

# DON'T MOVE, IMPROVE! KNOW HOW

## EMPLOYING AN ARCHITECT

- ✓ Check out [saia.org.za](http://saia.org.za) to find links to provincial institutes affiliated with the SA Institute of Architects to find an architect in your area. Always ask for examples of their work to see that you like their style.
- FEES** Small jobs, like helping you conceptualise a project and providing sketches, will cost from around R650 to R2 000 per hour. Larger projects, like drawing detailed plans and project managing, are often priced at a percentage of the building cost (starting at 12,5%, decreasing as project costs increase). Projects over R600 000 also carry a base fee.

## FINDING AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

- ✓ An interior decorator deals with soft finishes like colour and furnishing, while an interior designer deals with more technical aspects, like drawing of plans and electrical and lighting layouts. These designers understand construction and can oversee contractors, and advise on aesthetics. [iidprofessions.com](http://iidprofessions.com) lists designers across SA.
- FEES** Initial consultations are often charged per hour, varying quite widely based on the designer's experience. Expect to pay anything from R300 to R1 500 per hour. Thereafter, a project fee is usually proposed.

## HOW TO CHOOSE A BUILDER

- ✓ Hire an architect or interior designer to project manage, or save cash and manage it yourself. If you choose this route, decide on whether to hire a primary building company (who will hire and oversee any extra tradesmen needed, like electricians or plumbers) or to hire tradesman separately. Visit [contractorfind.co.za](http://contractorfind.co.za) to find tradesmen in your area, and get quotes from three building contractors based on drawings or an extensive written description of the project. Ask for references and ensure they're a member of a local body affiliated with the Master Builders Association ([www.mbsa.org.za](http://www.mbsa.org.za)) or that they're registered with the National Home Builders Registration Council ([nhbrc.org.za](http://nhbrc.org.za)). Ask if they have public-liability and contract-works insurance, to reduce your liability in case of accidents or property damage during work.
- FEES** Get your quote in writing and ask about any extra fees for sub-contractors. >>



# HOUSE PROJECTS without pain!

How do you pick a good builder, keep to budget and get top results? Jocelyn Jones, president of the SA Institute of the Interior Design Professions and CEO of Jossi Design ([jossi.co.za](http://jossi.co.za)), shares her tips with Kate Ferreira

**G**ive your home-renovation projects the best chance of success by consulting an interior designer or architect for an initial consultation, which can cost from as little as R300. You needn't necessarily employ them further, but this

is a good first step. They will help you see where you can best add space, and should provide simple hand sketches and, crucially, ideas! If they're good, their objectivity and experience will ensure inspired suggestions that can transform and really add value to your home.



# Before work starts

## AGREE ON A SCHEDULE

Normally, the builder supplies a project schedule, and your project manager ensures it's realistic and that the contractor sticks to it. If you're managing things, make provision for delays caused by rain or late materials deliveries. If your builder is reasonably delayed, you must both agree to add equivalent days to the schedule, moving the deadline. This is important if there will be late-completion payment penalties, (as per your contract).

As a rough guide, a project usually runs along these lines: demolition, plumbing and electrical, dry walling (if necessary) and ceilings, boarding and skimming, tiling, painting (coats one and two at different stages), carpeting, wallpapering, snag list, practical completion and occupation, and final completion list. If you're unsure, ask the contractor for advanced warning on when he needs the next lot of materials.

## DRAW UP A CONTRACT

The Master Builders Association has standardised Joint Building Contracts Committee (JBCC) contracts for different jobs. Some builders also have their own contracts, but the benefit of an independently drafted agreement, like the JBCC ones, is that they don't protect one party above the other. These agreements also have a section for

The more you get on paper, the less chance of disagreement

the contractor and client to fill in who's responsible for water, electricity, clean up, staff use of facilities and so on. A contractor may need a deposit for small jobs. For larger ones, it's best to follow the payment structure in the JBCC documents – usually no deposit, but regular payments every two weeks or every month, depending on what the contractor asks for. If you're going to have one, agree to a payment penalty up front in the contract. It's often a cost per day for all delays that weren't considered reasonable and weren't approved together as per the schedule.

## PROVIDE DRAWINGS

Give the contractor the official plans, drawn up by a draughtsman, designer or architect, which you've signed in agreement, so he can highlight any queries or concerns timeously to avoid problems during construction.

## REMEMBER YOUR INSURANCE

Tell your building and contents insurers you're renovating. Most insurers believe that damage during renovation is the contractor's responsibility, so contractors must give proof of their own insurance. Tell your insurer when the work's done and the contractors are no longer on your property. If you've increased the value of your home, you may need to increase how much it's insured for, too.

## DO YOU NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

**Repainting, re-tiling and repairing wear and tear usually won't require official approval.**

But for structural changes – like erecting walls, moving doors or windows and extending floor space – you must file plans for approval. Each municipality has its own procedures for getting planning permission. Find contact details for your local authority at [tinyurl.com/d2gk444](http://tinyurl.com/d2gk444). Your designer or architect can help you file these. If you're managing the project, file plans personally or hire a business to do it for you; try [plansubmit.co.za](http://plansubmit.co.za)

## KEEP COSTS DOWN

**Ask your contractor if they add on a percentage or fee for sourcing goods.** Sometimes they'll get a discount from their suppliers and could pass this on to you.

If they add a premium for sourcing, check to see if you can save more cash by bringing in the materials yourself. But don't skimp on quality, as that would be false economy.

Get the fundamentals right and you can always change and upgrade fittings later

# MANAGE YOUR BUDGET

- ★ Use the quotes that you get from different builders as a guide to help inform your own budget.
- ★ Get a feel for how much material you will need using a paint calculator (see [plascon.co.za/products/paint-calculator.asp](http://plascon.co.za/products/paint-calculator.asp)), and bricks, cement and mortar calculators (try [- \[Calculators.php\]\(http://Calculators.php\)\).
  - ★ Double check that VAT is included in all quotes.
  - ★ Jocelyn recommends including an extra 10 to 15% in your budget for contingencies – there are always costs that you don't foresee.
  - ★ She also suggests setting aside 10% of the contractor fee until after “practical completion”](http://cashbuild.co.za/DIY_</a></li></ul></div><div data-bbox=)



when you can actually use the space and after snagging the work (checking for any poor finishes or problems).

## WILL IT ADD VALUE?

- ➦ An extension to floor space could increase your property's value by 10% or more, depending on the size of total floor space added.
- ➦ Renovating and updating your kitchen or bathroom is the quickest way to add value to your home by up to 10%.
- ➦ Adding an en-suite bathroom to an existing bedroom could boost value by up to 5%, as long as you don't lose a whole bedroom to it. >>