

DESIGN ENHANCING LIFE



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Newsletter

RENOVATE OR KNOCK IT DOWN AND START AGAIN?

So it's time for a change. You want to improve the overall liveability of your home, but you're torn between whether to renovate or demolish your existing home and build a new one.

Well both options have their advantages and disadvantages, and at the end of the day, demolishing your existing home and building a new one can sometimes be more cost effective, but that does not mean that it will necessarily deliver you a better outcome. Before making any decision there are a number of factors that you should consider like:

- What are your real needs? Do you really need to build a complete new home, or would a renovation better serve your needs?
- Depending on where your home is and the age of your home you may or may not have the right to demolish your home, in which case renovating is your only option.
- Depending on the standard of your new home verses the standard of a renovation

the cost of new is not automatically cheaper. Unless you are building a very basic and very standard new home the cost of renovating verses new can often be the same.

- If you plan to remain in your home long term you need to fully consider your lifestyle needs. Basic new homes tend not to stand the test of time. Based on their quality they will often need renovating in 10 to 15 years time and potentially sooner than this. Some older homes have been functional for 70 to 100 years and can last that long again after a detailed renovation.

The cost of renovating vs. demolishing and building from scratch must be carefully weighed up. Whilst it can be cheaper to build a new home than do extensive renovations on an existing home, the cost of demolishing your current home needs to be factored in, along

with the cost of renting while demolishing and building work is taking place.

Often homes in inner city suburbs cannot be demolished due to character controls. However costs can be kept down by carefully planning your renovation and recycling much of your existing home, allowing you to add to your home by effectively doing a significant amount of new building work rather than a lot of true 'renovation' work.

At Dion Seminara Architecture we understand how to achieve your lifestyle goals for less. So whether you're thinking about renovating, or demolishing your current home and building a new one we can save you money and deliver the ideal outcome for your budget. So give us a call today and let us help you achieve your liveability goals.



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CONSIDER ENGAGING AN ARCHITECT

WHO:

- Understands climate design, this can save you thousands by harnessing natural airflow and conditioning;
- Is experienced in residential architecture, this can save you thousands during the construction phase of your work, as well as ensuring higher standards of work and a more functional and attractive outcome;
- Understands human movement, this can maximise your design to improve the flow through your home and take advantage of great views and vistas;
- Knows how to maximise the space in each room in any design you are considering by laying out furniture in the spaces.



SUBTROPICAL DESIGN: TAKING ADVANTAGE OF QUEENSLAND'S CLIMATE

If there is one thing that I love about Brisbane it is our climate.

Our weather is so much milder than that of Sydney or Melbourne. Yet few home designs take advantage of our gorgeous weather. Big square brick homes dominate house blocks, with few trees and little in the way of undercover outdoor areas.

Why is this so? Well simply because very few building designers truly understand subtropical design.

Subtropical design creates a strong connection between the inside and outside areas of the home, whilst allowing us to take advantage of nature's assets; keeping our homes cool in summer and warm in winter without consuming huge amounts of energy.

In essence, a subtropical design strives to achieve four key goals:

1. CONTROLLING TEMPERATURE
2. CONTROLLING THE FLOW OF AIR MOVEMENT
3. REDUCING ENERGY CONSUMPTION
4. CREATING A LINK BETWEEN INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SPACES

There are various ways in which these aims are achieved. For example, temperature can be controlled by simple measures like ceiling and wall insulation and using roof ventilation to allow heat to escape from the roof cavity. These measures, when combined with a design that directs natural breezes through the home can dramatically improve comfort levels without the need for air-conditioners and heaters.

But these are just the basics. There are many things that go into creating a subtropical design for any home, such as:

Open Planned Living Areas: Escaping heat and humidity are important considerations for anyone living in Queensland. By creating an open planned design, it is possible to maximise the flow of air through your home, and improve cross ventilation.

Shaded Decks: Even though Brisbane's climate is more moderate than those of other cities, you still do not want to be sitting directly in the sun for any length of time. Having shaded decks allows you to create comfortable outdoor living areas that reduce direct heat and capture cooling breezes.

Verandahs and/or Wide Eaves: Direct sunlight creates heat in homes, which is desirable in winter, but undesirable in summer. Fortunately the summer sun travels in a higher arc through the sky than the winter sun does. Well designed verandahs can be built in such a way that they keep the summers sun off your walls and windows, yet allow the lower winters sun to warm your home.

