



# how to prepare a design brief



# content

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## red blue architecture + design

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# welcome

We prepared this guide after seeing so many people struggle with understanding the design and construction process.

This process can seem like a complex and frightening roadblock for those who haven't been through it before. The first and most important step is to find and hire your architect.

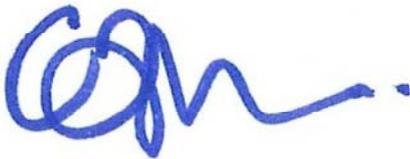
You may be wondering: how do I find the right architect for my project? Do I really need to hire an architect? How much are architect's fees? What about contractors? And most importantly: what are the key, critical steps I need to take to ensure that I hire the architect that is the perfect match for my project?

In the following pages, you will discover the answers to these questions – and more.

I hope you enjoy this guide and look forward to your feedback on the contents.

Sincerely yours,

Craig Taylor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CTaylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nothing is more exciting than creating a new building, whether it's your home or a commercial project and nothing will affect the success of your project more than the right architect. The architect determines the design and function of a building as well as the emotional toll and financial costs involved in its construction.

Finding your perfect match in an architect is not impossible and the following eight points can guide you along the way.

Use these to help analyse the personality, design strategy and communication skills of your candidates. Your goal is to find the right architect for your project, for your budget and for you.

# 01

## Where to Start

### Your Site

Scrutinize 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 every day and those you want to exclude? Where are the surrounding houses, other buildings and trees you may or may not want to see? Which parts of the site are most/least noisy? Does the site slope?

Put all the information you have about your site in a file to share with your architect (surveys, sewerage diagrams, legal paperwork/covenants, existing plans or previous site information).

Your architect will probably ask if you have a 10.7 (parts 2 and 5) Certificate. It should have been included as part of the sales documents if you have recently purchased your land. Otherwise, it can be obtained from council for a small fee. The certificate lists all the codes applicable to your land and will tell you if you can apply for a Complying Development Certificate or not.

### Spaces - Indoor

A good design can transform the way that we live. Think hard about your family's current and future needs. Map out your daily routine. How many people live in the house? How old are they? Who does what, where?

Don't forget your children's rapidly changing needs! Do you want to 'zone' spaces, separate family members, functions and/or pets? Consider the number of floors, rooms and other spaces and describe their use.

Make a list of who needs rooms to sleep, work and relax in. Where do you cook and eat? Is the kitchen like a constant thoroughfare for teenagers and large family gatherings? Is your lifestyle formal, casual, relaxed or active?

Do you need spaces to entertain at home – indoor and outdoor? What type of home entertainment do you want to include e.g. music, television, projector or areas for storage





of equipment? List any special requirements you have, e.g. accessibility, extra storage areas, garage loft space, built in furniture/shelving, home office. What method of heating do you want? What do other family members want from the whole project?

## Spaces - Outdoor

What do you want to do outdoors? Entertain? Relax? Play? Swim? Supervise children? Grow enough vegetables to be self-sufficient? 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 morning sun lands, where its exposed to and sheltered from the wind. Have you always dreamt of an exterior fireplace? Think of your external areas as outdoor rooms, and consider privacy and connections between spaces. Listing your requirements (perhaps using our List of Rooms and Spaces template) will help both you and your architect quickly understand your priorities.

## Design Mood and Feeling

This is important. This is your home, where your children and other loved ones are, where they're going to grow up and you're going to have all your family memories. Think about the '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! For example, what is your favourite time of day? Do you worry about shutting the curtains to protect the furniture from the sun, or do you like to enjoy coffee on the terrace? Is curling up with a good book your favourite hobby, or is it taking the dog for a walk no matter what the weather?

Describe spaces, design features and styles that appeal to you and those that don't. Create a 'mood board' or scrapbook of fabric swatches, photographs, magazine clippings and anything else that can help your architect understand who you are, how you live and what you want from your project. Use web-based sites like 'Pinterest' to assemble and share your ideas.

# 02

## What to Consider

### The Details

List major appliances you already own or are considering buying and any preferences you have about where you want to put them.

Do you really want that fridge next to your double steam oven? Do you have lots of gadgets that need power points in your island bench? Is your washing machine on 24/7 and do you want your drying and ironing space right next to it?

These details can make a big difference to the way your kitchen and utility space is planned. Note major pieces of furniture or artwork you want to showcase so your architect can provide spaces and power points for them in the design. Better to include it in your planning from day one, than to move in and wonder where you are going to hang your Picasso.

### Sketching

Sketch out your thoughts, but don't get too wedded to them. If the work involves altering an existing house you'll be constrained by existing structures and services and if it's a heritage listed building, there will be lots of limitations on what you can change.

If it's a new house, let your imagination flow, but be prepared for your architect to suggest other approaches. That is, after all, why you are hiring one!





## 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 the government. Your architect 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, rainwater harvesting to name but a few.

Although these add costs up-front, 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.

## 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? Do you like render, timber cladding or stone elevations? Zinc, slate, recycled products, glass, steel, aluminium... the list is endless.

Timber, Steel or aluminium windows? Much will depend on the style of building, but there are choices to be made that will determine how much you spend up-front, and how much you spend on maintenance in the longer term.

It is better to start considering all these things before the builder starts work as this is the best time to plan and control costs.

## Timetable

Think about and share with your architect the 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 takes at least 4-6 months to agree the design, obtain planning permission and prepare construction drawings before building work can commence.

