

My advice to the family is to first assess your need for space objectively and without exaggeration. Then, before even beginning the design, determine the maximum budget for the project, even taking into account the cost of furnishing the house. Then you must obligate the engineer to design the house according to budget, and not vice versa. Furthermore, it is best if the budget allows the involvement of an interior designer to develop 3D renders of the interior so your wife can visualize her house before things get changed up at the time of construction. Afterwards, ask the engineer to make schedules for the quantities with descriptions. He must draft tender documents followed by submitting a turnkey tender with a classified contractor who will give you a bank guarantee for an advance payment and completion. Don't even listen to the ones who tell you that separating one part of the tender will be cheaper for you. It will not be cheaper in the end, nor any better concerning the finishing. It is fair enough that if the contractor slacks off or breaches the contract, you hold him to account and you have the insurance of the bank guarantees. Don't forget to have an engineering consultant provide supervision throughout the implementation period and do not be cheap on paying for this kind of supervision. Deal with an office in which its owner actually works there, and not an office full of employees who just stamp the papers.

Someone may tell you that consultants like this are for big projects only, and I tell you that your dream house is the biggest project of your life. It is worth the effort. I'll summarize by saying, be cautious of advice from those who only pretend to have knowledge. Remember the saying of the blind man and the cripple who were hit by a car. The blind man tells the cripple, "Follow that car!" The cripple replies, "Get his license plate number!"