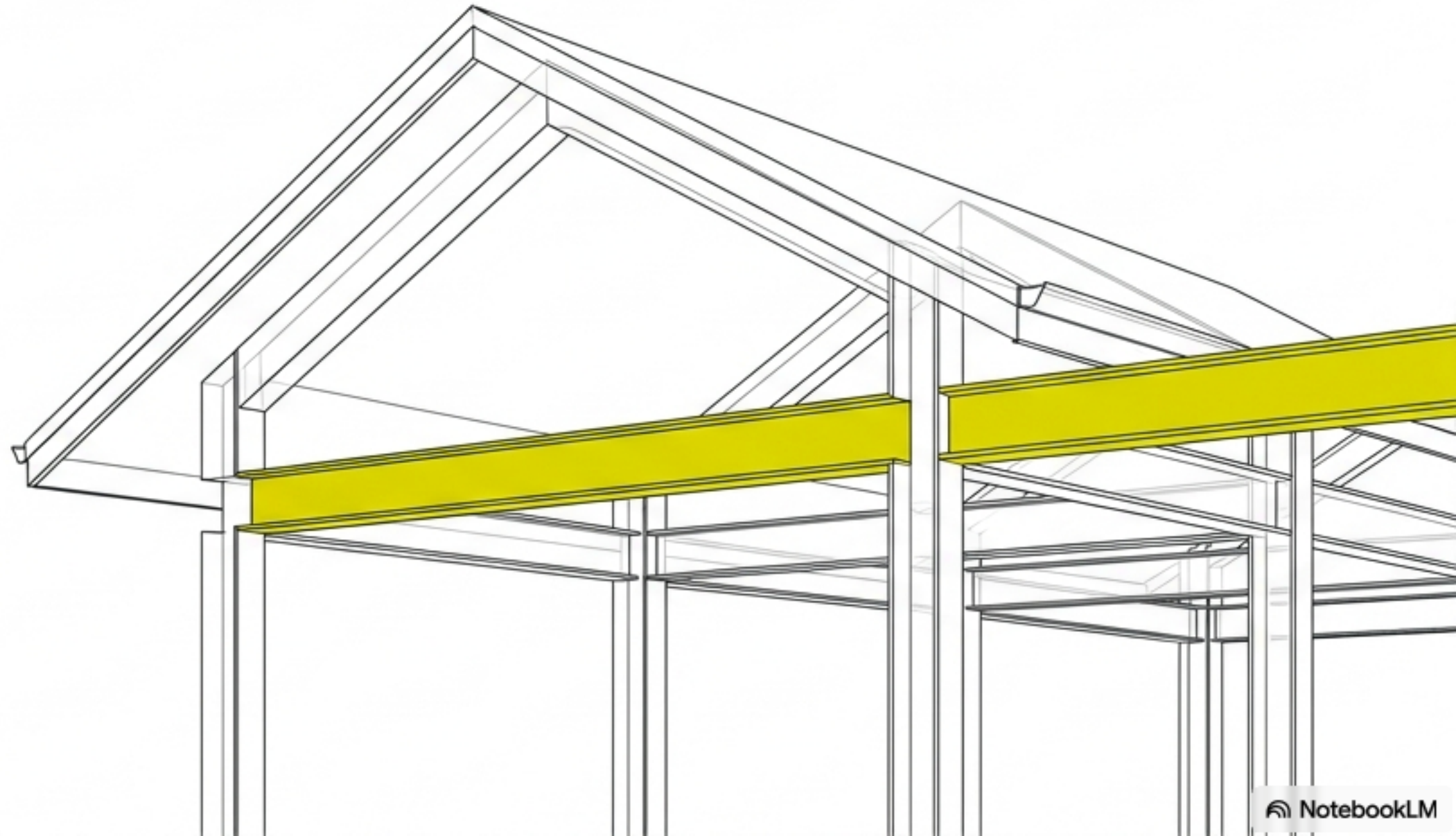


# How to Choose an Architectural Home Builder

A definitive playbook for bespoke, energy efficient homes in New Zealand.



