



NORTHGATE

THE 70% PARADOX

WHY MOST DREAM HOMES NEVER
GET BUILT & SIX STRATEGIES TO
ENSURE YOURS DOES

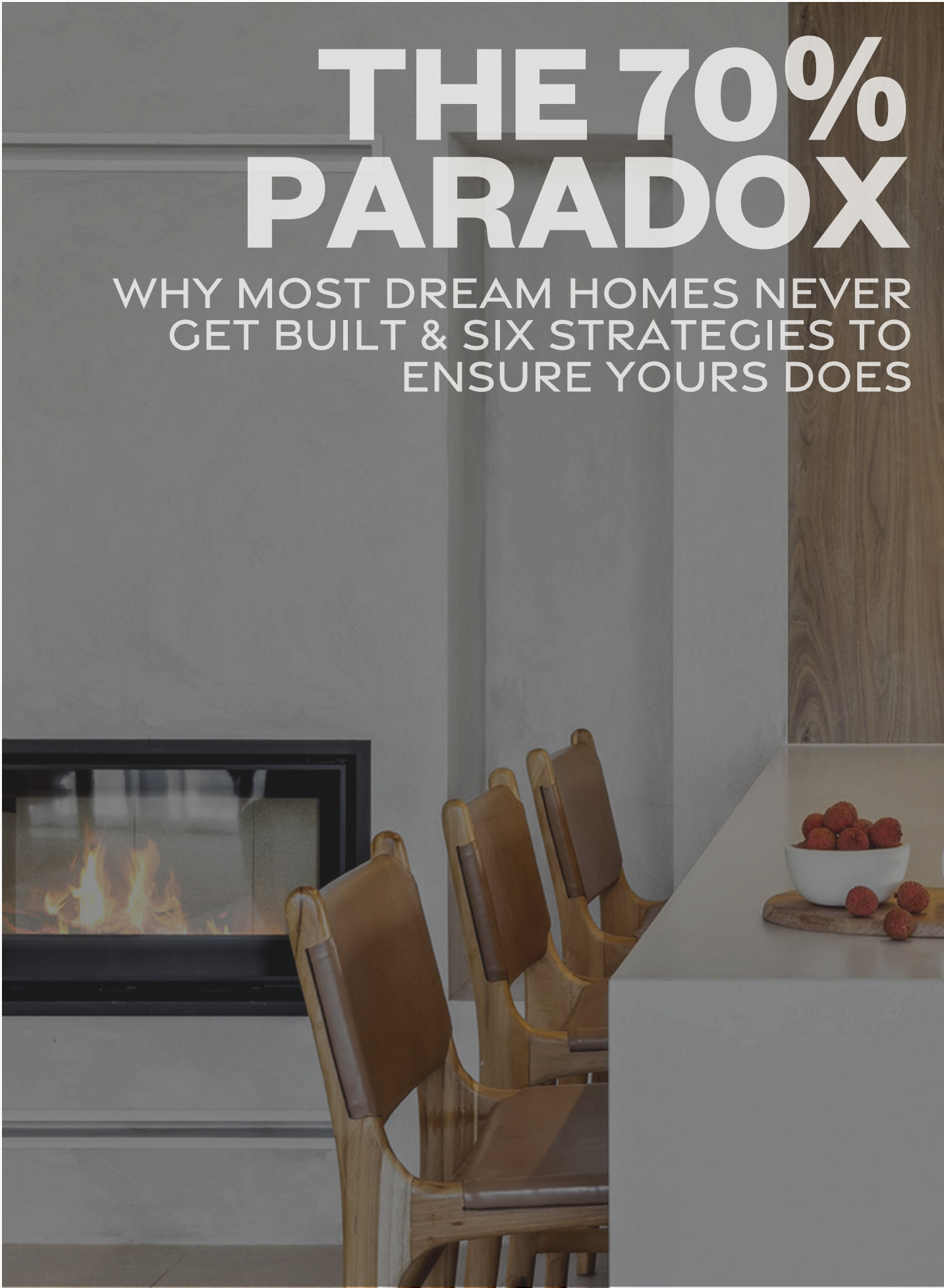


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THE 6 DECISIONS THAT TURN VISION INTO REALITY.

