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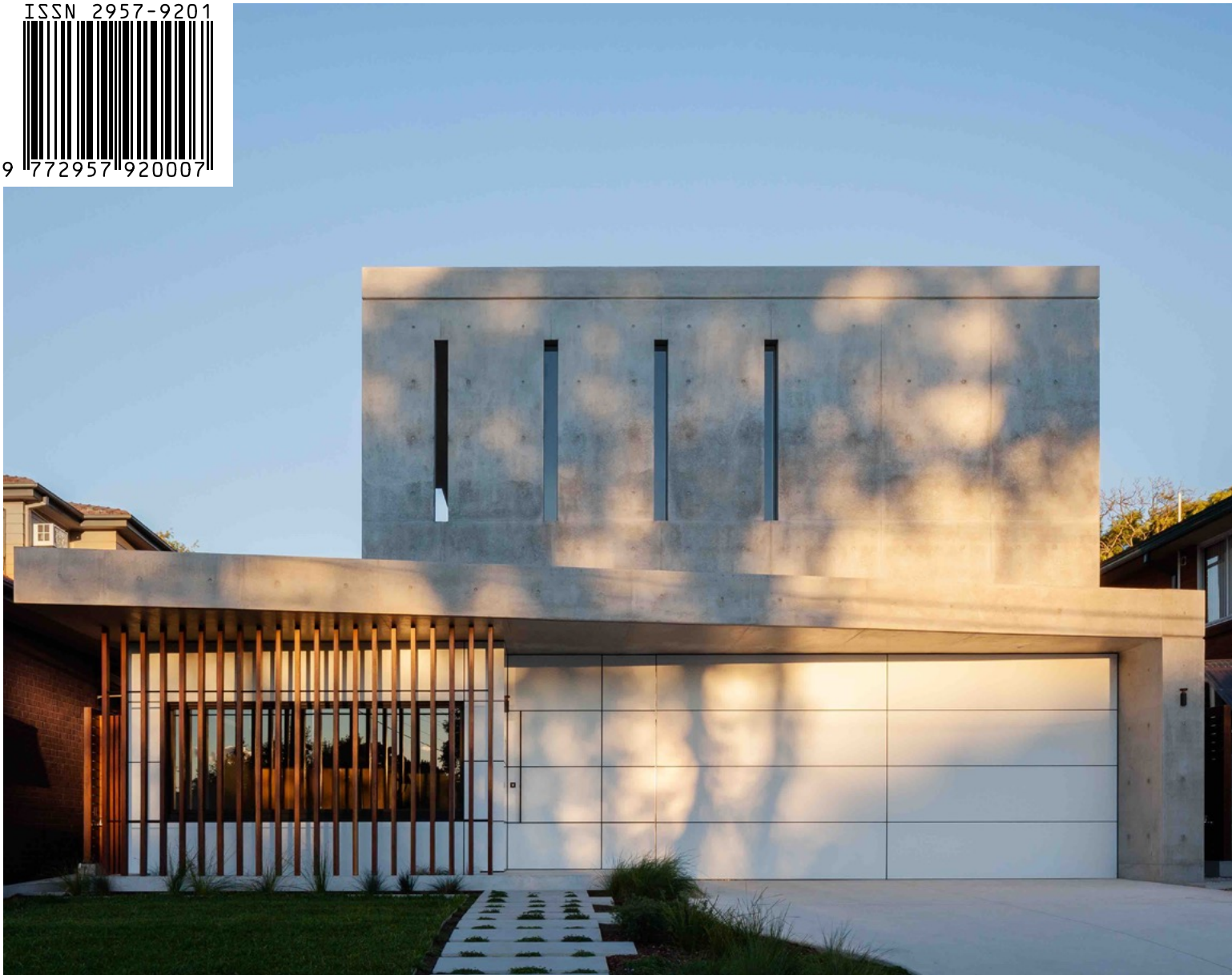
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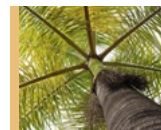
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DREAM HOUSE

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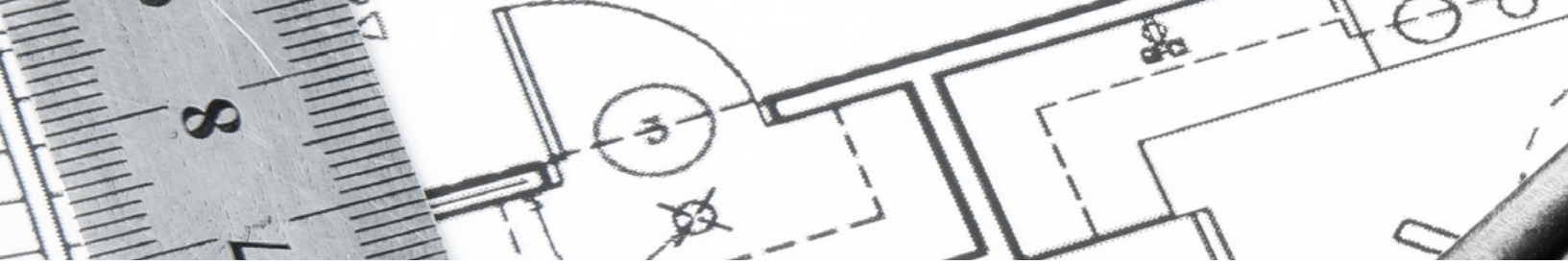


