



# The Pitfalls of Building

Your guide to building a house

1300 55 25 03  
sales@klinehomes.com.au  
klinehomes.com.au



# Contents

Separating the dream from reality	3
Compliance risk	3
Dealing with tradesmen	3
Building a waterfront 'Bargain'	3
The warranty trap	4
Entering the disaster zone	5
Start with a qualified builder	5
Still want to build?	6
Kept out of the loop	6 - 12

## About the Authour

Graydon Kline is a builder with more than 22 years' experience in home construction and renovation. He is highly active in the Gold Coast market where he has undertaken a broad range of work from entry-level homes for investors and first-home buyers to luxury homes in some of the Gold Coast's most desirable locations. Graydon has tapped into his extensive knowledge of the construction industry to put together The Pitfalls of Building as a tool for owner-builders or those looking to build their home but don't know where to start. He is passionate about the industry but hates seeing homebuyers taken for a ride by the complex array of rules and regulations that now govern the building sector.



### Separating the dream from reality

Reality television these days makes home construction and renovation look like a breeze. In a matter of days the on-screen competitors can apparently transform a run-down house into a beautiful dream home with all the modern conveniences. While they make it look easy, the reality is anything but that.

Usually, television construction jobs such as these require a big team of builders converging on the project to get the job done as quickly as possible. It's a far cry from real-life construction which is often plagued by unexpected delays and problems, especially for the novice builder. The frustration is often amplified by crippling cost blowouts that have left many owner-builders unable to complete their dream project.

What also remains hidden is the vast array of rules and regulations that govern the industry – regulations that can stop a project dead in its tracks if they are not followed to the letter of the law.

If you are an owner builder, or even contemplating your own construction job, I'm not writing this to shatter your dream. Instead, I want to arm you with the essential tools you will need to ensure you don't fall victim to the many pitfalls of building.

I don't like reading long-winded, "go nowhere" papers, so I have kept this very short, simple and straight to the point in order to help you get started and to better understand the task ahead.

I own two building companies, Kline Homes & Kline Constructions, and I continually see people wasting not only their time but their money when they jump into their own home building project.

Many of these people believe that they understand the building process and they should be capable enough to undertake the building works themselves to save money.

More times than not, the opposite is the case. I have seen many people lose money and become heartbroken because they find out too late that the construction business is a hard business.

### Compliance risk

One of the first big issues to deal with is compliance with new occupational health and safety regulations. The regulations are too many to list here, however you need to research this area thoroughly. The fines for non-compliance are heavy, ranging from \$6000 to \$60,000 which, in an instant, can unravel the profit savings you may have originally targeted when you first took on the job.

Owner-builders must also know and comply with all the current building codes and Australian standards.

### Dealing with tradesmen

Dealing with tradesmen can also be extremely difficult. Many don't turn up or they will try to overcharge, especially if they know you are just a one-off customer. I have employed countless tradesmen over the past 22 years, although over that time I have been able to sort through the good and the bad. Just remember, many of the bad ones I got rid of are still out there.

### Building a waterfront 'Bargain'

In 2010, I met a lovely couple who wanted to become owner-builders. They wanted to build a substantial waterfront home in the exclusive Sovereign Islands estate on the northern tip of the Gold Coast. The husband was an electrician and he detailed a very impressive spreadsheet showing all his pricing. He was convinced that, as an owner-builder, he could build the home cheaper than any project builder.

Of course, as a professional in the industry, you would expect that he had everything covered. There is no denying he was close, but close enough is never good enough in this industry when the slightest error could risk tens of thousands of dollars being added to the building cost. When I went through the electrician's list, I found eight items that he had missed. This shows how hard it is for the novice builder to keep on top of every aspect of the project.

As he felt capable enough to complete the interiors of the house, I suggested that I would price the construction job to lock-up stage in order to see how our separate prices compared. This also would give him some added peace of mind through the Building Services Authority's warranty scheme.



The electrician had many friends within the building industry, including a cabinet-maker, plumber and painter, who he planned to engage to complete the interior work. The electrician also planned to complete the tiling himself in an effort to curb his costs further.

