building cities for tomorrow

VAKAI



ON PAGE 12

SHOULD YOU BUILD USING RELATIVES WHEN IN THE DIASPORA?

ON PAGE 16



ROOF MATERIALS

ON PAGE 18



SMART HOMES NOW GAINING POPULARITY

ON PAGE 36



RENEWABLE ENERGY SAVING ENERGY IN HOMES





CONTENT INDEX



PEBBLES IN LANDSCAPING

1 O DOUBLE STOREY REVOLUTION

In the past decade in Zimbabwe we have seen more multiple storey homes.

1 D BUILDING FROM THE DIASPORA

Should relatives be trusted to build your home whilst you work in the diaspora?

14 PAINTING CONSIDERATIONS

What to consider when you want to paint your finished building well.



ROOFING MATERIALS

20 STEELREINFORCEMENT

Reinforcement with steel can ensure buildings that are mechanically strong.

22 BUILDING MATERIAL QUALITY

A key priority to lasting infrastructure.

23 SELECTING THE RIGHT SITE

What to consider when looking for a site for your construction project.

Monitoring Contractors is a key enabler of saving costs - Trust is a virtue of humanity, but when it comes to money - everyone is fallible. Therefore, monitoring contractors is an imperative for successful building projects. See page 26



SMART HOMES

28 ALUMINIUM

Construction material gains Popularity and application.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SAVING ENERGY IN NEW HOMES

How are you going to power your home?

32 BEWARE OF CEILING MOULDS

Moulds can destroy other materials such as paint, wood and also pose health hazards.



KITCHEN STYLES

33 AIRVENTS

Your gateway to ambiance and Indoor air quality.

34 WOODEN FLOOR DECKING FOR YOUR PERGOLA

A common solution, to create a nice ambience.

35 DOOR HANDLES

The modern day house is now taking door handles seriously.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor-in-Chief

Tawanda Collins Muzamwese

Design and Layout

Opus Haus (Pvt) Ltd

Contributors

Tawanda Collins Muzamwese Calvin Manika Innocent Nhire

Photography

Jairos Nzvimba, Green Records Company

DISCLAIMER

The editorial team tries to ensure accuracy of information presented in the publication. However, the publication is not liable for any loss, damage or inconveniences arising as a result of using information contained herein. The information presented by the contributors represents their personal opinion. Vakai Magazine and the Toxiconsol Consultancy Group will not be legally liable to any loss arising as a result of reliance on information contained therein.

Reproduction of content without prior permission is strictly prohibited. All Rights reserved © 2024

The Vakai Magazine is a publication of the Toxiconsol Consulting Group. All Rights Inc © 2024 zimgreengazete@gmail.com +263773472697





COVER ILLUSTRATION

This cover shows an example of a modern pergola.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to Issue 4 of Vakai Magazine, the publication which gives you modern tips of building your dream house. In this issue we talk about the need to monitor contractors as a way of guaranteeing quality of the resultant building structures. We also delve into roofing material and its paramount importance to the success of any building project. The current issue urges you to consider quality in everything you do for your building project.

On another note we explore various factors to consider for your paint job. It could be the weather situation in your area, taste, aesthetic look and durability — don't budge when it comes to painting. In addition, use experienced painters. The damage will last for a long time if painting is done by pretenders.



The issue explores diaspora remittances for building purposes. Whereas, thousands have managed to build from the diaspora through sending money to loved ones, back home, a couple of others have had unpleasant experiences. Always tread with care, even when it comes to relatives and friends. Prevent losing your multi-year savings to the people whom you trust. Temptation has no age.

I urge you to take seriously your kitchen, in line with the emerging trends of the kitchen design. Go for style, durability and sophistication. Aluminium usage seems to be increasing for many aspects such as window frames, shopfronts etc.

A craze for double and multiple storey buildings also seems to be gripping the country of Zimbabwe, and we are seeing prospective home-owners achieving structures which are unprecedented. What is driving this frenzy and how can this inspiration be used to inspire others?

