



RENOVATION & EXTENSION SPECIALISTS

5 CRITICAL THINGS YOU MUST KNOW BEFORE HIRING A BUILDER

You don't think hiring a great builder is important? - Think again.

As the client, it's absolutely critical to feel confident in your builder's ability to deliver on-time, on-budget, and on all of your other expectations.

With that in mind, here are five critical things to consider before making a financial commitment to any builder...



RENOVATION & EXTENSION SPECIALISTS

1. UP TO DATE AND QUALIFIED

Is Their Documentation (licenses, insurance, etc.) up to date?

Without exception, this needs to be your opening inquiry.

If a builder is not licensed or lacks the right insurance, they cannot – legally – build your home. Don't take their answer at face-value either. Perform a license check on the Fair Trading website.

For your convenience, we've listed our information neatly below:

Legal Name: Urban Design & Construction Co. Pty. Ltd.

Trading Name: Urban Design & Construction Co.

Licensed Builder: Thomas Quinn

License Number: 281095C

As you probably know, construction companies require many types of insurances, the most important of which is the Home Owners Warranty.

Home Owners Warranty insurance should be obtained for every renovation and build undertaken by a given builder. This insurance is notoriously difficult to obtain and is commonly used as a way to "weed-out" inferior builders within the marketplace.

Another thing to remember is this: no project deposit is required until the "hired" builder can produce proof of their Home Owners Warranty Certificate, specific to your home.

Don't fall for other types of insurance certificates like Worker's Comp or Public Liability: Make sure the certificate is for Home Owners Warranty before agreeing to place any money down.

When the time comes to formalise an agreement, a number of contracts can be used. There are industry-based contracts – those provided by the Housing Industry Association (HIA) and Master Builders Australia (MBA) – and there are Office of Fair Trading contracts. Office of Fair Trading contracts tend to be viewed as better for the consumer whereas industry-contracts tend to be viewed more favourably within the building industry.

Ask your builder which contract they prefer and obtain a blank copy of said contract for review. This will give you time to look over the contract and seek out any independent advice before moving forward.

If the first time you see the contract is when the builder asks you to sign it, don't. Wait until you've had an opportunity to review the fine print. A reputable Builder will never put pressure on you to sign a contract before you feel ready.



RENOVATION & EXTENSION SPECIALISTS

2. Communication

Maintain One Point of Contact

After you have made contact with a company, who do you communicate with during the design, quoting and construction stages?

As your project transitions from phase to phase, you want to know that the person you dealt with at the start will be by your side for the duration of the build.

It goes without saying that construction projects are complex undertakings and, at one point or another, you will be forced to deal with different members of a builder's staff. But the person you began the process with should never be too far from the project.

Talk to your builder about how their company likes to handle communication and make sure it meshes with your expectations.

The more people involved in the communication process, the more likely it becomes that miscommunication will rear its ugly head. Miscommunication is the one thing that any good home builder wants to avoid at all costs—there's simply too much at stake for all parties involved.

Secure a single point of contact to fall back on for the duration of the project, preferably the actual on-site builder. Regular and direct communication with the builder helps ensure mutually proper expectations are not only set, but kept.



RENOVATION & EXTENSION SPECIALISTS

3. Project Management Systems

Gone are the days of phone calls updates and site diaries.

In today's world, technology is an important part of any business and that includes the building business.

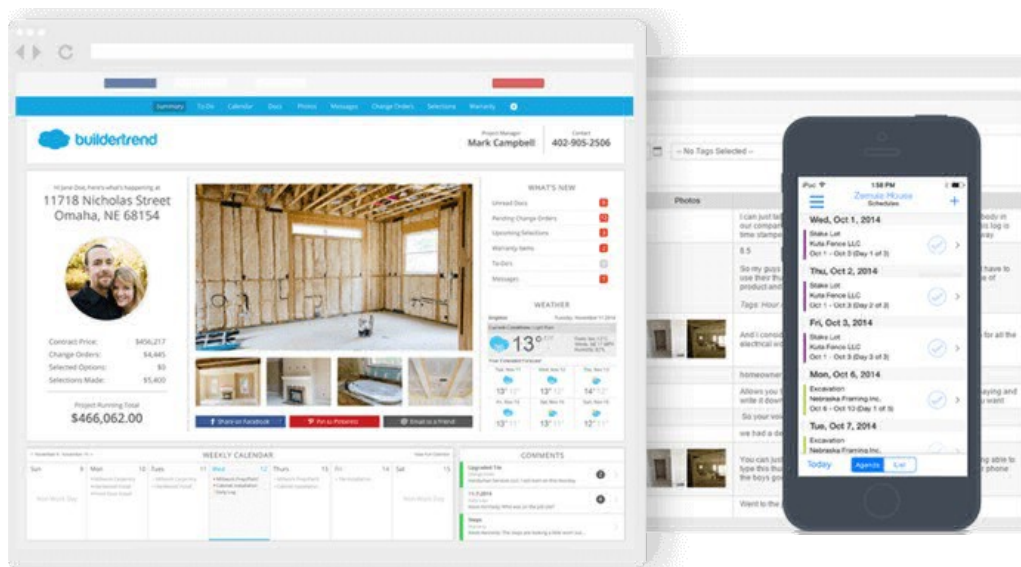
Breakthroughs in computer software development have enabled builders to become more efficient and organised in all aspects of their work.

Before getting underway, ask your builder what systems they use to track the day-to-day progress of your homes construction.

Gone are the days of phone calls, updates and site diaries alone. Today, any builder worth their salt will have cutting edge project management software in place and available for your use.

These software systems allow you, the client, unprecedented access to previously unavailable construction information including selections, financials, construction schedules, plans updates, photos, project communication and more, all from the comfort of a secure online portal.

Project management software helps you keep your finger on the pulse during the entire building process.





RENOVATION & EXTENSION SPECIALISTS

4. Quality over Quantity

Expect a high level of service and superior quality.

Some builders overly focus on the quantity of their projects rather than the quality. When this happens craftsmanship goes down and mistakes go up.

When you engage the services of a custom builder, you should expect a high level of service and a finished product of superior quality. This becomes impossible if the builder has too many homes under construction at the same time.

A well-organised and efficient custom builder will place strict limits on the number of jobs they undertake per year. This is done to ensure each home receives all of the time, effort and attention to detail it deserves.

This also helps to ensure the builder's labour staff isn't overworked or tempted to cut corners as they "rush" to finish your home.

Remember; choose a builder who places an emphasis on quality over quantity and you'll end up with a home, and experience, worthy of your initial expectations.



RENOVATION & EXTENSION SPECIALISTS

5. Flexibility During Construction

Feel comfortable to ask your builder to accommodate you.

The contracts are signed and the project is ready to get underway when – suddenly – you start having second thoughts about how the front door will look against the brick exterior or how a coffered ceiling will impact the feel of your home.

As the paying customer, the builder needs to be able to accommodate any changes you request during the construction process so ask what systems they have in place. Ideally, your builder will have a reliable and efficient software program to easily accommodate changes on the fly.

A quality custom builder will demonstrate flexibility throughout the construction process if the client demands it.

During critical stages of the building process don't hesitate to ask the builder to conduct a walk-through of the site. These walk-throughs will not only allow for healthy and regular discussions about the project, they'll also afford you the opportunity to request on-the-spot changes.

Talk to your builder about when the key stages of the project will be and make a walk-through schedule for these specific points. Ultimately, these walk-throughs will be critical for assuring the delivery of a home that meets all of your expectations.

