

DESIGN ENHANCING LIFE



architecture



interiors



landscapes

dion seminara architecture

Newsletter

DOWNPLAYING YOUR BUDGET WILL COST YOU MONEY

I am constantly surprised at how many people don't want to tell me their exact budget when I first meet them. Many people will beat around the bush and give a rough budget range, whilst others will understate their true budget by a significant amount.

Sure, I understand that we are all programmed to do this. Many of us believe that if we tell someone how much we can really afford to spend that they will increase their prices to ensure that they take every last cent. But what some people fail to realise is that my motivation is to get them the very best value for money, regardless of the size of their budget.

But by not being completely honest with how much they can afford to spend, many clients are actually making it harder for me to save them money.

Let me give you an example that will help illustrate my point ...

Imagine that you have been conservative with your budget when talking to me. You tell me what you want and your undervalued figure

how much you can afford to invest. I then go away and create plans based on your lifestyle needs, but limited by your budget constraints. Your plans will of course be stunning, but they might not include EVERYTHING that you wanted, simply because it was my understanding that your budget did not allow for some additions.

But that's ok, you can always get things upgraded and/or added in at the building stage right?

Well yes you can, but chances are you will pay a whole lot more for them. You see, at the quoting stage your builder is motivated to give you the best price to get your business. But after the contract is signed, adding something else in, or upgrading to something of higher quality which is outside of the scope of the original building quote will almost always cost you more money. Why? Because the builders motivation is now to make more profit.

And once you are locked into using a particular builder you are indeed locked in. If you try to get some things added after the contract is signed you can expect to be paying top dollar.

However, clients who give me a clear understanding of the upper limit of their budget avoid these problems.

Understanding your true budget up front allows me to ensure that everything is included in the detailed documentation, which brings me to an important point; we don't just offer design, we also offer building approval and construction documentation. Our sketch design service is just the beginning of the process, it does not include exact specifications. Without the full specs contained within our detailed documentation builders cannot accurately quote on your project. Our documentation service spells everything out and ensures that when you get your 3 quotes, you are getting the very best price with everything included.

So if saving money and getting the very best outcome is your goal, then you need to be completely up front about your budget and invest in having us put together your detailed documentation.



dion seminara architecture

3D DREAMING

Want to see what your dream home will look like before the building work even commences?

Well now you can thanks to our 3D services. We offer a Lifestyle 3D design sketch service, a 3D walk through service as well as our 3D modelling service, all designed to bring your dreams to life on paper.

Call us today and let us show you your dreams in 3D.



FLOOD RECOVERY: WHAT THOSE AFFECTED NEED TO KNOW

Firstly, I wish to extend my sympathy to those affected. I have spoken to some of our clients who have been impacted by the devastating Queensland floods and I can only imagine how traumatic it is for those who have lost so much.

For those who have been affected, or who know somebody whose home was damaged during the floods I would like to make you aware of some points that you may not have considered or fully understood.

INSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL FEES

Many people who have flood damage insurance are surprised to know that most insurance policies have an allowance for professional fees. In other words, if you have insurance cover, then chances are your insurance would pay for my fees (or any other architect or an engineer). It's not surprising that most people don't realise this, as insurance companies don't tend to promote this fact.

I mention this because there are many benefits in having a professional assist you with your rebuild/repairs. If you do wish to engage a professional to assist you, I would strongly recommend looking over your insurance policy, or contacting your insurance company and asking if professional fees are indeed covered. Chances are they will be.

ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGE

If you haven't done so already it would pay to have the damage assessed by a professional to ensure the structural integrity of the building has not been compromised in any way. We can arrange this for you if required.

SCOPE OF INCLUSIONS

The next step in your renovations/repairs is to set out the scope of the work that needs to be done and what inclusions are involved. Even if you are not altering the design of your original home, it is useful to have an architect assist you with putting this together, as we are independent; working for you, not the insurance company or builder.

Having us put together drawings and specifications ensure that the quotes you receive are accurate,

with everything clearly laid out. You don't want to find that the quote you accepted did not cover everything as costs can blow out and work will be delayed if this happens.

GETTING QUOTES

Once drawings, specifications and inclusions have been put together it is now time to arrange for some quotes. You should really aim to get at least three to ensure that you're getting the best possible deal. If you choose to work with Dion Seminara Architecture we can organise to get these quotes for you. We will then go over them with you to ensure you understand the pros and cons of each one.

Currently there are a lot of builders struggling to find work, which makes this a great time to be getting quotes as builders are prepared to dramatically drop their prices just to get work coming in the door. So if you are getting repairs or renovation work done you can expect to get some pretty amazing deals at the moment.

