

A decorative graphic consisting of a thin vertical black line and a short, thick horizontal yellow bar intersecting it.

Tendering Your Plans vs. Partnering With One Builder

A guide to procurement, pricing, and protecting the design of your energy efficient home.

TWO LEGITIMATE PATHS

TENDERING

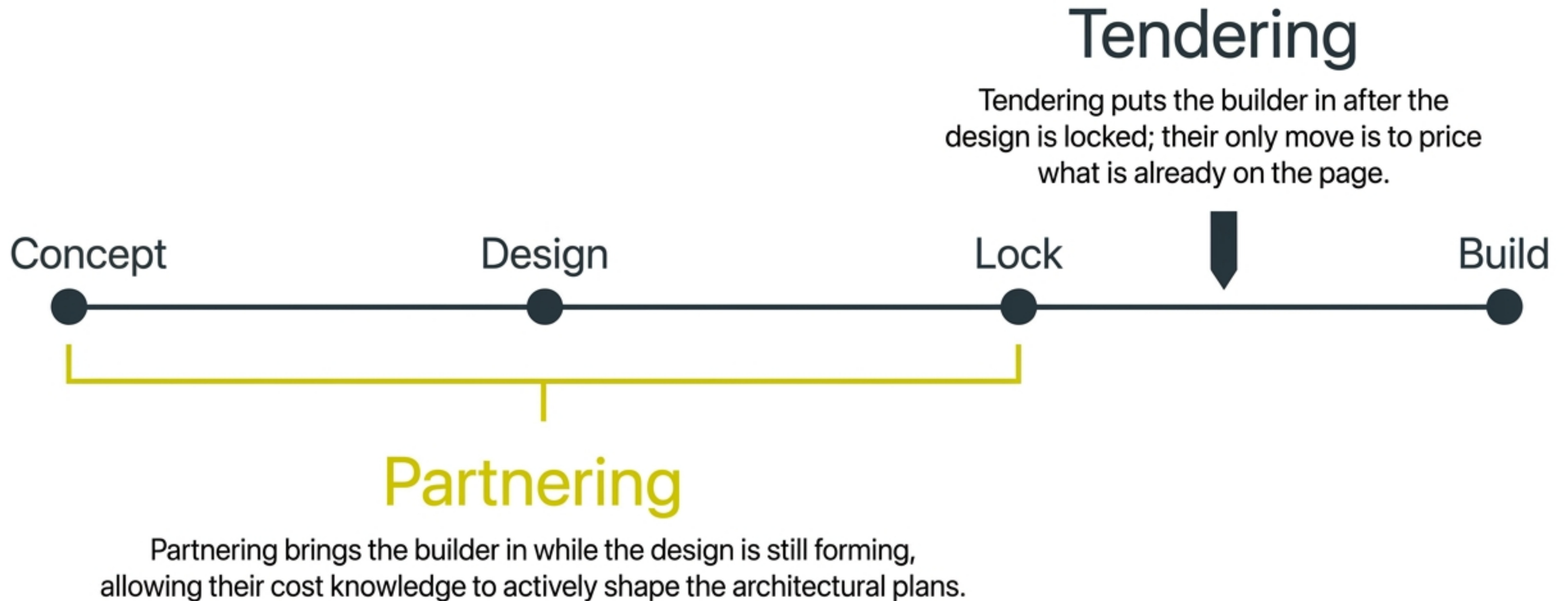
The traditional route. You finish your plans, issue them to several builders, and each one prices the same drawings and hands back a quote. You compare, and you choose—usually on price.

PARTNERING

The collaborative route. You engage one builder early, often before the design is finished, and price openly as you go. The home is designed to a real budget from the start rather than measured against one at the end.

Both approaches are legitimate; they simply suit entirely different types of builds.

