

CLIENT GUIDANCE FOR WRITING A DESIGN BRIEF

Technically, the design brief is a document to help an architect understand the client's requirements, expectations, and ideas for a project.

Writing a brief need not be a formal document, it can be as simple as a list to help to develop your ideas and prioritise aspirations before embarking on discussions with an architect and ultimately taking the project further. You are not expected to have a clear idea of how the finished building will be designed however, it would be useful if you and your family spend some time thinking about the following:

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- What are your reasons for wanting to build a house or add to or renovate your current home?
- What do you hope the project will deliver?
- What is your budget?
- Do you have any specific time requirements?
- Do you want to reduce your impact on the climate and the environment through sustainable design?

CURRENT HOME

- What do you like about it and why?
- What don't you like and why?
- Is there anything missing?
- How would you change the space you have?
- What is your lifestyle? Are you at home a great deal? Do you work at home? Do you entertain often?
- How much time do you spend in the living areas, bedroom, kitchen, utility space etc.?

THINKING OF BUILDING A NEW HOME?

- Do you have a site selected?
- What kind of spaces do you need; bedrooms, large open plan spaces or smaller private rooms, family room, gym, hobbies room, etc?
- How many occupants will you have?
- What do you envisage in your new home that your present home lacks?
- Will you need an annex or outbuilding(s)?

THINKING OF BUILDING AN EXTENSION OR RENOVATING?

- What functions or activities will be housed in the new space(s)?
- What do you think the extension/renovation should look like?
- How much disruption in your life can you tolerate to extend or refurbish your home?

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- What are your design preferences? Do you have strong ideas about design?
- Do you have any images from magazines/internet that show a style that you like?
- Is sustainable development and increased energy efficiency of importance to you?
- Do you have any specific materials or surfaces in mind that you would like to see included in the project?
- What type of storage do you require? Specific hobbies that require lots of storage space? Large wardrobe space?



- Is there anyone in the family who has impaired mobility, or do you have regular visitors with a disability?
- Do you envisage staying in the house for a long time - changes in mobility associated with aging may need to be addressed?
- How much time and energy are you willing to invest in maintaining your home?
- Do you have any specific ideas or plans for the outside spaces that you would like us to consider?
- Who will make the decisions about the designs, costs and construction when the project is underway?

Feel free to express your ideas in any way that you feel comfortable with. Pinterest is a great way to collect ideas whilst browsing the internet. A number of home design websites offer internal 'scrapbooking' facilities, such as Houzz. Do also tell us what you **don't** like, this helps shape ideas too and ultimately will help prevent any abortive work in the later stages of a project.