# **A different kind of home requires a different set of rules.**

The moment you decide to build a bespoke or high-performance energy efficient home, your evaluation criteria must change. You are no longer comparing catalogue sticker prices. You are evaluating craft, pricing honesty, and project leadership. Choosing an architectural builder requires an entirely different lens.



# The Builder Dichotomy

Both approaches are valid; they are simply different jobs.

|                    | Volume Builder                         | Architectural Builder                                    |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Home Type          | Set range of plans, adapted to site    | One-off, shaped to site, sun, and lifestyle              |
| Pricing Focus      | Hitting a set budget target            | Open-book honesty and accurate forecasting               |
| Project Management | Handled via head office silos          | End-to-end leadership by a single dedicated team         |
| Measure of Success | Volume delivered and margin maintained | Craftsmanship, transparency, and architectural integrity |

# Evaluating the Bespoke Market

A good builder is happy to show you their mechanics, because they have nothing to hide.

## Trust Indicators

- Finished homes and reachable owners you can question.
- One cohesive team managing design coordination, trades, and programme.
- Verified Master Builders or Certified Builders guarantees.
- Clear, honest, and highly organised early communication.

## Warning Signs

- No references you can contact; homes you are not allowed to visit.
- Fragmented management where responsibility is passed around.
- Vague credentials without verifiable backing.
- Poor communication before you have even signed.



