

ESTIMATING HOW MUCH IT COST TO BUILD

The **actual building costs** are by far the main component of the total costs. This usually consists of material costs and labour costs. Due to the continuous escalation in building costs, it is extremely dangerous to list typical building costs here. This may also vary from city to city, and will also vary depending on how luxurious the owner intends to build, and what degree of finishing is required.

PUBLISHED AVERAGE BUILDING COSTS PER SQUARE METRE

- **Houses smaller than 80 m² is R3898 (ABSA)**
- **Houses larger than 80m² is R6325 (ABSA) R6700 (Turner)**
- **Prestige Houses larger than 80m² is R12000 (Turner)**
- **Flat and townhouses is R6841 (ABSA) R7400 (Turner)**

COST PER SQUARE METRE

This question is often asked by consumers phoning into the office - "what is the cost of building per square metre these days"? This is a total misnomer and is something that stems from mainly rural house contractors or inexperienced developers selling plot and plan who tell prospective clients the cost of building is x/m².

A cost per square metre can only be a **rough estimate** when based on the same ingredients in the mix as well as the same configuration on plan and position, of a structure already built. To illustrate the misnomer of a cost per square metre consider the following:

- House A has a Room size of 4m x 5m = 20 m²
- House B has a Room size of 10m x 2m = 20 m²

Both have a 20m² surface area but:

- House A has 18 running metre of walling and finishes
- House B has 24 running metre of walling and finishes

Therefore **House A** will be the cheaper option per square metre despite them both being 20m².

Be extremely wary of a builder that quotes on a per m² rate, as the configuration of the walls or plan is what determines the price of the basic construction element.

TO ACHIEVE A MORE ACCURATE ESTIMATE YOU WILL NEED

Finishes Specifications - It stands to reason that the cost of constructing a standard garage or pool-shed will be far lower than for an “upmarket” house with expensive carpets, windows, fittings etc.

Wall to Floor Ratio - The shape of a building affects the cost. For example the total wall area required for a square building will be less than that for a rectangular one but still provide the same floor area.

Floor to Ceiling Height - A Building with a greater floor to ceiling height will obviously cost more as additional wall area is required to enclose the floor area.

Plumbing and Electrical Installations - The amount of plumbing installations such as toilets, bathrooms etc. can significantly change the total cost of a building. This also applies to electrical installations e.g. air-conditioners, automatic gates and geysers.

Internal Walls - The number of internal walls and partitions will have an affect on the overall cost of a building.

Region - Construction costs vary between different regions in South Africa.

General - Paving, swimming pools, tennis courts etc. also affect building costs.