

# HOW TO AVOID A NIGHTMARE BUILD

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## THANK-YOU FOR DOWNLOADING OUR GUIDE ON HOW TO AVOID A NIGHTMARE BUILD. IT REALLY IS POSSIBLE!

**If you've decided to embark on building your dream home, you might suddenly be terrified. I am sure you have heard multiple horror stories: builders running away with the client's money, projects running horribly over budget or of poor workmanship.**

It is possible to avoid a nightmare build. The best defence is offence! When setting out on a build that offence is preparation, preparation, preparation. In writing this document, I want to share the lessons I have learned from a decade in the construction industry. I have been involved in the design and building of several contemporary homes over the last decade, some even featured in magazines. All the best builds that I have been involved with have included the following three factors:

1. The finances are in order
2. The decision makers (clients) are in agreement
3. A good team is appointed on site

Building your dream home involves many decisions and you want to make sure you get the best advice all the way; only a team approach can achieve this.

The following points should be considered and are what I have found lead to a good building experience:



# 1

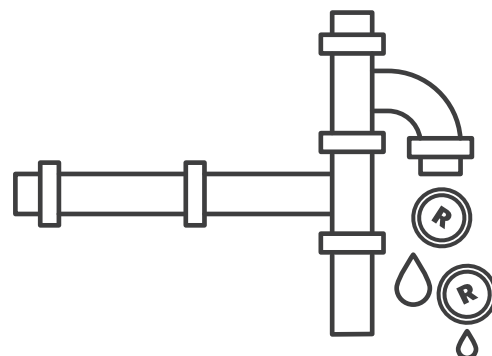
### BUILDING COSTS

Get a realistic idea of building costs for the type of home you want. Bear in mind that finishes make up to 50% of the build cost, and should you want to install systems such as underfloor heating, solar, rainwater harvesting etc. your cost will increase. AECOM publishes an annual building cost document that is a very useful guide and is an easy google search away. We can also guide you, just call.

# 2

### ASSOCIATED COSTS

Determine what the hidden or associated costs are, beyond appointing an architect and an engineer there is NHBRC registration as well as utility connection costs etc. We have prepared a separate document outlining all these cost, which we will email through next.



# 3

## BUDGET

Be realistic and determine what you can afford as a build budget. Then add in a contingency sum for unforeseen building expenses that cannot be calculated ahead of time. It might also be prudent to find out what loan you qualify for if you plan on building using a bank loan. Also find out what your banks processes are and how they handle building loans versus land purchase loans etc.

BE HELL BENT ON STICKING TO THAT BUDGET (decision makers in agreement) Do what you need to do to reach this objective.



# 4

## AGREE

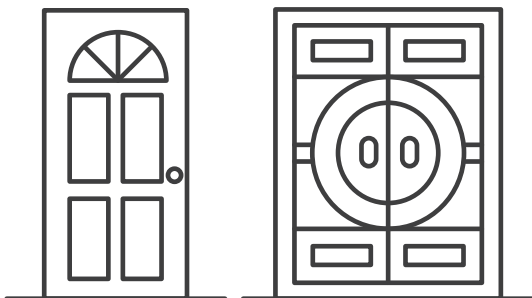
If you are building with a partner, take some time out to discuss the project in detail. What your dreams, aspirations, desires and expectations are. How you want spaces to feel, flow and look. Discuss the accommodation you desire and or require as well as the systems you'd like to see within the house. Ensure that you get on the same page, and that you are dreaming within the range you can afford.

# 5



## DEAL BREAKERS

Now that you have discussed all this decide what the deal breakers are. These are items that you are not willing to compromise on. Remember to prioritise this according to your budget. Is that home gym or cellar really necessary, or could it be a phase 2 addition?



# 6

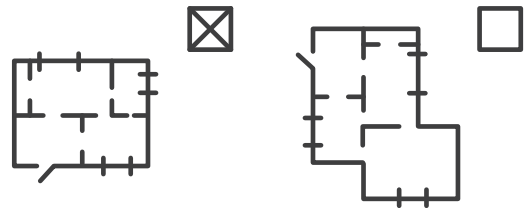
## HOMEWORK

Get on Pinterest, read some magazines, or go to those trade shows and get an idea of what you like or what appeals to you. Do some homework about what's out there, and more importantly what does and does not appeal to you.