From the Editor-in-Chief's desk, I implore you to finish projects to the level of landscaping effectively. Try out stone pebbles of different kinds, for your walkways, footpaths, flower beds, potted plants and deadwood seedbeds. Stone pebbles can help you attain the stunning look for your precincts. I also urge those who have outdoor decks, verandas and pergolas – to try out wooden decking. Its durability and aesthetic finish, makes it an obvious choice in the harsh weather.

As a publication, we appreciate those who have taken heed of our call to advertise in the magazine and also follow our social media channels. Vakai! Together we will build.

Tawanda Collins Muzamwese

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PEBBLES AND THEIR USE IN LANDSCAPING

Having a beautiful superstructure is not the end of the journey, when building your home. It is necessary to invest more time and resources in creating an ambient environment on the precincts of the property. Landscaping ideas have emerged hard and fast in the last few years. Greater emphasis is being put on landscaping using pebbles of different colours. White pebbles, black, brown, blue and rustic are existing on the market.

Pebbles can be put in flower beds on walkways which have stepping concrete blocks. Pebbles can be placed around paving blocks either around them or in between the series. This applies to both stepping blocks which are procured elsewhere or those which are moulded in situ.

Pebbles can be let loose or be cemented together using binding materials such as cement or calciferous plasters. It depends on whether the owner requires permanence or also a temporary set-up.

Pebbles can be designed and laid out in a fashion that mimics water flow from a container. This creates a visual sensation for those who marvel to see.

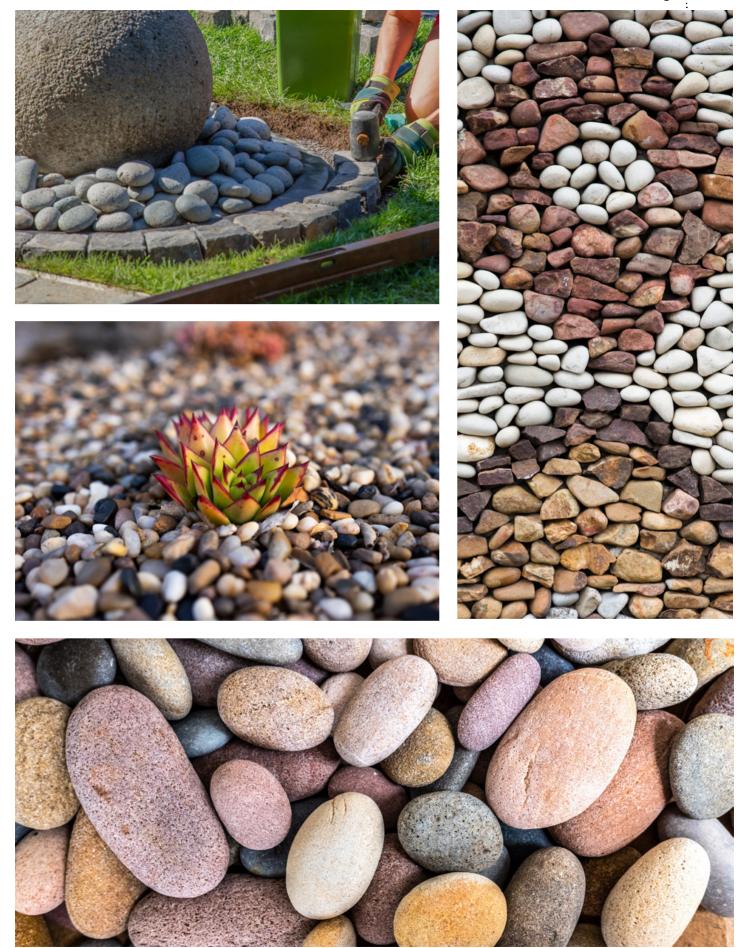
The usage of pebbles on walkways alongside green lawns, requires people with the art of doing the work and laying them out. Large pebbles and small pebbles are both effective in creating the visual aesthetic transformation of a yard.

Some pebbles are also placed in metal frames

in order to create gabions. These have a beautiful visual effect, whilst also acting as good mechanisms for impeding erosion.