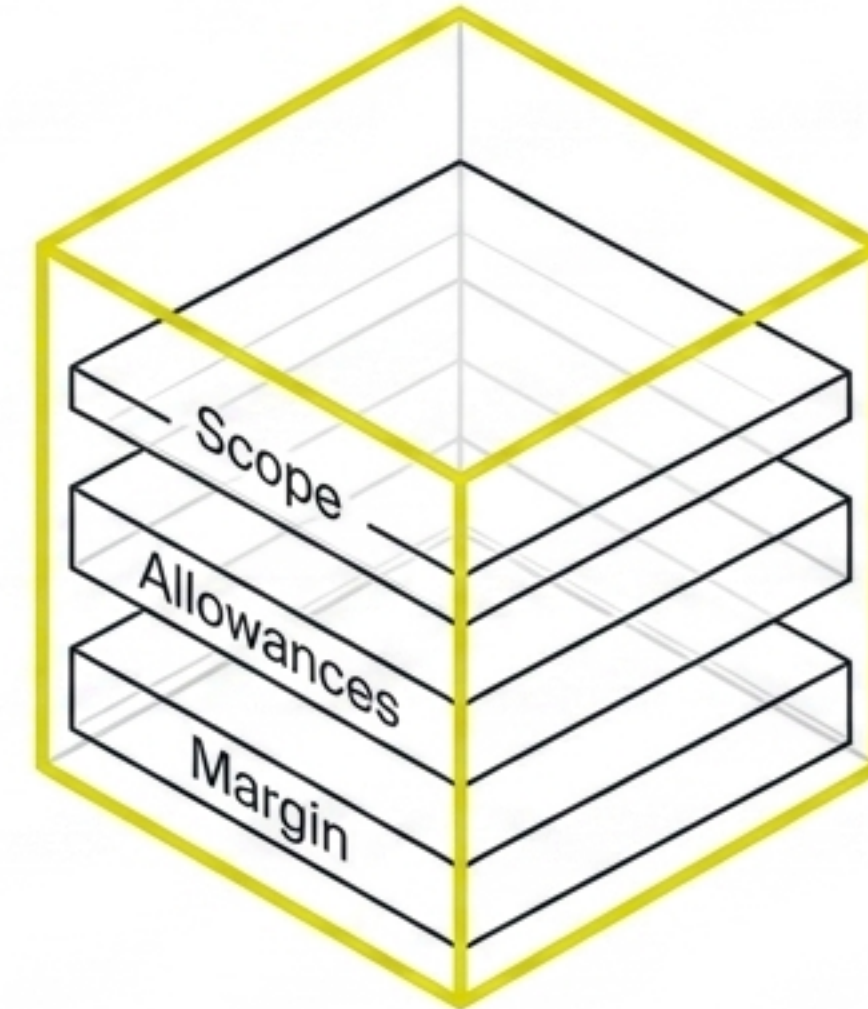
# The Pricing Trap

## The Fixed-Price Illusion

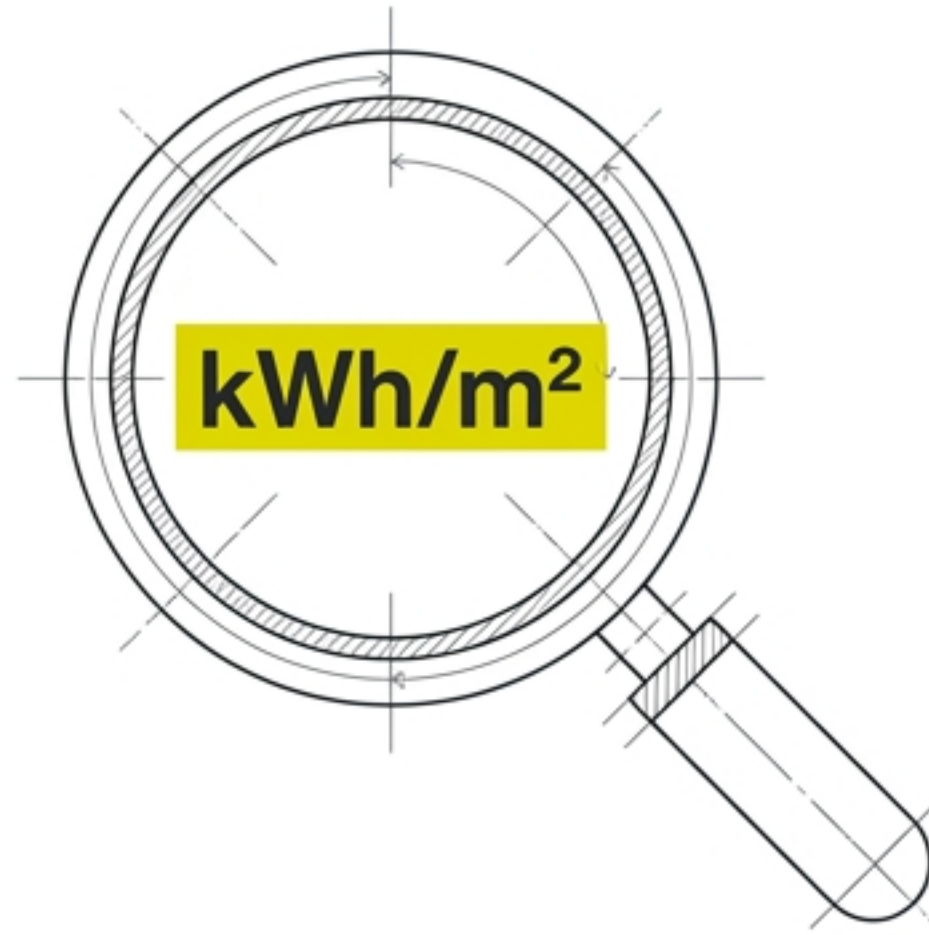


The lowest quote is the classic trap. It wins on the lowest initial number, but hides the margins. The builder then recovers the difference through costly variations once you are locked in. The cheapest quote and the blown-out build are often the same one.

## The Open-Book Standard



Ecotectural builders utilise open-book, itemised pricing. You see the exact scope, realistic allowances, and a clear margin—not a mystery number. This transparency aligns the builder's financial interests with your own.

