

CURTISARCHITECTURE
Raising the standard

Working together – creating smart solutions

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*Working together –
creating smart solutions*

What drives us

We have a passion for designing and creating individual architectural statements which reflect our clients vision, while ensuring the project is financially achievable.

Our values

Keep it simple

Simplicity is the ultimate form of sophistication.

On the same page

Efficient communication between all parties (clients, designer and builder) is the best way to ensure the ultimate outcome for our clients. We make your vision a one-of-a-kind reality.

Bringing clients ideas to life

It's your house, we want you to come home and love it. We are not bound by a set style, but have the freedom and creativity to design for the individuality of each project.

Our promise

Excellent communication

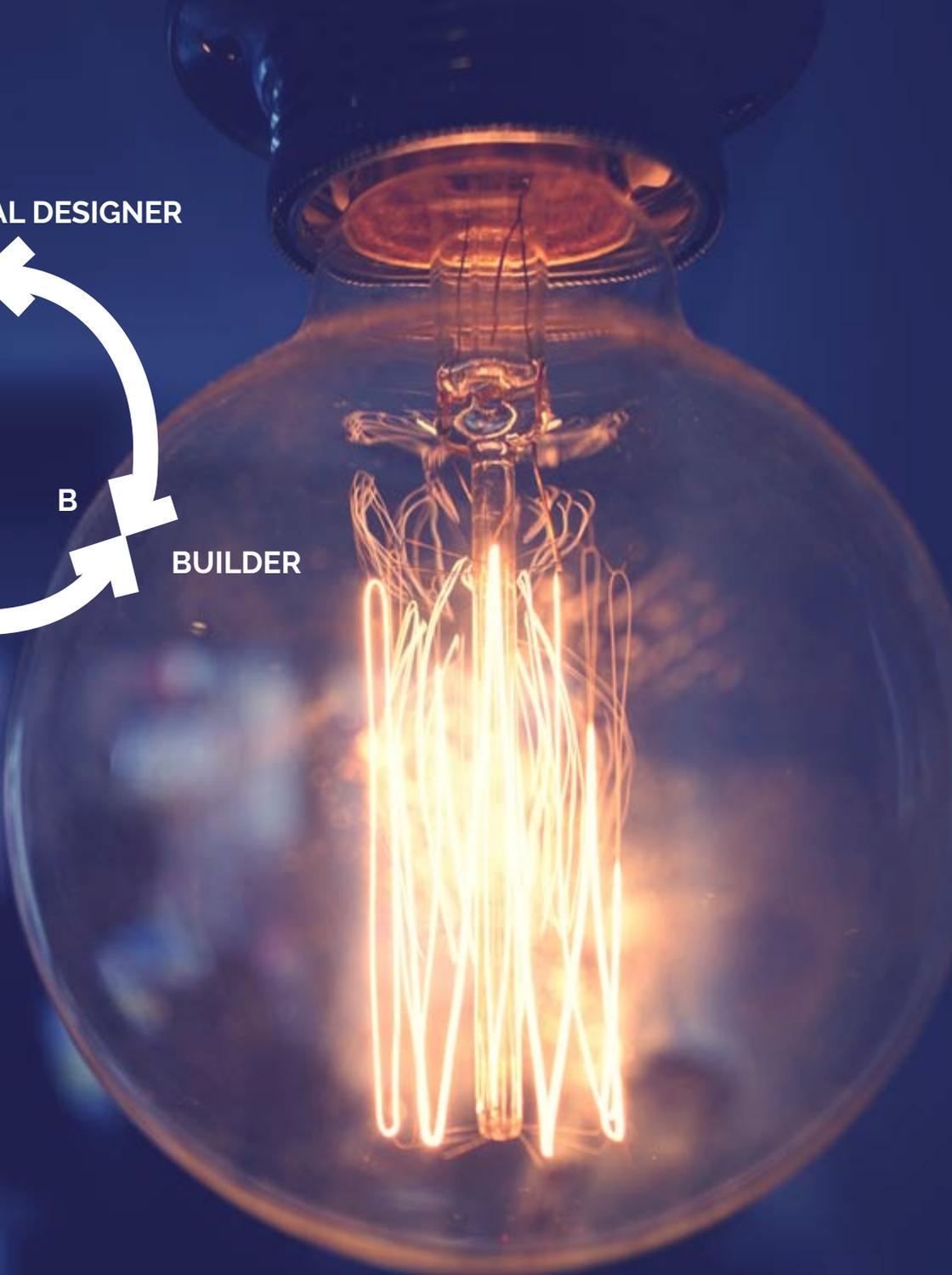
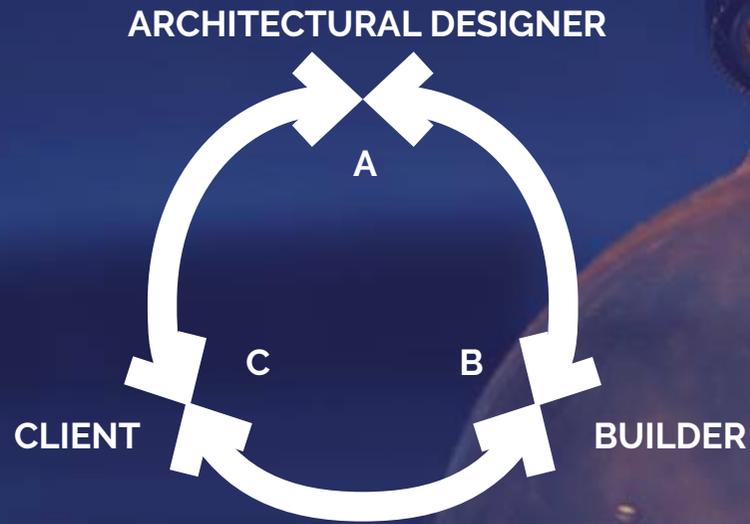
Prompt follow ups and open lines of communication with both builder and you, the client.