After comparing our prices, the electrician was surprised to find I could deliver the home to lock-up at \$80,000 less than his own price. The savings are attributed to my buying power and long-term relationships with both tradies and suppliers, which allow me to buy at a much better rate than the owner-builder – a one-off customer for suppliers.

The light went on for the electrician who wanted me to take on the job. He soon realised that he didn't have to take time off work and forgo lost earnings. He also realised that not only would he have his home built for substantially less than planned, he also would have warranty on his home.

I agreed to oversee management of the project for \$30,000 which meant the electrician was still more than \$50,000 in front than if he took on the onerous task himself.

None of the large project building companies will allow the above to happen. I describe the large project building companies as the McDonalds of the building industry. They turn houses out "fast and furious" based on volume. Besides, who do you think pays for the display homes and the sales staff?

### THE WARRANTY TRAP

One of the biggest obstacles facing the owner-builder is their inability to access the Building Service Authority's 6.3-year home warranty on the structural component of the project.

If you plan to sell the home within this period after construction, then that's when a registered builder should be considered.

Owner-builders must legally advise potential buyers when selling within the 6.3 years that no construction warranty comes with their home.

One simple way to overcome this is to engage a builder to finish the home to lock-up stage.

This will leave you free to undertake work on the interiors yourself.

All you need rely upon for this is your owner-builder's permit.



### Entering the disaster zone

The old adage of comparing apples with apples and not with oranges holds so true for the construction game. This is where the owner-builder starts off on the wrong journey. They waste so much time because they want to save money, yet this is where disaster is imminent.

You decide to go to an architect or draftsman and get your dream home plans drawn up. You now believe you are ready to send the plans out to numerous builders and get the best price possible? Wrong, you have just entered what I call the disaster zone.

You send the builder the plans without engineering and without a detailed specification of all your fixtures and fittings. You also forgot to tell the architect or draftsman your budget and so he proceeds to draw up your dream home – the one you have in your head without any thought to ultimate cost. Then you wonder why the builders' prices vary so much and why the prices have exceeded your budget.

Don't worry you're not alone. I see it every week and this is the main reason for this book. I am sick of seeing people waste their valuable time and hard-earned money. You wouldn't hire an accountant to give you legal advice, and you wouldn't hire a solicitor to give you financial advice, so why wouldn't you hire a builder to give you building advice?

I have had two clients this year who have had to go back and redesign their home and prepare their tender documents, their plans, engineering and specifications to enable them to get pricing to build their new homes. This cost both of them valuable time and money paying rent, when they could have been in their own home sooner. If you are an investor, it also means you could have been collecting rent sooner.

### Start with a qualified builder

You need to engage a qualified, licensed builder even if you want to become an owner-builder. A builder will make the initial stage less daunting and prepare all the necessary documentation so your journey is enjoyable. For example I offer my clients a pre-contract whereby I sit with you and design your home, bearing in mind your lifestyle and budget. We then prepare the inclusion list of fixtures and fittings. Most good builders will have standard inclusion lists for varying budgets.

Once you are happy with the design and the inclusions, and the project is within your budget, we then produce the final working drawings and engineering.

The critical part here is the builder's knowledge in knowing the best way to provide those expensive looks without the expensive price. It is important to know the truss design and layout to avoid expensive beams, the best energy-efficient material to use for external roof and walls, the stud widths to suite those facade finishes, what type of timber to use for frames and trusses, as well as footing and slab designs to suite the soil type.

Once the tender documents are prepared you can then have other builders price them easily and you know you are comparing apples with apples.

All builders should be able to give you a fixed-price contract. If they don't, I would be careful with their price because it may be increased with variations throughout your building process and that can become expensive. Some builders will try and win your business by quoting cheaply initially, to only charge you more once you have started.

Many real-estate agents do the same. The agent will tell you your home is worth far more than the true value just to win your listing. The agent will then tell you he has had numerous offers well below his expectations. He is now conditioning you to sell your home cheaper, so when the agent brings you a contract for a much lower price, he urges you to take it because this is all that the home is worth. You end up selling for the price the honest agent told you in the beginning. Unfortunately the same applies with builders.

