

# Your House Specifications: Do You Know What Your Builder is Building?

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The vast majority of people that I speak to who have had bad building experiences could have avoided them if only they took note of a few simple things at the start of the journey. If you are working to a tight budget then what follows is even more important to take note of.

I have posted a number of articles on the website on subjects such as:

Avoid a bad building experience ;  
Choosing your builder, a checklist ;  
A building contract. Do you need one? ; and  
Thinking of building? Excellent advice from an architect .

In this article I want to answer the question posed in the title: Your House Specifications: Do you know what your builder is building?

If your answer is "Yes", then please pause to answer the following questions:

1. What bricks is your builder using? Where is he getting them from and are they suitable for your project?
2. What quality of windows and doors is your builder installing and where is he getting them from?
3. Did all the builders that you received quotes from, quote on the same quality of items or did one of them quote on inferior and sub-standard products because they're cheap?
4. Likewise with your plumbing pipes, electrical work and switches, paint quality, door locks and handles, flooring, shower doors and a pile of other items that I can mention. Do you know what products you are paying for and are you are sure you are getting what you paid for?

If your architect or designer has discussed all these issues with you and presented your builder with a detailed specification for your building project then the chances are that you will have been able to answer the questions posed. Your builder would then also have quoted on those items and will be installing them.

If, however, you only asked your designer for a basic drawing in order to save some money on fees which you then gave to the various builders to quote on, then the chances are very real that you are going to have very little control on the quality of many of the materials that you end up with in your building. If there is no specification, then the chances are that your builder is going to price the cheapest in the range and unfortunately, you will only find that out after a year or two when things start going wrong.

If you are going to compromise on design costs in order to "save" a few thousand rand at the start of your project, experience says that you will often pay far more than you saved to fix things up later. Either that or you will often have to learn to live with products that do not perform to your expectation.

My advice to you is pay the extra and get a proper specification for your project from your architect and know what it is that you are actually building. It will be well worth the money spent and will increase the value of your investment.

This is what a typical House Specification should look like. It may vary in the amount of detail but make sure you have one in your hand before you start building.

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