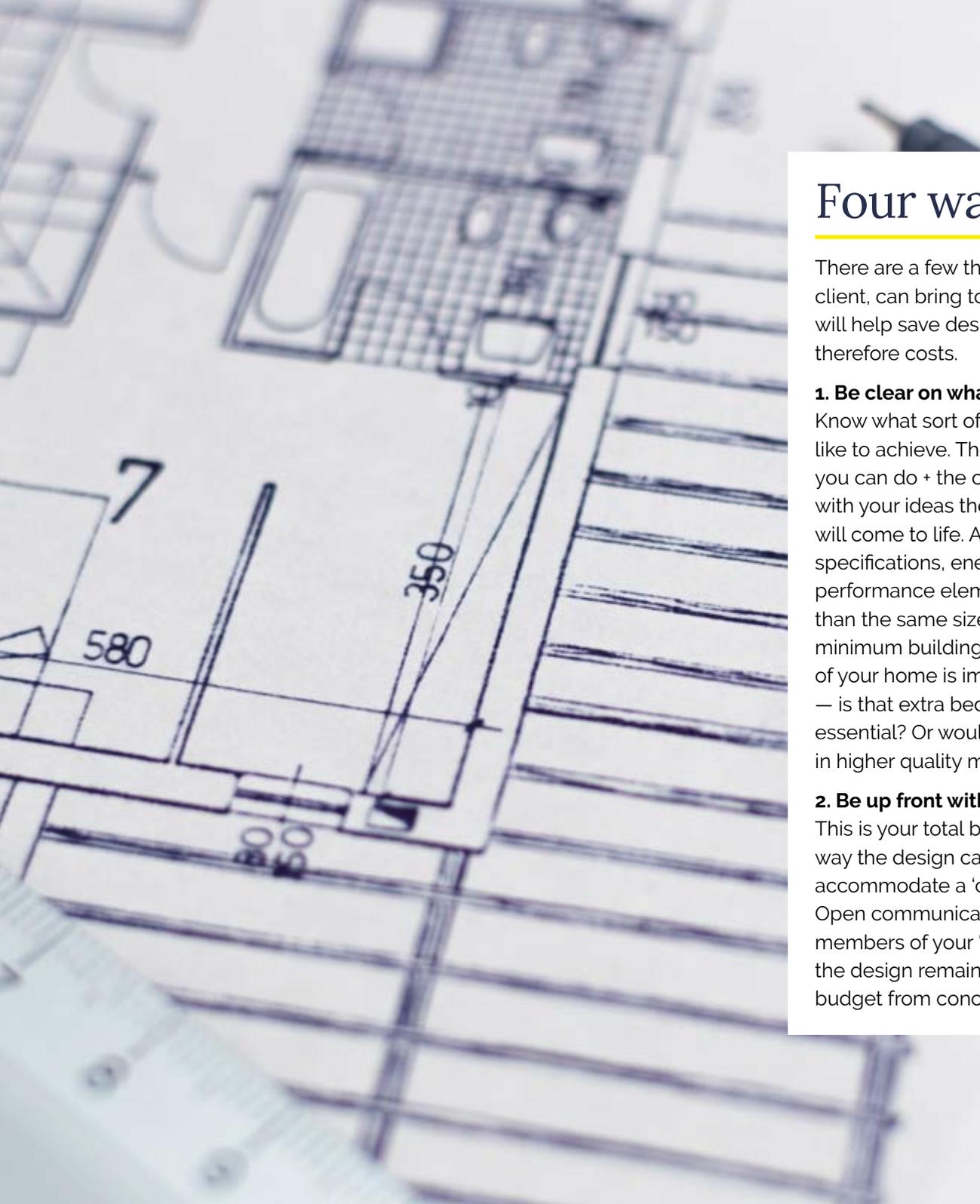
Valuing your ideas

We will always incorporate your ideas into the design and offer advice on how to best achieve your dream home. It is your home not ours.

Eliminate surprises

By providing thorough fee proposals and keeping you in the loop throughout the entire process, you end up with the home you wanted for the price that we agreed upon.



A close-up photograph of an architectural floor plan. The drawing is in blue ink on white paper. It shows various rooms, walls, and furniture layouts. A ruler is placed at the bottom of the frame, showing measurements in centimeters. The numbers 7, 580, and 350 are visible on the drawing. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the plan and a pen tip.

Four ways to reduce design costs

There are a few things that you, as a client, can bring to the table which will help save design time, and therefore costs.

1. Be clear on what you want

Know what sort of home you would like to achieve. The more research you can do + the clearer you can be with your ideas the faster your ideas will come to life. A home with high specifications, energy efficient or high performance elements will cost more than the same size home built to minimum building standards. The size of your home is important to establish – is that extra bedroom or bathroom essential? Or would you rather invest in higher quality materials?

2. Be up front with your budget

This is your total build cost. This way the design can be built to accommodate a 'complete' package. Open communication between all members of your 'team' will ensure the design remains within your budget from concept to completion.

3. Select the right team for you

The key here is to find a builder or building company that will collaborate with a designer. Find a designer who will work closely with a builder. Choosing the right team to design and build with can be as important as knowing your budget. Choose a team who shares your vision and most importantly who you feel most comfortable with.

4. Be a little flexible

A good design team will put forward ideas on how you might be able to save a surprising amount of money with clever planning.

Energy efficiency

We have an enthusiasm for designing low energy homes that preserve our clients' health, scale down energy running costs and increase home comfort.

