

DESIGN and build

Planning Issues

Research is vital if you're planning to build a home, says **Graham Hepburn**

Before you begin planning your dream home, it pays to know exactly what you are permitted to build on your property.

Proper research into a section will provide a lot of information, but you need to know what that means in terms of added costs or any constraints on your building plans.

"As anyone will know who has been through the process, there is a lot of due diligence and cost involved long before any building can commence," says Martin Wiltshire of David Reid Homes North Shore.

"This includes addressing planning issues, procuring survey plans, geotechnical reports, CCTV of respective sewer and storm-water lines, resource and building consents, and can include arborist's reports, house removal, engineers' reports... the list goes on."

Martin says David Reid Homes, which is New Zealand's largest group builder of homes over \$450,000, engages the services of experts in all these fields, ensuring clients are provided with the correct information, including cost implications from the outset, to avoid discovering problems once it is too late to remedy them or incurring unnecessary costs.

"All of this can be taken care of by David Reid Homes, providing one point of contact for our clients and the removal of any stress that can often be encountered in this area," says Martin. "Our service begins as soon as you meet with us and we carry out the preliminary site assessment and continues on throughout the entire



Result rests on homework

process. It is critical with a project of such high value such as your new quality home that you don't try to cut corners, as it will always end up costing you more in the long run."

Martin says David Reid Homes understands the importance of trust and provides a transparent and realistic building service based on experience, coupled with high-level systems and national buying power.

One of the experts David Reid Homes calls on for planning issues is John Childs of John Childs Consulting, who says doing your homework on a prospective section is critical.

"It's really just doing the basics, which is understanding the site first and what you can do with it rather

than trying to pick the pieces up afterwards," says John.

He says removing homes in heritage zones to build new can be tricky given neighbours' objections and having to meet urban design regulations. There could also be issues with site stability and drainage, which can cost "a packet", as well as height restrictions and site coverage.

To help make an informed decision about your building plans, you should check the certificate of title, as this should outline any consent notices, covenants or easements that relate to the site. Covenants might determine the style of home, the time frame in which you must complete it, what materials can be used and even the

exterior colour. They could also dictate protection for trees or bush, the style of landscaping, and the type or size of fencing. There could be restrictions on pets or running businesses from home. Easements can include such things as rights of way or water rights.

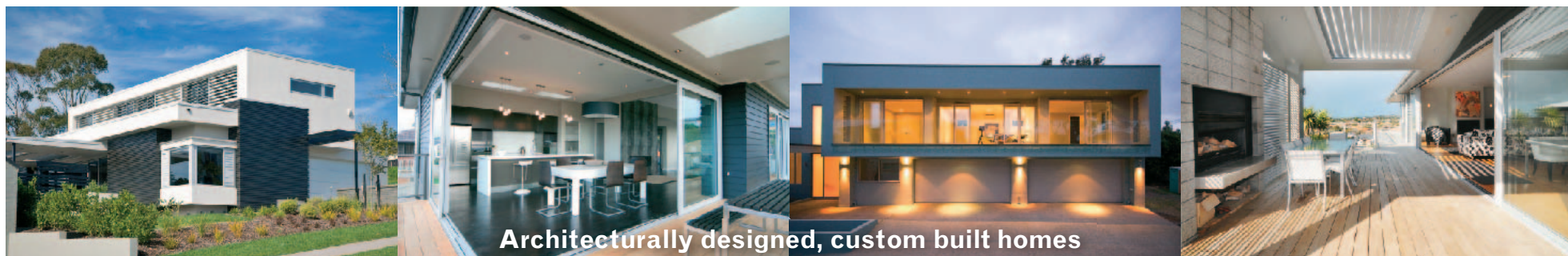
You should check the district plan, which will tell you whether you need a resource consent and provide information about boundary, height and coverage restrictions. District plans can also alert you to other issues that may affect your building plans, such as flood zones, natural hazards, sacred sites or heritage buildings. You also need to be aware that properties are classified into

wind, earthquake, snow load and corrosion zones — factors that will affect the sort of materials you can use and how much your home might cost. Acquiring a Land Information Memorandum (LIM) for your site is vital, as this is information held by the council specific to that piece of land that may not be on the district plan.

Generally, a LIM should provide information about storm water and sewerage, erosion or flooding issues, hazardous waste, any resource consents issued, and restrictions on usage. It's also important to check the survey information so you know exactly where your boundaries are, as boundary disputes can be long-running and costly.

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