

building cities for tomorrow

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# VAKAI



ISSN 2957-9201



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**Matters**



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A modern living room with a grey sectional sofa, blue and grey pillows, and a black coffee table. Large windows and a glass door provide natural light. A black pendant light hangs from the ceiling. The text "BUILD MODERN" is overlaid in white.

**BUILD  
MODERN**

**BUILD FOR  
THE FUTURE**



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# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Welcome to Issue 5 of the Vakai Magazine, where we discuss key tips about building your dream house. Construction is one of the best decisions that any person can undertake in order to preserve value. At the same time construction also provides a safe haven for families when it is completed.

In this issue we share practical tips on a variety of topical issues. Firstly, we explore the unique bathroom options that can be adopted in finishing your construction project. We also delve into the domain of epoxy floors and why they are getting serious demand in different parts of the world. Furthermore, the issue also prioritises the need for project management and its benefits in Managing costs, ensuring quality and preventing safety incidents. Whilst many home builders manage projects on their own, as projects get bigger it is essential to consider project management of your project.

Even if you go on to manage it yourself, project management fundamentals are inevitable.

This issue also explores the dangers of moisture in homes and how to prevent it from building up in the first place. Some of the key measures to prevent moisture include good building design, effective construction, installation of intact roofs and repairing roof leaks.

We delve into some elements of style and privacy through discussion on window frosting. In comparison to clear windows, frosting offers decorative capabilities whilst rendering privacy and elegance. If the budget permits you to explore frosting, why not give it a try.

Lastly, we take pleasure to be introducing a refreshed and enhanced appearance of Vakai Magazine. This is in line with our commitment to enhance our offering and increasing your experiences. We keep counting on your continued support.

Tawanda Collins Muzamwese  
**Editor-in-Chief**

# BATHROOM FINISHING KEY TO MODERN HOMES

Modern bathroom finishes require water-resistant, durable materials like ceramic, glass, and stainless steel. With standalone tubs and sinks gaining popularity, thoughtful design choices can create memorable, high-traffic-friendly spaces.



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Building the superstructure of a building is not very difficult for many people, but finishing the project can be a nightmare. Bathrooms are key elements of the finish of a building and modern trends are engulfing society.

With new materials that have been brought to the market, it is essential that we make good decisions that will result in the creation of memorable spaces. It is essential to choose good colours that put into consideration the fact that the bathroom is frequently used.

In modern bathrooms, tubs may be attached to the wall, but increasingly stand-alone tubs are also becoming very popular. Likewise, standalone sinks are also very popular with modern buildings. It is always advisable to use materials that have high levels of durability.

Some of the leading materials used in finishing bathrooms include ceramic, plastic, glass and metal. Due to the fact that bathrooms have water and also generate steam, it is essential to ensure that you go for materials that will be water resistant.

A good bathroom should be able to handle high levels of traffic and movement. At the same time the bathroom should be able to deal with potential dirt and be constructed from materials that do not attach to dirt. Stainless steel can be used

© Drea



in bathrooms for handing towels, taps and showerheads due to its ability to avoid catching dirt and also being able to resist rust and corrosion.

Ceramic, marble, porcelain, stone, glass, wood, concrete and matte are also commonly used in different bathrooms worldwide. These materials are used variably depending on the personal preferences of individuals as well as the availability of materials. It is very essential to shop around, before making solid decisions about your bathroom.



# READY MIX CONCRETE VS HAND MIX CONCRETE

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As many people build their homes and as contractors proceed with implementing various projects, one of the key questions that has boggled the minds of many, is whether Ready Mix Concrete (RMC) or hand mix concrete should be used. Aggregates, sand, cement and water need to be properly mixed in order to ensure that there is a proper combination.

In the case of hand mix concrete, ingredients are procured separately including aggregates, sand and cement and then they are mixed on site. However, in the case of ready mixed concrete, the concrete is produced in a batching plant and then delivered to site. Its production is based on a design mix. RMC allows precise mixing and proportioning. There is an advantage of reduction in pollution, dust and noise as the production is carried out off-site.

The other advantage of RMC is that it is possible to develop the product according to the requirements of the client. Furthermore, the project has less delays. RMC based projects can enable projects to be completed in a short space of time. Different mix designs are used for different uses and applications. RMC also comes with some disadvantages such as the fact that not all sites are accessible. The status of the road and traffic congestion can play a part in project delays.

As you make the decision of using RMC or hand mixing concrete consider your budget, timeline, application and precision. With more knowledge transfer and awareness, the number of private individuals using RMC is increasing whilst at the same time commercial and institutional use remains in operation.