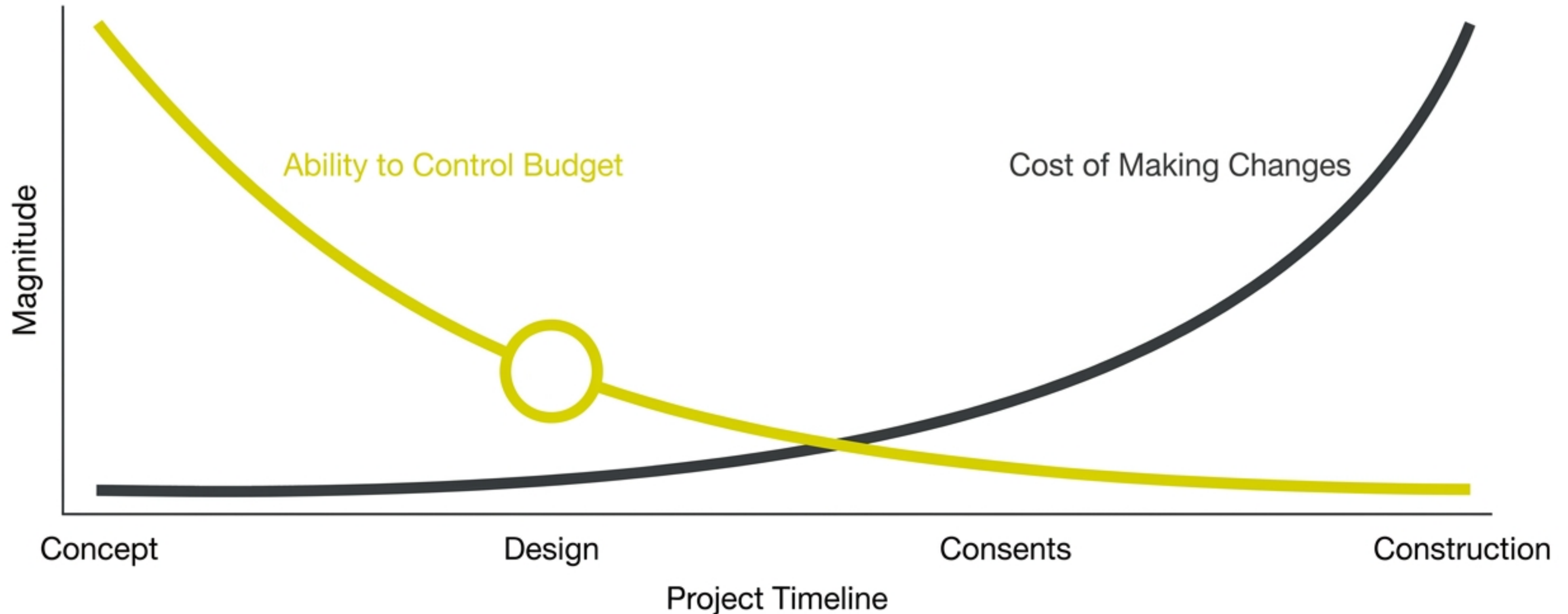


## Demand evidence for energy efficient claims

A vague performance claim—such as promising to build to a Passive House standard with nothing specific behind it—is a warning sign, not a selling point. A credible, high-performance builder does not rely on marketing buzzwords; they can point to real homes, real data, and recognised verification (such as PHINZ).

# The Early Engagement Leverage Curve

The greatest value a builder adds happens before the design is finished. The earlier the right builder is at the table, the more of your design and budget you control.





# The Architecture of Early Engagement



## Late Engagement

Choose a builder late, once plans are locked, and you have essentially hired skilled hands to build what someone else drew. You lose the opportunity for cost-saving foresight.

## Early Engagement

Choose a builder early, and you hire their cost knowledge and buildability. They shape the home while every decision is still cheap to change—on paper.