The Crucial Difference is Timing

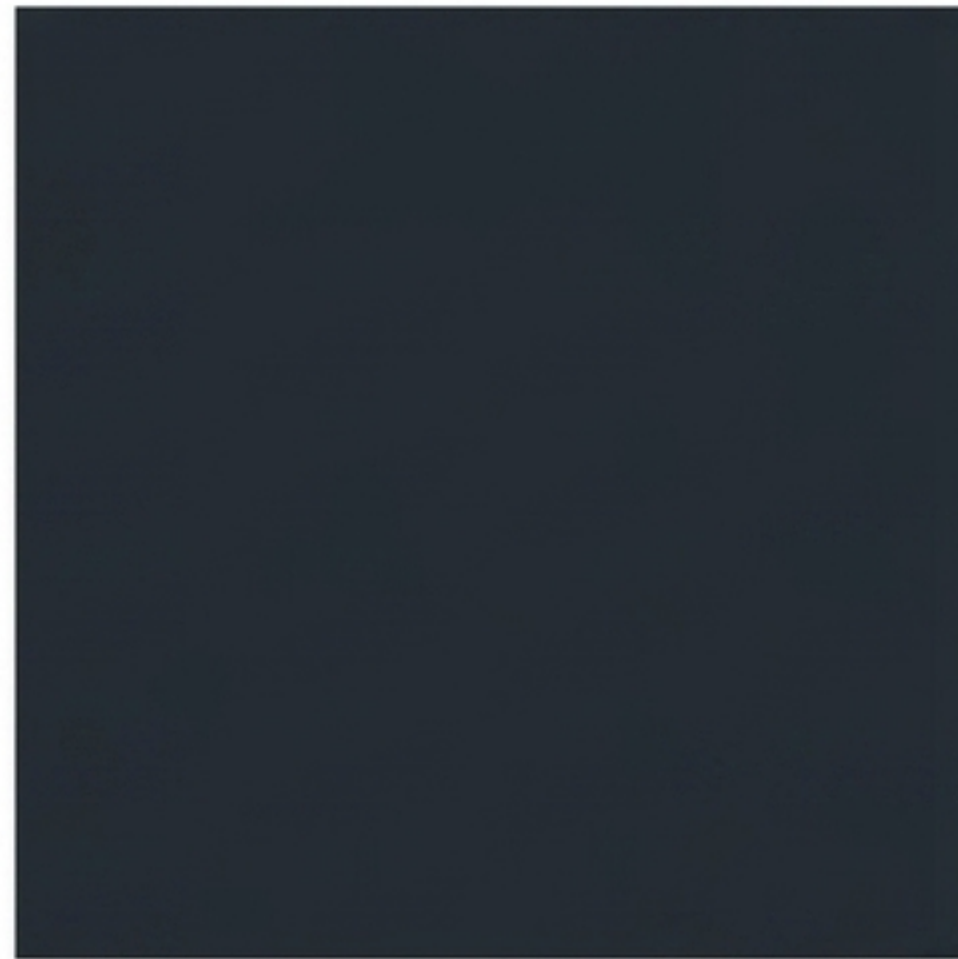


The Promise of Price Tension

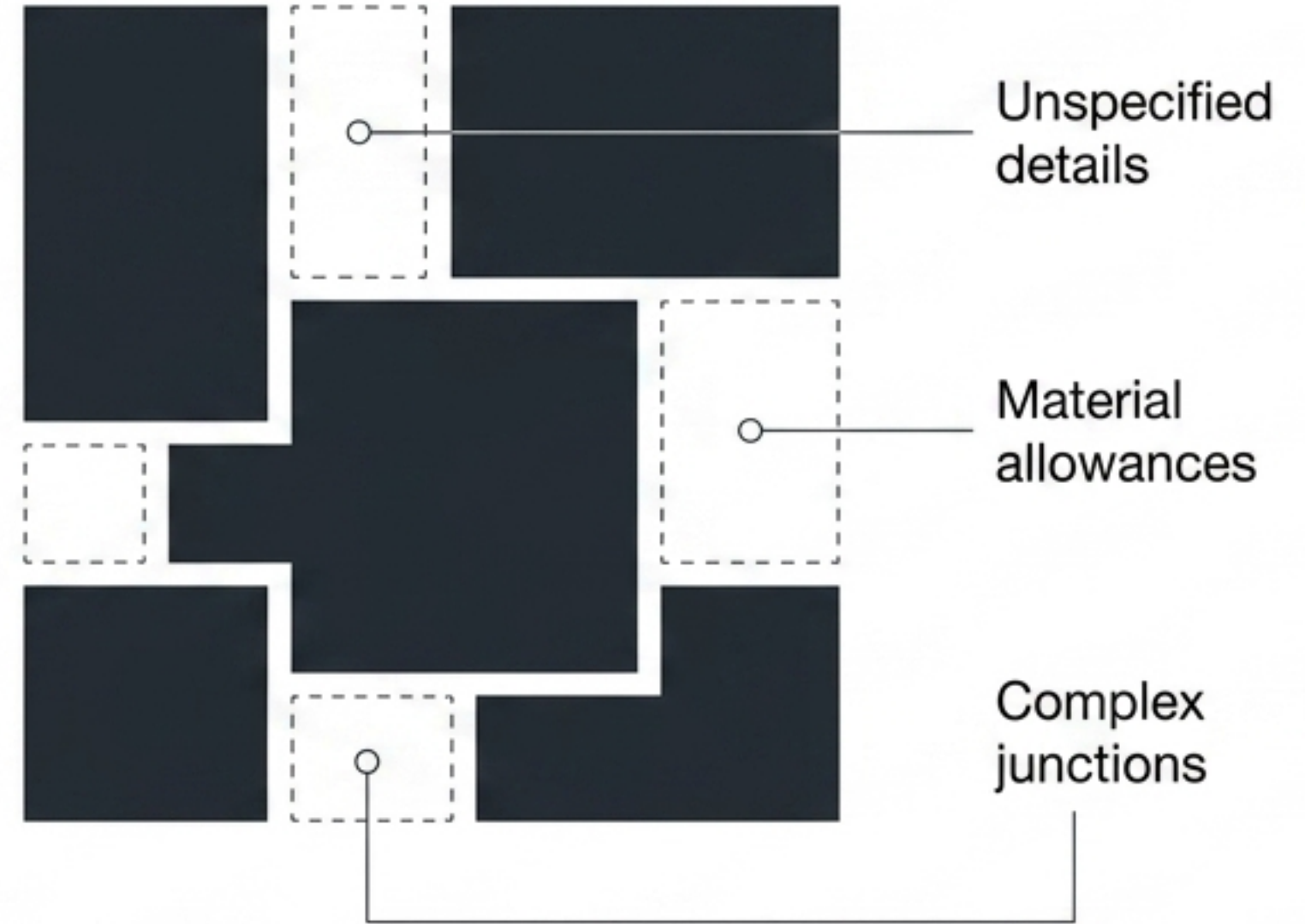
$$\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{Multiple} \\ \text{Builders} \end{array} \right] + \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{Identical} \\ \text{Plans} \end{array} \right] = \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{Sharp,} \\ \text{Competitive} \\ \text{Price} \end{array} \right]$$

In theory, several builders competing sharpens the final number. This works cleanly when plans are complete, fully specified, and standard—because everyone is pricing the exact identical thing.