## 7

DRAW UP A BRIEF

Now that you have had a realistic idea of building costs, have determined your budget, have had discussions about what you want and then determined what you need, and looked at some images to find out what you like, you are finally ready to set about documenting all of this. This is your brief and you will use to convey your requirements, dreams hope and desires to your architect. This way you should be in agreement before you engage a professional. If all this seems overwhelming, we offer a strategy session to assist.



## 8

APPOINT AN ARCHITECT

Now you are ready to engage an architect. The RIGHT architect is going to hold your hand and guide you through this entire process so it's critical that you select someone you feel comfortable with, and who has the relevant experience. Contact a few architects and find someone whose work appeals to you and get some testimonials. Remember this is a big investment and you need to feel comfortable with the architect and be sure that they have the adequate experience and expertise you require. Be very clear on what you will be getting from the architect as deliverables and the levels of service they offer as this differs from practice to practice. As an example, we assist our clients with procurement and co-ordination of finishes, not all architects do this. When you are comparing architectural fees, it is important to ask for a breakdown of deliverables.

It is our experience that many companies exclude items like 3D renders, HOA submissions or written specifications and just charge a fee for 'drawings' (without a break down of what those drawings include). It's usually a square meter rate. Please check what those 'drawings' include as 1:100 drawings should not be used for construction but for information only, and will not contain all the information your builder requires to build your home. As not all information required can fit on drawings a written specification is critical.

This documentation forms part of your contract with the builder, exclusions result in additional costs on site. Some companies will also exclude the cost of site administration, knowing that once they have done the drawings and you realize that you need help on site, you will have little choice but to accept their fees. Make sure you get a complete breakdown of deliverables as well as service levels. If they do not include their costs to assist on site enquire before you appoint them.

Remember your home is likely to be one of your biggest investments, make sure you have the right professionals on board and that you are aware of all their costs from the onset. Don't just go on fees alone, in all instances you get what you pay for.

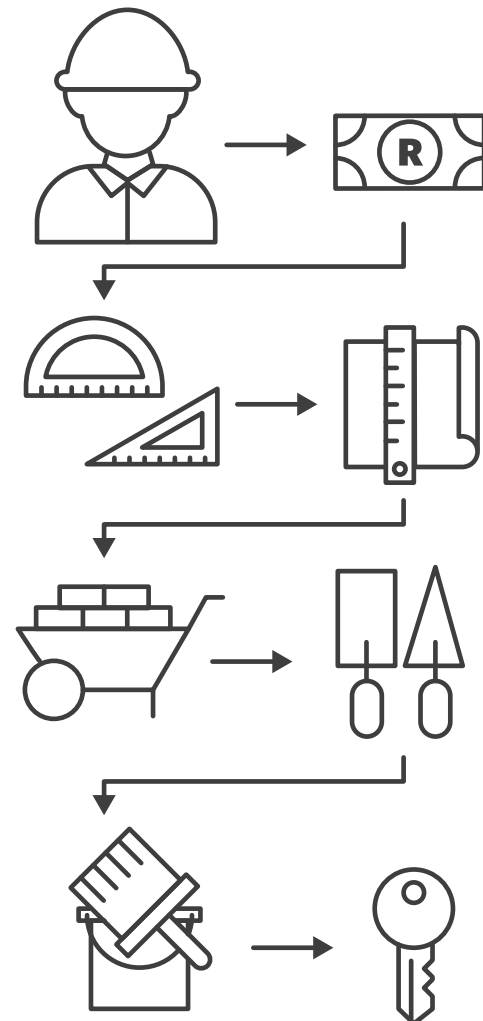
We have written a blog detailing the architectural service and how we apply it, to ensure your home is delivered on time and in budget. <https://meik.co.za/why-do-i-need-an-architect/>



# 9

## CONSIDERING CONTRACTORS

The contractor you choose to work with is critical. Select a few contractors who have the relevant experience. Meet them, get references, view completed projects and trust your gut. I know this is time consuming, but your home is a big investment. Ensure that the contractor's finances are in order and that they can finance the deal. Discuss your expectations. Enquire about the level of oversight and attention your project will get. Ensure that they do not have too many projects to meet your expectations and level of oversight you require. Ask what sort of a breakdown of costs you will get. Make sure you are comfortable with the contractors you invite to tender. Here your architect is also important as they should be able to guide you.