In this guide, **'the paradox'** is simple: most homes fail not because of design, but because of a handful of preventable decisions made at the wrong time.

You have probably been imagining this home for years, a place that truly supports how you live and reflects the work you have put into your life. That vision often begins long before the plans, the land, or the budget are finalised.

What many people don't realise is that close to **70 per cent of designed homes never get built**. It's rarely because the idea was wrong. More often, **six critical decisions** were made too early, too late, or without the right guidance. Even among projects that do move forward, many homeowners finish feeling they had to compromise. The difference between a home delivered with **clarity and confidence** and one that becomes stressful usually comes down to these six decisions, and to builders who understand how to guide them properly.

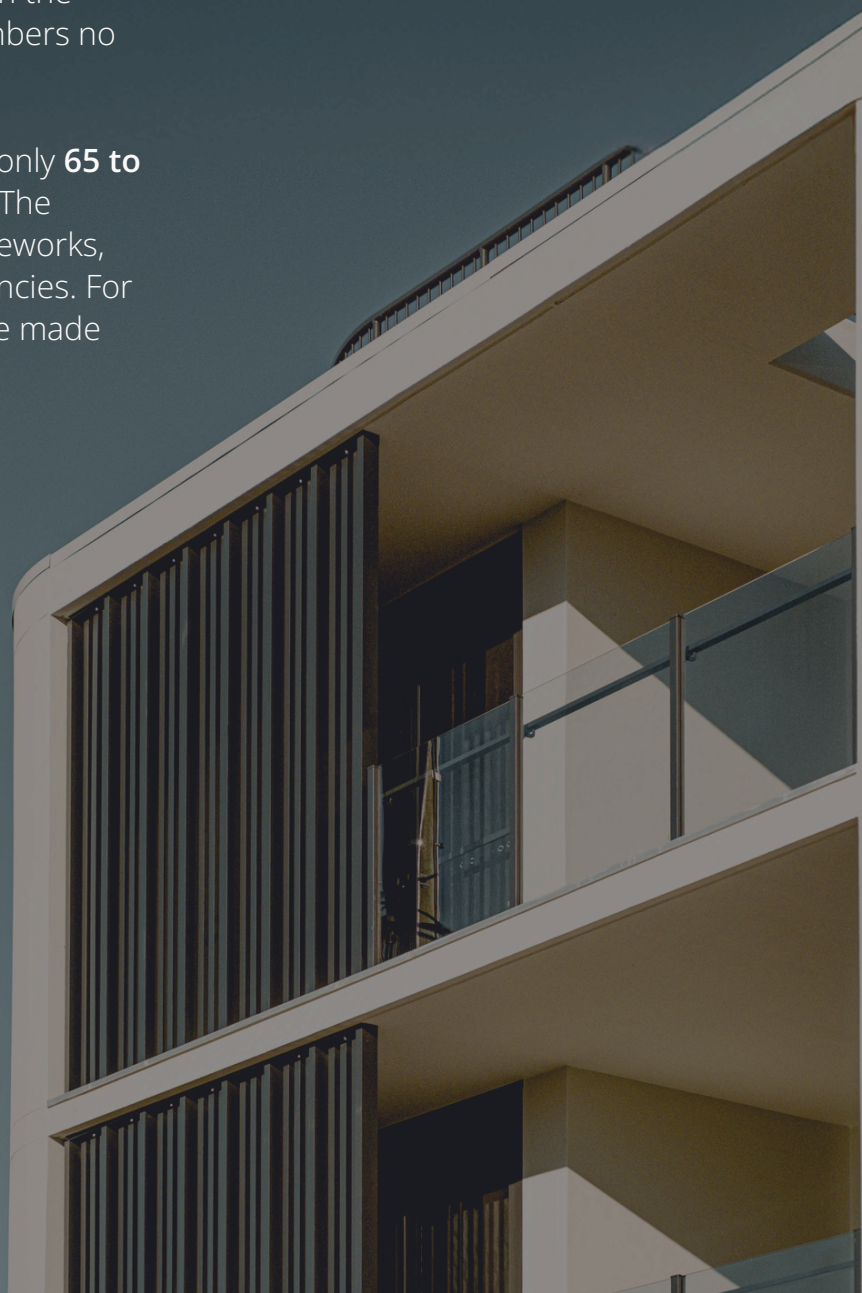
1

BRING YOUR BUILDER IN DURING DESIGN STAGE

When your vision has the most potential and needs the right guidance

Most projects follow the same pattern. An architect designs, clients fall in love with the plans, the builder quotes, and the numbers no longer align.

Construction costs typically represent only **65 to 75 percent of the total project cost**. The remainder sits in design, approvals, siteworks, landscaping, furnishings, and contingencies. For this reason, design decisions should be made with the **full picture** in mind.



A better approach is simple. Confirm your **total project budget** first, work back to your **construction budget**, then **involve your builder early in the design stage**. This prevents falling in love with ideas that do not suit the budget or the site.

When architects, builders, and clients work together from the beginning, the design remains both **inspiring and achievable**. Your builder provides clarity on where **cost can be managed** and where investment genuinely adds **long-term value**.