Only trust a builder who is prepared to give you a fixed-price contract with no conditions in the contract that will allow the builder to charge a variation, unless you want changes, of course.

At Kline Homes, we have completed a detailed tender package as described above, so you have all the information required to adequately price your home from start to finish at a fixed price.

Unfortunately this is where the large project builders make their money. They will advertise a cheap price, although this price may not include floor coverings, light fittings, tiles (except only in wet areas) and cabinets. The list goes on for exclusions. One major homebuilder has been fined for misleading and deceptive conduct by the ACCC for this type of advertising.



### Kept out of the loop

Another problem with signing with one of the larger building companies is that you are locked in and you are not allowed to speak with the sales agent who you have come to know and trust. If you're lucky, you may see your on-site supervisor once, and don't try to contact the company's head office, because you will be passed from department to department as you are now a number not a person.

A good builder should invite and meet with you on-site at every stage before invoicing. Remember, under Occupational Health and Safety you do own the land and you are paying for the building, although the construction site is a building site under legislation, anyone without a recognised white card for safety induction is not permitted on-site unless fully supervised.

I have listed below all the trades and services generally required to build a new home and what you, the consumer, should be aware of at each stage of construction. Keep in mind that this list is not a guide on how to build, but merely an A-Z list of trades, suppliers and services needed to complete your home with a basic definition of each.

#### Air-conditioning

Depending on your budget you have the choice between a fully-ducted system or a split system. If initially air-conditioning is out of your price range, it is important to at least wire your house with 20 Amp provisions.

There are many brands from which to choose and we can advise on the best brands based on your budget, warranty needs and house size.

#### Antenna

Your antenna is important for free-to-air TV, although you may choose cable or a roof-mounted dish for pay-TV.

#### Bricklayers

Brick ties are often nailed into wiring and this can be an expensive fix. Ensure the mortar joints (perps) lines are level and walls and piers are plumb. For coastal projects, stainless steel ties need to be used within 200m of breaking surf.

Often bricklayers will use detergents from Coles or Woolworths to make their cement workable.

### STILL WANT TO BUILD?

If you still wish to go down the owner-builder path, be prepared to gather as much knowledge as possible before starting.

Don't rely on tradies to educate you. They may take short cuts and overcharge.

It is important to see BSA licenses for each trade and ensure their insurance is current. You should also take out public liability insurance before commencing any works.

When you engage a licensed builder, the builder is the principal contractor. The owner is not responsible for any risk or obligations under the building act.

To take advantage of our FYI (finish it yourself) visit [www.klinehomes.com.au](http://www.klinehomes.com.au) and let us build your home to lock-up stage. You can then finish the home yourself and will have secured the BSA home warranty insurance for 6.3 years. You also will have peace of mind that the structural integrity of your home is not compromised.

Unfortunately this breaks the cement down and all the bricklayer needs to do is add more cement or purchase approved plastersisers.

Ensure the damp course is installed correctly with adequate weep holes. When block laying ensure steel is laid as per the engineers' specifications and all cement is cleaned out while wet. This will allow for a better core fill of concrete.

### **Bricks**

When choosing bricks or blocks it is important to use the right materials to suit the job. If you are going to render the building, it is cheaper to use a double-height brick. A concrete double height is cheaper than a clay brick and commons should be used.

Remember when using face-brick you should allow for acid washing and pressure cleaning. It also costs more for off-white cement.

### **QBCC insurance**

QBCC insurance premiums are payable at rate of approximately 1 per cent of your building contract. It is compulsory for the home warranty scheme whereby the QBCC will come and finish your home if the builder goes broke or is unwilling to carry out any works within the 6.3-year home warranty period.

It is important to note the insurance covers structural and category-one defects. Items such as ovens, hot-water systems and tap-ware come under the manufacturers' warranty.

