



TOP
TIPS
ON
HOW
TO
DESIGN
&
CONSTRUCT
YOUR
YARRA
VALLEY
HOME

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HOW TO DESIGN & CONSTRUCT
YOUR YARRA VALLEY HOME**

THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS TO BUILDING A BESPOKE NEW HOME IN THE YARRA VALLEY.

With blocks that have sprawling acreage and views of the foothills, a tight-knit and welcoming community, plenty of local attractions, all within a short drive of the city. Why wouldn't you want to build here?

THERE'S PLENTY TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU GET STARTED ON YOUR HOME BUILD

Particularly, if you're embarking on a Design & Construct project. To make the most of your building experience, we've put together our top tips on how to Design & Construct your Yarra Valley home.



1

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Before you make the big decisions, it's essential to conduct thorough and extensive research. Begin this process by asking yourself the following questions:

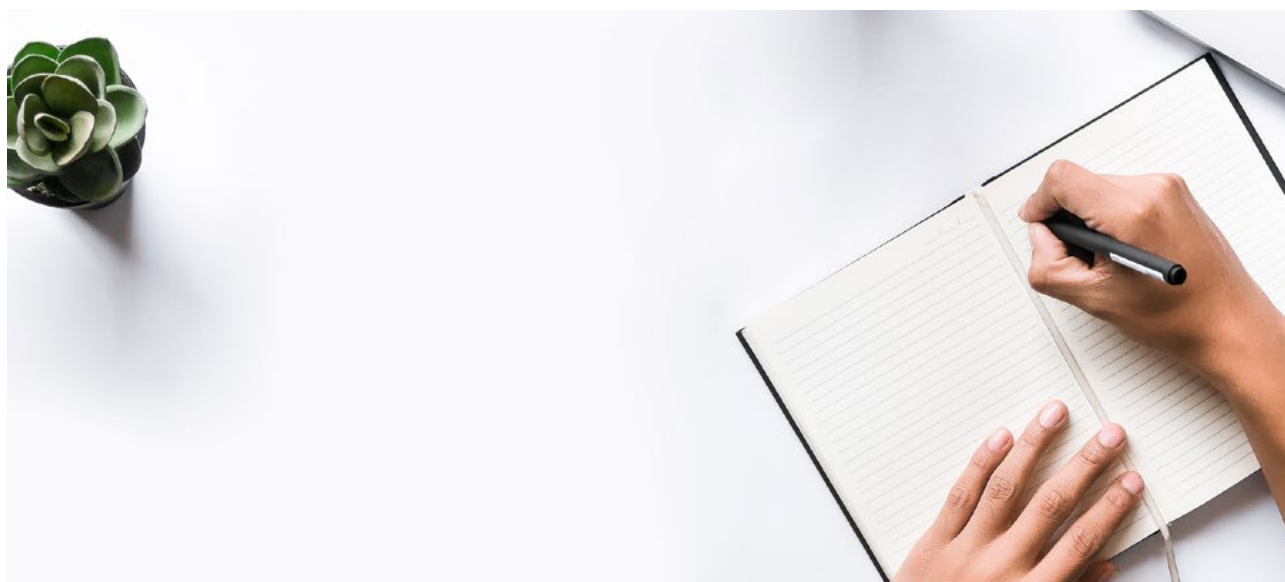
“WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO MY (AND MY FAMILY’S) LIFESTYLE?”

“WHAT ARE MY NEEDS NOW AND HOW MIGHT THESE CHANGE IN THE FUTURE?”

“WHERE DO I WANT TO SPEND MONEY AND WHERE CAN I AFFORD TO SAVE?”

Considering the above will help to determine a design that suits your needs – for example, how many bedrooms, bathrooms and living room spaces are required. During the research process, you should also aim to identify what style of home you'd like to achieve. A great way to do this is to start online, Pinterest and Instagram are great tools for seeking home design inspiration, or if you prefer hard copy, there are plenty home design magazines to flip through and cut out interiors that inspire you. Once you've established how you'd like your home to look, collate these ideas into a document or scrapbook to show your builder.

Keep in mind, the research journey shouldn't end there. You should always carry out plenty of research on your builder of choice in particular. Make sure you explore their website and social media channels so you can read testimonials, view past projects and get a better sense of their building process and values.



2

ESTABLISH YOUR BUDGET EARLY

Building a bespoke custom home is a big financial investment - one that you may only undertake once in your lifetime. Therefore, it's imperative that you get it right, and deciding on a budget early in the building process is central to this. This will ensure you can build the best home for your lifestyle without breaking the bank. In a BAL 29 area, the installation of the decking boards contains strict requirements.