***Choosing between Ready Mix and hand mix concrete depends on budget, precision, and site access. RMC offers speed and consistency, while hand mixing is more flexible on-site but labor-intensive.***







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# EPOXY FLOORS GAIN POPULARITY

*Epoxy floors are durable, stain-resistant, and stylish, with lifespans of 10-20 years. As demand grows, they're becoming a modern alternative to traditional ceramic or wood finishes.*

Traditionally, house building mainly favoured, ceramic, porcelain, wood and carpeted finishes. Whilst these are very good and easy to maintain, there are new trends which are rising on the building and construction markets. Epoxy flooring is fast becoming a preferred choice in many families.

Epoxy floors are highly durable and they do not catch up stains easily. This is the reason why many people are seriously considering them.

With epoxy flooring, stains will be a thing of the past. Furthermore, there is a reduced risk of damage. They come in different colours, thereby proving different options of aesthetic enhancement. The durability of the epoxy floors renders them a clear choice for many home owners. Epoxy can have durability of between 10 - 20 years. The chemical composition of Epoxy floors ensures that they are resistant to dirt. As this technology gets traction, it is essential to give it a chance.



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# FROSTED GLASS



# CLEAR GLASS

***Frosted glass adds privacy and elegance, though it may reduce visibility. It's a stylish option for homes prioritizing decorative light diffusion and privacy.***

Windows are key for adding light and also for facilitating opening buildings for ventilation. However, they also present some exposure and lack of privacy if they are left uncovered. Whilst many home builders are used to curtaining homes as a way of privacy, there is also some emerging new forms of attaining the same objectives. Window frosting is gaining momentum in home building. Frosting can be plain or it can take specific designs.

There are several benefits that may accrue due to frosting and these include privacy of the inhabitants, decorative results and scattering

light inside a building. However, there are several disadvantages associated with frosted glass, ranging from obstruction of the view, reduced visibility and maintenance costs.

The choice between installing frosted glass and clear glass is in the hands of the end user. Carefully assess the function of the building where you want to frost the glass. Consider the budget which you have and assess whether or not it is an option which you can consider. If you opt for the options, ensure that there is synchrony with the existing design and there is a budget opportunity.



# LANDSCAPING THE KEY TO TRUE AMBIANCE

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Landscaping your property, is one of the key methods of ensuring a good aesthetic finish to your project. Taking it seriously is essential in facilitating increased value of your property. There are many concepts of landscaping including growing lawns, flowers and plants. In some cases, combining with water fountains and waterfalls can turn your property into a haven. Landscaping also needs a good water supply to ensure that your plants are well catered for and they remain hydrated.

Good landscaping can be undertaken through Doing-It-Yourself (DIY) or through engaging professional landscapers. These professional landscapers can take things a notch higher than conventional landscaping practices.

In your considerations, it is also key to consider terrain and the weather patterns of the place where you are located. These key aspects determine the type of plants and the amount of water that is required. In some areas, there is need to landscape with fleshy plants which are adapted to desert environments. This is particularly important in cases of hot weather.

Combining landscaping with pebbles, pottery and lighting can also result in proper outcomes and enhanced sustainability. Landscaping is an ongoing endeavour which is not a once-off event. As time progresses, the level of maturity, colonisation and proliferation of vegetation is also enhanced by the receipt of water and rain. Create your own world, through effective landscaping. Let's start today!





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Aesthetic landscaping with lawns, water features, or succulents enhances property value and ambiance. Whether DIY or professional, it's a long-term investment in beauty.




# WHY WALL FINISHING MATTERS

Wall finishing is a key step towards making a building habitable. Different styles are in use worldwide, based on budget, preference and availability of materials. Some people aim for aesthetics, whilst others aim for durability.

Some of the popular options include the use of wall finishing plasters as a means of gaining smoothness and making sure that paint can attach properly to attain a world class finish. Wall finishing can also facilitate creation of smooth surfaces which can be coated with paint. In other domains, wall finishing can be complemented by wallpaper.

Wallpaper may comprise of different unique designs, therefore creating some unique patterns of an aesthetic environment.

Some home-builders love plain walls, whilst others perceive them to be dull. At the wall finishing stage, you can make your own choices based on your own preferences. Other unique variations include wall panelling. The adoption of wall finishing variants depends also on availability of material.



*Wall finishes like plaster, paint, or wallpaper define a room's character. Smooth surfaces and unique textures add both durability and decorative appeal.*



# ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IN HOMES

*Homes with LED lights, insulation, and solar power reduce costs and carbon footprints. Smart energy systems and biogas digesters enhance sustainability.*

Building can be fascinating until the time of occupancy, where bills have to be paid. However, this can easily be managed by ensuring that your building has incorporated energy efficiency measures. Furthermore, the scope of energy efficiency measures differs based on individual taste.