We trust this introduction has been valuable. Remember we are here to guide and assist you. Feel free to call or email us.

082 809 1970  
nadine@meik.co.za



## ASSOCIATED COSTS

### The Simple, Do-It-Yourself Way To Estimate The Numbers

Aside from your building costs there are several costs you will incur when embarking on building your dream home.

Here is a list of what to expect:

# 1

### PROFESSIONAL FEES

Depending on the complexity of your project you will require a professional team to assist you. At a minimum you will need a team of two: an architect and an engineer.



If you are planning a subdivision you will require a town planner.

- Architect's fees are either based on a percentage of the build cost or at a square meter rate, do some homework with the architects you consider working with to determine their fees.
- Your architect is likely to be able to recommend an engineer and they will prepare their own independent proposal. Engineer's fees will depend on the complexity and size of the project. Once again, an experienced architect would be able to guide you.
- If your project exceeds a certain value, and you require a bank loan, your bank may insist on the services of a Quantity Surveyor. If you are taking out a bond on your project ask for a comprehensive break down of what your bank will require.

# 2

### NHBRC REGISTRATION

Yet another governmental tax. If you build a new home using a bank loan, in the form of a bond over the property, you must use a contractor registered with the NHBRC. You are required to pay a levy to them in exchange for which, they will look after financial losses incurred:

- a) should the contractor go into liquidation, or
- b) the building falls down due to structural failure, or
- c) an Act of God.

The levy is based on a percentage of the contract and land value.

# 3

### UTILITY COSTS

As with any new property there will be a cost to connect your utilities, such as:

- power
- water
- gas
- fiber etc.

Find out what these costs are to make sure you plan ahead.

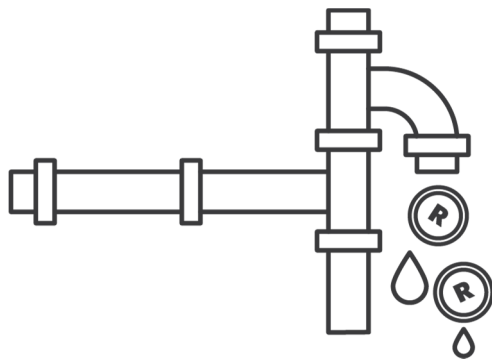
## PROPERTY COST

# 4

Undeveloped land, where there is no completed building, attracts higher rates and taxes than developed land, find out what the costs will be and budget accordingly for the time period before and during your build.

One is usually required to make an application to the municipality to have this amended once the build is complete.

There are service providers who offer a service to do this on your behalf, as with any council process it can be onerous to get the application done!



# 6

## MUNICIPAL SUBMISSION FEES

There will be a cost associated with submitting your plans for approval, this will depend on the applications required. Regular submissions with no special town planning applications are generally billed at a square meter rate for every new square meter under roof. This rate differs from municipality to municipality.

# 5

## BOND COSTS

Many banks in South Africa require the client to pay a certain percentage of the bond / loan value before they start paying out. This essentially means that you will need this lump sum and will pay the first draw or two of the build before your loan kicks in. Find out what your loan options are as certain loan types are more expensive.

Remember there will also be bond registration fees to consider that are over and above the lump sum of the loan!

# 7

## ESTATE APPROVALS

If your new home is located within a security estate with aesthetic guidelines there is usually a fee required to have your plans reviewed and approved by the HOA aesthetics committee or representative.





## 8 ESTATE BUILD COSTS

Many security estates may also require a pavement deposit prior to the build commencing that gets returned once the build is complete. If your stand is in an estate find out if there are any additional costs associated to your build relevant to that estate.

## 9 DISBURSEMENTS

As an architect I do not pay for the prints of the drawings required by the contractor to build the home. This is simply because he requires a minimum of 3 sets each time something changes. Budget some additional money for prints. It would be prudent to check with your preferred architect what is included in their fee and what is not. Some estates may require 3D renders for submission and not all architects include this in their fees. Meik is one of the few firms that does of course!

