



Designing a Home for Heat, Rain and Typhoons

A home in the Philippines faces heat, heavy rain and strong winds. Good design choices can help, and the rules that apply set the minimum.

We give no guarantees here. Design reduces risk but cannot remove it, and your architect and engineer should decide what fits your site.

01 Start with the site

Check flooding history, slope and drainage before you plan anything. A lot that floods needs a different approach from a lot on higher ground.

Ask the local office whether hazard maps apply to your lot.

Walk the site in a heavy rain if you can, and note where the water goes. What you see on the day is more useful than a map. The site tells you things that no brochure can. Example: after a heavy rain, you notice water pooling at the low corner of your lot, so the plan can raise the floor or add a drain there. Why this works: what you observe on site shows how water really moves, which a map may not show.

02 Keep the heat out

Shade walls and windows with roof overhangs, plan openings so air can pass through, and think about the direction the house faces. Ask your designer how each choice helps.

Light colours and good ventilation can make rooms more comfortable.

Planting and shade trees can help too, but keep them away from walls and foundations unless your designer says otherwise. Shade and airflow reduce heat before you pay for cooling. Example: a roof overhang over west-facing windows blocks afternoon sun that would otherwise heat the room. Why this works: stopping heat at the wall costs less than removing it with air conditioning every day.

03 Design for rain and wind

No guarantees: Design reduces risk but cannot remove it. Rely on your engineer for structural decisions.

Plan roofs, drainage and connections with an engineer. Strong connections and well-planned water paths matter more than decoration.

Ask what design wind and rain criteria your engineer is using.

Ask who checks the work during construction. Good details only help if they are built as drawn.

Storm resistance depends on connections and water paths more than appearance. Example: a roof that is tied firmly to the walls and has clear gutters is more likely to hold in strong wind and rain. Why this works: details built as drawn work in a storm, while decoration does not.

04 Plan the first day after a storm

Think about where water goes, where you store essentials and how the family reaches safety. Keep the plan simple and share it with everyone.

Review the plan every year.

Keep roof gutters and drains clear. Simple upkeep is a low-cost way to protect a house. A short plan makes the first hours after a storm calmer. Example: agree on where the family gathers, where the flashlight and documents are kept and who checks on elders. Why this works: when everyone already knows the steps, nobody has to decide under stress.

05 Questions to ask your designer

1. What does this site's flooding and slope mean for the design?
2. How does the design handle heat and ventilation?
3. What wind and rain criteria is the engineer using?

Have a project in mind? Book a free 15-minute consultation.

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