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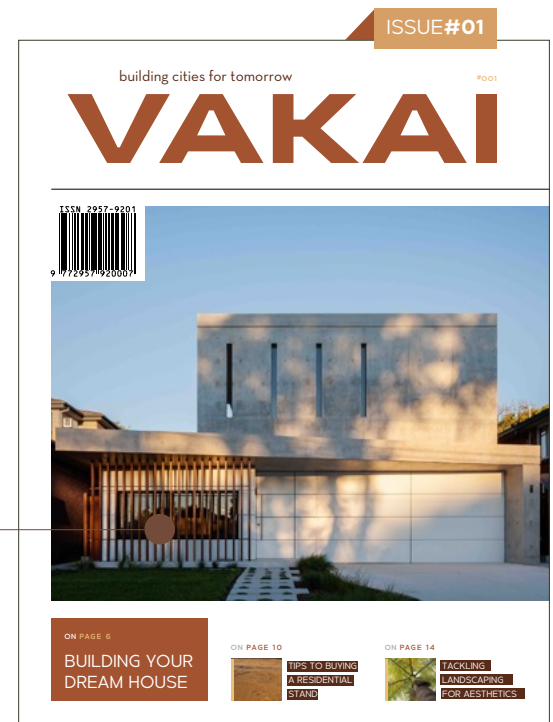
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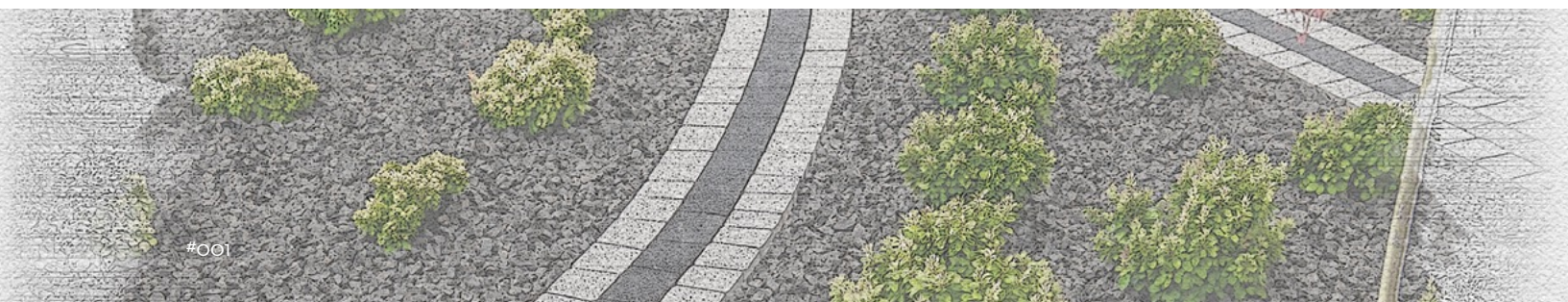
building cities for tomorrow

VAKAI



COVER ILLUSTRATION

The classic brick and concrete house is a staple in Zimbabwean house building, with strong unshakeable foundations. These modern house shapes are fast becoming popular too.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Vakai! Indeed, let's build. Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Vakai Magazine where we give you cutting edge tips on building your dream house. From selecting contractors, managing environmental and safety issues at your construction sites; to how you can safely dispose waste, we provide you with key guidance.

The Zimbabwean individual is so much engrossed in the passion of building and securing their future, whilst at the same time locking economic value. However, for first timers, this can be very daunting due to dishonest builders, poor planning, inadequate resources and lack of experience. Through this magazine we take you through all the key stages of having your dream house fully fledged until it is ready for occupation.

Rushing to finish is not a solution. In this magazine we explore possible finishing approaches which can enhance your house to become world class. We are not in the neo-lithic era - but in the new millennium.

In this first particular issue we give tips about your dream house. We also delve into the issues related to risk of buying stands from bogus property developers. Let's guard our hard earned cash.

Choosing a contractor is not easy for many. But we provide cutting edge information on how to select the ideal contractor. In addition, we give guidance on contractor management.

Landscaping is necessary to avoid your newly-built home to be characterised by desert environs! Bring freshness and nature to your own doorstep through hiring professional landscapers and you will never regret.

Waterproofing your deck is also a key issue that we cover in this inaugural issue. Many have regretted building double storey buildings due to the fact that there is no waterproofing consideration for open decks. The result has been leaking decks right into the house. We explore torch-on waterproofing and other waterproofing conditions which you can consider for your home.

This issue considers the essential importance of compaction to the long term success and longevity of a building.





Switching on the television, could lead to surprises when you marvel at some of the world class houses that people are building. It is becoming a reality to many people that you can build that dream house with a modern feel and touch.

The key steps to consider are your needs. Are you building the house for your family or this is for your real estate empire to solicit tenants? Depending on your needs, it is essential to have an idea of the type of structure that you desire. Modern trends tend to be inclined towards open plan set-ups but others prefer their privacy with conventional rooms.

Get a good architect and facilitate development of house plans that suit you. This stage is critical as it will influence the whole project. Do not develop a plan which you will later regret.

Upon approvals, choose a builder or contractor to undertake the construction. From the stage of setting out to completion every step matters. Decide if you will manage the project on your own or you will outsource. Supervision is critical in the quest for a dream house. Otherwise costly mistakes can be made.

Critical stages like footing, roofing and finishing cannot be done casually. For individuals and small enterprises every cent counts. The last thing one would want is to have materials being stolen or overstated by builders. Undertaking regular checks on sites could be very incisive.

Finishing the superstructure alone is not enough. Finishing stages such as plastering, wall finishing, skimming and painting, add sophistication and a modern feel to the structure.

In order to get a modern dream house, get information through many sources. Currently internet searches, joining construction groups, attending construction shows and visiting other construction projects could be key strategies to enhance your appreciation. Bathrooms are becoming heaven on earth with new glamorous materials. From ceramic to diplomatic toilets, the range is becoming widely accepted.