The Reality of the One-Off Plan

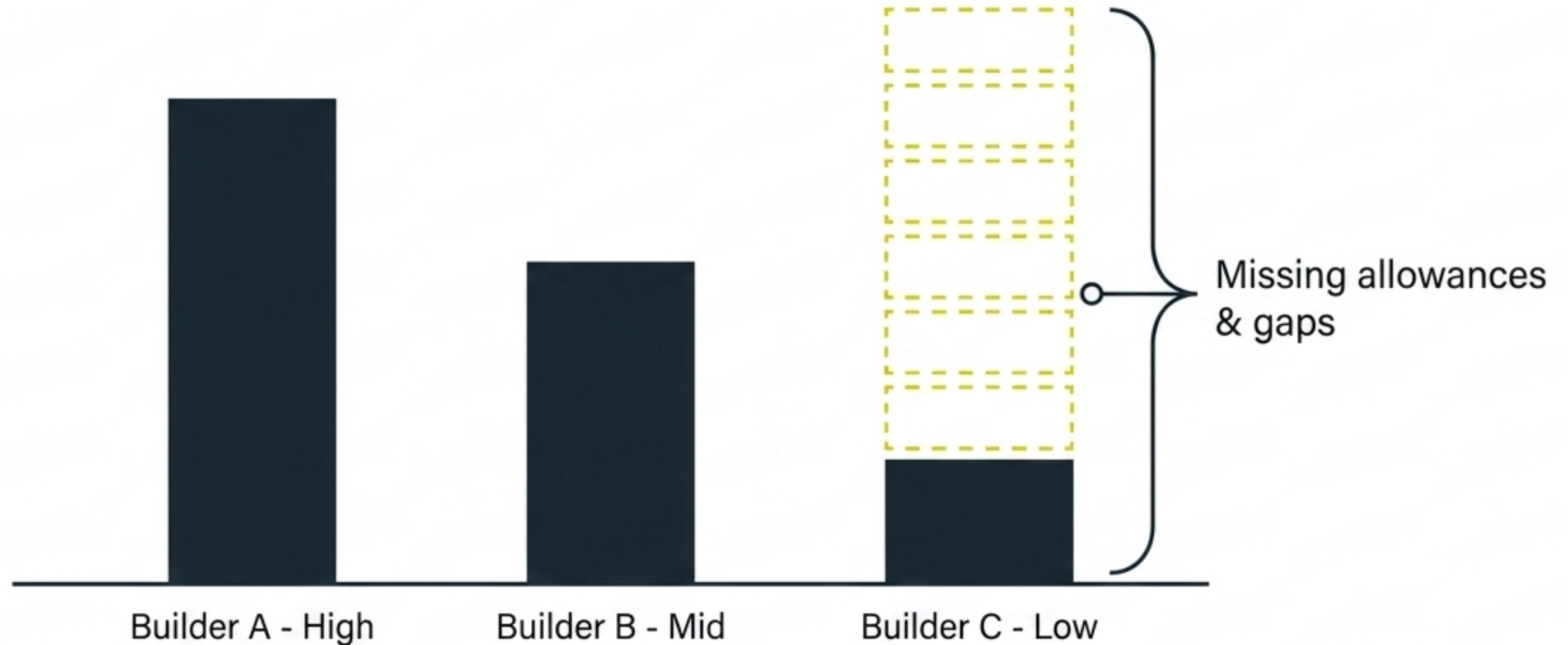


Standard Home Plan
(Fully Specified)



On a bespoke, energy efficient home, no set of plans specifies absolutely everything. Each builder must guess at the gaps.

The Anatomy of the Lowest Quote



The builder who guesses most optimistically, or leaves the most out, wins the tender.
You have not necessarily found the cheapest build; you have found the most optimistic quote.