Ask: “At what stage should I bring you into the process, and why?”

If the answer is **“once the plans are done”**, they are only prepared to quote rather than guide and protect your vision.



2

LOCK IN YOUR DESIGN DECISIONS BEFORE CONSTRUCTION STARTS

Clarity over compromise

Incomplete design leads to **rushed decisions**, **avoidable variations**, and outcomes that miss the mark.

Design completion means **every finish, fixture, and detail resolved**. When construction is underway, decisions become **reactive**. Trades are waiting, timelines are tight, and choices are made under pressure.

FOR EXAMPLE

Your tiler is arriving on Tuesday, but tiles are not selected. You rush to a showroom, choose something acceptable, and move on quickly. Multiply that across more than 150 decisions and the result becomes a collection of choices that are **acceptable rather than deliberate**.

Homes that feel considered and enduring are the ones where clients had the **time and guidance** to make informed decisions early. This is not about perfection. It is about **clarity**.

If your architect, designer, and builder cannot support you in completing selections before construction, you are starting from a **compromised position**.



3

NAVIGATE APPROVALS STRATEGICALLY

Most builders and designers accept a **“no” from council or a certifier** and adjust the design accordingly. It is common, but it can **limit what is possible**.

Exceptional builders understand local planning controls and environment controls well enough to work with consultants, engineers, and certifiers to find **compliant pathways** that keep your **design intent intact**.

This is not about pushing boundaries improperly. It is about understanding the **reasoning behind requirements** so solutions can be developed that satisfy both **compliance and design goals**.

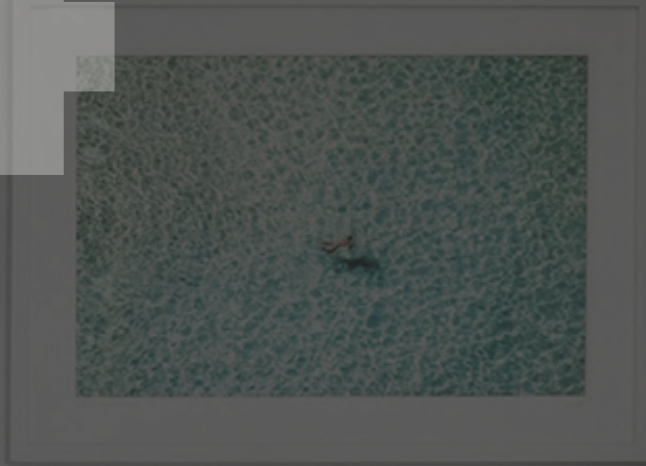
ASK: “CAN YOU SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU HAVE NAVIGATED A COMPLEX APPROVAL?”