CHOOSING A CONTRACTOR



When building infrastructure, many people consider hiring a contractor to do the construction on their behalf. Contractors can ease the burden greatly by taking charge of the hard labour of building.

However, a number of individuals have been disappointed by the conduct of selected contractors who have failed to deliver high quality products. Weak controls have also resulted in loss of materials to contractors who may have dishonest employees.



**WHEN CHOOSING A CONTRACTOR, IT IS NECESSARY
TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING 10 GOLDEN RULES:**

10 GOLDEN RULES OF CHOOSING A BUILDING CONTRACTOR

1. Never choose a contractor without checking previous work and doing site visits
2. Compare contractors in terms of price, quality, safety record and delivery time
3. Avoid contractors who have never built anything, even if they promise to deliver
4. Carry out reference checks on all contractors
5. Check the competence and qualifications of their contractor personnel
6. If contractor will need plant and equipment, check the availability of such equipment. Ignoring this will make charges for plant hire skyrocket on your side.
7. Consider specialists in certain building trades e.g. tiling, painting, bricklaying. Be careful with contractors who claim to do everything.
8. Choose a contractor who is able to read building plans accurately and is able to translate the information on the plan to the ground.
9. Consider contractors who are members of professional associations and are reputable in the industry.
10. Go for experience when choosing a contractor, not necessarily the cheapest. Some contractors are cheap but have no experience, hence produce sub-standard infrastructure.



BUYING A RESIDENTIAL STAND – AVOID BOGUS FIRMS

For most millennials, the choice of building vs buying is getting skewed towards building. As a result, most people favour buying their own stands and then building a house of their own choice. However, the inherent risk of buying land which is in dispute, contested or from a seller who does not have the mandate to sell is modern reality. What is meant to become a dream purchase can become a nightmare for life.

Before you buy a stand, consider due diligence, research and undertake critical checks. These checks are necessary in order to preserve value. Not all stands which are for sale are genuine. Criminals are also on the prowl to hoodwink unsuspecting buyers into being duped. At minimum, consider the following issues if you would like to undertake a hustle-free purchase of your stand.

- a) **Ask for Proof of Ownership e.g. Title Deeds for Private Property or Valid Offer Letters from government to the developer depending on the regulations of your country.**
- b) **Use reputable property developers**
- c) **Engage a lawyer to check with the Deeds Office whether or not the stand exists in the Registry of Deeds**
- d) **Confirm whether the seller has the mandate to sell**
- e) **Undertake a site visit to the actual site. Many people have bought stands only to know someone has already build on the same spot. Avoid purchasing stands without visiting the sites, lest you will discover someone occupying the land.**
- f) **Do not be rushed into a transaction before doing your due diligence**
- g) **Put all agreements in writing to ensure that there is a paper trail of all transactions**
- h) **Consider if Subdivision Permit, Development Permit, Dispensation Certificate and Certificate of Compliance has been issued just in case you have an intention to build without hustles.**
- i) **Do not be persuaded into making very quick agreements without cross-checking these.**

Due to the fact that raising money to buy a stand is not that easy, it becomes very painful to lose the hard earned cash. Scammers are on the prowl each and every day and we need to be properly advised and undertake due diligence.

Double sales are on the rise, fictitious stands and those that are occupied present intricate situations which buyers can fall into. If you are unsure, do not commit to the agreement.



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THE VALUE OF WATERPROOFING



With the rise of technology and exposure, more sophisticated house designs are coming to the fore. A considerable number of individuals and firms are building multiple storey buildings with balconies, decks, basements as well as single storey houses with flat roofs. The number of houses that are constructing decks is also increasing and many individuals are trying flat concrete roofs. However, decks, basements and rooftops made of concrete require water proofing in order to prevent water entering into the building through the deck, walls or otherwise.

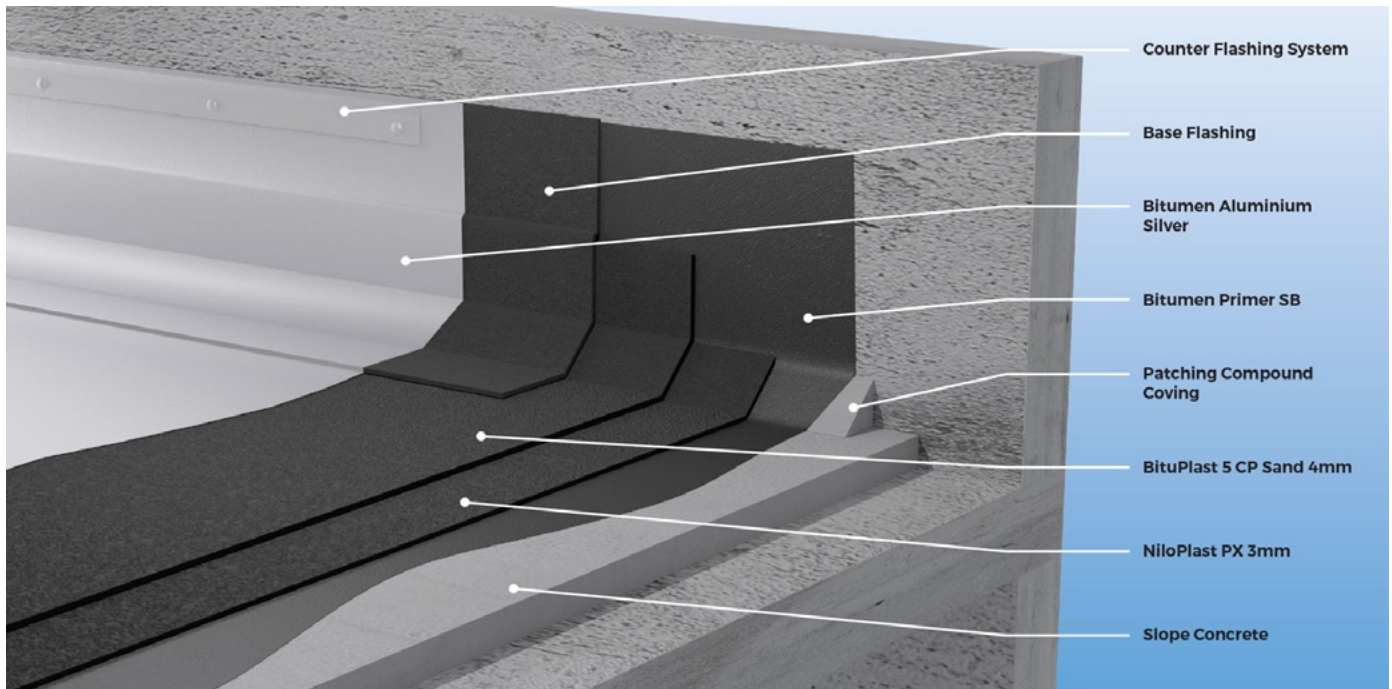
Waterproofing can assist in preventing water from entering the structure. It is a process of making objects and structures water resistant. If you build a house that has a balcony, it is most likely that the balcony may need waterproofing to avoid moisture entering the building.

