



Choosing the right home

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When you're building a project home, you'll find that there are a lot of different styles available. Your choice will first be narrowed down by the size of your land and your budget, but you're likely to have a number of options to choose from even if you are choosing from a standard range.

Wish list

Take a critical look at your existing home and make a wish list of features, broken into a list of 'must haves' and a list of 'nice to haves'. Visiting display homes will also give you ideas. Think too about the future value of the property – an attached garage is more valuable than a car port, for instance. Your wish list should reflect the lifestyle you want in terms of layout and practicality, and of course it's also important to check that your furniture will fit in the spaces well.

Styles

The builder's brochures will give you the basic idea of the look of the house and the floor plan. Generally the more you want to change the design, the more the basic price will increase, so it's worth hunting around the different house styles to find one you don't need to adjust. Choosing a builder with a large range of house styles will make it easier to find one you like!

If you have several you like, it's worth asking the builder which would work best on the block. Project homes are designed for flat or gently sloping land, so this question is particularly important if you have an awkward block. A design that works well with the block could be less expensive to build.

Customisation

Some builders also have 'custom services', which means that for a fee you can either ask them to design a bespoke home using their standard materials and fixtures or make significant changes to one of their off-the-shelf designs. Custom designs will, of course, add to the overall cost of the build.

There will also usually be a range of materials available both for the home's exterior and interior, and of course paint colours, roof colours and even fencing colours (if fences are included). Deciding on these aesthetic features can be the hardest part, but it's important not to get too hung up on it – after all, you can always change the colour later. Making firm decisions on the things you can't change after the house has been built is most important. In fact, changes after the contract has been signed ('variations') are definitely something to avoid as they are likely to cause delays and extra expense.

Before you talk to the builder, it's a good idea to make as many of the decisions as you can, so that when you meet with the builder you can focus on the details that need their input.

BetterBuilt Tips

- Pick a style that will not need adjusting to fit on your block
- Make a wish list of 'must haves' and 'nice to haves' so you can compare builders' quotes properly
- Pick a layout that suits your lifestyle and that your furniture will fit into
- Discuss any customisation with your builder – they should be able to help you find the most cost-effective way to get what you want
- Use your builder's knowledge and expertise to help you decide on the right plan and inclusions for you
- Focus on making firm decisions about things you won't be able to change once the build is complete
- Make as many of your decisions about inclusions, aesthetics and 'must haves' as you can before you meet the builder
- Be certain about your decisions before the builder prepares a tender so that the price is accurate
- Commit to your decisions when you sign the contract – changing your mind after that is likely to incur expense or delay.