Pebbles can simply be put into flower pots on top of the soil column. If you have a deep flower pot, put soil from the bottom to almost the top and place a thin layer of pebbles on top of the soil. Even as you water the container, water effectively passes through the pebbles, to the roots of the plants which re underneath the layer of the pebbles.

For those who have fancy imagination, it is also possible to grow plants on deadwood. Carve space within the bark of deadwood and place soil or substrate. After the solid layer, place a thin layer of pebbles. Plants will grow using the nutrition from the soil placed in the deadwood, whilst the pebbles maintain an aesthetic look. For succulents and desert adapted plants, they can thrive alongside soil and pebbles. Why not transform your home by learning the art of pebbles in the walkway, garden, pathways, potted plants and fountains? With the use of pebble rock, you will never go wrong in the pursuit of world class landscaping.



DOUBLE STORERY REVOLUTION GRIPS ZIMBABWE

For some, it was a marvel to watch in movies and there was not even a distant imagination of owning the DOUBLE STOREY. However, in the past decade, we have seen an increasing number of people going for multiple storey buildings, mostly two, but at times three in some cases. The time has come for the aspiring Zimbabweans to try out building forms that were not popular.





It is very evident that we have seen greater boldness by prospective home-owners who are challenging themselves to do difficult projects. Complemented by competent architects, engineers and building contractors and individuals with greater focus, it is very clear that the country is headed in a positive direction as far as infrastructure is concerned.

The major difference between multiple storey buildings and the conventional buildings that remain on the ground is that the double storey buildings will need to have decks and reinforcement with steel and concrete to separate the floors and maintain structural integrity.

Plans vary widely depending on the building style in the area, local regulations, general style of the architect and also size of family. The challenge of space is many areas can be addressed by going up, rather than going horizontal. There are of course many notions that the double storey seems to be a financial guzzler, but it may also be economical to suit your budget.



RELATIVES AND FRIENDS WHILST YOU WORK IN THE DIASPORA?

Multitudes of people have made the great trek into the diaspora in search for work and have made inroads in finding stable employment. There comes a time when one ponders about building back home. Because, you are located in a faraway country, the key question is how do you build when you are absent?

There are many possible options to build from the diaspora. The first option is to use a registered building contractor whom you have no relationship with. This comes at a cost which needs to be paid, but there is an element of professionalism and you can sue in case of loss.

Then there is also an option of sending money to a relative or friend so that they manage your project and build on your behalf. This is mainly based on trust that my relative or friend will not let me down, no matter what happens.

Some individuals have had the honour of just coming into a house that was well built by a relative whom they sent money over the years. However, there are those who have been swindled by their own relatives. Pictures were sent via email or WhatsApp, but they were for other people's sites. Money was spent and diverted for personal use. How do you then deal with this issue? Arrest the relative or friend or else bite the bullet and move on? People in the diaspora must think carefully before entrusting anyone with their hard earned cash, including relatives back home.

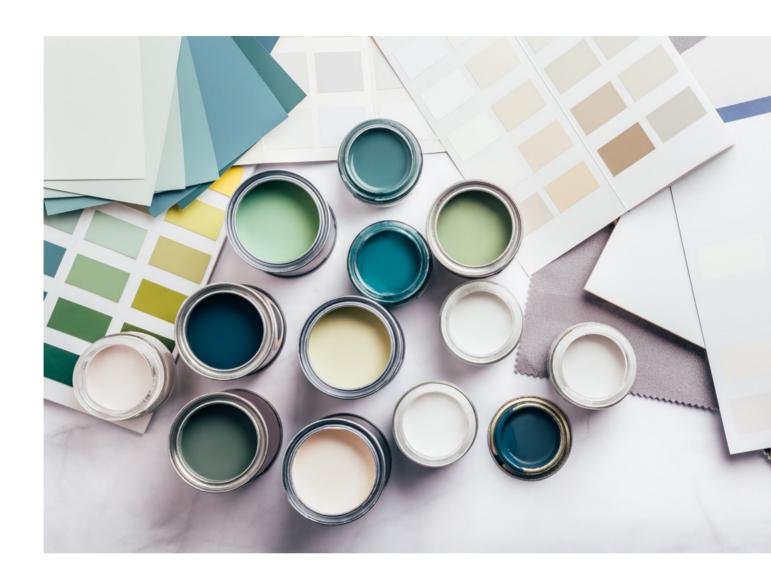
In selecting people, it is essential to choose individuals of high levels of integrity as well as those who have proven to manage building projects before. Also select people who are not desperate for cash as they will feast on your savings.