If the answer is vague, they may accept limitations rather than work through them.

Look for builders who clearly explain past challenges they have solved, whether structural, waterproofing, fire compliance, or design constraints. This demonstrates **capability and mindset**.



4



CHOOSE YOUR BUILDER BASED ON CAPABILITY, NOT COST

You're not just selecting a number, you are choosing a partner.

A noticeably low quote usually means **something is missing**. It may be **scope, supervision, workmanship, or experience**. These gaps almost always appear again during construction.

You are not just choosing a price. You are choosing the **people you will work** with for the next 6 to 18 months, the way issues will be handled, and the quality of trades in your home.

Experienced builders solve problems calmly and efficiently with a **solutions focused mindset**, keeping the client's vision and budget protected at all times.

Awards are not everything, but they show the builder's work has been assessed by people with **decades of industry knowledge**. Clear **processes**, strong trade **relationships**, and reliable **suppliers** all contribute to better value and better outcomes.

ASK

"Can you walk me through how you manage a project day-to-day?"

"Can you clearly explain where the costs are sitting, and why?"

Listen for clarity, not just confidence.



5

EXPECT WEEKLY UPDATES AND A DETAILED CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Confidence in Communication

Poor communication creates stress and unnecessary pressure. Most people under-communicate, some over communicate. Do you know the difference in construction?

Exceptional project management means you know **what is happening, when it's happening and why** it's happening. This includes works completed, what is coming up next, and any decisions required from you.

This may be an online portal, weekly reports, or a simple group message with photos and updates. The tool matters less than the **consistency**.

A reliable builder has a **detailed construction program** before the project begins and updates it as the build progresses. They will not call about every small issue. They will call only when they have all the pieces together and the **solutions mapped out** with a recommendation on the best way to proceed.

ASK:

"Can you show me how you communicate with clients during a build?"

Examples of **real updates**, with details removed, are a strong indicator of a reliable system.



6

KNOW HOW TO COMPARE QUALITY STANDARDS

Because everything depends on the foundations

The most important parts of your home are the ones you cannot see. **Structure, waterproofing, building performance and hidden workmanship** determine comfort, longevity and maintenance far more than finishes ever will.

Ask the right questions.



"What does your quality management system look like?"

Experienced builders can explain their process clearly. This includes licensed builder **supervision**, management **inspections**, trade **benchmarks**, internal & external **checks**, and how consistency is maintained.

"How do you approach waterproofing and building envelope performance?"

If they focus on finish samples before **building science**, that reveals their priorities. And if they cannot explain the fundamentals clearly, it raises a fair question about how well they understand them themselves.

Notice how a builder speaks about their trades. Quality builders show **respect for the people doing the work**. If someone speaks poorly about their trades or treats them as interchangeable, that is the standard you can expect on your project.