The least of things that one would be expecting is mouldy ceilings or else wetness around the inside walls of the house.

One of the most popular methods of waterproofing is torch-on waterproofing, which uses a method of membrane polymers and bitumen which are heated onto the surface to create an impervious layer. Due to its effectiveness, torch-on waterproofing can easily restrict movement and permeability of water into a structure.

The approach to waterproofing will differ depending on the structure and orientation of the building. What is key is ensuring that you get waterproofing experts before the building is damaged.





LANDSCAPING FOR AESTHETICS

Now that the dream house has been built, a number of people struggle on what is the best way to landscape their property. Landscaping brings a lot of ambiance onto the site and ensures that your house becomes a home.

Do it Yourself (DIY) is an alternative that is cheap. Alternatively hiring landscaping experts can also facilitate a fast track method of landscaping as well as one which is also advanced.

Lawns should be considered, flowers, trees, rockeries, footpaths and water fountains. These days there is a possibility of buying instant lawn which will just be spread onto the ground and proliferate immediately. Why decide to live in a desert at your own premises when instant lawn is available for sale. Instant lawn saves you the hustle of going around trying to get seedlings and also preparing tender lawn from seeds. However, instant lawn can be a bit

costly for those who do not have a budget. Therefore, it is necessary to also do your landscaping with a good budget.

A good water supply for your home is necessary if you plan to create a garden of Eden in your own backyard. Water for irrigating plants is needed. Not all sites can have the luxury especially in the age of climate change.

If you have a borehole it will be easier to water some of the plants. Landscaping can also be done without major plants. This could be in the form of gabions, rockeries, terraces and rock cages.

Use the resources that you have in your journey towards landscaping. It may transform the aesthetic look of your property and even increase its value. When people are buying houses or properties, they also consider the outside environment.



A KEY ELEMENT TO CONSIDER IS ESTABLISHING GOOD VEGETATION ON SITE AND MANAGING ITS GROWTH

Palms are very much popular in the landscaping business and they also play a part in modifying the landscape. Building a dream house is not complete until you add a touch of landscaping. Begin to green your property today!



GREEN BUILDINGS AND BUILDING MATERIALS WHICH PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable Building and construction is one of the key strategies for fighting climate change. Buildings and construction sector contribute to 50% of global greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, buildings must be constructed in a manner that saves energy, reduces water intensity as well as minimising waste.

Some of the global examples of sustainable buildings include the Eastgate Building in Zimbabwe and Bahrain World Trade Centre. Buildings which use natural lighting instead of artificial energy intensive lighting, are becoming more preferred.

