existing structure is in sound condition.

Think quality, not quantity- When building new or extending, thoroughly and realistically assess your requirements, budget and available funds. Always allow for sufficient contingencies sum, particularly when renovating an old house as you may require to
upgrade electrical wiring or old plumbing once you commence the renovation.

Think lateral, before renovating your bathrooms your kitchen, consider developing the whole master plan for
renovating your home, thus ensuring that they do not require to be relocated at later stage.

Spending time on design is always a good investment and professional input can be very useful. To add value to your property, consult an architect for professional services. Discuss and ask for references from someone who has engaged architect's services before. Look for their references and projects they have done in the past. Whether building new or extending, your architect can help you through different stages-
concept plans, Council submission, Construction Documentation, tendering for builder or Contract administration, saving you considerable time and money.

When you get the builder to quote the price for building new or extending, ensure that the builder has thoroughly inspected the property/site and clearly understood the scope of work.

Ensure that you have thorough documentation that clearly outlines the full scope of work of the project. This must includes building plans from architects and consultants like structural and hydraulics services. Projects quoted on basic drafted plans with insufficient construction details and specifications may lead to dispute or design variations costing thousands of dollars.
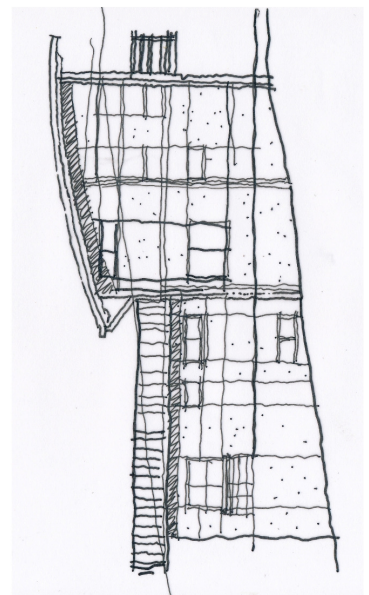
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When signing a contract with the builder, always check the builder's credential and currency of builder's license With the Department of Fair Trading, NSW for past record and history. Ask the builder to provide references for three recent projects he has completed, contact them to discuss about builder's performance.

Once the work commences on site, whether building new or extending, when there is any variation that you would like to make, to avoid any conflict, always confirm your instructions in writing. Likewise any variation from builder, ask for confirmation in writing.

Consider orientation for energy efficiency, use shading screen to east and west facing windows, maximize the use of sunlight where appropriate, particularly in living spaces. Northern side is warmer and best for main living areas in NSW climates. The southern side of the home is coolest. The west side gets hot in the afternoon. The laundry, garage, bathrooms and store rooms are best suited for this side. The east gets morning sun and is good for breakfast rooms and kitchens.

Consider skylights as they can bring light to dark rooms and passageways. Install insulated skylights to maximize natural light and improve comfort.

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