

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR

DESIGN PROJECT

WHERE TO START

WHAT TO CONSIDER

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Building Design ❖ Interior Design ❖ Project Management

HOW TO CREATE A DESIGN BRIEF BEFORE ENGAGING THE BUILDING DESIGNER

Your project can and should be really exciting. However too often we hear stories of unexpected surprises, misunderstandings between the builder, the client and the designer on the contracted scope of the project, and allowances for items not specified in the contract.

I have decided to do something about it.

IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THE BRIEF

A good working relationship with your building design professional is based on open, honest communication. This starts with a good brief that helps the architectural designer understand your expectations, preferences, budget, wants, needs, aspirations and goals. If your expectations are not clearly outlined and understood by all parties, you run the risk of spending unnecessary money, project complications, and costly delays. The designer and builder will struggle to understand what to include when pricing your project.

A well thought-out design brief is the foundation for a successful project. This guide will help you cover critical aspects of a design brief.

Right then! Lets get started.

WHERE TO START

YOUR SITE

Scrutinise your site and get a real feel for it. Where is the sun in summer? Where is the sun in winter? Where are the views you want to enjoy and those you want to exclude? Where are the surroundings you may or may not want to see? Which parts of the site are most/least noisy? Does the site slope? Do you need to consider parking and traffic flow? Put all the information you have about your site in a file to share with your architectural designer (legal paperwork/covenants, existing plans or previous site information).

SPACES - INTERIOR

A good design can transform the way that we live and work. Think hard about your current and future needs. Map out your daily routine. Who are the people that will use the space? How old are they? Who does what, where? Do they have changing needs over time? Do you want to 'zone' spaces, separate people and functions? Consider the number of floors, rooms and other spaces and describe their use. Make a list of rooms and their function (work, relax, eat, etc.). Is your style formal, casual, active or quiet, etc.? Is the kitchen or break room a hub of meeting and socialising/entertaining? List any special requirements you have, e.g. accessibility, extra storage areas, built in furniture/ shelving, etc. What method of heating do you want? What level of sustainability or green design do you want, especially if it is healthier and can save you money?

WHAT TO CONSIDER

SPACES - EXTERIOR

What kind of curb appeal do you desire? If it's a commercial project, what are the opportunities to attract and brand your building? What do you want to do outdoors? Entertain? Relax? What type of landscape do you want? How much parking do you need? Do you want a high or low maintenance scheme? What features are important to you? Think about the indoor/outdoor flow of spaces, where the sun lands, where its exposed to and sheltered from the wind. Think of your external areas as outdoor rooms, and consider privacy and connections between spaces. Listing your requirements will help both you and your building designer quickly understand your priorities.

DESIGN, FUNCTION, LOOK & FEEL

This is important. Think about the function of your space. How do you want to choreograph the experience of the user, visitor or customer? What is the 'look & feel' of your project - do you want it to be bold, low-key, industrial, traditional, minimalist, contemporary or organic? Think about your feelings - yes really! Describe spaces, design features and styles that appeal to you and those that don't. Create a 'mood board' or scrapbook of photographs, magazine clippings and anything else that can help your designer understand you and what you want from your project. Use web-based photo sites to assemble and share your ideas.

THE DETAILS

List major appliances or equipment you already own or are considering buying and preferences for location. Note items you want to showcase so your architect can

HOW TO HIRE A BUILDING DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

provide spaces and sockets for them in the new plans. Note how much storage you need - what has to be accessible and what can be remote?

MATERIALS

List materials you like and dislike (inside and out), but be aware that your budget will be a determining factor in your final choice. Do you have any specific wall, ceiling and floor finishes in mind? Stone, wood, glass, steel, aluminium... the list is endless. There are choices to be made that will determine how much you spend upfront, and how much you spend on maintenance in the longer term.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Regulation and rising energy costs are making sustainable 'green' design an essential consideration rather than a 'nice to have'. There are now minimum requirements laid down by national and local government. Your building designer will know all about these and will discuss with you how 'green' you want to and can be. There are lots of renewable energy solutions - solar panels, ground source heat pumps, daylight harvesting, and rainwater harvesting to name but a few. Although these add costs upfront, they can save you money in the longer-term. Much will depend on your budget and how long you plan to live in the building after the work has been done.

TIMETABLE

Think about and share with your designer key target dates that are important to you. When do you want to start and finish the project? Bear in mind that, as a rule of thumb, it can take at least 4-6 months to develop a design, obtain planning permission and prepare construction drawings before building work can commence. You are less likely to be disappointed if you allow at least 6-12 months.

BUDGET

Providing a realistic budget is often the trickiest part of the process. If you don't know what you can afford, talk to your building designer about their experience with projects of similar scope and quality as yours. If you have a firm budget, talk to your designer about what that affords you and learn quickly if it is in alignment with your expectations or if you need to adjust them.

GOOD / FAST / CHEAP – PICK 2

There are three things that push and pull on each other constantly: good, fast, and cheap. In any project, you can pick two. If you want your project to be good and fast, it may not be cheap. If you want fast and cheap, you may sacrifice quality. If you want good and cheap, it may not be fast. Of course, there are always exceptions, but history has shown that this is typically the case.

THE NEXT STEP

Congratulations! You now have the key information that will help you lay a successful foundation for how to prepare for your design project.

Unfortunately, I can't include every important piece of information about this very important step in the design and construction process successfully in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the requirements differ based on a multitude of factors. But with this guide, you have the critical information to help your project be a success.

If you are in the process of looking for a building designer for your project, let's talk. I can help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure. I offer a custom **initial consultation** where I will provide a needs and options review and identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically, the **initial consultation** saves my clients thousands of dollars and weeks of lost time, not to mention the stress and headache of getting something wrong.

To read more about the **initial consultation** as well as the price for this service and why it is critically important to your project's success visit my website. If you are ready to talk now, please give me a call.

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Best wishes for the success of your project!