Energy efficiency saves money long term, helps our local economy, increases comfort, and is good for the environment. It doesn't have to be expensive if executed correctly. We are continuously exploring new ideas and new technologies.

The New Zealand building code (NZBC) is the 'worst' or minimum you can build to. Some designers and builders see it as a target to achieve, where it is meant to be a base to start from.

Bigger is not necessarily better. Often people opt for a larger home with high-end fittings, and don't consider the value of a smaller or more energy efficient home.

The energy required for lighting, heating, cooling and moisture management is directly affected by the design, specifications and size.

Even homes built to today's minimum standards can still have issues with overheating and moisture retention. Low energy homes cost less to run and are better for your health.

With increasing demand on energy and with power prices increasing, this is all worth considering.

Top energy efficient building principals

- 1. Air tight construction — SIPS panels, Internal membranes**
- 2. Orientation — Sun (passive heating), wind (passive ventilation), shading**
- 3. Insulation — SIPS panels, thicker walls, rigid insulation (no sag)**
- 4. Windows — Thermally broken, PVC (air tight), triple glazed**
- 5. Ventilation — Passive venting, mechanical ventilation systems**
- 6. Lighting — LED**
- 7. Solar — PV panels, solar hot water**



Design & detail has a substantial influence on build costs

Choosing an architectural designer

It is important to find an architectural designer who understands what you are wanting, listens to you, and makes you feel at ease. It is important that an architectural designer involves a builder to review the design (and adjust if needed) before it goes to consent.

Not all fee proposals are equal. Be sure to read the fine print and ask questions to ensure you are aware of all costs. Fee proposals generally work out a lot more cost effective than fees based on percentages of build cost.

Be aware of firms who use a tendering process to price and choose builders. This can lead to price wars and overruns due to tenders not being priced correctly and builders taking shortcuts to win a tender. Instead, find a builder you trust to give you an honest price and go through it in detail with that builder.

Choosing a builder

Collaboration is key. Find a builder who will work closely with architectural designers, engineers, and all other professionals to deliver you the best product for the right price.