The QBCC has a great website where you can conduct licence searches and see the top 10 defects found in homes from poor workmanship. Through good supervision and proven systems, Kline Homes has never had a demerit point against it.

### **Cabinet maker**

The cabinet maker constructs your kitchen, vanities and laundry cupboards and benches. The installer must be equally as good as the cabinet maker or he can make your new products look average instead of great.

All carcasses are made from melamine. You then have several choices between laminated doors and bench tops or two-pack doors and panels, and granite tops with many choices of profiles and colours.

Be wary of Chinese cheap imports as they are filled with formaldehyde and other dangerous chemicals. The cabinetry should be installed after the tiles are laid. However, some builders will install the cabinetry prior to tiling and this can potentially cause damage by the tiler. If there is a water leak, the cabinetry can become damaged if the tiles are laid after the cabinetry is installed.

### **Carpenter**

The carpenter's role is to either make or stand the frames. We choose to make our frames while the project builders will use pre-fabricated frames from the factory. These are usually made by unqualified junior labour, because they are cheaper to manufacture and quicker for the carpenter to stand. If price is more important than quality, the choice is yours.

The carpenters will then place the trusses into position and complete the tie-down and bracing. Always ensure the nuts are firmly tightened on the threaded tie-down rods.

For double-story homes, the carpenter will also be responsible for constructing the floor system supplied by the manufacture, comprised of bearers, joists and particle-board flooring. You may choose more expensive hardwood flooring that can be sanded and coated.

The carpenter is also responsible for placing the windows into the frame. Due to new building codes, windows are now a structural component and there must be timber blocking at each fixing point. Unfortunately not many carpenters are aware of the new code.

The carpenter will also fit your front door and complete the fix-out, comprised of skirting boards around the floor and the architrave that goes around the door and window frames. The carpenter is also responsible for the fit-off of all door furniture, towel rails, toilet-roll holders and hanging rails to the wardrobes.

### **Certifier**

The certifier approves your home for occupation by way of an approval. The certifier will also submit all council-required forms and documentation.

### **Cleaning**

The finishing touch to every home is the cleaning and, without efficient cleaners, a great job can appear very poor. It is important to clean all upper external windows before the scaffold comes down. The internal appliances also should be turned on so the protective coating on the elements can burn off, ready for the home owner to use.

Other items that require a high level of attention are the internal windows, tiled floor areas, bathrooms and all kitchen, vanities and laundry cupboards. Once the carpet has been laid, the cleaners return to give everything another once over and vacuum the carpet and mop the floors ready for handover.

### **Clothesline**

The wall-mounted clothesline is the most popular although the old Hills hoist is still requested. Most estates do not want clotheslines in full view, so again it is important to get your design right.

### **Concrete**

Depending on the engineering of your home, the concrete mostly used is 25mpa for footing and slabs. However, most project builders will use a waffle pod which is cheaper to construct. This is safe to use as long as your concreter has calibrated his equipment.

Dwellings located within 200 metres of the beach are required to use 35mpa concrete. The higher cement level in the concrete will reduce salty moisture penetrating the concrete and rusting the steel. During exceptionally hot days retarders are placed into the concrete to slow the curing time. When the weather is cold accelerators are chemically added to the concrete to assist the concrete to cure faster.

### **Concrete pump**

Most jobs will require the use of a concrete pump to ensure the concrete is placed quickly and efficiently. Concrete trucks now charge a waiting time after 40 minutes. A concrete pump ensures the concrete trucks are not held up and can return to the yard to collect another batch of concrete quickly.



### Concreters

Like the bricklayers, the concreters need to work quickly and efficiently. There are no second chances once the concrete goes off.

Quality concreters must calibrate their equipment often, especially if you decide to use a waffle pod system. You must have sufficient coverage over the steel to give the strength and structural integrity the engineer has designed.

Many homes have had bad cracking and even the car jack has gone through the floor because there is not enough concrete coverage. This has never happened to any of our homes. Project homes normally get most of the problems. That's because they do build the majority of houses and they pay their trades and suppliers poorly. As they say, when you pay peanuts you get monkeys.

