

## ***CONSTRUCTION RISK CHECKLIST > Pre-construction > Confirm Plans Are Buildable***

### **Just Because It Can Be Drawn Doesn't Mean It Can Be Built**

Many builders have experienced the frustration.

The plans look impressive. The client is excited. The consent has been issued. Then construction begins and problems start appearing.

A beam clashes with services. Access for installation is impossible. Materials are unavailable. Critical dimensions don't work. Details are missing. The project becomes slower, more expensive and more stressful than it needed to be.

One of the most overlooked risk management steps in residential construction is confirming that the plans are actually buildable before work starts.

A buildable design is one that can be constructed safely, efficiently, practically and within the client's budget using readily available labour, materials and construction methods.

The earlier potential issues are identified, the cheaper and easier they are to resolve. A design change on paper may take minutes. The same change after construction has commenced can cost thousands of dollars and cause significant delays.

### **Buildability Review Checklist**

Before construction begins, make sure you can answer "Yes" to the following:

- 1. Has the builder been involved early enough to provide practical construction input?**
- 2. Have the plans been reviewed for buildability, not just compliance?**
- 3. Are all structural details complete and coordinated?**
- 4. Have access, sequencing and installation challenges been considered?**
- 5. Are specified materials readily available and suitable for the project?**
- 6. Have subcontractors reviewed any specialist aspects of the design?**
- 7. Are there any obvious conflicts between architectural, structural and services drawings?**

8. **Have unusually complex details been identified and discussed?**
9. **Does the design align with the client's budget and expectations?**
10. **Has someone asked, "How are we actually going to build this?"**

One of the best ways to improve buildability is to involve the builder as early as possible in the design process. Builders bring practical experience that designers, architects and homeowners may not have. They understand construction sequencing, labour requirements, material availability, access constraints and the real-world challenges of turning drawings into completed buildings.

Unfortunately, builders are often brought into the project after key design decisions have already been made. By that stage, opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce costs may have been lost.

A buildability review should look beyond whether the plans meet Building Code requirements. Compliance does not automatically mean the design is practical or economical to construct.

For example, plans may specify products with long lead times, details that require specialist trades that are difficult to source, or construction methods that significantly increase labour costs. None of these issues may prevent consent from being granted, but all can affect project success.

Builders should also review whether the plans contain sufficient information to accurately price and construct the work. Missing dimensions, unclear details and inconsistent drawings often lead to assumptions being made. Assumptions frequently become variations, disputes and cost overruns.

Where concerns exist, raise them early. The objective is not to criticise the design but to improve the outcome for everyone involved.

The most successful residential projects are not simply well designed. They are well designed and well planned for construction.

Before work starts, take the time to ask one simple question:

*"Can this be built efficiently, safely and within budget?"*

If the answer is uncertain, it is usually worth resolving those issues on paper before trying to resolve them on site.