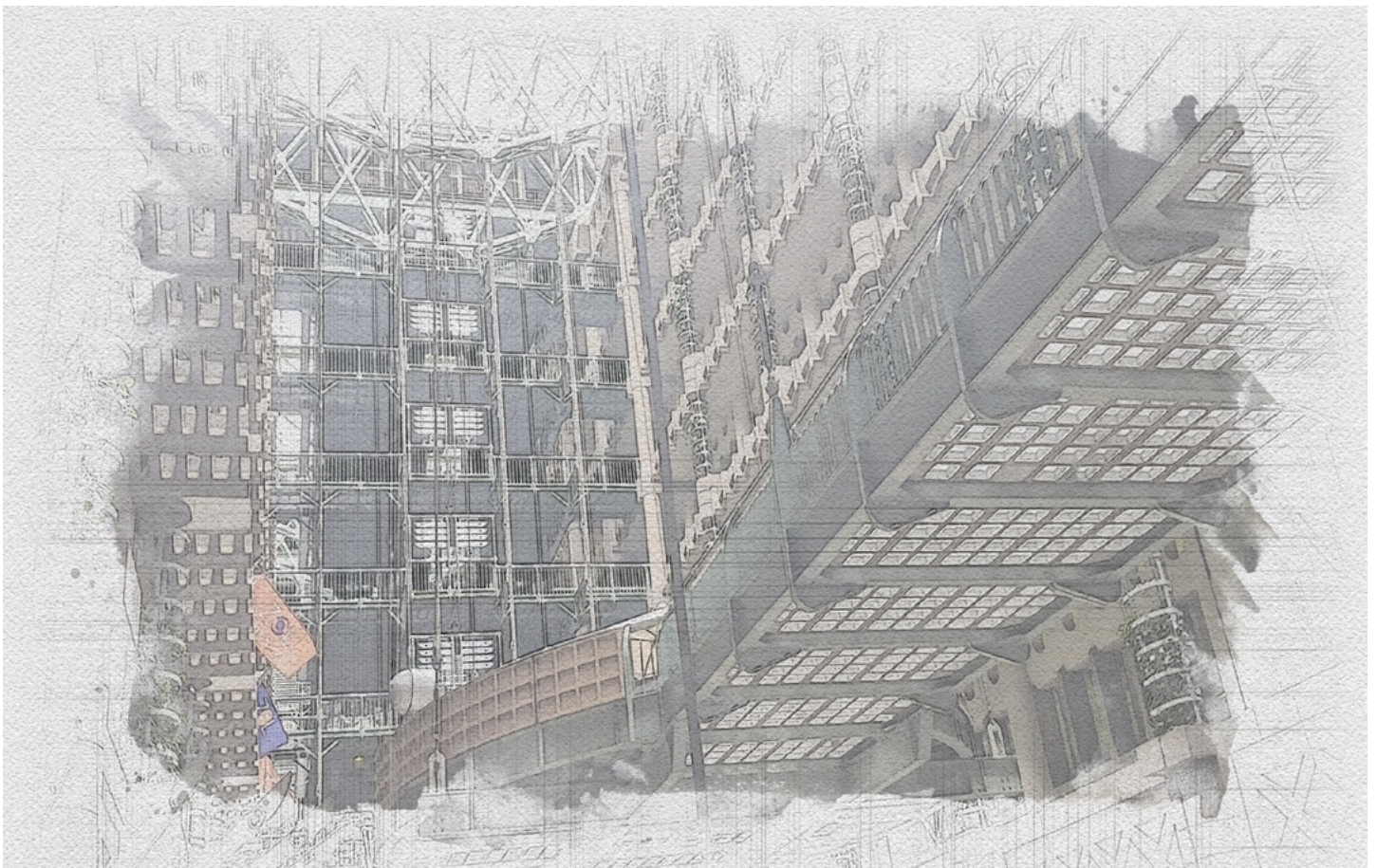
Natural cooling buildings which offset the need for air conditioning are becoming the order of the day.

At a smaller scale and individual level, a lot of work can be done towards installing energy efficient lighting in buildings. The use of solar geysers is also a key strategy of reducing both the energy consumption and the carbon footprint of buildings.

Whilst everyone is building in the twenty first century, it is necessary to promote a transition towards cleaner and greener building materials. Construction is well known for having a negative impact on the environment. This includes the impact generated by activities such as and abstraction as well as abstracting quarry stones.

The key challenges facing the world today include climate change, water crises and biodiversity loss. These need to be prevented as a means of averting an imminent crisis. Recycled steel can be used in areas where steel is required and recycled wood is becoming a popular green material in some countries.

Interventions related to building design, material purchases and environmentally sound disposal of waste can help make an impact and prevent a catastrophe.



PASSIVELY COOLED, EASTGATE USES ONLY 10% OF THE ENERGY NEEDED BY A SIMILAR CONVENTIONALLY COOLED BUILDING

DURING DAY: MACHINES AND PEOPLE GENERATE HEAT, AND THE SUN SHINES. HEAT IS ABSORBED BY THE FABRIC OF THE BUILDING, WHICH HAS A HIGH HEAT CAPACITY, SO THAT THE TEMPERATURE INSIDE INCREASES BUT NOT GREATLY.



PASSIVE COOLING WORKS BY STORING HEAT IN THE DAY AND VENTING IT AT NIGHT AS TEMPERATURES DROP.

EVENING: TEMPERATURES OUTSIDE DROP. THE WARM INTERNAL AIR IS VENTED THROUGH CHIMNEYS, ASSISTED BY FANS BUT ALSO RISING NATURALLY BECAUSE IT IS LESS DENSE, AND DRAWING IN DENSER COOL AIR AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BUILDING.

WHEN ACTIVELY COOLED, THE CENTRE CONSUMES 35% LESS ENERGY TO MAINTAIN THE SAME TEMPERATURE AS A CONVENTIONALLY COOLED BUILDING

SAFE DISPOSAL OF CO

Construction is associated with a number of waste streams.

These include rubble, concrete, brick asphalt, waste plastic packaging, paper, waste chemical containers from paint usage and sewage waste from construction operations.

Contractors and individuals who engage them, should ensure that there is a plan for managing waste throughout the life-cycle of the project.

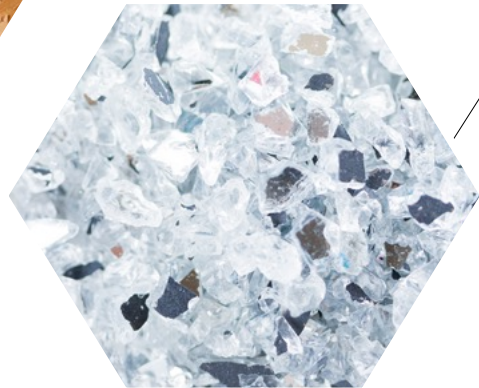


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2

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WASTE STREAM

HOW TO MANAGE THE WASTE

1. Bricks

2. Wood and sawdust

3. Glass

Filling holes and backfilling

Making wood Briquettes

Recycling at glass recycling companies

CONSTRUCTION WASTE

The following provides information on typical construction waste and how to deal with the different waste types:



