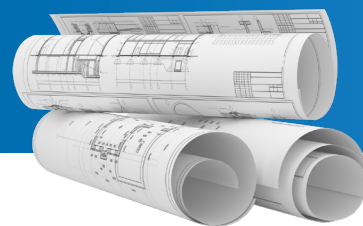


Checklist

What to ask before you choose a builder



Choosing a builder is a big decision, and it's worth taking the time to get it right.

Before you start talking to builders, spend some time thinking about what you want to achieve.

Define the scope of your project, including which rooms or areas you're changing **if you're renovating**, and what's most important to you. Separate your **must-haves** from your **nice-to-haves** and think about how you live day to day – things like storage, natural light, heating, accessibility, sustainability and future needs. Writing this down and sharing it with potential builders will help everyone start from the same understanding.

It's also worth doing some background research before talking with some builders. Look at their websites and social media pages, read online reviews and consider carrying out a credit check. A little homework upfront can give you greater confidence in who you're choosing to work with.

When you meet with builders, ask questions about their experience, communication style, pricing, timelines and the protections they offer. The questions in this checklist are a good place to start before you say yes.

TIP: Use the same questions with each builder and compare the answers side by side. It will help you make a more informed decision and find the builder that's the best fit for you and your project.

Questions to ask

Experience and Reputation

☐ Have you completed projects like mine before?

☐ Can I see examples of similar work, and speak to recent clients?

☐ How long have you been in business?

Build Programme and Communication

☐ When could work start, and how long is it expected to take? What could cause delays?

Build Programme and Communication (continued)

- ☐ Who are your sub-contractors, and have you worked with them before?
- ☐ Who will be my main day-to-day contact?
- ☐ How will you keep me updated once work is underway? How often can I visit the site?

Cost and Payment

- ☐ What is included in the quote and what is excluded? Please walk me through it.
- ☐ Are all materials, finishes, fixtures and services included in the contract documents?
- ☐ Which costs could still change, such as allowances or provisional sums? What are these based on?
- ☐ How much contingency should I allow for in my budget?
- ☐ How will the payment schedule work, and what does each payment relate to?

Cost and Payment

- ☐ How will you manage unexpected cost increases or price changes?

Quality and Changes

- ☐ What level of finish can I expect, and how will quality be checked?
- ☐ How do you manage variations if I want to change something during the build?
- ☐ If a product or material is unavailable, how will substitutions be approved?

Contract and Protection

- ☐ What happens if the project is delayed, goes over budget, or there is a dispute?
- ☐ Do you offer a recognised building guarantee, what does it cover, and when does it need to be applied for?

Before you commit

If something is unclear, ask. A good builder will not mind talking it through. Confirm the important bits in writing before you sign the contract. It is also a good idea to get a lawyer to review the building contract.

Finally, ask yourself if you can work with them – this is a relationship that you will be in for a while, so it is important that you trust and respect your builder.