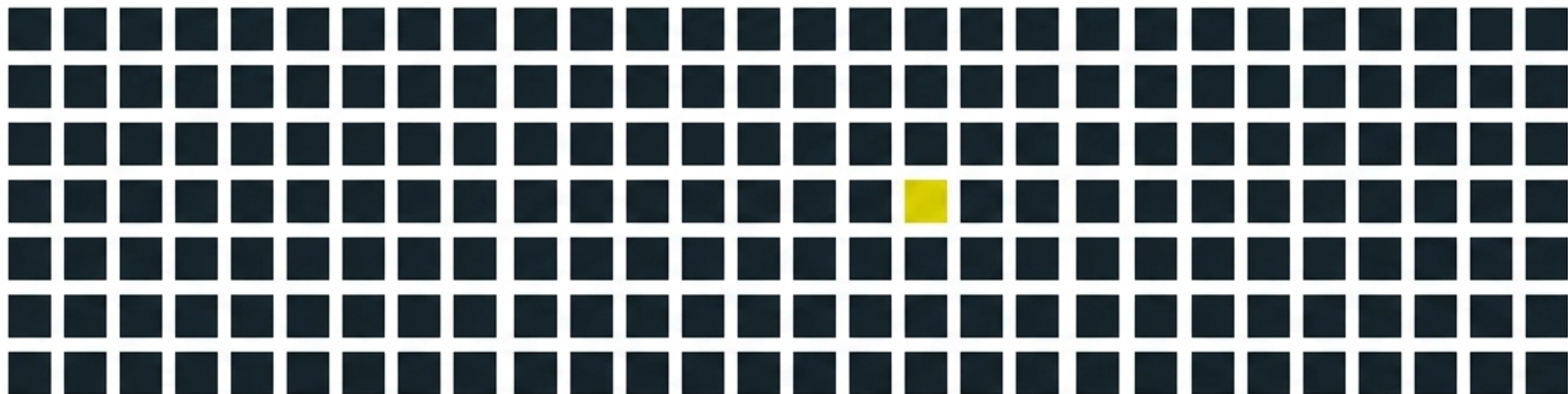
The items assumed away still have to be built.

The quiet risk of the lowest tender is that it is often the least complete. Unpriced gaps return as variations once you are committed and switching builders would cost more than paying up.