To establish your budget, make a list of the things you “need” and the things you “want” in your dream home. By making this list, you’ll be able to determine roughly how much you will spend to build your home. Obviously, the needs of your home should be prioritised, but if there is money left over in your budget it’s time to explore the “wants” list!

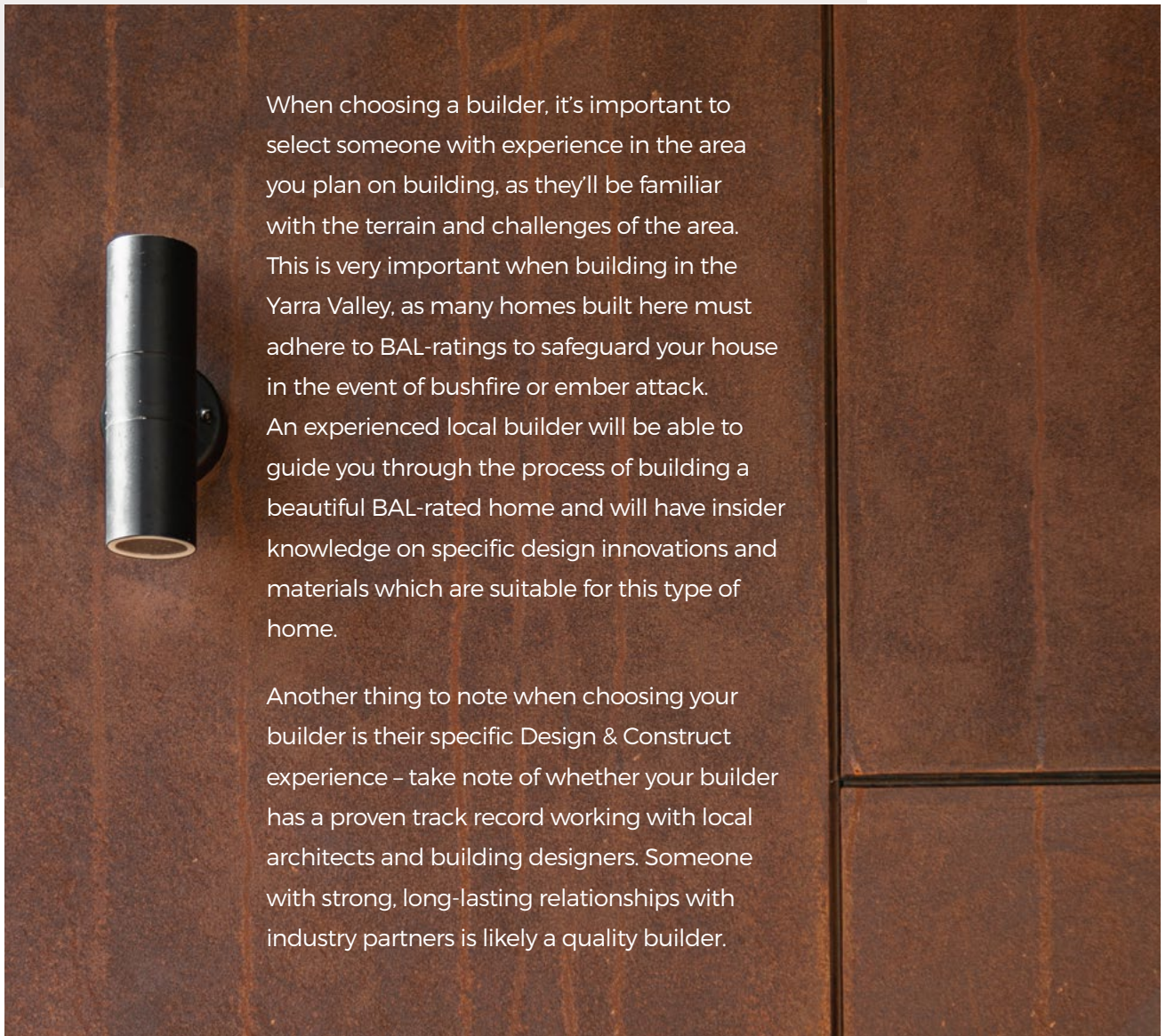
Consider the potential resale value of your house too. It may be hard to imagine selling a home that you haven’t built yet, but it’s best to consider the value of homes in the area to ensure you don’t over-capitalise on your property. It’s also good to compare the market for features that increase your home’s value, including extra bedrooms, living areas, parking spaces or thoughtful layouts.

