

Priorities when building your custom home

Designing a home of your own forces you to rank what truly matters. Square metres tend to win by inertia, yet year-round comfort depends on a variable that too often stays in the background: energy.

Starting a custom-home project opens a long list of decisions, and the first usually revolves around the final cost. Unlike buying an already-built property, here many factors shape the price: the land, the foundations, the architectural design and the construction itself. To set a first set of indicative figures, the [budget calculator](#) is a useful starting point, but before running the numbers it pays to order your priorities.

The underlying question is simple to ask and hard to answer: what value do you place on each aspect when designing your future home? Total square metres, the garden, energy efficiency, the materials, sustainability and the environmental impact of the build. Each answer reorders the project and, with it, the budget.

The disproportionate weight of square metres

When building what will become our home, prioritising floor area is common, whether out of need or long-term foresight. The reasoning, however, has to go one step further: what use are many square metres if they then prove uninhabitable, cold in winter and too hot in summer?

This bias has a specific origin. During the real-estate bubble, developers optimised the price per square metre to extract the maximum return from the land, and everyone chased the best price per metre. That criterion has lodged itself in the way we think about a home of our own, both in new builds tailored to individual needs and in the purchase of an existing property. Breaking with that myth is the first step towards designing a house meant to be lived in.

The energy mortgage and energy poverty

The concept of an energy mortgage describes the energy spending needed to guarantee a home's interior comfort and healthiness. It is closely tied to a more familiar term: energy poverty. The relevant question is whether it makes sense to carry two mortgages at once, the loan and the energy bill.

Building homes without an energy mortgage prevents energy poverty. It is a direct benefit for whoever builds the home and, at the same time, an indirect benefit for society, because it lowers the energy dependency that underpins collective wellbeing. The social fragility that comes with building homes with high energy dependency is large enough that the Technical Building Code that came into force in 2020 raised its energy-efficiency requirements.

Building for the whole year

At PAPIK Group we have always believed in high-energy-efficiency construction and in Passivhaus certification for the homes we build across Catalonia. Our biopassive houses are built with natural, sustainable materials, conceived to be lived in and adapted to how their occupants live. A [new-build project](#) lets you decide from the first line what priority energy holds, and that decision shapes comfort for decades.

Square metres are paid for once; the energy that makes them habitable is paid every month of every year they are lived in.