### Concrete cutting

Concrete cutting can be used in driveways and paths where expansion joints are not provided. Cutting must be in an up and down motion to ensure the steel is cut through the length of the cut or movement may occur. Concrete cutting is required for driveway crossovers when the kerb needs to be removed. Renovation work requires professional cutting, so driveways and paths can be picked up by machinery ready for removal.

### Council fees

All councils require payment of fees and permits before works can begin. Most Councils will issue and conduct all plumbing inspections only, the certifier is responsible for the lodgement of all documentation and the certifier now provides the final certificate.

### Crane hire

Crane hire is normally used in hard-to-access sites and double-story buildings. They are more likely to be used to lift materials, trusses and equipment to the work areas.

### Door furniture

Door furniture refers to the door handles, locks, hinges and dead bolts and there are many suppliers and equally as many levels of quality. All fixtures and fitting should be listed and included in your contract.

### Driveways and paths

Driveways and paths are generally 100mm thick with a minimum of 6.2mm square mesh steel. I personally prefer to use 8.2mm. Some preferred driveways can be plain concrete, coloured concrete, stamped concrete, stencilled concrete or exposed concrete with a range of finishes.

### Earthwork machinery

Machinery will range in size and type depending on the job size and terrain. Most conventional building sites only require a drott or excavator to clear the site and prepare the crossover, which by law has to be rock rubble so vehicles leaving the site do not place debris over the road. Silt mesh also needs to be placed within the building site where water flows, thus containing any debris and ensuring the drains do not fill up with debris.

Other machines such as smaller excavators and bobcats are used to clean the site and prepare the external areas for drainage and landscaping.

### Electrician

The electrician must comply with all current legislation and ensure the workplace is safe and in working order. The electrician will supply and install the meter box and connect the wires from the front pillar. Energex will then supply your new digital meter and supply power to the building site.

The electrician will complete the roughens, that is to wire the house as per the plans for all internal and external light fittings, power points, data cabling, TV and phone connections. It's crucial the electrician does not allow wiring to the exterior of the building to be taken through the frame. If so, it can be hit by nails when installing Breathable foil as a moisture barrier or the brick ties. This can be very dangerous and expensive to fix.

The electrician will also connect all fixed appliances, such as cooktop, oven, range hood and all light fittings. Electricians need to ensure their hands are clean as these are finished products.



## Engineer

The engineer will provide the engineering for the footing and slab design after receiving the soil test that will provide the engineer with the soil's reactivity. S means slightly, while M means moderate. There are others and, depending on your soil type, the engineering will be designed specifically for your house and soil type.

The engineer also designs your bracing and tie-down based on your area. If you are elevated or exposed to high winds, you will need more intense bracing up to N3.

The engineer will conduct regular inspections throughout the building process. The engineer must inspect the steel for both the footing a slab before concrete can be poured. The steel must comply with the engineer's design. The engineer will also inspect and sign off on the bracing and tie down as per his design.

## External cladding

There are numerous products used for external finishes, depending on your budget, energy efficiency and the look you want. Feel free to contact us to discuss further.

## Fascia, gutter and roof

The fascia and gutter comes in a range of colours and profiles. Colourbond is generally the preferred and best-wearing product of choice. However, when renovating there are a number of alternative products still available to match yesteryear.

Your roof, on the other hand, comes in either concrete tiles or Colourbond sheeting. I personally prefer Colourbond sheeting because the roof can withstand large hail while the concrete tile can smash and allow water to enter your home. Most people believe the foil under their roof tiles is insulation. This is not true. The foil is merely there as a second water barrier if the tile roof should leak. The foil will actually keep the heat in your roof space and keep your home hotter for longer. A Colourbond roof has a anticon insulation blanket that is an insulation and controls the condensation from the colourbond sheets.

## Fix-out materials

Fix-out materials generally mean the skirting and architraves boards, doors, door stops and shelving which all come in various shapes, sizes and materials.

## Floor coverings

Floor coverings vary with tiles, carpet and timber the most popular. Depending on your budget all products come in varying ranges of quality and styles. Rectified tiles cost more to purchase than pressed edge tiles, rectified tiles also cost more to lay.