We may be relatives, but let's not pull each other down, by diverting building funds for personal use. It is better to build wherever you are than to send money back home and return to a bare ground, after your trusted relative or friend has vanished with cash. After all, these could be the same people who make fun out of your homelessness, when you make the great trek back home. At a certain point we will grow old and the energy is gone. All we will need is a place to rest our heads. As a result, choose wisely when you entrust someone to build for you whilst you toil in the diaspora.

BUILD WITH THE FUTURE IN MIND







CONSIDERATIONS

Painting a house is not a decision to be taken lightly, as it determines a lot of things with regard to your finished building. First of all, painting ensures that you get that aesthetic look, which you have been yearning for. It is possible to build a nice house, but spoil it with very bad paint job. Always consult experts who know the various paint hues, blends and shades.

Selecting the right paint should consider many factors including the following:

- Your preferred colours
- Individual expression
- The furniture and curtaining that you possess or plan to have
- Your preference for durability
- Weather conditions and its potential effect on durability
- Budget constraints
- Preferred quality standards

Selecting the wrong paint may result in wasting costs, sub-standard work and having to repeat the same work at your own cost. Some paints are water based, whilst some are oil based. Some are easy to wash, whereas some are not ideal for washing. If you have children who may make some of the paint dirty, then definitely you will require paint that can be easily cleaned. Remember that the appearance of paint when it is wet and when it is dry always varies – avoid surprises.



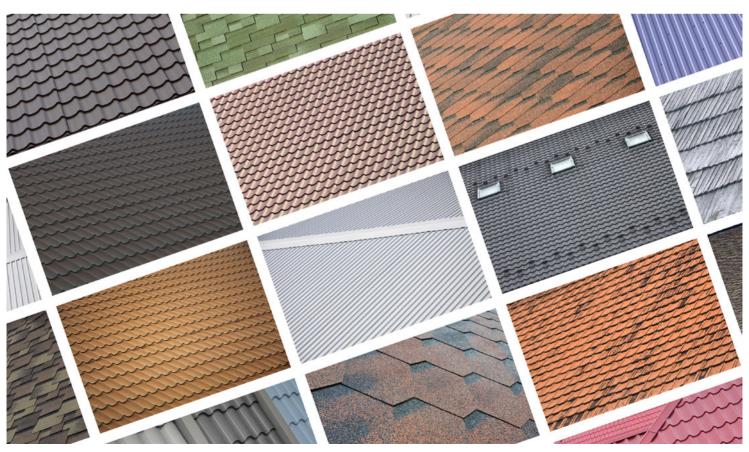
CHOOSING ROOFING MATERIALS THAT LAST

There is no unanimous decision when it comes to selection of roofing material. In many households roofing material is discussed when the stage of roofing arrives. However, roofing material should be considered as a part of the initial project planning phase.

Concrete Roof Tiles, IBR and Chromadek are some of the commonly used materials. Less commonly asbestos is used, but in many countries its use is now reduced. The decision of choosing roofing material should consider the durability of the material. It is essential to use roofing

materials that lasts for a long period of time without needing replacement. Many people have purchased roofing materials that resulted in leaks and damage to property. Notwithstanding the leaks and damage to property, there have been a number of injuries reported due to incidents arising from poor quality roofing.

Some consider the affordability and price. Yes, this is okay, but never compromise minimum quality standards. Compare prices and get the best deal. The aesthetic look of the roof is also another key aspect to consider in order to avoid your roof becoming an eyesore.





AGING HOMES

AN EYESORE IF LEFT WITHOUT MAINTENANCE

A house is meant to last for a long period of time, but without maintenance it can lose value quickly. Many people ignore maintaining homes.

This may result in the investment losing value or rather in some cases may result in defects that threaten safety of inhabitants.