Using Lightweight Materials: If you were going to build an oven, you would want to construct it out of dense material that absorbs and retains heat. Concrete and bricks would be two suitable materials for this purpose. But given that you are building a home, and not an oven, it is important to use lighter materials where possible. Lightweight materials that do not retain unwanted heat are ideal for areas that receive direct sunlight.

Garden Design: Planting trees on the eastern and western sides of your home can cut down the amount of sunshine that strikes your walls. Replacing paving and concrete footpaths with ground cover plants can also help to reduce interior temperatures within your home.

Subtropical designs not only reduce power consumption, they also add tremendous value in terms of lifestyle and liveability. By creating designs that give a feeling of connection with the outdoors you can instantly create spaces that are visually appealing; relaxing, inviting spaces where the stresses of day to day life seem a world away.

So if you want to create a living environment that is low on power consumption but high in liveability, then call me today to discuss how a subtropical design for your home can enhance your lifestyle.

PROOF THAT YOU ONLY GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

We all like to save money where we can. But what if your attempts to cut costs actually cost you more money in the long run?

Well according to some recent studies, that is exactly what is happening in the building industry today.

Ever since our competition authorities forced the industry to discard its compulsory fee scales in the 1980s, people and companies bidding for design work have decided to focus on price rather than quality and value. It is an accepted fact that as a direct result, project costs have actually risen by between 10% and 15%!

You're probably wondering how focusing on cheaper prices has driven up the overall cost of projects. So let me explain.

Researchers have found that the low fees approach has had a significant negative impact on the quality of project design documentation, leading to an inefficient, non-competitive industry.

In the good old days, fee scales like the one established by the Association of Consulting Engineers Australia (ACEA) were able to maintain professional standards with minimum fees. In other words skills and qualifications were rewarded at a set rate. After fee scales were abolished, it didn't take long for people to notice a difference in terms of service and delivery.

This was first identified in a report that was prepared by the National Public Works Conference (NPWC) and the National Building and Construction Council (NBCC) in the 1990, which identified that architects often tendered on sketch plans and allowed builders to start building before all the drawings were ready! Problems, they said, were inevitable.

Similar findings were handed down in research conducted by the Construction Industry Development Association (CIDA) just a few years later. In 1999 the CSIRO conducted a survey that investigated the various factors thought to affect the quality of design and documentation as well as the impact of inferior design and design documentation on construction efficiency and construction costs.

The survey identified a direct relationship between construction documentation and both the time and cost of building. It also showed that the level of fees paid to architects and design consultants had an obvious affect on the quality of documentation supplied. The higher the fee, the better the documentation was.

Unfortunately, though, the survey found that people were opting for lower fees – to save money – and ending up paying higher construction costs, often simply because the build took longer to complete. The bottom line, CSIRO said after analysing the survey, was that poor design and poor documentation quite simply hit project costs and increase them.

In 2001 and 2002, the Australian Procurement and Construction Council (APCC) and the Australian Industry Forum (ACIF) came up with similar results in yet another study.

Then in 2005, an industry-wide task force prepared yet another report. Called Getting It Right the First Time, it examined the problem in Queensland. They noted that the quality of project design documentation in the building, engineering and construction industry had *“declined significantly over the past 15 to 20 years”*. They also noted that this had had a negative impact on *“current practices”* as well as resulting in *“enormous cost penalties”* within the industry.

In monetary terms, this report stated, Queensland alone was losing \$2-billion a year. The researchers estimated that Australia as a whole was losing at least \$12-billion every year. Now that really is something to worry about.

So how does this affect you the consumer? Well quite simply it means that trying to save money on the design phase of your project is very likely to result in your project costing a lot more than it should.

So if you're serious about saving money and getting the very best lifestyle outcome, then you simply must call Dion Seminara Architecture for all your renovation and new building needs.

4 STEPS TO THE PERFECT HOME

At Dion Seminara Architecture we offer a range of services that ensure the success of your project. Broken up into 4 easy steps that takes into consideration our climate and your hip pocket.

1. Advice Services

- Personal one on one service
- Exploring your true needs
- Offering creative design solutions

2. Design Services

- Concept Sketch Design
- Measured Drawing if required
- Concept Revisions
- Independent Cost Estimate

3. Documentation Services

- Building Application Drawings
- Construction Drawings & Spec
- Coordinating all Consultants

4. Contract Management Services

- Sourcing Builders
- Tenders & Negotiation
- Contract Administration of Builder

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