



how to hire an builder



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introduction

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welcome

We prepared this guide after seeing so many people struggle with understanding the design and construction process.

This process can seem like a complex and frightening roadblock for those who haven't been through it before. The first and most important step is to find and hire your architect.

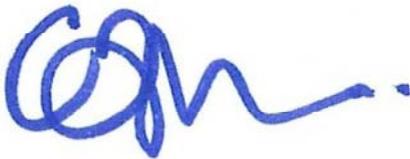
You may be wondering: how do I find the right architect for my project? Do I really need to hire an architect? How much are architect's fees? What about builders? And most importantly: what are the key, critical steps I need to take to ensure that I hire the architect that is the perfect match for my project?

In the following pages, you will discover the answers to these questions – and more.

I hope you enjoy this guide and look forward to your feedback on the contents.

Sincerely yours,

Craig Taylor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CTaylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nothing is more exciting than creating a new building, whether it's your home or a commercial project and nothing will affect the success of your project more than the right architect. The architect determines the design and function of a building as well as the emotional toll and financial costs involved in its construction.

Finding your perfect match in an architect is not impossible and the following eight points can guide you along the way.

Use these to help analyse the personality, design strategy and communication skills of your candidates. Your goal is to find the right architect for your project, for your budget and for you.

01

How to Find Builders

Ask for referrals from people you know and trust.

Your architect is an obvious source, but so are family, friends, neighbours, lawyer, real estate agent and others who have built projects similar to yours.

Local building suppliers, design firms and other trade-related businesses can offer referrals too.

Are there recently completed or projects under construction in your area? Ask the owner about their builder and the working relationship.

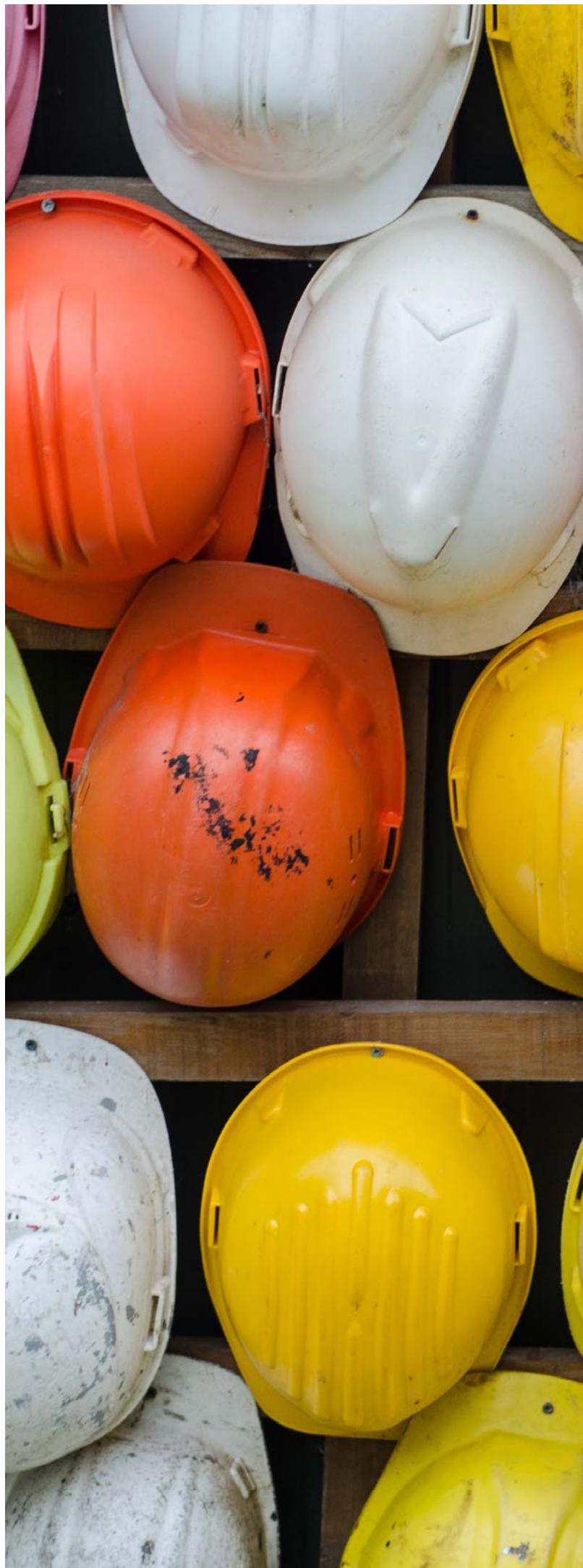
When you have a good number of referrals, begin your research.