## Floor preparation

Floor preparation is required generally on the second-story timber floor, where nails need to be punched and floor joints sanded smooth for floor coverings to look and feel their best.

## Flyscreens

Flyscreen material will vary. If you are in a fire-rated area, you will require stainless steel mesh which can be the same price as the windows.

## Front door

The front doors come in many configurations. Generally they are solid doors and graded as stain grade, which is sliced pacific maple or pre-primed for painting. There are pivot doors, double doors, single doors, and doors with glass features. Door packages come with highlights or side lights, again these are optional depending on your budget and house design.

## Garage doors & gates

Garage doors come in many different styles and colours. The most popular are Colorbond timber look panels with no maintenance, real timber requires ongoing maintenance. Garage doors are generally supplied and erected within a day. Front gates, pool fencing and open carport gates are generally made from pre-fabricated, powder-coated aluminium with various styles and designs to suite your budget.

## Gyprock

Gyprock is the general term used for plaster board lining. The fixing and setting is a fairly simple process, although if the frames are not properly trimmed or straightened by the carpenter the works will look uneven. Frames and back blocking of ceiling timbers need to be in place for adequate fixing. You may have noticed older homes that have sagging or cracking ceilings. This is the tell-tale sign of poor workmanship. Also the setting of joints must be spread wider at each application, so that when sanding all joints and fixing points it is done properly. The sanding should not be over done or underdone or you will see the imperfections through the paint.

## Hire equipment

Generally the hiring of equipment is an imperative on any building site. This is an expense that should be allowed for.

## Hot water system

Most hot water systems come with a 12-month manufacturer's warranty. New Queensland legislation has allowed the old electric systems to be used again. Other hot water systems include solar, gas and heat pumps. Heat pumps are noisy and are notorious for breakdowns. Solar systems take about six years before you reach your breakeven point compared to the outlay. Gas is great if it is natural gas within your estate, while electric is the cheapest to purchase and install if you connect to an off peak tariff 31.

## Insulation

External walls and ceilings are now required by law to have insulation batts. Different batts will provide varying degrees of energy efficiencies. Many builders still choose to use 70mm wall framing. Unfortunately the batts are too large for this and give a bulging look. The preferred is to use 90mm frames throughout. Whirly birds are one of the best ways to keep your roof space temperature controlled and allows the roof space to breath. R1.5 batts are used for walls and R2.5 for ceilings.

## Insurance

Your home is covered by the builder's insurance while construction is being undertaken. I personally recommend a week prior to handover you take out your own building insurance.



### Labour

Labour is generally used to clean the building sites as housekeeping is highly regarded as part of workplace health and safety. The workplace must be free of any dangers. It is also professional to keep sites neat and tidy, and building materials easily accessible so that wastage is kept to a minimum.

### Solar panels

Solar panels are fast becoming the norm to keep rising electricity costs under control, even though government grants are far less than what they were 12 months ago. Solar panels are also becoming cheaper, and the electricity you produce during the day will offset the electricity you use, thereby reducing your electricity costs.

### Splashbacks

The two most appealing splashbacks are either tiles or glass. Glass behind cook-tops must be tempered glass so it doesn't crack.

### Letterboxes

Your letterbox can either be constructed from the same building materials as your house for uniformity, or you can also purchase a free-standing letterbox. If you are constructing a front fence it is most likely this is where you will place your new letterbox. It is important to ensure your letterbox is water proof.

### Light fittings

There are a large number of Chinese imports entering the market that are not Code Mark compliant. They could be potentially dangerous and you most likely will forfeit insurance. There are many suppliers of quality light fittings that are compliant and, depending on your budget, you can search countless suppliers. LED is now the preferred light because it lasts for over 10 years and some warranties are 15 years.

With new technologies there are many new devices that can be purchased at your local lighting shop. These include motion sensors that allow lights to come in hallways, toilets and front entries. There are front doorbells that can record when the button is pushed, data cabling so you can network throughout your home, and security cameras so you can lie in bed and see what's going on outside. If you are away on holidays or overseas,

you can log on and view your property at any time relatively cheaply.