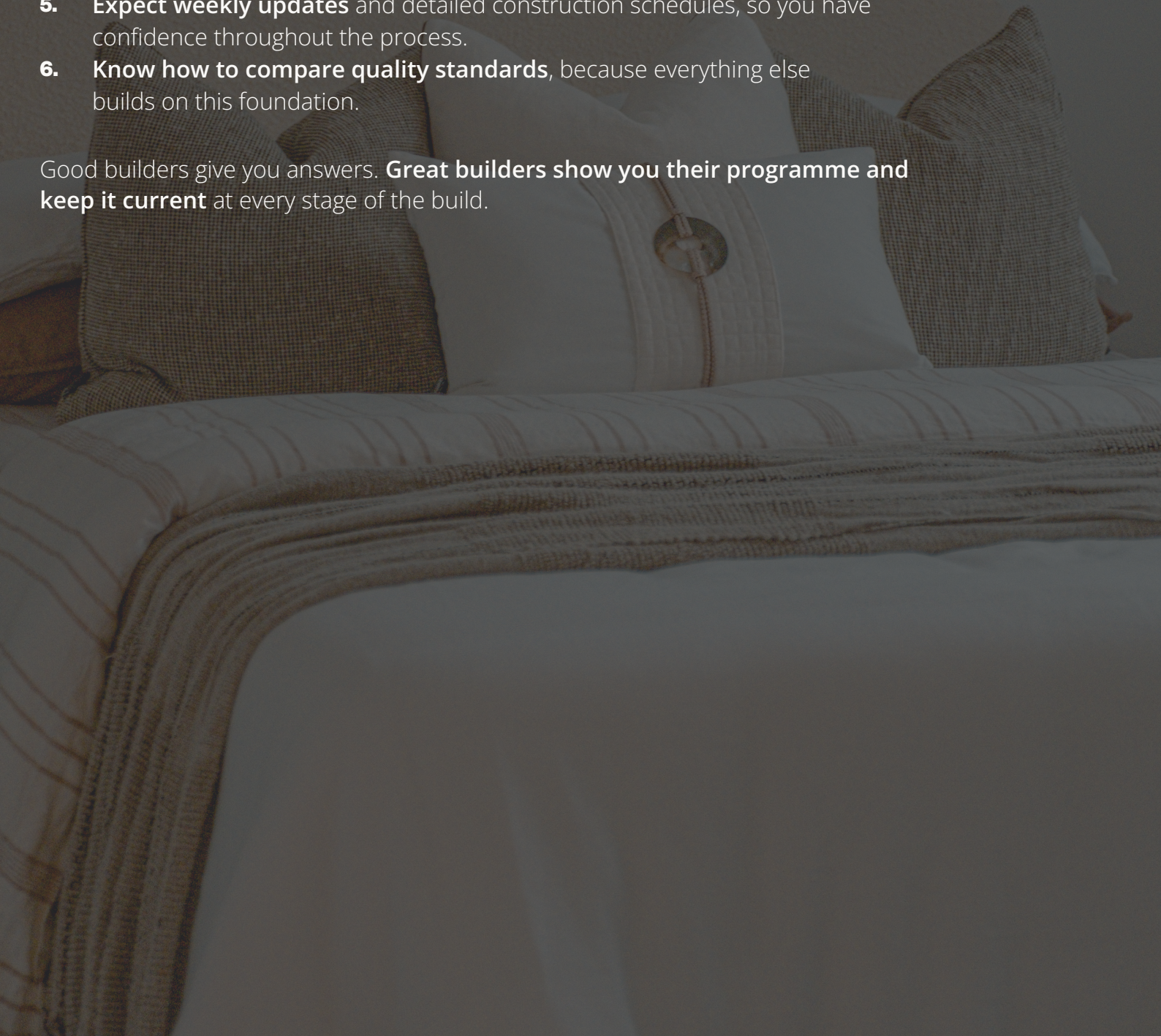
Quality is not about spending more. It is about working with builders who **never compromise on fundamentals**, even when no one else will notice. The builders worth choosing take as much pride in the **unseen work** as the work everyone admires. That is the standard your home deserves.



THE 6 DECISIONS THAT SHAPE YOUR OUTCOME

1. **Bring your builder in during concept design**, when your vision has the most potential.
2. **Lock in your design decisions** before construction starts, so every choice is thoughtful rather than rushed.
3. **Navigate approvals strategically** to turn “no” into “how can this work?”
4. **Choose your builder based on capability**, not cost. You are selecting a delivery partner, not just a number.
5. **Expect weekly updates** and detailed construction schedules, so you have confidence throughout the process.
6. **Know how to compare quality standards**, because everything else builds on this foundation.

Good builders give you answers. **Great builders show you their programme and keep it current** at every stage of the build.





YOUR NEXT STEP

At Northgate Building Group, we build across Sydney and Newcastle using these principles every day. We work with homeowners who value **quality, clear communication and a director-led process** that protects their vision from start to finish.

If this resonates with you, we would love to discuss your project.

“When you get the process right at the start, the outcome takes care of itself.”

BOOK YOUR 20-MINUTE BUILDING CONSULTATION TODAY.

CONTACT NORTHGATE

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