

CLIENT'S GUIDE



WHERE TO START

WHAT TO CONSIDER

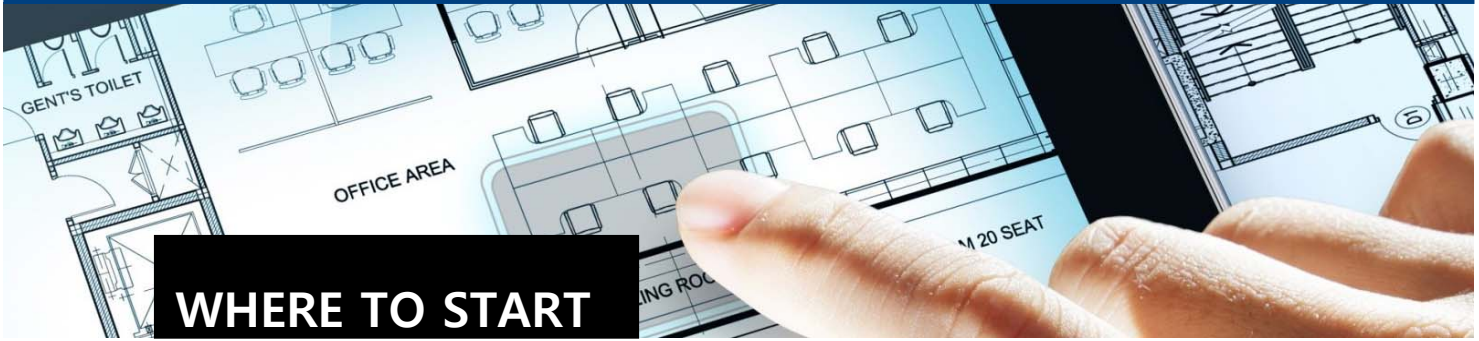
ANSWER THE WHYS

WHO

WHAT

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR

DESIGN PROJECT



How to create a design brief before engaging an architect

Building a new office or renovating your current space can and should be really exciting. However too often we hear stories unexpected surprises, misunderstandings between the contractor, 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 architect is based on open, honest communication. This starts with a good brief that helps the architect understand your expectations, preferences, wants, needs, aspirations and work style. 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 contractor 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. Towards the end of this document, you will find two worksheets that will help you outline your design brief.

Right then! Let's get started...

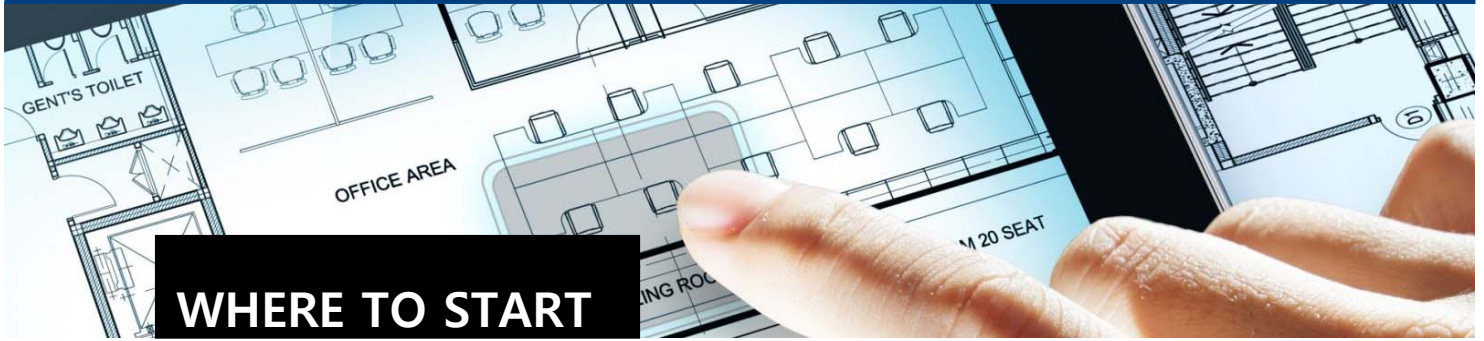


Your Site

Scrutinize your site and consider as many aspects of the area as possible. Is it undeveloped land or is it re-developed? Is it zoned for your projects use? Is the site currently platted? What are the existing adjacent uses surrounding the site? Is there a need for deceleration or acceleration traffic lanes at the entrances and exits? Are utilities available? What drainage requirements are needed? Put all the information you have about your site in a file to share with your architect (legal paperwork/covenants, existing plans or previous site information).