To society, this simply becomes an eyesore and a thorn in the viewing flesh. Maintaining buildings should be routine activity that should be undertaken on a regular basis. Even if you have tenants in the property, periodic maintenance helps to preserve value. Always reserve a budget for building maintenance if you would like your property to last longer.



SMART HOMES GAIN POPULARITY



Many contemporary families are making their homes "smart homes". Moving away from traditional and physical controlled homes is a new phenomenon. Smart homes can be based on commands to open curtains and to switch gadgets automatically.

Some may have sensors of daylight and can also sense motion. It is also very possible to view your home from the phone using internet connected cameras. Controlling fridges, televisions and other key gadgets remotely has made life easy.



Both voice commands or non-vocal commands can all be used. The world is transforming with artificial intelligence (AI) and there is now less risk of wasting energy, water and being at the mercy of criminals. Consider the possibility to make a smart home.







WITH STEEL - A NECESSARY ENDEVOUR

There are building structures that will require reinforcement with steel in order to ensure that they are mechanically strong. Buildings that are based on pillars, beams and columns will definitely require steel reinforcement. Furthermore, those who build special foundations and in moist areas require steel reinforcement, lest the foundation and the structure at large develops structural cracks.

The need to save is the major killer of the idea of reinforcing with steel. Some prospective home-owners believe that they will save by not including steel on their building materials. But this is suicidal – both in the short and long term. If the engineer has recommended steel reinforcement, it must be undertaken to the book. It is not worth it to cut corners when it comes to the structural strength of your building. That being said, competent steel fixers are also needed in order to ensure effective steel fixing.



Builders should have higher levels of vigilance in order to ensure that the work is undertaken properly. In finalising the ring beam, steel is also required to ensure the strength of the structure, bringing it together and making sure that the structure can also withstand upper loads such as that of the roof.

The high cost of steel, makes many people want to avoid it. Therefore, many prospective home-owners dodge steelworks and prefer to replace with other alternatives or rather opt for less quantities of the prescribed steel. The end result includes decks which fall, foundations which sink in and collapsing ring beams.



building cities for tomorrow



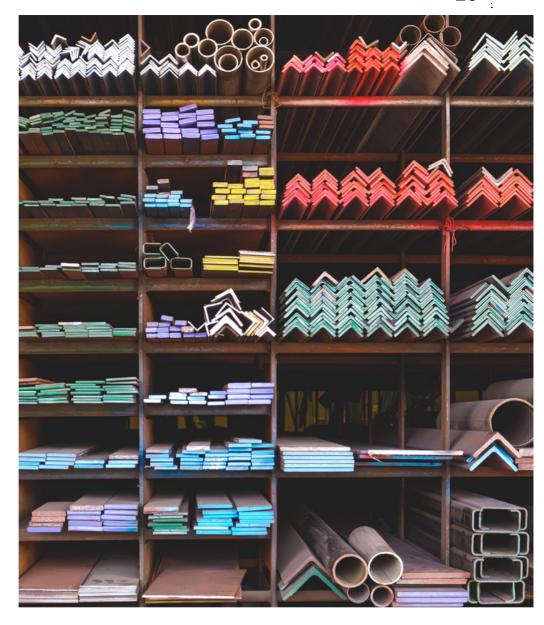
BUILDING MATERIAL QUALITY - A KEY PRIORITY TO LASTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Many people have regretted ever starting building projects, after experiencing unpleasant finishes to their homes. Chief amongst the reasons of frustration, is the poor quality that resulted. The desire for cheaper products, raw materials and inputs is a big threat to attaining lasting homes. Moreover, this is exacerbated by inspirational talk of "building with a lean budget". Whilst this is desirable, it is essential to look at the bigger picture and prioritise durability over poor quality cheap material.

Quality checks are very essential before procuring any building material. Products such as bricks, cement, timber, brick force, tiles, pavers, wall finishing plasters, river sand, pit sand and aluminium are amongst some of the most commonly used materials.

Some roofing tiles may have a high propensity to leak easily, whereas some bricks may wear out easily when exposed to moisture. Some people have bought very moist timber and their roofs ended up warping as well as leaking water into the building. All these can be due to ignoring quality of materials.