Start with a company's website. Review their portfolios. (The lack of an online presence says a lot about the builder too).

How long have they been in business?

How big is the company?

Where are they located in reference to your project?





02

License and registration, please

Verify that your building candidates are licensed and in good standing with the various building boards - The Department of Fair Trading, the Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association.

Ask to see the builder's license, a picture I.D. and certificate of insurance.

Not only does proper licensing demonstrate a company's best practices management, but hiring a licensed builder protects you.

For example, Workers Compensation insurance may be a builder's responsibility by law and not that of a property owner's.

However, that will not hold true if a builder is not licensed or does not carry proper insurance and instead the liability may fall on you should anything happen with a worker while working on site.

03

Questions for the Candidates

After the preliminary online research and license check, narrow your candidate pool to three to five builders.

Set up an interview at their office, which will verify their business location. Consider asking the following questions.

What does their place of business tell you about their organization and quality of product and service?

Is it a small one-person company working from home or a larger firm with multiple employees?

What is their pipeline of jobs? Will they be able to start work on your project in a timely manner?

Ask how your project will be completed should something happen to the owner of the company?

Who will be the foreman - the person on site on a day to day basis - can you meet that person?

How do they deal with variations?





04

View Recent Work

Request to visit three projects that are similar in size and style to yours. Check out something recently completed, one under construction and a third project completed five to 10 years earlier.

Speak with the homeowners and ask the following questions.

Does the work carry a warranty and are problems corrected?

How does the construction site look?

Does a finished project stand the test of time?

How did the builder deal with variations?

Was the process easy and comfortable, or were there issues?

Did they leave the site clean every day, or was it a mess?

Did they make the process enjoyable or was there tension?

05

Check References and Then Some

Ask for a referral list.

In private, discuss with previous clients their experiences working with the builder.

Was it a pleasant working relationship?

Was it easy to communicate with the builder?

What were the staff working with the builder like to work with?

What were the builder's sub-builders like to work with?

When the builder was off site, did the other workers keep working hard or did they slack off?

Was the builder fair and honest?

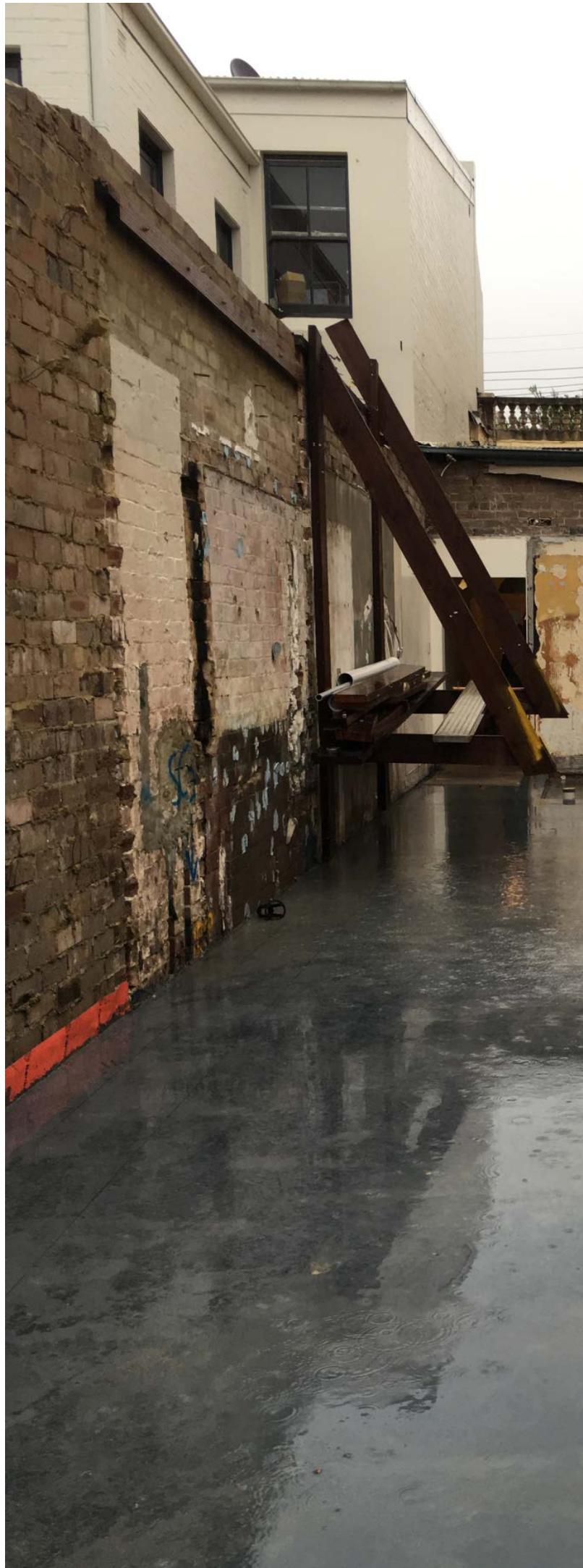
Was the project completed on schedule and within budget?

