





Design Brief Guide for Homeowners

A thorough and informative design brief is an imperative part of the design process. It is an essential point of reference not only for the designer, but for all people involved in the design and implementation of the project. The more information the designer can gain from the client in the early stages of design, the more effective the decision making, and problem-solving process will be.

Often clients, particularly domestic, may find it daunting to compile a design brief and as such it is important that we, the professionals, guide our clients to give us the information we need.

Briefing requirements will vary from project to project depending on scale and need. You will also find some aspects will be dictated by local authority regulations, planning requirements and conservation restrictions – it is important to be mindful of this from the outset.

You may also find that the brief will change and develop as you work on your early proposals and as you interact with your designer.

Homeowner Checklist

Describe your current home. What do you like and dislike about it? What is missing, and what you would like to change.

What kind of ideas do you have about design and / or materials? Do you have any images from magazines/internet that show us a style that you like?

Are there any particular design features that are important to you?

What kind of style do you require for the project e.g.. contemporary, traditional, industrial, bold, elegant, minimal etc.

Do you have any specific materials or surfaces in mind that you would like to see included in the project?

Do you have specific time requirements for the project to be complete?



Do you have any specific accessibility requirements, for example is anyone in your family disabled or do you have any regular visitors that would have special needs?

Do you have any specific considerations toward sustainability and energy efficiency – is there a particular system you would like to use: i.e., solar panels etc.

How much time and energy would you be willing to invest to maintain your home?

About The Property

Is there anything about the site that you particularly like or dislike?

Are there any views within the site that are particularly important to you?

About The Occupants

How many people will be living in the new home?

Any pets that will need to be accommodated?

About the lifestyle:

- Describe your lifestyle and the kind of spaces that you need? For example, work from home, entertain often, etc
- How much time do you spend in the different areas of your home (indoors and outdoors)?
- What type of entertainment systems do you require? Music, TV, projectors, speakers throughout the house?
- What type of storage do you require? Specific hobbies that require lots of storage space? Large wardrobe space?



Indoor Spaces

Number of floors / rooms / spaces and use for each?

Are there any particular areas that are to be more private than others? Or particular rooms that you would like to be connected?

Do you have any preferred room layouts/relationships or orientations – a south facing kitchen for example

Outdoor Spaces

Do you have any specific ideas or plans for the outside spaces that you would like us to consider?

Specific questions for clients looking to extend or renovate current homes:

- What would you like to see in your newly extended/renovated home that it currently lacks?
- What additional areas / functions / activities will be housed in the new proposed space
- Do you have any particular preferences to the relationship between the rooms? Would you be happy to reconsider the internal layout?

What are the time constraints of the project?

Are there any particular phasing requirements?

What is the budget?



Basic Design Factors

Depending on the type of project questions will vary.

What is the client looking to achieve with this project?

What do the surroundings look like? Landscaping, trees, orientation, climate etc?

What are the existing buildings and surround buildings? What materials are they?

Does any later construction need to be taken into account now?

What sort of materials would the client like to use?

Does the client have any leaning toward a sustainable energy efficient ethos?

Would they like to include new technologies in the project?

How would the spaces need to connect?

Are there any specific external landscaping requirements?

Are there any specific mechanical or electrical requirements?

Above are just a few of the things that need to be considered when developing the initial architectural brief.