The urge to buy cheap products is also one of the leading reasons why many people lose their hard earned cash through buying sub-standard products. Furthermore, just allowing products to be incorporated into your structure without inspection of their quality is double tragedy. In some cases, the buyer will have to demolish the structure as it would have failed to meet inspection standards.





There are many strategies which can help to safeguard against sub-standard material reaching your site:

- Engage reputable suppliers and retailers of building material.
- Inspect goods on arrival at site.
- If in doubt take some products for testing.
- Work with reputable contractors or builders who have knowledge to distinguish between quality or substandard materials.
- Compare different suppliers who are traceable.
- Avoid buying under pressure.
- Do not rely on other people to buy building material on your behalf. If you do, keep tabs on them to guarantee quality control.
- Be vigilant of counterfeit products on the market.





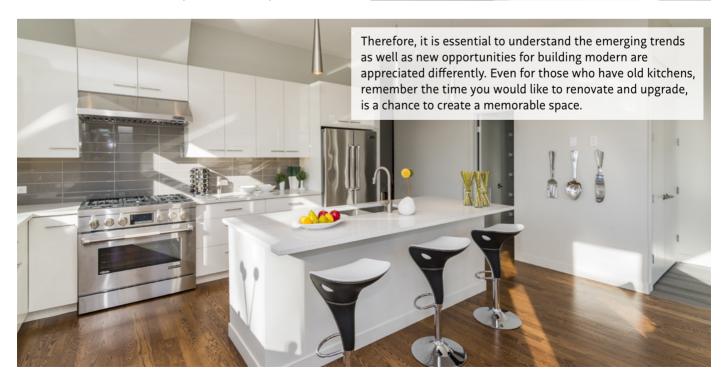
KITCHEN STYLES HIT TOP PRIORITY

After completing the building of your superstructure, one of the places where magic will happen is the kitchen. This is the place where all the delicious meals will be orchestrated. Therefore, it is worthwhile to invest in a stylish finish to your kitchen.

A number of issues have to be looked at, depending on your preferences. Some individuals are selecting kitchen cabinets which will enable them to house their beautiful cutlery and collection of kitchenware. To others, the design of the kitchen is a chance to install the modern stoves which are "built-in". A couple more people also prefer fume hoods to collect steam from the kitchen in order to avoid moulds.

Granite is becoming very much preferred when it comes to some of the kitchen finish, sinks, counters and the breakfast nooks. The mechanical strength of the granite makes it suitable for kitchen counters. Aluminium sinks still get preferred due to their costs, but at a much less rate of preference. Other prospective home-owners are also choosing resin. Automatic taps with sensors have become a common trend, for those who prefer to add sophistication.

The style of an individual cannot be forced onto another, but in the end; budget and style must converge in order to come up with desired outcomes. New spaces for refrigerators, toasters and dishwashers are also becoming a common trend in modern kitchens. One person's preference is another person's dislike.



MONITORING CONTRACTORS

- A KEY ANABLER OF SAVING COSTS

Trust is a virtue of humanity, but when it comes to money – everyone is fallible. Therefore, monitoring contractors is an imperative for successful building projects.

Some of the key issues that need serious consideration include:

- Supervising the quantities of materials used by contractors.
- Checking whether the right material has been delivered on site.
- Checking whether the declared competent staff have been brought on site instead of proxies.
- Monitoring swapping of products and being shown containers e.g. empty cement bags.
- Checking the quality of the work before being ordered to do rework by inspectors.
- Assessing the potential for theft of materials and undertaking stock-takes on site.







ALUMINIUM

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL GAINS POPULARITY AND APPLICATION

In the last two decades, many prospective home-owners have been moving away from traditional building materials anchored on well-known materials such as steel window frames or steel doors for balconies. Aluminium has recently been accepted as a popular choice for windows and shopfront doors.

With its ability to combine well with glass, aluminium is making serious in-roads amongst home builders. It is a lighter material than steel, whilst it maintains strength and rigidity all the same. It has greater aesthetic features and good appearance. It may be a matter of choice amongst individuals, but some have been overtaken by the bandwagon effect in pursuit of aluminium.