SIGNING THE CONTRACT

Upon selecting the best quote you will now be required to sign a contract with the builder. If you have ever read my blog article on this subject then you will know where I stand on this issue. It's important to have a professional look over it to ensure there are no hidden extras. We can look over your contract for you.

OVERSEEING THE REPAIRS

Finally it is important to keep an eye on the work that is being done. Often repairs and rebuilds after a flood tend to be done quickly with a lot of trade people all working together on the project. Having someone keep an eye on their progress and overall quality of work can help to avoid a disappointing outcome in the long run.

So if you, or someone that you know has been affected by the floods and needs help with the repair/rebuilding process, then please give us a call and let us help you through this difficult time.

THERE IS NO *Recipe* for GREAT DESIGN

Have you ever gone out for dinner and ordered a dish that you occasionally make at home yourself, only to notice how much better it tastes when it's prepared by an experienced chef?

You may have wondered why, when they are essentially using the same ingredients as you.

Well the reason is simple – it's because the chef is so skilled and experienced, they no longer need the recipe. They simply take the ingredients and create something truly magnificent.

Great home design is a lot like great cooking. Sure the ingredients may look the same – walls, roof, doors, windows etc. – but it's the skill in blending them all together that is the difference between good and great design.

So how do I consistently create great designs you may ask? Well firstly, I understand the recipe. In other words, I know the basics of great design inside and out. But more importantly experience and design ability allows me to go beyond the 'recipe'.

For me great design starts with truly understanding what my client wants. I don't mean the part where they say 'We thought we could put the laundry here'; I mean finding out what their true lifestyle goals are.

You see, whilst it is very useful for clients to have an idea of what they want, seldom do they know the best way to achieve those goals. In fact, I recently had a client pay me the ultimate compliment when upon seeing the draft design she said: 'It's nothing like what I asked for, but more than I could have hoped for'. By getting my clients to tell me the lifestyle outcome they wanted to achieve, I was able to create the perfect design for their particular needs.

I effectively strip what my clients tell me back to the bare essence of 'What is your preferred lifestyle'. Once I understand exactly what my client's desire, I then bring everything together in a way that meets their liveability goals.

My designs add real value to my client's homes maximising their overall investment by utilising our beautiful climate to full effect; designs that are well proportioned, timeless creations that will serve my clients needs now and well into the future.

But whilst great sketch designs are a useful start, they are really only the beginning of a great design. The true benefit of our design services are only fully realised through our additional services such as detailed design and contract and/or construction documentation services.

Essentially, this is the part where we ensure that the 'ingredients' of a great design are mixed correctly; in the same way that a talented chef brings together the ingredients in such a way that they taste magnificent. It is these additional services that result in the perfect design for your home.

Taking our initial sketch designs and giving them to a builder/draftsperson will result in the final design being ruined, in the same way that taking a chefs recipe and giving it to a less talented cook will result in an unpalatable dish. The very best results come from letting the very best people look after your entire design.

So if you want the best outcome for your home or renovation design, contact me today and arrange for one of our unique Lifestyle Assessments. As one client recently commented – it's the best investment you'll ever make.

ARCHITECT'S TIPS

- Despite media reports, builders are far from busy, making this a great time to build.
- Now is the time to get us to help with your home design, your construction documentation and your building approval.
- It takes 6 months minimum to prepare documentation that can save you 20-30% on the cost of your project so you need to act now to take advantage of this opportunity.
- If you have been affected by floods make sure you take advantage of the professional fees component that exists in most insurance policies.
- Keep in mind that we can assist you in scoping what needs to be replaced.

dion seminara architecture





Member
Australian
Institute of
Architects

Telephone: 07 3899 9450

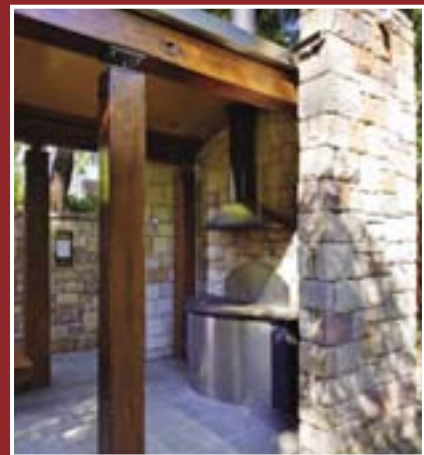
Mobile: 0402 842 096

Facsimile: 07 3899 8436

Email: architects@dsarchitecture.com.au

Suite 1, 6A Thynne Road Morningside Qld 4170

P.O. Box 465 Bulimba Qld 4171



www.dsarchitecture.com.au

Dion holds a Bachelor of Architecture with honours and is a registered architect and licensed builder. He is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects - at the most senior level - who has been recognised for his long standing involvement in the pursuit of excellence in architectural profession and service to this association.