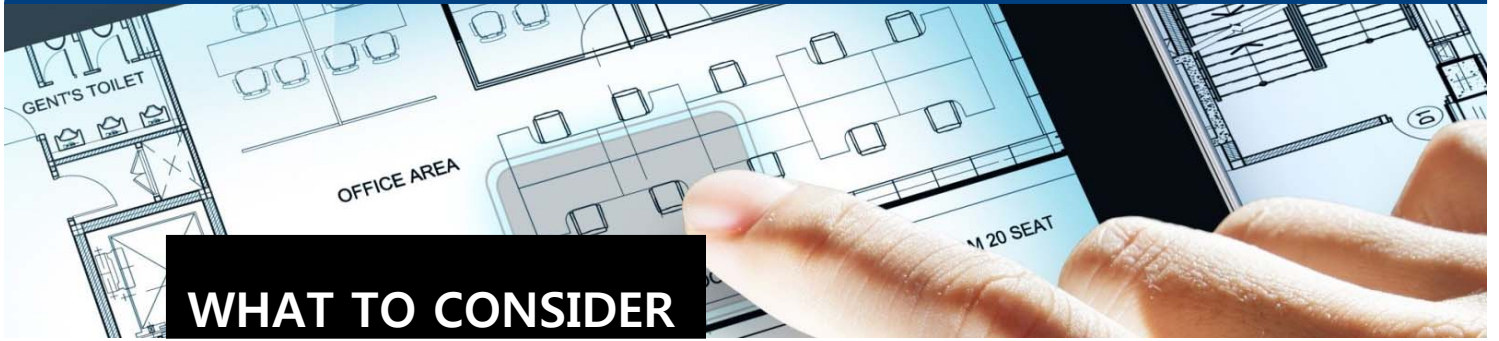
Spaces

A good design can transform the way that we work and live. Think hard about your company's current and future needs. Map out your daily routine. How many people work in the space? Who does what, where? Don't forget your company's future growth needs! Do you want to 'zone' spaces? Consider the number of offices, workrooms and other spaces and describe their use. Make a list of who needs offices or open workspaces, how many restrooms will be needed, what about a break room? Is your work style formal, casual, relaxed or active? Do you need spaces to entertain or educate – indoor and outdoor? What type equipment do you want to include e.g. music, television, projector or areas for storage of computers/equipment? List any special requirements you have, e.g. accessibility, extra storage areas, parking space, built in furniture/shelving, filing space. What do other company members want from the whole project?



Design Mood and Feeling

This is important. This is your building, where your clients will visit you, where you and your employees spend the bulk of the day, the public expression of your business. 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 business is really about. For example, what are you trying to do here? What are your key success factors? How does the building fit into that overall strategy? Describe spaces, design features and styles that appeal to you and those that don't. Use web-based photo sites or example of other businesses that appeal to you to assemble and share your ideas.



WHAT TO CONSIDER

The Details

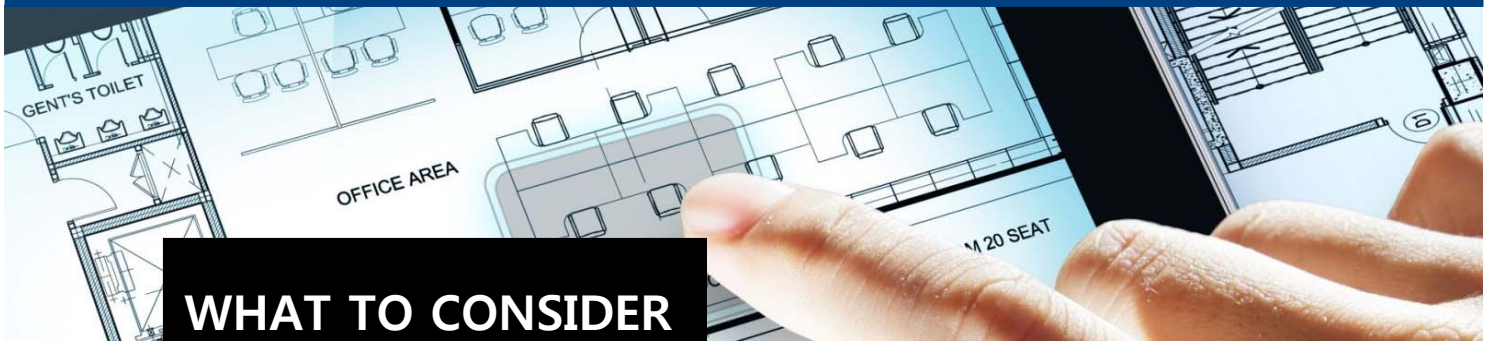
List major equipment you already own or are considering buying and any preferences you have about where you want to put them. Do you need a file room next to the reception area? Do you have lots of computers or equipment that need special outlets? Will you need public restrooms or just shared employee facilities? These details can make a big difference to the way your space is planned. Note major pieces of furniture or artwork you want to showcase so your architect can provide spaces and sockets for them in the new plans. Better to include it in your planning from day one, than to move in and wonder where you are going to display your business awards.