4

5



6



WASTE STREAM

HOW TO MANAGE THE WASTE

4. Paint and Solvents

5. Adhesives

**6. Cement Bags
(Polypropylene)**

Safe disposal at hazardous waste sites

Safe disposals at hazardous waste sites

Recycling

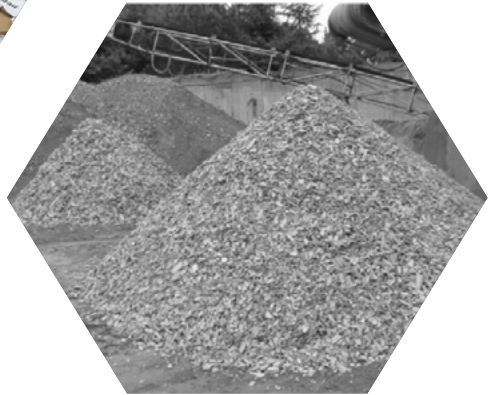


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WASTE STREAM

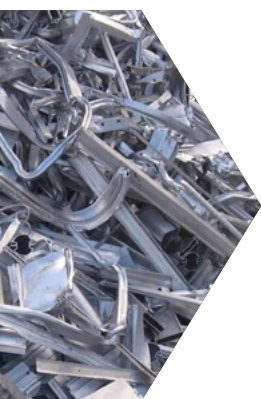
HOW TO MANAGE THE WASTE

| | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 7. Plastic | Recycling |
| 8. Paper | Recycling |
| 9. Ceramics | Backfilling |

One of the first things to come to mind is how human waste should be managed. Currently there is the usage of mobile toilets in order to prevent the practice of open defaecation at construction sites. Contractors must ensure they have, an effective management plan for sewage waste.

A lot of the paper and plastic can be recycled with minimal effect on the environment.

Rubble and construction solid waste can be used for road patching and facilitate ruse of materials. In other circumstances this type of waste can be used for backfilling.



0

11



12

13



| WASTE STREAM | HOW TO MANAGE THE WASTE |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 10. Aluminium | Recycling at aluminium recycling companies (aluminium can be recycled unlimited times). |
| 11. Rubber | Safe disposal at hazardous waste sites |
| 12. Cable offcuts | Safe disposal at hazardous waste sites |
| 13. Broken Tiles and Ceramics | Backfilling |

Paints and varnishes tend to be troublesome due to their toxic nature and ability to cause groundwater and land pollution. Ceramics and glass should be managed in a careful manner to avoid a situation where glass can become a hazard to human beings.

Under all circumstances, burning waste should be avoided. Individuals and contractors should avoid indiscriminately burning waste as this is not environmentally friendly.

COMPACTION – THE KEY INGREDIENT TO SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS





Soil is a colloidal mass of inert materials upon which construction activities take place. Therefore, as building projects are undertaken, it is necessary to ensure that the soil is prepared adequately. Compaction is a process that increases the mechanical ability of the soils to hold a building or civil structure. Some soil structures are too weak to support buildings erected on them. Without good compaction, buildings can collapse and pavements can cave in.

Reducing the amount of voids and air in the soil can be removed through compaction. Depending on the construction project, compaction varies widely. Compaction can be done using plate compactors, tamping rammers and roller compactors. For smaller projects the need for compaction is still needed. If compaction is not done properly, buckling of pavements and cracks of buildings shall observed. In order to prevent inadequate compaction, it is essential to use the proper equipment and work with competent personnel such as engineers. Compaction tests also play a critical role to verify if the compaction has been done to satisfaction.

As early as the 20th century, compaction was widely used and is lately, it is undergoing improvement. Hand tampers were used at some point before the technological advancements. Tamping rammers work well in confined places such as in foundations and in trenches. Plate compactors work well in wider areas. More sophisticated compaction equipment including “drive-on” and automated compaction equipment is becoming very popular.

Soil compaction increases the ability of the soil to hold heavy loads that the soil will bear during the life cycle of the building or civil structure. Buildings, foundations, roads and pavements cannot be of a high quality if they skip compaction.



Examples of types of equipment for soil compaction includes some of the following:

TYPICAL EXAMPLES OF COMPACTION EQUIPMENT

Roller Compactor
Plate Compactor
Tamping Rammer
Vibratory Roller
Hand Tamper (Available but rarely used nowadays)
Drive-on compaction equipment



AVOIDING INJURIES DURING CONSTRUCTION WORKS

Undertaking a construction project for your dream house is a very memorable thing to do, but it can be tainted by the death or serious injury of a contractor. It is necessary to ensure that contractors are managed in order to prevent their injury or death on the site.

It is necessary to monitor the activities that contractors and builders undertake on site and advise them to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for their employees. PPE is very essential in reducing the level of impact just in case injuries do occur in the workplace.

Families, individuals and corporates who are contracting builders to build their house should ensure that these people value Occupational Safety and Health and they prioritise key issues such as Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment.

There are some common acts which happen on site which can increase the frequency of injuries occurring and these include - horseplay, unsafe acts, using improper scaffolds, intoxication and defective tools.

For the buildings which are erected by individuals, sometimes it is difficult to fully adhere to international standards, but basic safety measures should be enforced. No-one should die because they are building your house or doing construction work on your site.