Some have touted it as the next big thing in construction design, whilst some consider it as a weaker material in comparison to the traditional forms of window frames. To others, it is essential to move with the times and style. More so, to others, it is a potential exposure to criminals due to weaker strength. Time will tell whether aluminium will last the mile. But as for now, it is ruling the roost.







ENERGY SAVING ENERGY IN NEW HOMES

Energy is a key enabler of socio-economic development the world over. For home-builders, after construction work is done, one of the questions that remain is how are you going to power your home.

Whilst many have relied on electricity for a long time, it is also installed at a cost and one needs to pay bills. Worse still, in other developments it is not yet available for connection. Therefore, renewable energy and in particular solar energy is proving to be an interesting option. There are individuals who are running their homes purely off grid and utilising solar systems.

Lighting, entertainment, internet, ironing and refrigeration are easily being supported by solar energy. These of course depend on the sizing of the solar system. The advent of solar lights also makes it possible to illuminate yards and premises to the highest level of illuminance.



Solar energy is cheaper in the long run and you don't need to pay bills, although there are high upfront costs. The technology also helps to reduce emissions to the environment. Investing in good batteries is essential for guaranteeing your storage, whereas choosing the right panels can enable you to generate even in cloudy conditions, especially with the new generation of panels. Say goodbye to power cuts by going solar today. GO SOLAR - GO GREEN.





BEWARE OF CEILING MOULDS





Building a house is never meant to be a nightmare. It is rather an act of courage and rewarding feat. Therefore, once occupied the rendezvous should give comfort and enjoyment to the inhabitants.

Accumulation of moulds is one of the most undesirable issues for homeowners. Moulds can destroy other materials such as paint, wood and also pose health hazards.

Several causes exist, with regard to the onset of mould. Firstly, moulds can emanate from wet timber and wet ceiling boards. Installing these and even painting them will not solve the issue. The mould will still show even after painting the ceiling boards

Leaking roofs are also another source of moulds in the modern homes. Therefore, having the right installation of your roof is essential, especially the tiling or installation of other materials such as IBR or chromadek. If you prefer asbestos (although less common these days) just ensure that the joints are well connected and overlapping.

Unfinished repairs on roofs such as those which involve installation of satellite dishes, electrical repairs and other works which happen in the ceiling are a source of moulds. Some technicians forget to replace the tiles that they removed for access, whereas others do not properly fit them back. It is the duty of the homeowner to ensure that they are replaced properly. If contractors work on your property, supervise them.

Steam from bathrooms and kitchens without ventilation can gradually facilitate build-up of mould in the house. Whilst opening windows provides temporary relief, the design of kitchens and bathrooms should always consider steam and how it should be captured and directed outwards. Condensation of steam is destroying the aesthetic of many homes.

The onset of moulds in homes has health impacts and can trigger respiratory diseases. In addition, some individuals may experience breathing difficulties in damp environments.



Air vents have existed since time immemorial. They continue to evolve from cement based, PVC based, plastic based and also using new materials.

They facilitate free air circulation in the home to add an aura of freshness. The air vent also prevents dampness and accumulation of moisture in your house. In certain geographical jurisdictions they come in the form of air bricks. But all of these have the same purpose.

Fresh air also prevents the build-up of odours, chemicals and humidity by allowing free circulation of air in the building. They may come in different aesthetic styles and modes of finish. All the same, the purpose is similar, to ensure that we add freshness in the home and at the same time ambience of the indoor air quality.

There are a number of countries which have regulated the standards of indoor air quality. These stipulate the minimum concentration and maximum concentration of certain air quality parameters. Often, such regulations are implemented with a consideration of the health of the inhabitants in mind.