From the onset, it is essential to adopt LED lights, which use less energy than conventional bulbs. Furthermore, energy can be saved through having some motion switches. Designing buildings that have natural light, eliminates the need for deploying artificial lighting

Adopting insulation of walls and double glazed windows in cold regions of the world can help to reduce temperature changes. Furthermore, adopting renewable energy technologies such as solar energy is a key step towards attaining energy independence.

Installation of timers and also linking devices to Smart Home Systems ensures that the timeline of usage of gadgets can easily be controlled in order to optimise the energy usage.

Other measures may include the installation of biogas digesters in institutions where there are many people - who can be a source of feedstock, which is used to generate biogas.

Conserving energy is a measure that will result in a significant reduction in energy costs and also on the carbon footprint of the organisation of the organisation. Furthermore, procuring equipment that is rated on energy efficiency is essential to manage the energy consumption.







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# ROOFING MATERIAL







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## AND LABOUR CONSIDERATIONS

*Quality roofing materials and skilled labor prevent structural failures. Always inspect timber and vet roofing contractors to ensure durability and safety.*

Roofing a building is one of the final stages of completing the project. When done properly, it can result in very good results. However, when done in a manner that is haphazard, the end result is disappointment and loss of resources. Whilst many people profess knowledge about roofing, it is not all of them that can nail it.

When it comes to materials, it is essential to purchase roofing materials from approved suppliers. Whether you are going for concrete roofing tiles, chromadek, clay, wood slate, PVC amongst others – always choose durability and quality. When it comes to selecting timber, it is essential to consider timber which has been properly cured.

The desire for cheaper things can lend you in deep trouble. Some roofs can be sagging and result in warped roofs.

Some roof trusses can be affected by moulds. Decaying timber is a safety hazard to the inhabitants.

In the process of choosing individuals who undertake roofing jobs, always check their references and also get information of where they have undertaken projects. It has to be practical distinguished and proven. Move around and check real projects that have been done. Furthermore, supervision is very essential throughout the project life cycle.

Remember that your roof shall be above your head when you sleep. If it is not done properly, it will become a major safety threat to the inhabitants. Ensure that you avoid novice contractors and labour resources who have not done any notable installations.



# CEILING FINISH FOR YOUR DREAM HOUSE



*Ceiling designs influence both aesthetics  
resistant, sound-insulated finishes that match*



A plethora of designs have emerged in the domain of ceiling finish. This stage of building construction gives you an aesthetic look which puts the building into a class of exquisite appearance. Ceiling installation should give a balance of aesthetics and strength. At the same time, it should allow for a good height to allow inhabitants to move around freely and enable good air circulation. In some developments, ceiling works are integrated with downlights to add an aesthetic look. Fire resistance and sound insulation are also key considerations in ceiling design. Ideally, ceilings should enable the sound insulation of a building from one room to the next one in comparison with a building without a ceiling. Other individuals take a look at their budget before choosing a ceiling design. Whatever you do, never take chances on the ceiling. Look at a wide variety of factors and of course the competence of the installers. Look at things with an eye of the future.



and functionality. Choose fire-  
ch your style and budget.





# BENEFITS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management improves *construction efficiency, safety,* and *quality.* Hiring a manager can *reduce costs* and ensure *smooth delivery.*







Construction project management is essential in order to ensure that your building project takes place without a major hustle. However, for many people, the challenge is how to manage the project and whether they should hire a project manager to manage it for them. The choice is entirely yours. Here are some proven benefits of project management in construction:

- Improved quality of output
- Meeting deadlines of the project
- Efficient utilisation of materials
- Cost savings
- Effective management of labour resources
- Better adherence to legal requirements and statutory obligations
- Better communication
- Increased ability to meet health and safety requirements
- Reduced rate of accidents, injuries, ill health and fatalities
- Enhanced chances of accessing funding for projects





# SITE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

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Many construction projects are delivered with the support of building contractors. However, the adoption of occupational safety and health standards still remains a pipe dream for many. The end result is a risky workplace and possible accidents, incidents and fatalities. There is need to adopt safety and health considerations in order to retain the site in a state of sanity.

Signage of the site is very essential to ensure that there is warning concerning occupational hazards and risks. Signage can include speed limits, hard hat area, respiratory protection, eye protection and other signage about PPE.

Undertaking inspections on a regular basis is also a critical step in maintaining site safety. With regards to pits that are created through extracting materials, it is essential that these are refilled and also barricaded to avoid risky and unexpected events.

Due to the fact that most construction sites have dust and noise, it is necessary to develop effective mechanisms for noise control - such as acoustic control and dust control measures. Control of dust can have far reaching benefits, such as prevention of respiratory diseases.