## 10 INTERIOR FINISHES & FURNITURE

You might think this is a strange item to list. Remember your new home's windows might not be the same as your current home, and window dressing is expensive! Similarly, your current furniture might not suit the style of your new home or you might not want to move with it. I have found my clients often buy new beds for their new homes!

Either way allow an amount for window furnishings as a minimum. You might even want to employ an interior decorator to assist you with softs and interior schemes, your architect will generally have interior people they can recommend.

At meik we work with an interior decorator and offer a FREE scheme for your living area, with a full architectural service.



## 11

### APPLIANCES

You might be starting think this list will never end! The truth is that I have seen many people moving into dream homes, only then wanting the shiny new appliances to complement their new home. Who wants a tired old fridge in a brand spanking new kitchen! You might want a bigger, better TV, fridge, washing machine, or that coffee machine you have had your eye on...



## 12

### RENT

If you need to sell your current home or property, in order to finance your build, remember that you need to live somewhere while you build! If you cannot put up with your in-laws for the build period, best you plan to rent somewhere! My advice is to add at least one extra month to the time period the builder supplies you with; as no one wants to move into a building site, or have coffee with the builder's guys while they fix the last few small things!



We offer a STRATEGY SESSION to assist you in setting up your brief, advise you on the viability of your project, and do some conceptual sketches of what we think is possible. if you are feeling overwhelmed and would like us to assist you, feel free to call to discuss your project,

**Nadine : (m) 082 809 1970**

**Studio: 011 025 8381**

## MYTH VS. REALITY

What architects ACTUALLY do...

An architect's role is larger than most people realise. When an architect manages your project, they ensure that

every part of the process below (and more) is handled to ensure that the biggest investment of your life or your career is safe and secure.

Myth	Reality
Do Designs...	<b>STAUTORY REQUIREMENTS:</b> Checking any statutory town planning restrictions that determine what you can build and where you can build it on your stand.
	<b>HOA REGULATIONS:</b> Checking that what you build is in keeping with any regulations and or aesthetic guild lines of the Estate if your home is within an Estate
	<b>COMPLIANCE:</b> Ensuring Compliance with building & safety regulations, local planning regulations and restrictions. Depending on the project there may be laws surrounding the preservation of the local environment or any historic parts of the building.
	<b>BRIEF GENERATION:</b> Refine the brief, to ensure all your requirements are met within the design and to ensure all parties are in agreement about what the project entails.
	<b>BUDGET:</b> Advise you on viability of your project, assist you in setting up budgets and that there are no costs that spiral out of control
	<b>SUSTAINABILITY:</b> Advise you on passive design elements, materials technologies to create the most sustainable building that suits your requirements.
Draw plans	<b>DESIGN:</b> Generate a design solution that meets your brief, makes the best

	use of your site and ensures the best Return on Investment. Express the design in a way that you understand what you are getting.
	<b>CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTATION:</b> Translate the design into instructions and technical specifications for contractors and construction experts. Ensure those specific actions are met.
	<b>LEADERSHIP:</b> Heading up the team of professionals who will work on the project including builders, trades people, engineers, designers and financial professionals.
	<b>ON SITE MANAGEMENT</b> – site visits and meeting overseeing the construction and validating quality of work, negotiating with contractors and dealing with any problems that arise on site.
	<b>AESTHETIC CO-ORDINATION</b> Assist to procure and co-ordinate finishes and fittings, within budget and timelines, from reputable suppliers and subcontractors.

For more detailed information about each topic above check out our blog on ‘Why do I need an Architect?’ just click [HERE](#).

**NADINE: 082 809 1970**

**STUDIO: 011 025 8318**

T : 011 025 8318  
M : 082 809 1970

nadine@meik.co.za  
www.meik.co.za

4 Nkuru Rd West  
Sunninghill 2157

# CHECKLIST QUESTIONS TO ASK PROSPECTIVE ARCHITECTS...

When hiring an architect, it's helpful to have a process to make sure, you get the RIGHT person for the project.

## Asking the right questions

Although extensive schooling and training is required for all architects, that doesn't mean all architects are created equal.

Finding the RIGHT architect for you depends on several factors: personality, design style, building for taste or to make money, budget and even whether

your project requires a special skill set.