As for how long the actual building work will take, well that is 'how long is a piece of string'! It all depends on how much you are building and how complicated the building is.

Your architect can give you an indication, however, when you go to tender with the builders, they will include their program and end date as part of the tender, along with the building cost.

Sometimes it is beneficial to accept a builder's tender that is not the cheapest, but can finish sooner, if timing is important. Usually, there is a balance between the cost and the time.

## Budget

Lastly, have a conversation with yourself and keep asking why you want what it is you say you want. That way you are slowly elaborating your brief into more detail.

Include the emotional aspects, as this is the overriding deeper reasoning behind what you want to change about your house.

Use the checklists provided below to help you get a deeper understanding of what you want and why you want it.

Budget is extremely important. Always beware of over-capitalising on your property. However, if you plan to stay in this house long term, then over-capitalisation is less of an issue as the longer you stay in the house, the greater the inherent value of 'being there' is and this isn't a value you can put a figure to.





# 03

## Answer the Why's

What I Really Want Is?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

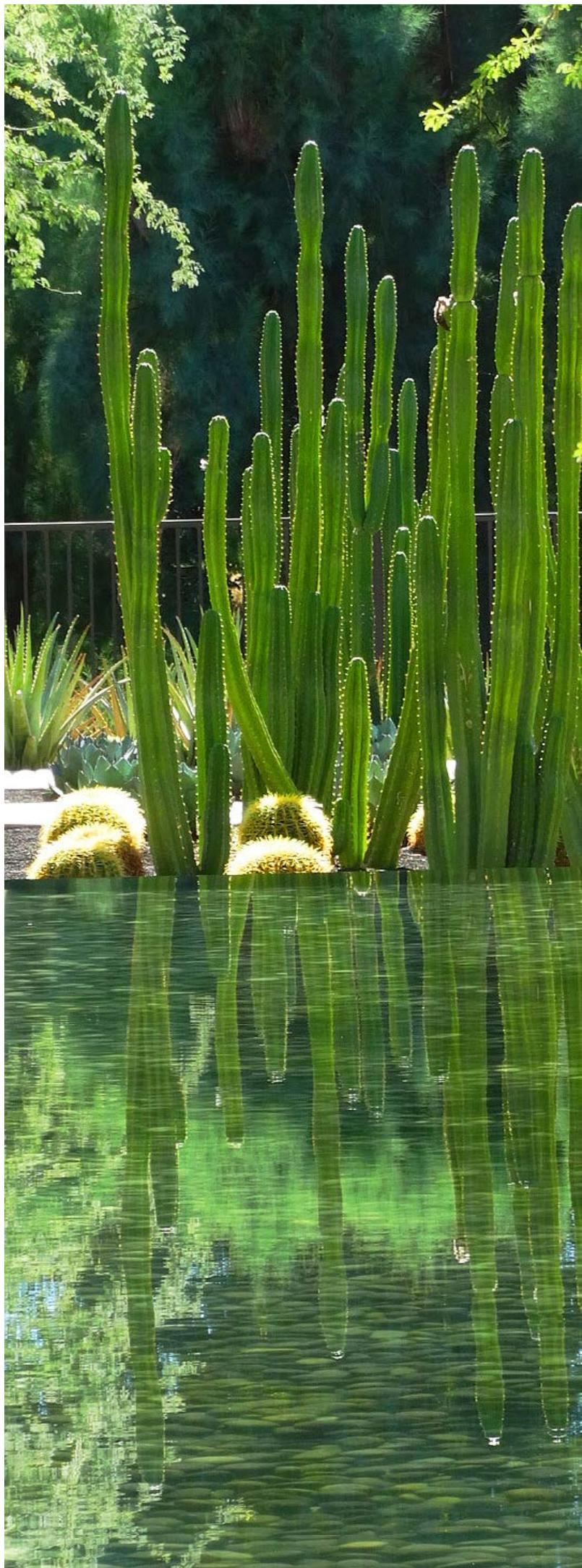
6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_





# 04

## Who What When

### The Nuts and Bolts

Having listed the whys, we have dealt to the big elephant in the room. Now it is time to dwell on the nuts and bolts. The following is a series of questions that will further elaborate on your brief.

Who will live in your home now and in the future?

What new activities will you need to accommodate, that you don't have in your current house?

How do you want your home to fit with the existing area?

Are there any health or safety issues you need to take account of?

What would you really like to live in?

What do you want your home interior to look and feel like?

What colours will it have?

What facilities for cooling and heating do you want?

Do you want to install or upgrade existing security and/or audio systems?

Do you want a total makeover or a staged process?

What is your budget?

Does your budget allow for consultant fees, council fees and GST?

What level of involvement do you want in the management of your renovation?

# the next step...

Congratulations! You have now discovered some of the most common mistakes that people make when building a new house.

Unfortunately, I can't include every important piece of information about building new houses successfully in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the requirements differ based on a multitude of factors.

To help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure, we now offer a custom 'Needs & Options' review where we will identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically, the 'Needs & Options' review saves my clients thousands of dollars and weeks of lost time, not to mention the stress and headache of getting something wrong.

To learn more about the 'Needs & Options' review, as well as the price for this service and why it is critically important to your project's success email me at [info@redblue.com.au](mailto:info@redblue.com.au). If you are ready to talk now, call me at 612 9114 6767.

Best wishes for the success of your project,



Craig Taylor

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