Sketching

Sketch out your thoughts, but don't get too wedded to them. If the work involves altering an existing space you'll be constrained by existing structures and services and if it's a listed building, there will be lots of limitations on what you can change. If it's a new building, let your imagination flow, but be prepared for your architect to suggest other approaches. That is, after all, why you are hiring one!

Materials

List materials you like and dislike (inside and out), but be aware that your budget and development standards will be a determining factor in your final choices. Do you have any specific wall, ceiling and floor finishes in mind? Do you like tile, carpet, stone, slate, rubber, glass, steel, aluminum... the list is endless.



These decisions 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 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 to consider, be mindful that these add costs upfront but can save you money in longer-term. Much will depend on your budget and how long you plan to work in or own the building after the project is completed.

Timetable

Think about and share with your architect 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 firm up the 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 for work on existing buildings and about 18 months for new buildings.

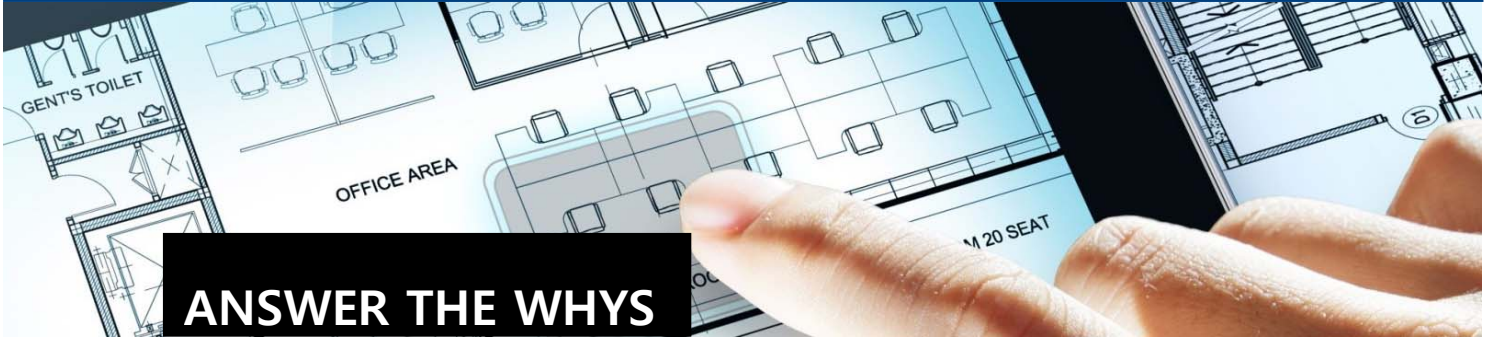


WHAT TO CONSIDER

Budget

We have prepared several typical cost plans for different types of projects and these are available on request.

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



I want to build a new space (or renovate my office/building), why?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



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.

What are you trying to accomplish with this project?

What is your vision for the completed project?

Who else will work in your space now and in the future?

What different new activities will you need to accommodate?

Are there any health and safety issues you need to consider?

Are there development standards to consider for the Exterior look?

What do you want the interior to look like?

Do you want a total makeover or a phased process?

Will there be a committee involved in the decision making process?

Who will be the primary contact for your project?

What is your budget?

Does your budget allow for land cost, specialized equipment and furnishings?

How will the project be financed?



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 in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the brief will differ based on a multitude of factors. But with the concepts explained in this guide, you have the critical information to help you create a design brief that will ensure that your project is a success.

If you are in the process of looking for an architect 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 **need and options review** where I will identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically, the **need and 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 read more about the **need and options review** 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, feel free to give me a call.

Best wishes for the success of your project!