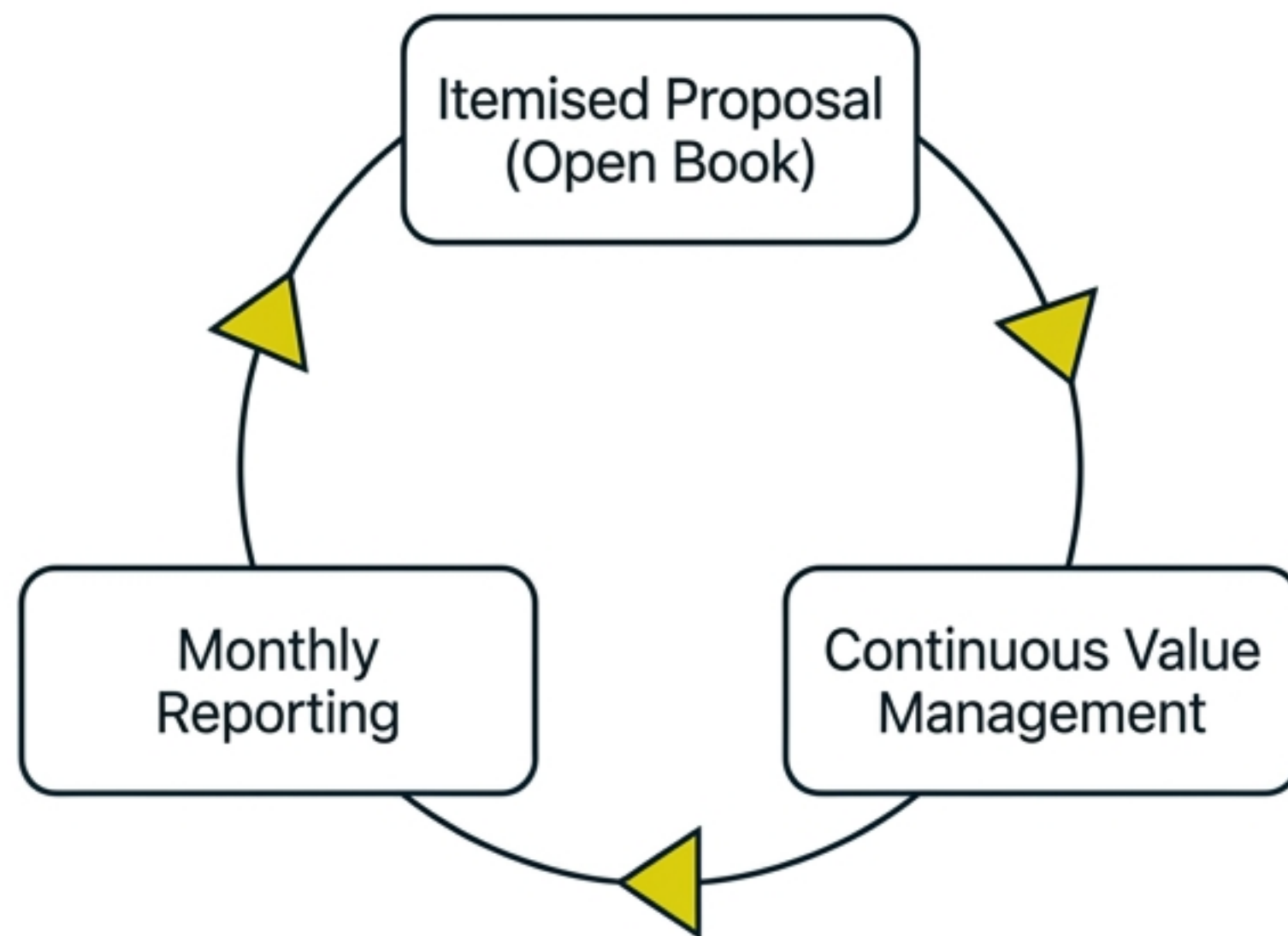
The Hidden Industry Cost: A genuine quote takes many hours to prepare. Builders pricing tenders they mostly lose must recover those hours in the work they win. Free competitive tendering spreads its real cost across every client's price.

