



Cost per Square Meter: What Is and Is Not Included

A price per square meter sounds simple, but the number only means something when you know what it covers. Compare figures only after checking what each one includes.

We give no price here. Costs change, and any figure you see online came from a specific project, place and time.

01 What a per-square-meter figure can cover

The figure may cover only the building shell, or it may include finishes, fixtures and site work. Ask what is in and what is out before you use it.

Ask which date the figure is from, since material and labour costs move.

A figure quoted for one house may not suit yours. Site, design, finishes and the contractor all change the result. A single figure can describe very different scopes. Example: one contractor's figure may cover only the shell, while another includes finishes and fixtures, so the two cannot be compared directly. Why this works: asking what is in and out turns a number into a scope you can check.

02 What it often leaves out

Why this matters: A figure without a list of inclusions is only half an answer.

Check whether it includes the design fee, permits, utility connections, landscaping, furniture and a buffer for changes. These can sit outside the figure.

Ask for a written list of inclusions and exclusions.

Ask for the breakdown if a figure seems very low. A low number often leaves out something you will pay for later. What a figure leaves out is where budgets usually run over. Example: a very low figure may skip permits, utility connections or furnishings that you still need to pay for. Why this works: a written list of exclusions shows the real total before you commit.

03 Test your own budget

Take your total budget, subtract fees, permits and furnishings, and divide what is left by the floor area you want. That is your working number.

Compare that number with written estimates from contractors for the same scope.

Share the working number with your architect early so the design is sized to fit it, not the other way

round. Working backwards from your own budget gives you a number that fits your situation. Example: take your total budget, remove fees, permits and furnishings, then divide the rest by the floor area you want. Why this works: the design is sized to the money you actually have, instead of being cut after the budget runs out.

04 Keep a buffer

Set aside a share of the budget for changes and surprises. Discuss the size of that buffer with your architect.

A plan that fits only when nothing changes is a fragile plan.

Review the buffer again before construction starts. If it is thin, adjust the scope, not the safety margin. A buffer absorbs the surprises that almost every project has. Example: if a soil or utility issue appears, a buffer lets you handle it without removing a room. Why this works: a plan with room for change keeps small problems from becoming big redesigns.

05 Three checks before you trust a number

- 1. What is included and what is excluded?**
- 2. What date and place is the figure from?**
- 3. Does it match the scope and finish I want?**

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

<https://ramadesignstudio.com/#book> | WhatsApp +63 917 812 6815

Read online: <https://ramadesignstudio.com/what-cost-per-sqm-includes/>