Choosing the architect can mean the difference between an enjoyable experience and one plagued with problems and hassles the whole way through once a project moves into the Build Phase. How will your project go?

The questions are the answer ...

## A great architect is your Designer, Advocate, Teacher, Project Leader & Coordinator

<input type="checkbox"/>	What unique value do you have for our specific type of project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	How would you like me to share my ideas, images, needs, wants and research?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How can you add value to our home so that we maximize the return on investment when/if we sell?	<input type="checkbox"/>	What can I do to help you deliver the best work for us?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you offer a pre-design service to help move us safely and efficiently towards the design phase?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have a team game plan that outlines how we will all successfully work together even under pressure?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What are the specific challenges for our types of project and how have you overcome these in the past?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will you run the tender process to find and select the best construction team?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will you advise on the systems the building should contain?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will you handle the council approval process?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If my budget, timeline and scope of the project are unrealistic will you let me know?	<input type="checkbox"/>	What educational material do you provide so we can understand the requirements of our specific type of project?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you offer any On Site Service? If you do who involved will you get in the finishes, fittings and aesthetic co-ordination of the interiors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will you assist with the procurement and specification of all finishes and fittings?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you SACAP registered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you hold Professional Indemnity insurance and to what Value?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have reliable builders whom you have worked with that you can recommend?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have reliable suppliers you have worked with and can recommend?
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Meik Architects offer a Strategy Session, to help you get out of the blocks so to speak, and to give you the opportunity to assess if we are the right fit for your project. Just call us to Book a Strategy Session and find out what it entails.

**STUDIO: 011 025 8318**

**MOBILE: 082 809 1970 (this is Nadine's Mobile)**



## DESIGN BRIEF CREATOR

“Focusing Is About Saying No” – Steve Jobs

**Alice:** would you tell me please which way I ought to go from here?

**The Cheshire cat:** That depends a good deal on where you want to go

**Alice:** I don't care much where

**The Cheshire cat:** Then it doesn't much matter which way you go  
**To help you determine where you are going with your home,**

**We have created this simple Design Brief Creator.**

We offer a STRATEGY service to assist you with all this if it seems overwhelming.

Once on Board we go through a detailed **BRIEF GENERATOR** with our clients to ensure we cover all the finer details and requirements to make your home your dream.

### Your question

### Answer

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Outline your current situation?

How do you live?

Is that changing or about to change?

What lifestyle factors need to be Considered in the design of Your home

What will you need to see to know your project has been a dramatic success?

What does your home really mean To you?

Who are the important people This house needs to be designed for?

What are the:

- budget,
- timeframes
- boundaries we need to work within?

How do you want to FEEL as you move through your new space?

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What are your accommodation requirements?

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What accommodation is essential?

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What is a nice to have?

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Which spaces are of primary importance?

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Which spaces should relate to one another?

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Does the design need to Comply with any guidelines as set out by beliefs or other factors?

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Is there anything that should be avoided in the design of your New Home

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What Technologies should be incorporated in the design of your new Home?

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Have you considered their cost?

---

Which are essential vs nice to have?

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Need help?

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Book a Strategy Session with us, we'll help you figure this all out.

NADINE - 082 809 1970



## Readiness Slider

### Are You Ready To Move The Design Phase?

This exercise allows you to access how ready you are to move to the **Design Phase**. If you are not close to 10 on ALL scales, then its best to seek help from an expert to do this research.

If you rush into the design phase without this information

available, you'll run the risk of making too many assumptions, which is the #1 reason projects go over budget and over time.

Question	Slider 0-10, zero = low 10=high
On a 1-10 scale, how clear are you on exactly what you need?	0 10
On a 1-10 scale how aware are you of all the various options your site will accommodate	0 10
On a 1-10 scale how confident are you that you are aware of all the legal requirements?	0 10
On a 1-10 scale how aware are you of the process you will need to have in place to get the project completed on time and on budget?	0 10
On a 1-10 scale how confident are you that your budget will achieve your needs	0 10
Give yourself a current overall rating for readiness	0 10

Don't worry if you are not at 10 on all scales yet. Our Brief Generator allows you to fill in the knowledge gaps and gets you ready to move to the Design.