Communication

Find a builder who will listen to what you are trying to achieve. Choose one who communicates well and is trustworthy. Do background checks and try to talk to past customers.

Ask how involved you need to be in the build because each builder has a different process around this.

There are a few expenses that builders will have to make Predicted Cost Sums (PC Sums) on, such as foundations and drainage etc. So it pays to find out if they've priced it low to win the job and potentially have extra costs later, or if they've been generous and not likely to blow the budget.

Detail

What does the quote include and exclude? Avoid square metre rates as they are depended on a variety of factors and can be very vague. If a builder gives you an idea that's OK, but try not to maximise the building budget straight away until you have a better estimate once you have some pricing plans together.

Middle-man

Be mindful of sales people. Try to talk directly with the builder and architectural designer so your ideas, changes or concerns aren't misinterpreted. There is the risk that suggestions can be made without proper consideration. For example, moving a wall can have unseen (and potentially costly) knock on effects in the design. It is best to have that conversation directly with the designer. A good sales person won't get in the way of this but would be encouraging those lines of communication.





Interior design

Architecture covers the structure, interior layout, and floor plan design. For furnishings, finishes, colours, and custom pieces, this is where an interior designer comes in. It can be a good idea to involve an interior designer early on in your project so they can have input into the house design.

A good interior designer will be able to help whether you're after some expert tips or need a complete concept created for you. A good interior designer will save you time, money, and stress by helping you make smart decisions and show you the best products to suit your budget and style. With a vast array of products and knowledge of where to source them, interior designers can be a valuable asset.

Interior designers can help create structure to the areas you wish to decorate by picking out focal points, managing traffic flow, and offering advice about lighting — a crucial component for the mood, versatility, and usability of a space.

Landscaping tips

Even if you are doing the work yourself, a good landscaping plan is a great way to start. Not only will it ensure cohesion in the garden but across the whole site. Here are some things to consider.

Use

Think about how you want to use your outdoor spaces. Will they be for entertaining, children, growing vegetables, active gardening / no maintenance, cooking and dining, swimming and relaxing, or something else? Would you be outside more often in the mornings, evenings, or both? Will your landscaping need to accommodate young children, or will it be primarily an adult retreat? Don't forget to think about pets; animal behaviour can often influence landscaping decisions.

Future proof it

Think beyond your own personal needs. One day you may want to sell the house, so think of the landscaping as an extension of the house if they work together it becomes complimentary to both.

Plan

Collect photos of other landscaping and outdoor living areas including of plants you may like. By planning early on in the design stage you can ensure things like power points and irrigation lines are located in the right place. Also like all tradies, trying to find someone at the last minute can be tricky and limiting. Do some research, visit plant shops, set a realistic budget and the project will flow well.

Use what you've got

Locating your house to make the best use of your property is paramount. It will allow you to create the best kerb appeal for future sale, give you space for a pool, spa, or vege garden, or at the very least give you the most useful spaces to work with if you don't know what you want yet. Also consider the sun and wind patterns. You might want to place a patio on the west side of the house, but it will get lots of afternoon sun, which means dinnertime in February won't be relaxing — just hot.

