

Our Top 10 Design Tips



All our home designs are customer driven and we actively encourage clients to design their own home. Of course, we will be on hand to advise and guide you through the process. Designing your Thermohaus® home could not be simpler, but to set you off in the right direction we offer our top 10 tips:

1. Before attempting to design your new home, you must have a site. It is extremely unlikely that the house design you come up with can simply be plonked on the site when you get it. Probably, it will just end up being a bad design, based on unnecessary compromises.
2. Before buying your site undertake a full site assessment to establish it is suitable for your requirements and determine the ideal position and form of your new home. Avoid steep sloping sites which give rise to increased foundation costs, may have a negative impact on the appearance of your home and will make the whole build more challenging. Also, consult the local development plan and speak to the planners to make sure they are happy with what you are proposing.
3. It is important to bear in mind the available budget when designing your new home. Just remember the greater the floor area, the greater the cost. And, when deciding on external finishes, minimise maintenance liabilities. This will ensure your home remains good to look at and reduce lifecycle costs.
4. 'Keep It Simple' - complex layouts, curves, angles and unconventional roof configurations all add to the build cost. And, avoid small projections such as porches, bay windows and dormer windows. They may add aesthetic appeal but are disproportionately expensive for the practical benefits derived.
5. Avoid wasting space. How many bedrooms and bathrooms do you need? Do you really need to accommodate family and friends who only stay a few days, a couple of times of year? Putting them up in a local hotel will be much cheaper. And, that's rooms you won't need to heat, clean or pay Council tax on! Also, do you really need big bedrooms and bathrooms - what are you going to be doing in them? A poor layout may create long corridors. Have you minimised circulation space? The current trend towards open plan living works well in this regard.
6. Try to keep the plumbing in one area. If this is not possible keep the number of areas to a minimum. Keeping kitchens, utility rooms, bathrooms and en-suites close together, both horizontally and vertically, will reduce internal pipework and external drainage, further reducing cost.
7. Ideally your new home will maximise the benefits of natural light and solar gain. It is important to remember the sun rises in the east, passes through south and sets in the west! All dayrooms (kitchen, dining, sitting) should face south / west. The only exception might be where there is a particular view you wish to capture, in which case rooms should be double or triple aspect so as to get at least one window facing south. If you want early morning sunshine to enter bedrooms they need to face east. Utility rooms, bathrooms, en-suites and stores, which do not need much natural light can face north.
8. Consider windows and doors very carefully. A lot of money can be wasted here. Even the best windows on the market are poor insulators in relationship to the wall in which they're located. Keep window numbers and sizes to the minimum necessary, to conserve energy. Any large areas of glazing should ideally face between south east and south west, to maximise solar gain. In our view triple glazing rarely offers significant benefits / value for money.
9. Adopt a 'Fabric First' approach. The more you invest in insulating and making the structure of your home airtight the better. It will save you money for the lifetime of your home.
10. If working to a tight budget don't spend money on expensive sanitaryware, kitchen units / equipment and internal doors. It is relatively straightforward to upgrade these items, when funds permit.