### Mechanical ventilation

Mechanical ventilation is now required for all exhaust fans on the ground floor. No longer can these exhausts only expel into the floor joists, they must be vented to the exterior of the building. You may want to exhaust your range hood externally, so no cooking smells are inside your home

### Tie-down materials

The tie-down rods, washers and nuts are supplied by the builder, not the tradies or suppliers. It is best to use galvanised as opposed to zinc-coated rods.

### Onsite toilet

Under occupational health and safety regulations, your building site must provide for a toilet and access to water for drinking and hand cleaning. You also need to provide shelter for tradies to have breaks.

### Appliances and tapware

Both of these products are purchased off the shelf. Your appliances can have up to fifteen years' warranty, depending on the brand of product you choose which ultimately depends on your budget.

Tap-ware must be approved Water-Mark by Standards Australia. Many importers are bringing in cheap Chinese products, although even some of the top standard fittings are also made in China. I prefer companies such as Hansa which manufacture in China with ceramic components that are made in Germany. These products come with a 15-year warranty.

### Paint and painters

Probably the most important job is the finish that can be seen by everyone. Firstly, it is good practice to undercoat the ceilings in the wet areas or the paint will eventually peel and flake off, because steam causes moisture to get behind the paint. The ceilings should be back-rolled as this allows for touch-ups later. The best paint work is a three-coat system on all walls and woodwork which includes doors, architraves and skirting boards. The first coat is an undercoat followed by two coats of paint. Before applying each coat, all surfaces must be sanded.

The large project builders pay very little for these trades and because the trades supply the paint, they water the paint down and purchase the cheapest paint they can. I purchase my own high-quality paint and make sure all tins are accounted for.

### **Plumber**

The plumber is much like the electrician as they are both required throughout the whole building project. Some plumbers do not back-fill pipes with sand. Sand must be used to stop pipes from breaking due to ground movement, and the pipes must be glued using a primer first before using the glue. Many plumbers do not do this.

Once all roughens are complete (pipes within the house), they need to be pressure tested to ensure there are no leaks. Plumbers must make sure at fit-off stage to use mats for their tools and ensure they do not scratch finished benches or floors.

### **Render**

The external render and paint should be completed by the same people, then there are no excuses over the quality of the work. The soffits (eaves) also need to be painted by the same people. It is often easier to advise the renderer to be responsible for all external rendering and painting, except for the front door.

Ensure all windows are covered and protected. If any cement render is accidentally placed on glass, make sure the renderer does not try to wipe it clean. This will result in scratching the glass. The cleaners will use a hydrochloric acid to remove any concrete from the windows.

### **Scaffold**

This is a necessary expense that is compulsory and required for any height greater than 2.8 metres. Don't rely on or allow tradesmen to use self-made scaffold. The fines if caught are expensive, and if your building site is deemed unsafe it will be closed down until you comply.

### **Shower screens and mirrors**

Shower screens and mirrors are measured once the tiler is finished. You have many choices from frameless, semi-frameless and glass-panelled shower screens. Mirrors also come in all shapes and sizes. Trends are always changing and the only limitation is your imagination and budget.

### **Silicone**

It is good practice and better quality to apply a colour-matched silicone to all tiled areas around the edges and internal corners, especially in the shower cubicles. This is not common practice for the project builders due to the expense.

### **Stairs**

The stair manufacturer is generally a specialist like the cabinet maker and will have a display office to show you the varying types of timbers available, including styles and combinations of materials.

### **Steel**

It is important to never use old second-hand rusting steel. This could affect the structural integrity of your home.

### **Security**

The building site must be kept safe at all times, and one way to do so is to implement adequate security. This can be achieved by a removable steel fence around your lot and ensure all windows and doors are locked at the end of each day. This will prevent wilful damage and theft.