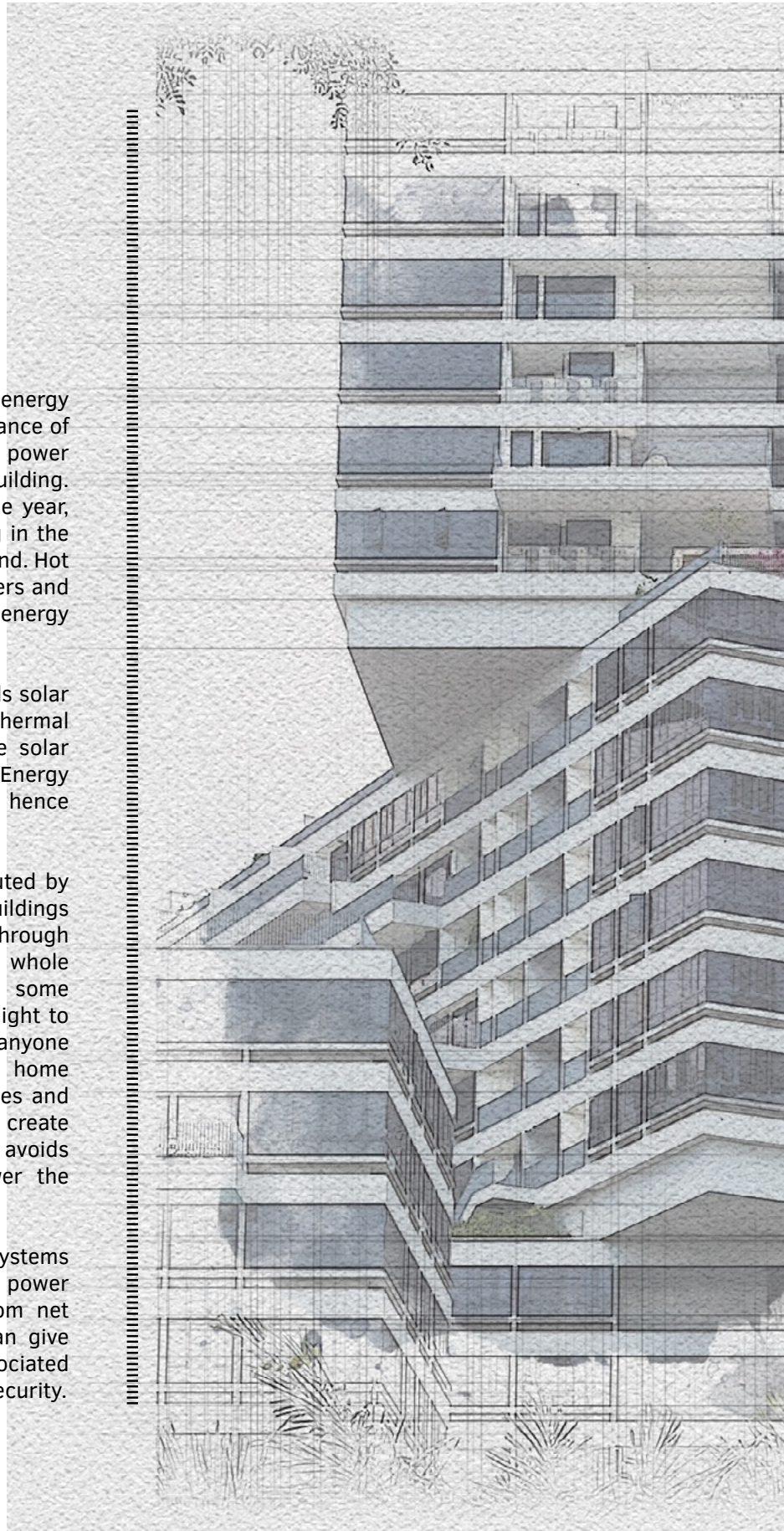
ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN BUILDINGS

Buildings are one of the largest consumers of energy in the world. This is because of the importance of lighting as well as the need for electrical power to power various gadgets within the building. Space heating in the colder periods of the year, coupled with the need for air conditioning in the hot periods also contribute to energy demand. Hot water supply is normally supplied by geysers and most geysers are electrical and increase energy demand and carbon emissions.

However, there is now a global shift towards solar geysers. These geysers harness solar thermal energy. In addition to saving energy, the solar geysers reduce the cost of running a home. Energy savings result in financial savings and hence should be taken seriously.

Lighting solutions have also been substituted by the use of natural lighting and orienting buildings in the direction from which light can come through and illuminate areas. Instead of roofing whole parts of buildings with tiles, there are some innovations of skylights, which can allow light to enter. Extreme caution should be taken if anyone considers skylight glazed spaces in the home because of the possibility of water leakages and moulding. If properly installed, they can create an ambient environment that is well lit and avoids darkness. In addition, they help to lower the energy bill.

Most new houses are also having solar systems which are grid tied. This allows the excess power to be put onto the grid and benefit from net metering. Generating your own power can give energy independence, reduce costs associated with energy as well as facilitating energy security.





HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PAINT FOR YOUR HOUSE



Upon completing the superstructure of the building, many contractors, individuals and builders struggle to strike the right cords when it comes to paint. A building that has been worked on greatly can be ruined just by paint. Therefore, careful thought and planning is necessary in order to ensure that the paint blends well with furniture and other key accessories in the house.

Paint can set the mood of a room and evoke some feelings to all who enter it. As we create spaces of habitation, some paint shades can foster serenity and tranquillity. Consider carpets, mats, chandeliers and door types that you will have to ensure that there is a blending effect. In all circumstances testing paint colours is necessary. Therefore, considering the following key nuggets can be helpful the next time you consider painting:

- ① Decide if you would like to paint the whole structure with one paint type or you prefer a variation.
- ② Avoid colours which do not blend with your property and accessories.
- ③ Avoid the cheapest paint which loses its ambience and colour in just a few months.
- ④ Choose colours that blend with the mood and emotion of the room to be painted.
- ⑤ Choose paint which has a good coverage area.
- ⑥ Consider the differences in requirements between outdoor paint and interiors
- ⑦ Suit the paint to your interior décor, curtains, upholstery and couches, tiles and other elements of the interior for your home. (Avoid creating a camouflage interior or a clown-like interior)
- ⑧ Consider the visual effect of light on paint and the orientation of different rooms.
- ⑨ Consider whether the room is a high traffic area which may need regular cleaning of walls or not (consider washable paints if the area is prone to dirt)