Were there extra costs or surprises?

How were problems handled?

How was the quality of craftsmanship and follow-up?

If there were defects or problems, how quickly did the builder resolve them?





06

Cementing a Relationship

Narrow your list of builders to two or three.

Invite them to your project site to meet with your architect.

Consider asking them the following:

Review your site and preliminary architectural plans.

Ask about a range of general construction costs. Is it within your budget and quality expectations?

Where can you save money?

Does their schedule suit your time frame?

Can you trust and communicate with this person easily?

Are your questions answered clearly and satisfactorily?

How often will the principal builder be at the job site?

Who will be the day-to-day job foreman? How long has that person been with the company?

Ask to meet the foreman. Determine your compatibility.

Ask for a preliminary, itemized written estimate.

07

The Tendering Process

When your plans have final design approval, you have received your approvals from council and the construction documents are ready, let the short listed builders know that you will be sending out tender documents for a lump sum tender. There are other ways of securing a builder, but a lump sum tender includes all the costs and you will know what the building cost will be up front.

Give them a deadline before which they can submit their bids for your consideration. Make sure that they all have the same deadline and that they are all tendering on the same set of documents and information. This is the only way you will be able to compare 'apples with apples'.

Ask your architect to help you review and compare the tenders.

Ask for a breakdown for various categories of work for comparison and to avoid possible mistakes.

Ask for "allowances" for unknown costs such as fixtures and finishes to be chosen later.

For renovations projects where structural conditions are unknown, have the builder open up a partial section of a wall or other area to help either party determine beforehand the extent of repair work that will be required to be made.

Even if you have decided on a builder, get multiple bids to get the best value and to be sure that the cost you have been given is market value.



Contracting for Construction

Before you go to tender discuss with your architect the different kinds of contracts available and ask for one to review. It is prudent to get your lawyer to also review the contract. This may be the biggest spend of your life, so you want to make sure that you are protected by the contract.

Ask for updates to the construction sum if plans change for any reason. Most contracts allow for 'variations' to the contract sum.

Do not sign the contract until all of your approvals/certifications have been approved and all costs finalised.

Be aware that there are always unknowns in the construction process that require changing things at additional costs. Examples of these include design changes made by you, building code requirements or unknown site or other existing conditions. This is normal. Expect it. Allow 5 to 10 percent of your total budget for these extras. This is known as a contingency sum. With good planning, design and management they can be minimised.

There are far more reputable, honest and hard working builders than there are the slapdash, fly-by-night operations we read about in the news.

With proper planning and prior research, you will find the perfect builder for your project. Invest the time and remember that spending a few extra dollars in the beginning could save you thousands of dollars in the end.

Creating a new building, whether it's your home or a commercial project, is an exciting project. Make it an enjoyable one, too, by hiring the right builder.

the next step...

Congratulations! You have now discovered some of the most common mistakes that people make when building a new house.

Unfortunately, I can't include every important piece of information about building new houses successfully in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the requirements differ based on a multitude of factors.

To help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure, we now offer a custom 'Needs & Options' review where we will identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically, the 'Needs & Options' review saves my clients thousands of dollars and weeks of lost time, not to mention the stress and headache of getting something wrong.

To learn more about the 'Needs & Options' review, as well as the price for this service and why it is critically important to your project's success email me at info@redblue.com.au. If you are ready to talk now, call me at 612 9114 6767.

Best wishes for the success of your project,



Craig Taylor

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