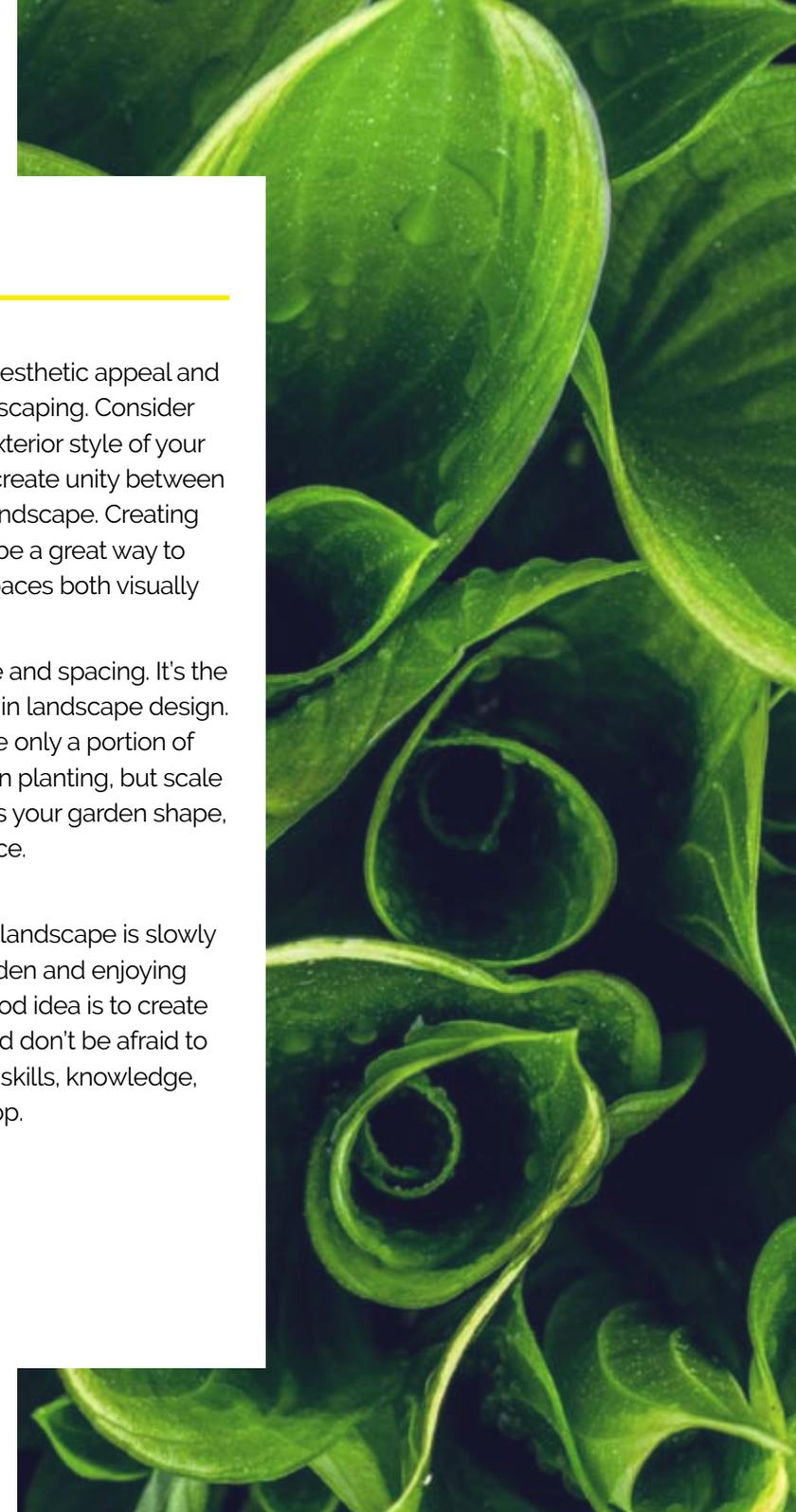
Style

Think about the aesthetic appeal and style of your landscaping. Consider the interior and exterior style of your home and try to create unity between these and your landscape. Creating a focal point can be a great way to make sense of spaces both visually and for usability.

Think about scale and spacing. It's the trickiest principle in landscape design. Your plants will be only a portion of their full size when planting, but scale and spacing gives your garden shape, depth, and balance.

Be patient

Part of creating a landscape is slowly developing a garden and enjoying the process. A good idea is to create a 'master plan' and don't be afraid to change it as your skills, knowledge, and tastes develop.





New build checklist

1. Market research

Before buying a section, look at what the market is doing. Talk to real estate agents and valuers about your plans and ideas.

2. Research

Get an idea of what you do and don't like by checking out examples online, maybe look at Pinterest or Houzz. Going along to open homes and show homes can be helpful.

3. Finance

Get your finance sorted well in advance. A good broker generally offers the best solution, then talk to a builder and an architectural designer to help give you an idea of what you could afford to build.

4. Lawyer/insurance

Find a lawyer and an insurance broker/company. Mortgage brokers can point you to some they recommend.

5. Section

Once you have a section in mind, it's a good idea to go back to the architectural designer to check feasibility of a section before purchasing.

6. Concept

Once you go unconditional, get your architectural designer to develop the concepts and open the lines of communication with the builder. A quick review of the plans at this stage can be helpful. The builder will be able to check ball park estimates before moving onto pricing plans.

This is also the right time to engage an interior designer and landscape architect if you choose to employ them. They can offer beneficial input during the concept stage.

7. Pricing plans

A builder can provide a build estimate (not quote) to check we are still within budget. It is best to sort any budget related design changes at this stage before moving to the next design stage. Check finances.

8. Consent drawings

Before drawings are submitted to council it is a good idea for the builder to cast their eye over the plans to ensure they are happy with the detailing. Keep the lines of communication open. Check finances.

9. Building consent & construction

Once your building consent has been granted, construction can begin. Keep a close relationship with the builder and have fun.

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