



A new Standard in:  
**Timber Construction & Human-Friendly Building**

Building Cost in Ireland:

Irish Times, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007

2007Review

Construction

The year that builders became available - at last



Builders are eager to tackle home improvements after 10 years of a boom when homeowners had to beg to give them business. Emma Cullinan reports

HOMEOWNERS who've searched in vain for builders over the past decade now find that it is the builders who are contacting them. It happened to one man who recently put in for planning permission for an extension in Dún Laoghaire and another building a new house in Co Meath. The latter was also contacted by a builder's merchant offering a discount if he bought everything from their store.

This shows how the planning lists are proving a fruitful hunting ground for those in the building trade who don't have the volume of work that they used to now that major housebuilding projects are being put on hold while developers and buyers wait to see what the market will do.

Architects, too, are being approached by builders who are now available for work after the decade-long building boom. "We are now getting one or two phone calls a week from contractors we've never worked with before, looking for work in the New Year," says John O'Keefe of Dundrum based O'Keefe Architects. "We haven't had contractors call us for any reason in eight or nine years so it's a massive change, especially since architects are parish as far as many builders are concerned."

The timing couldn't be better, if you consider that home improvements have increased considerably in the past few years and are set to grow. "There are fewer cranes in the sky and more skips outside people's homes," says Martin Whelan of the Construction Industry Federation, whose figures show that residential repair and maintenance hit €4.5 billion in 2006, and is expected to rise to €4.9 billion in 2007.

The cost of building work

Building costs can vary widely, depending on the type of project: whether it is a standard type of construction or of an usual, bespoke design. The quality of fittings also affects the cost.

Recently people have found that builders' quotes vary greatly from each other with some chancing a very high quote because they don't really need the work but would be prepared to do it for incredible sums.

The RIAI (Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland) gives realistic building cost guidelines for a standard construction (the design provisos outlined above can almost double these amounts):

- One-off new house: €2,500 to €2,900 a sq m (€232.25 to €269.41sq ft)
- Extension: €2,250 to €2,850 a sq m (€209 to €264.7sq ft)
- Extension with renovations to an existing house: €2,700 to €3,300 a sq m (€251 to €306.5sq ft)

Project Oecotop Homes of Health are in the middle range of average cost in Ireland for houses with (Irish) "Standard Construction"!

Project OECOTOP Homes of Health  
 Our quotes are always **all inclusive!** We give **warranty of cost** and we always finish in time.

"The contractor has done what he can get away with and the client wants it to cost as little as possible, but instead of spending lots of money on fantastic bathroom tiles, the money would have been better spent on someone to check the work."

Liam Brennan, an architect with Extend, which was set up in response to the demand for extensions, says that he has noticed an increase in talented workmen. "The better tradesmen are being freed up from bigger sites."

To ensure that you get quality workmanship, Whelan of the CIF says you should seek references and view other work that the builder has done and perhaps speak to former clients.

"Have a clear agreement from the outset about what is to be done, the timescale and the likely cost. When work starts, keep the lines of communication open with the builders so that little problems don't turn into big problems.

"I wouldn't always go for the cheapest quote - this is your home so you want the best person to work on it," he says.

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doesn't comply with building regulations, so the price will drop accordingly," he says.

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(**€209** to **€264** a **sq ft**) ...!

Solution instead of Confusion!



# Prices & Comparison

## ECO-N Designs with "GO Zero/PLUS" Option

| Design:   | Rectangular                     | L-shape                         |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Outline:  | 8m x 12m                        | 8m x 12m + 6m x 6m              |
| Storage:  | 1,5                             | 1,5                             |
| Bedrooms:   | 3                               | 5                               |
| Extra:  | (4 Bedroom possible)            | 1 additional Living Room        |
| Need of <b>Primary Energy</b> :<br>(heating & hot water)                    | <b>Less than 40 kwh/m2/year</b> | <b>Less than 40 kwh/m2/year</b> |
| Estimated <b>total cost</b> for<br><b>heating &amp; hot water</b> per year: | <b>Less than 180.-€</b>         | <b>Less than 250.-€</b>         |

### Overview of details & prices. All prices without VAT! (W)= Worst Case / (G)= Good Case:

1 square meter = **10,7** square foot

|  |                        |    |                        |    |
|--|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| Total Volume (incl. Construction):   | <b>448,34</b>          | m3 | <b>660,41</b>          | m3 |
| Total Area (incl. Construction):   | 194,40                 | m2 | 269,16                 | m2 |
| Construction Area:   | 38,29                  | m2 | 50,82                  | m2 |
| <b>Total Net Area (net space):</b>   | <b>156,11</b>          | m2 | <b>218,34</b>          | m2 |
| <b>LIVING Area (&gt; 1.5m):</b>  | <b>114,79</b>          | m2 | <b>177,70</b>          | m2 |
| Total Cost (W):  |                        | €  | 409454,61              | €  |
| Total Cost (G):  | 277970,50              | €  | 368800,00              | €  |
| Price per cubic-meter (W):   |                        | €  | 620,00                 | €  |
| Price per cubic-meter (G):   | <b>620,00</b>          | €  | <b>558,44</b>          | €  |
| <b>Total Net Area (net space):</b>   |                        |    |                        |    |
| Price per square-meter (W):  |                        | €  | 1875,31                | €  |
| Price per square-meter (G):  | <b>1780,61</b>         | €  | <b>1689,11</b>         | €  |
| Price per square-foot (W):   |                        | €  | 175,26                 | €  |
| Price per square-foot (G):   | <b>166,41</b>          | €  | <b>157,86</b>          | €  |
| <b>LIVING Area &gt; 1.5m:</b>  |                        |    |                        |    |
| Price per square-meter (W):  |                        | €  | 2304,19                | €  |
| Price per square-meter (G):  | <b>2421,56</b>         | €  | <b>2075,41</b>         | €  |
| Price per square-foot (W):   |                        | €  | 215,34                 | €  |
| Price per square-foot (G):   | <b>226,31</b>          | €  | <b>193,96</b>          | €  |
| <b>Groundwork, Architect, etc.</b> (For the house only!):  |                        |    |                        |    |
| Price per square-meter:  | <b>268(G)</b> -375(W)  | €  | 321,00                 | €  |
| Price per square-foot (estimated):   | <b>25(G)</b> -45(W)    | €  | <b>30(G)</b> -45(W)    | €  |
| <b>Project Oecotop (ready for living) starting at:</b>   | <b>250-260.-€/sqft</b> |    | <b>223,96 €/sqft</b>   |    |
| <b>For 10-15.-€ per square foot extra, all ECO-N Designs can be build in Zero/PLUS Standard!</b> |                        |    |                        |    |
| <b>Average house price in Ireland ("Irish Standard") starts:</b>                                 | <b>200-250.-€/sqft</b> |    | <b>200-250.-€/sqft</b> |    |
| (Usually <b>NOT</b> ready for living, 5-15 times MORE Energy need compared with PO, toxic, ...)  |                        |    |                        |    |



# Project OECOTOP

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S o l u t i o n   i n s t e a d   o f   C o n f u s i o n !



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