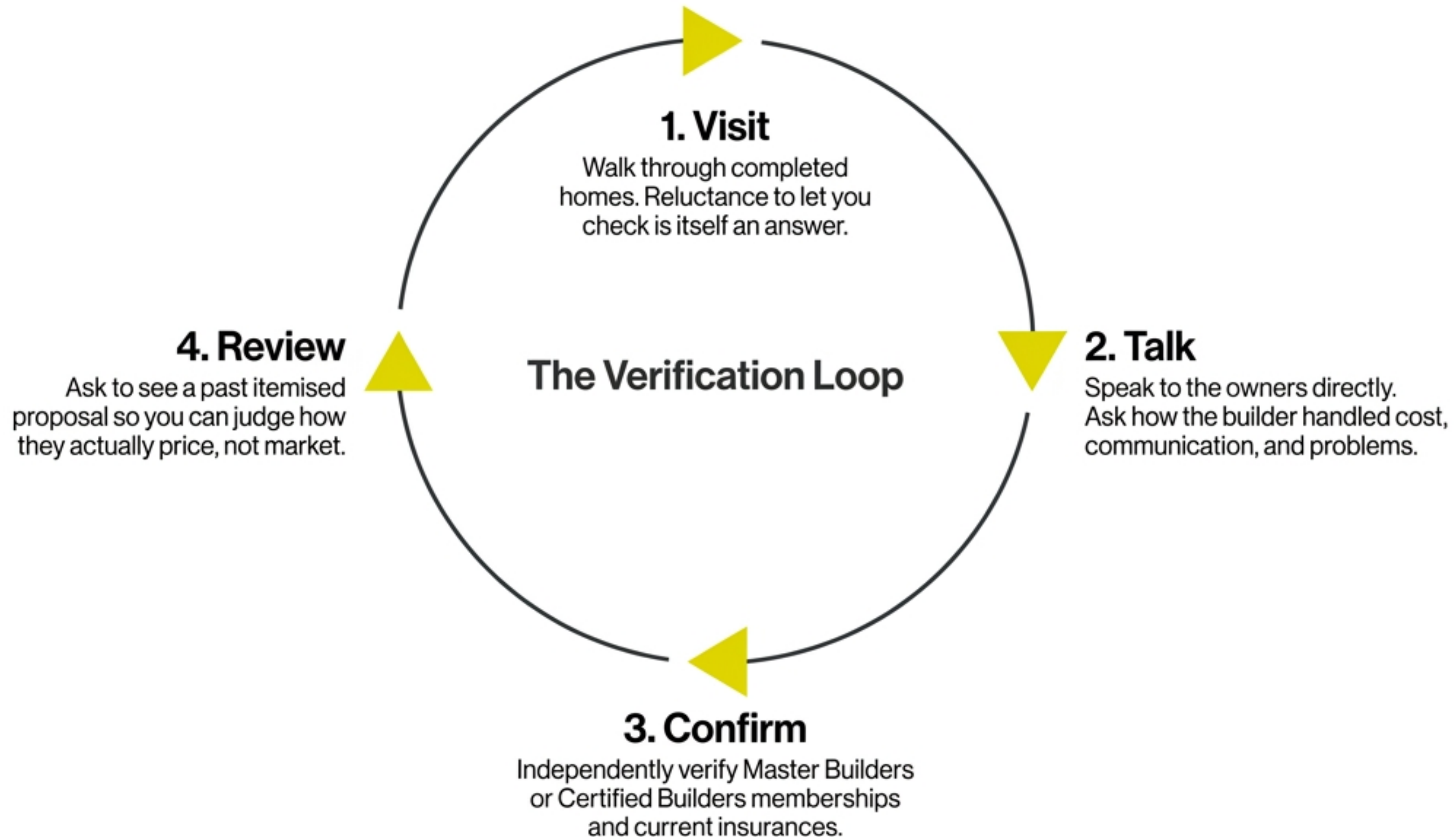
## The Result

The design is drawn to a real budget from the start, preventing redesign loops and blown-out costs.



# A Methodology for Verification

Replace marketing with evidence before you make a decision this large.



# The Ecotectural Standard

Choosing an architectural home builder is an exercise in evidence over marketing. Every standard, verification step, and pricing philosophy in this playbook represents our daily operating procedure for bespoke homes in Nelson Tasman.

**Put us on your list and hold us to this standard. Arrange a consultation to see our work and read exactly how we price. We are happy to be judged on it.**



Open-book itemised pricing

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End-to-end project management

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Verifiable energy efficient performance

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Full access to past work and clients

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