The best person to approach for advice at this stage of your project is a builder. A builder can provide advice on design ideas, offer cost-effective materials and alternate techniques, and put you in touch with a reliable designer or architect who can bring your vision to life. We recommend speaking to a builder before getting plans drawn up, to ensure the plans are prepared with your budget in mind as this will avoid additional costs on redesign.

3

CHOOSE AN EXPERIENCED LOCAL BUILDER

It's important to have your builder involved in the design stage as early on as possible. Not only will they be invaluable in helping you achieve a space that suits your budget, but they can also offer advice as you decide on the details for your new home.



When choosing a builder, it's important to select someone with experience in the area you plan on building, as they'll be familiar with the terrain and challenges of the area. This is very important when building in the Yarra Valley, as many homes built here must adhere to BAL-ratings to safeguard your house in the event of bushfire or ember attack. An experienced local builder will be able to guide you through the process of building a beautiful BAL-rated home and will have insider knowledge on specific design innovations and materials which are suitable for this type of home.

Another thing to note when choosing your builder is their specific Design & Construct experience - take note of whether your builder has a proven track record working with local architects and building designers. Someone with strong, long-lasting relationships with industry partners is likely a quality builder.

4



PRIORITISE COMMUNICATION

Communication is key when it comes to a successful Design & Construct project. Before you sign on with a builder, pay close attention to their communication skills.

Effective communication from your builder prior to the construction of your home not only indicates how responsive they will be during and after your build, it's also a good gauge as to whether the building process will be simple and stress-free or arduous and stressful.

When you are finalising your preferred builder, you should find out what previous clients have to say about their building experience. You can start with website testimonials, but independent reviews on Google or Facebook will give you an unbiased reference. You could also ask your builder if you can speak to their previous clients. By getting in contact with previous clients, you can ask specific questions about their experience you'll gain invaluable insight into what the builder will be like to work with.

With advances in technology and people's busy schedules, you should look for a builder who has a client portal. A portal allows you to access real time updates on your project at any time from your computer, tablet or phone, so you can communicate with your builder and stay abreast of any changes as they occur.

5

DESIGN FOR THE CLIMATE

The Yarra Valley is a beautiful place, but the summers are hot and the winters are cold, so your home will need to be built to suit a multitude of climates. One of the most effective and environmentally friendly solutions is to build a home that adheres to Passive House principles – this will not only reduce your home’s ecological footprint but can lower your energy bills due to high-quality insulation techniques.

A good builder will help you to prioritise a home with wonderful outdoor living areas and large windows that allow you to appreciate your views of the valley. Large, north-facing windows can also help you capture an abundance of sunlight during the day – you’ll be especially thankful for this on cool winter mornings.





6

FINALISE SELECTIONS BEFORE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

Before you sign your building contract, you should make sure that you're comfortable with all aspects of your home's design.

Making changes after you've signed your contract can result in budget blowouts and time delays in your build. That's why it's so important to ensure that all fixtures, fittings and other selections have been organised and decided upon before construction begins.

Should there be elements of the home you're still unsure about at the time of contract signing, your builder may include a Prime Cost (PC) or Provisional Sum (PS) allocation in its place. This is essentially an allocation of money for the unselected elements. If your contract includes PS or PC items, it's incredibly important that these sums are accurate – too low and you'll have to pay the difference once you've finalised selections, too high and your budget will be completely thrown off. It is advisable to have as few PC and PS items in your contract as possible, as these can drastically affect your final build amount.

7

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SIGNING

Even if you've found the perfect builder and crafted the perfect building design, don't rush to sign your contract

Make sure you read this document carefully and ensure you know exactly what's included and excluded in your build. Often landscaping is excluded from a common building contract, which can come as a surprise to clients. If landscaping is an important factor in your new home, ensure you've allowed for this within your budget, or discuss the option of including this service in the contract sum. Another aspect to look for in your contract are your builder's guarantees and maintenance periods after handover, while these are standard clauses in a M&A or HIA contract, non-standard contracts will often avoid these in favour of the builder.

Ultimately, whatever size or shape your property, or how grand or modest your home ideas are, a Design & Construct service is a fantastic way to transform your ideas into a finished home.



**ARE YOU LOOKING TO DESIGN &
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IN THE YARRA VALLEY?**



Get in touch with the team at
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