### **Surveyor**

The surveyor is one of the first professionals to work on your site. The surveyor will mark out your house on your land. The concreter will then follow those marks to dig your footings. The surveyor will also mark out the contour lines on your block. If you have not received a copy from the land developer, the contour plans are required for the architect or draftsman.

### **Termite barriers**

The termite barrier is done in two stages - Part A and Part B. The Part A is the termite cover placed over all plumbing penetrations before the concrete slab is poured. The Part B termite barrier has many different types of applications, although this is to protect the exterior of the home from termite entry.

It is important not to place garden beds too close to your home and it is vital to never cover the weep holes. The weep holes are the narrow openings near the bottom of the external walls.

### **Tiler**

The tiler must be qualified. There are too many tradies saying they are qualified, yet they have no idea what they are doing. The tiler is a finishing trade and you can't afford to have your lovely home ruined by a poor tiling job.

The setting out of the tiles is the most important stage. The use of good quality rubber glue will also give you more flexibility when allowing for movement. You don't want tiles cracking while your home settles over the first few years.

The wet areas can be problematic. Tilers must allow adequate fall to drains or you will have pooling occur in large showers. When fully tiling bathrooms, it is best to leave the cornice off until the tiler is finished. The plasterer will return and place the cornice, this will provide a better finish.

### **Tip fees**

Tip fees have virtually tripled over the past few years. It is critical and good practice to minimise waste. As discussed earlier, worksites must be kept clean and tidy.



### Trusses and Timber

Many suppliers are competing on price, and unfortunately corners are being cut. Many window heads that should be hardwood or LVLs (laminated veneer lumber) are being compromised by some suppliers who are using F5 timber that is sagging and causing costly repairs.

Timber floor joists are also being compromised. You will feel a bouncing on your floors if the integrity of your floor system is compromised. I would upgrade to 300mm floor joists, so the plumbing drainage can be hidden in the floor space. This negates the need for ugly and expensive bulk heads.

The quality of your timber is also dependant on your budget. The most commonly used timber by the project builders is pine. The next step up is T2. This timber is green/blue in colour and has a protective outer barrier, although once cut the termites can enter the timber from the cut end. The preferred timber is H2, which is treated and kilned twice so the termite treatment has penetrated throughout the timber. Steel frames are becoming more popular, although specialist installers are required as the tools are not carried by general carpenters. I use both steel & timber frames & trusses.

### Water Tanks and Pumps

Water tanks and pumps are no longer required in Queensland, since state legislation was amended in early 2013. If you would like to be more self-sufficient and are concerned with rising water costs, water tanks can still be installed.

The purpose of the water tank is to capture the rain water from your roof and store the water to be used for your toilets, outside taps and laundry. I am reluctant to advise tank water for laundry use as the water is too hard and most detergents do not work efficiently.

### Waterproofing

This is one of the top five defects to occur in the QBCC defect list. Nothing is worse than having a ceiling damaged because the shower above has a leak. Fortunately, after 22 years in the building industry, I have had the same water-proofer and we have never had a leak.

### Windows

There are many window manufactures and they all offer manufacturing and delivery to site. All manufacturers must comply with Australian standards.

The extrusion aluminium frames will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. The choice of glass also varies from energy efficient "E" glass, clear glass, grey glass and tinted glass and can be made for both domestic and commercial applications. Yes, you can put commercial grade windows and doors in your domestic house if you wish.

### Window Coverings

There are many wholesale manufacturers that will come out and measure and consult with you. This will help you decide from the large variety of window coverings available.

Due to our large buying power and long-term relationships with our tradies and suppliers, we will always buy much cheaper than the owner-builder. If you are looking at either building or renovating, give us a call on 1300 55 25 03.

As you can see, there are many tradies and suppliers to co-ordinate, along with a broad range of components that go into the construction of your new home.

If you have any questions regarding new homes, please contact me at Kline Homes on [sales@klinehomes.com.au](mailto:sales@klinehomes.com.au)

For any information on renovating and extensions, office refurbishment or body corporate rectification works please contact me at Kline Construction and Developments on [enquiries@klineconstruction.com.au](mailto:enquiries@klineconstruction.com.au)