- 10 Consider the durability.
- 11 Select brands which are proven, tried and tested in multiple conditions.
- 12 Consider your health and select paint with minimal toxic chemicals and has less Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). (Low VOC paints are also associated with low odours).
- 13 Consider paints with more solids than paint which has very little solids.
- 14 Consider whether the room you are painting is prone to moisture.
- 15 Consider paint which is friendly to the environment.
- 16 Consider paint which is mildew resistant.
- 17 Consider paint with minimal splatter properties when choosing paint for the ceilings.
- 18 Avoid too runny paints which drip very quickly when painting ceilings

TO BUILD OR TO BUY A HOUSE?

Many prospective homeowners have a dilemma of whether they should build or buy a house. There is no straight answer to this question. It depends with your circumstances, tastes, preferences and budget.

Buying a pre-existing house ensures that you eliminate rentals earlier and use the income for other purposes and investments. A pre-existing house reduces the risk of money being eroded in value as it will already be offset by an asset.



However, buying a pre-existing house may not allow you to choose the plan as the house has already been designed by someone else. The rooms may be smaller or bigger than your expectations.

Building from scratch allows you to influence the design of the house and ensures that you decide your house plan. The modern day era has new and novel housing plans, hence building makes sense for you to design a classic home.

On the other hand, it is not easy to build as you have to run around to search for building materials, cover labour costs, inspection fees and have to bear the risk of price increases. For a house that is already built, there is no risk of rising prices of raw materials on the short or long term due to the fact that the price is what it is going for as specified by the seller.

Buying a house can result in incurring high maintenance costs if the house has defects such as cracks, leaking roofs and other legacy problems. Building a new house ensures that you are starting afresh with a house that does not have legacy problems.

Whether you build or decide to buy, consider convenience, customisation, cost, capacity to supervise and choice of materials. Both ends, there are pros and cons – in the end what is key is to own a home regardless of the route taken.

Buying a house means that you need upfront capital in order to complete the purchase or at least if it is a mortgage, a source of regular income is necessary.

Building allows you to raise funds as the project commences and you can do the project stage by stage.



INSTANT LAWN FOR YOUR DREAM HOME

After building a beautiful home, the least thing you would like to see is bare surfaces on the vicinity of a beautiful home. Lawns can add a natural feel to yards and premises.

|||||

There is a choice between transplanting lawn from other established lawns and starting from even grass seeds. However, we have seen the emergence and popularity of instant lawns taking shape. An increasing number of people are favouring lawns that are established elsewhere and rolled up for establishment at your own premises.

The key thing when getting ready to receive instant lawn is to prepare your premises by clearing up and getting the fine soil tilth.

INSTANT LAWNS HAVE A NUMBER OF ADVANTAGES SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING:

- Saving time of lawn establishment because it is an instant solution. (You can spend a bit more time free to enjoy your new home rather than spending all weekends trying to cultivate, maintain and water a lawn from scratch to its maturity.
- There is a limited chance for weeds to be growing alongside the lawn.
- Reduced risk of failure as the grass is already established.



- Ability to close patches.
- You can establish it all time during the year.
- Reduced management time e.g. from establishment, weeding and other maintenance activities.
- Reduced manual labour to get the lawn to maturity, as it is already at maturity stage when it is sold.
- It is easier to undertake lawn mowing activities because of a relatively flat. surface that can be facilitated by instant lawn.
- Less effort required to establish.
- Better colour texture and appearance than seeded lawn which may look disorderly at the beginning.

INSTANT LAWNS ALSO HAVE DISADVANTAGES SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING:

- High cost
- The lawn may fail to adapt to the conditions and climate
- Less varieties of grass to choose from and you may have to do with the available limited grass types suitable for instant lawn.

HOW CHEAP CONTRACTORS MAY COST YOU

When building a house, it is the desire of everyone to save as much money as possible in order to ensure that the structure proceeds to advanced stages. In general, all of us want to attain value for money. However, going for the cheapest contractor can be very risky in the long run.

We do not promote overcharging for any building work that is out there. But the important lesson is that not all contractors who claim to be cheap are actually cheap. In the long term cheap work can be costly

Never take the risk of having substandard work due to the fact that you want to cut corners with a cheap contractor. Shop around for prices in order to determine market value.

For example, if it is brickwork that you would like to assign someone to do, enquire with other contractors and request their financial proposals. In addition, confirm previous work and do background checks.



It should be noted that the aim should always be to get a good contractor who best suits your building project and budget. It is never about the cheapest or the most expensive. Avoid having to repeat the same stage over and over again, because of hiring sub-standard contractors.

The following are major risks of dealing with contractors who are very cheap:

1. _____
THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF SUB-STANDARD WORK.
2. _____
YOU MAY HAVE TO PAY FOR RE-WORK AFTER THE MISTAKES ARE MADE.
3. _____
HERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF PROJECT DELAYS.
4. _____
HIDDEN COSTS THROUGH PROJECT COSTS WHICH ARE NOT MENTIONED AND YOU HAVE TO DISCOVER THEM AS YOU BUILD.
5. _____
LABOUR CHALLENGES (CONFLICTS) BETWEEN THE CONTRACTOR AND THEIR WORKERS, HAPPENING AT YOUR SITE.
6. _____
USE OF SUB-STANDARD PRODUCTS.
7. _____
DEPLOYMENT OF UNQUALIFIED PERSONNEL.
8. _____
TAKING YOUR PROJECT FOR GRANTED.





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