Trading the Auction for Transparency

Partnering relies on choosing a builder based on evidence up front—their past homes, clients, pricing structure, and guarantees. Once selected, their cost knowledge works for you from early in the design, shaping the home to a real budget as it is drawn.

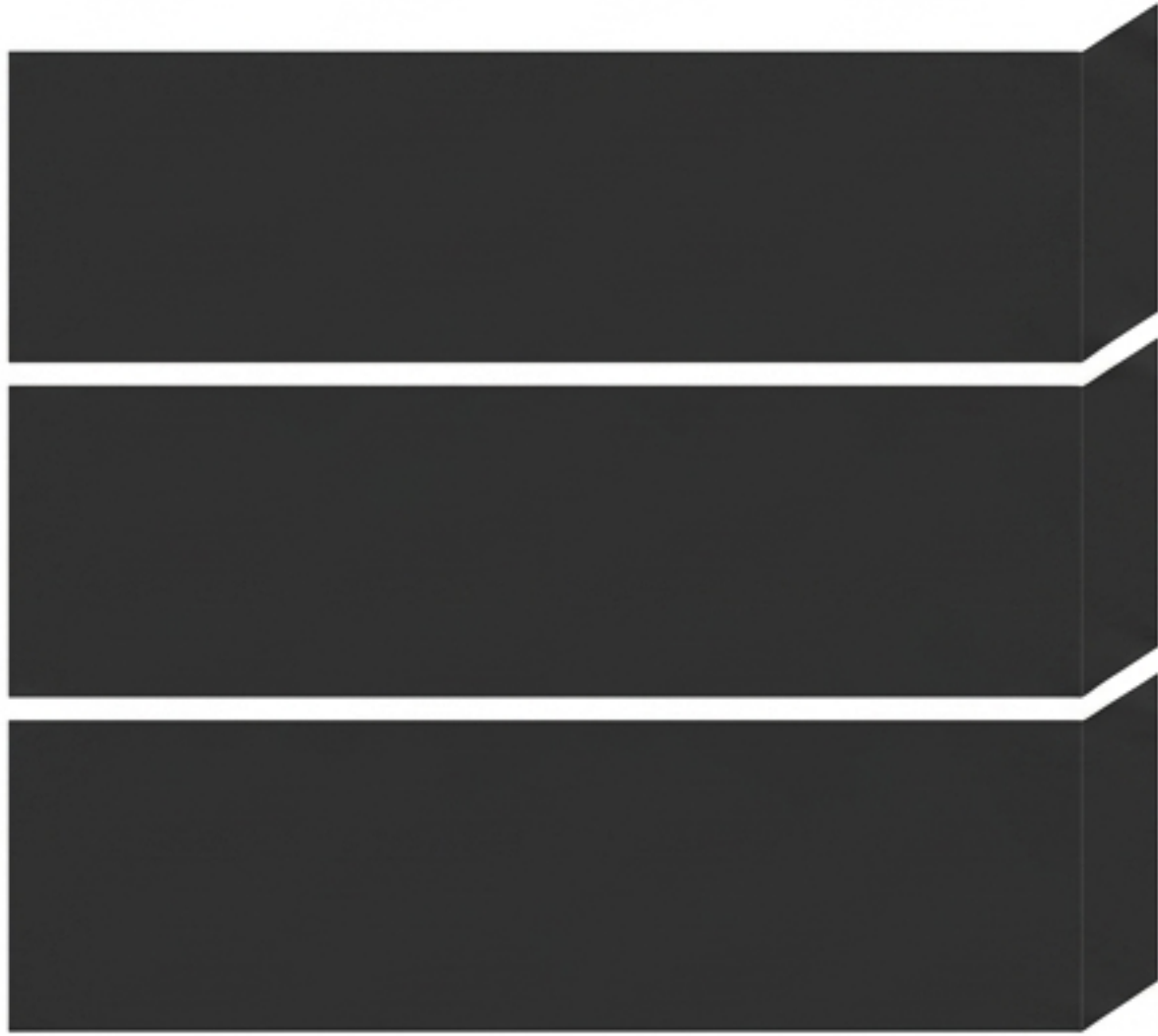


The Open-Book Advantage

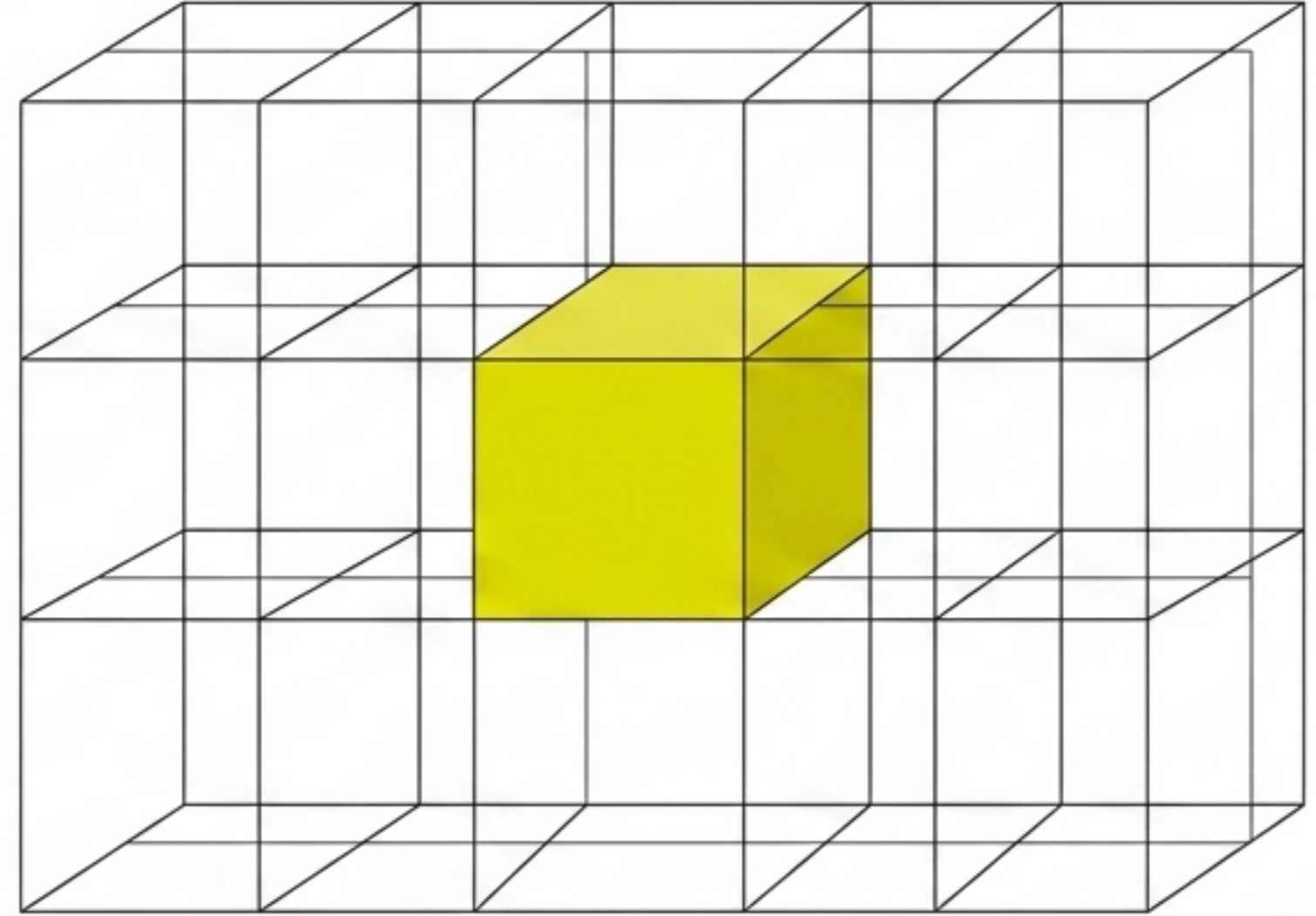


A single tendered figure is a snapshot you either accept or reject. An open-book partnership is a living budget. You see the scope, the allowances, and the margins, and you steer the budget decision by decision. When a detail changes, you know the cost impact early, while there are still options.

Competition Without the Race to the Bottom



Sealed Bids



Itemised Open-Book Proposal

An itemised proposal you can read line by line is vastly more checkable than three sealed numbers. Because you see the exact scope and margins, you can even bring in an independent quantity surveyor (QS) to sanity-check it. You get the discipline of competition without inviting builders to win by omitting details.

Which Method Suits Your Build?

	Tendering	Partnering
Best for	Fully documented, standard homes	Bespoke, architectural, energy efficient homes
Builder involved	After the design is locked	Early, while the design is forming
Price you compare	Headline numbers on different assumptions	One itemised, open-book proposal
Value management	Little room, design is fixed	Throughout, before decisions are locked
Main risk	Lowest tender is least complete	Choosing the wrong single builder
Budget control	A single number at the start	Monthly reporting the whole way

On a one-off architectural home, the lowest tender is usually the least complete, not the cheapest to build.

Partnering with one builder gives you early cost input, value management, and a budget you can actually watch develop. It protects both the design and the money.

Your Next Step with Ecotectural

If you hold plans for a one-off, energy efficient home in Nelson Tasman, you do not have to run a blind auction to get an honest, checkable price.

Book a plan pricing review with Ecotectural Home Builders.

Get a rigorously itemised number based on substance.

Paying one builder to price your plans properly puts the cost where the decision is—with the review fee **refunded entirely** off your build when you proceed.