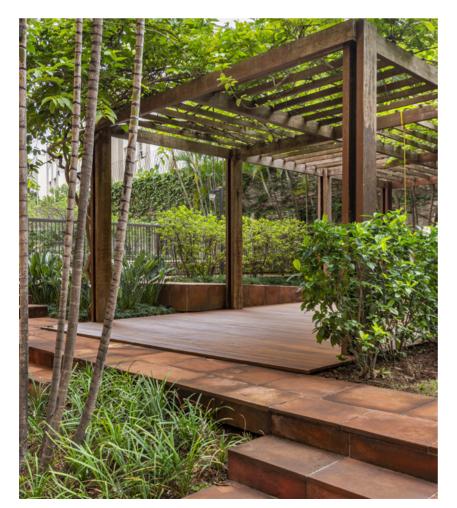




WOODEN FLOOR DECKING FOR YOUR PERGOLA

Outdoor pergolas have become a common phenomenon in both developed and developing countries. Some of them are covered by a roof, whereas some of them are not covered by a roof. In both circumstances wooded decking floors have become a common solution, to create an atmosphere of ambience.

Wooden floor deck of a pergola should be constructed using decking wood resistant of weather conditions such as extreme rainfall and temperature. If deck is on the ground, make sure you treat the ground with termite poison in order to prevent the onset of termite destruction of the wooden deck material.





If you decide to elevate your deck, ensure strong structural material such as steel, supports the wood, underneath the structure. Outdoor decked verandas, balconies and pergolas, can be equipped with outdoor chairs and shades, to create an atmosphere of imbibing fresh air. When it rains, strong, treated wooden deck materials withstands the harsh weather.







DOOR HANDLES

- A HIDDEN AMBIANCE

Door handles have greatly evolved in the last few decades. For what many considered to be an issue of peripheral importance, the modern day house is now taking door handles seriously.

The door handle is first and foremost a security measure, which ensures that the door is not vulnerable to be opened will-nilly. Ideally having a good lock is a key icing on the cake for the door handle.

From another angle, door handles also present unique style for the users. It is a very big statement to have a door handle that is made of exquisite materials, but also one which is functional. In most houses door handles are the point of contact that we can touch, when we need to enter the house. This means that they are very essential and they demonstrate a key first impression. Other property developers, homeowners, builders and tenants alike prefer door knobs. Whatever your preference is, the truth is that door handles have been under documented and yet they occupy a very essential place in the ambiance and glamour of the home.





building cities for tomorrow

DRAINAGE - A FORGOTTEN ESSENTIAL

Many homeowners have regretted owning a home due to failing to plan for drainage. In the tropics, rainfall will always come in the rainy season. From the superstructure, it is essential to decide how water will drain. This may entail some work with the installation of gutters. For single storey buildings it may be very straightforward. However, when buildings start having double storey set-up, there is even a more urgent need for drainage from the upper sections of the building. Many houses experience roof leaks or other forms of leaks due to poor planning for drainage.

Besides draining from the building, some yards are soggy and flooded during the rainy season. It is as a result of failure to have drains or landscaping that channels water away from the yard. Flooded waters will result in damage to foundations and also water rising through the paint and forming films of water waves as well as moulds.

If the yard is not well drained and has pockets of stagnant water, this may become a haven for the breeding of mosquitos and also promote the onset of malaria and other water borne diseases. Run-off must quickly flow and leave the yard, into drains or other destination where it is channelled. If drains or drainpipes are installed, these need to be monitored, maintained and repaired periodically.

Some families are already doing rainwater harvesting, to ensure that the rainwater is collected for better use. This water could be used later on for other purposes such as watering the gardens and laundry.



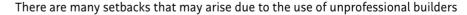






builders

Many people have found themselves in big trouble after using unprofessional builders. The need to secure cheap solutions to construction projects often results in many people choosing low cost builders including those who are unregistered and incompetent.





- [1] Poor quality work
- [2] Delayed project delivery
- [3] Risk of rework
- [4] Poor safety practices
- [5] Lack of attention to detail
- [6] Inflation of quotations and cost estimates for materials
- [7] Poor labour practices
- [8] Failing building inspections
- [9] Risk of abuse by the builders including physical attacks
- [10] Reputational risk due to the conduct of builders on site



opusfoto

IN SUPPORT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



bespoke photography solutions

P: +263772494373/ +263771931247 E: opus.fotografi@gmail.com



building cities for tomorrow