A construction worker wearing a blue hard hat and a yellow safety vest is working on a complex steel structure. The worker is positioned in the lower center of the frame, leaning over a horizontal steel beam. The background is filled with a dense network of vertical and horizontal steel beams, creating a complex geometric pattern. The lighting is bright, casting sharp shadows on the steel surfaces. A white rope or cable runs diagonally across the right side of the image.

Safety measures like PPE, signage, and regular inspections are crucial on construction sites. Neglecting them can result in injury or loss of life.

# FOR BUILDING CONTRACTORS

The adoption of Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments (HIRA) is essential to warn workers about the hazards associated with construction activities. This should be undertaken on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the inspection of equipment is very essential in order to detect any unsafe practices which may arise in the construction work.

On construction sites, contractors should ensure that there is no poor housekeeping. The provision of first aid facilities is very critical in ensuring that there is a means of dealing with first aid cases that may arise.

Due to the blistering effects of climate change, it has also become common to provide water supply for the personnel undertaking construction activities. Many people working at sites have collapsed or died at site due to dehydration.

Other key considerations include the need to ensure that any pits that are created on site are backfilled in order to avoid human beings and animals from being trapped inside.

As your building project takes place, never neglect the need for good safety practices. Remember that injuries and fatalities leave a bad legacy.



Many buildings are affected by moisture each and every year. Resultantly, the moisture can cause severe damage to the structural integrity of the structure. In this article we assess some of the leading causes of moisture in buildings and also some of their effects.

Some of the key causes that need serious consideration include:

- Activities within the building - including those that generate steam
- Rainfall and weather elements
- Preparation of meals and bathing
- Roof leaks
- Poor construction in waterlogged regions





The effects of moisture in buildings, includes the possibility for damage to paint. This damage can cause paint to peel off uncontrollably. Furthermore, moisture can cause accumulation and build-up of moulds, fungi

and other disease causing agents. Disease vectors find a haven on moist surfaces. The other effects of uncontrolled moisture include rusting of metal objects and also the rotting of timber.

Some of the key strategies to reduce and prevent moisture build-up in the home include the following:

- Installing exhaust fans and mechanisms for moisture extraction in bathrooms.
- Undertaking proper roofing and installing good gutters.
- Installing good drainage systems to avoid waterlogging.
- Repairing roof leaks.
- Opening windows and allowing proper ventilation.
- Avoiding construction in waterlogged areas.
- Using building material that is impermeable and paint that withstands moisture.



**RUIN YOUR HOUSE**



# 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.





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# BUILDING MATERIAL QUALITY – A KEY PRIORITY TO LASTING INFRASTRUCTURE

*Low-cost materials often lead to poor finishes and failures. Always inspect, test, and source from reliable suppliers to ensure quality.*

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.







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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 sub-standard 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.

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.



# ALUMINIUM CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL GAINS POPULARITY AND APPLICATION



Aluminium is lightweight, stylish, and increasingly used for doors and windows. Though some question its strength, it's transforming modern design.



# RENEWABLE ENERGY SAVING ENERGY IN NEW HOMES

*Solar systems power homes sustainably and affordably. Despite upfront costs, they reduce bills and keep homes running during outages.*

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 the grid and utilising solar systems.

Lighting, entertainment, internet, ironing and refrigeration are 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.



Building property or buying property is very common the world over. However, maintaining the property is a key challenge for many homeowners. It is not everyone who maintains a budget for maintenance. In order to preserve the value of your property it is essential to undertake regular maintenance. Inspecting your property regularly. Allows you to be able to identify and potential areas of weakness, deterioration or those which are succumbing to the elements of the weather. Undertaking repairs can save you a lot of money in the future as you would have eliminated further damage.

Undertaking upgrades is also a key strategy towards maintaining property in a high value state. This could be based on putting in place extra amenities which were previously not available. Amenities that add convenience to building occupants can go a long way in enhancing value. Typical examples may include air conditioning upgrades in hot climates, extra services like gyms and sporting facilities. Of course all these things will depend on space, taste and local legal requirements.

Cleaning can go a long way in maintaining buildings in a pristine environment. It is therefore recommended to have scheduled cleaning on a regular basis. Adhering to cleaning regimes, will ensure that there is maintenance of standards and levels of cleanliness.

Furthermore, preserving the value of your property requires thorough screening of prospective tenants before they occupy property. Only engage tenants who take care of property and who have a good track record from their previous renting experiences. If a tenant has a history of damaging property, avoid leasing your property to them.





# **PRESERVING** **THE VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY**

*Frequent inspections, upgrades, and responsible tenants help maintain your property's value. Cleaning and maintenance prevent long-term damage.*





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