



The Strategic Brief

**Providing you and your team
qualified and confidential
advice and a comprehensive
brief before design work starts**

Graham Ford

Client Adviser and Architect

GF+A
GRAHAM FORD +ARCHITECTS

What is a strategic brief and who creates it?

A strategic brief is a document that outlines your vision and priorities.

We will work with you to stress test the assumptions you have made in your business plan and will look at your strategy and make critical recommendations before you start your project. We help with early stage feasibility and give impartial and informed advice. We might not be the designer ultimately responsible for your scheme.

What problems you may have?

You will most likely have clarity about your project's outcomes, but you will depend upon your adviser for advice on design, construction, budgets and sporting requirements. You have to trust us that we will give you the right information and lead your project in the right direction.

You will need accurate information when it comes to making decisions regarding the viability of your project. You might have a very good understanding of your project from a business or strategic angle, but it is critical to make sure that your vision is possible and meets your budget.

The briefing and pre-design phases are critical as they provide absolute clarity about outcomes. This will minimise the impact of future design changes on scope, specifications, time and budget during project development.

**Talk to us before you start,
we can save you costly mistakes.**

About You

You most likely operate your business, school, university or club from a campus or from an estate comprising a number of buildings.

You need to think about the big picture, infrastructure (roads, parking, energy systems), landscape and buildings.

You may need high-level strategic advice to determine what is feasible.

You are ambitious for your business, school or club but also aware you need to consider the risks of any future development.

You believe that discussing possible and preferred futures with tactics, strategy and vision can lead to positive change which would be of great value to your organisation.

You may want to create a plan to demonstrate how and when your organisation will adapt to meet your sustainability goals and changes to statutory regulations.

You may want to capture lessons from past projects to ensure your next project runs smoothly.

You may need an advocate for the project at board level and someone who can communicate effectively with community groups. You will most likely need someone who can clearly articulate the benefits of the project.

You may be looking for a better relationship between your buildings and nature.

Big picture thinking...leveraging your assets and having a viable and robust plan for the future

About Graham

I am the founder of GFA overseeing the firm's operations and design. I received my BArch and MArch from Victoria University of Wellington, and my PhD from RMIT University. I have received numerous awards including a Victoria University Master's Scholarship and a Todd Foundation Scholarship.

I have been involved in several projects that have received design awards from the Royal Institute of British Architects including the Roundhouse Theatre in Camden Town, the London 2012 Olympic Games and a new city in the Middle East. My office is currently working on the River Club masterplan and Reading West Station.

I am the author of 'The Total Environment Masterplan' and I am a visiting lecturer at Portsmouth University. I have also taught at Cardiff and Nottingham Universities. I am an examiner for the Part 3 final examination in architecture.



Experienced advice that puts you in control of your design project from the beginning.

What are the benefits of developing the Strategic Brief before you engage a design team?

We help you maintain control over issues affecting quality, values, sustainability, and building lifecycle by:

- Developing an accurate brief for your project
- Scenario planning future visions for your club, school or city.
- Advising on failed or difficult planning applications
- Understanding your business objectives and values
- Advising on new technology including Building Information Modelling (BIM) and how this technology can be of benefit maintaining your assets in the future.
- Managing the design of your project
- Managing and analysing potential risks.
- Recognising and taking advantage of opportunities
- Improving communication
- Develop a future strategy for maintenance, cleaning and replacement of damaged components
- Develops a strategy for future adaptation of your facility
- Advising on which consultants you may require and assist the procurement of your design team
- Advising on the construction delivery



River Club Gym and swimming pool, 2023



Spatial design incorporating future proofing of your estate against climate change, energy requirements, trends in leisure and wellness and changes to statutory requirements.

River Club Gym masterplan 2023

Prevention of problems and a robust value proposition

The most value comes early in the briefing process. You should concentrate design thinking at the beginning of your project, distilling and communicating your ideas and vision. This vision must then be the basis for your project's business case.

Your Value Proposition is a statement of desired outcomes based on the needs and desires of you and your customers. The Value Proposition will include the financial value of your project, and other less tangible dimensions.

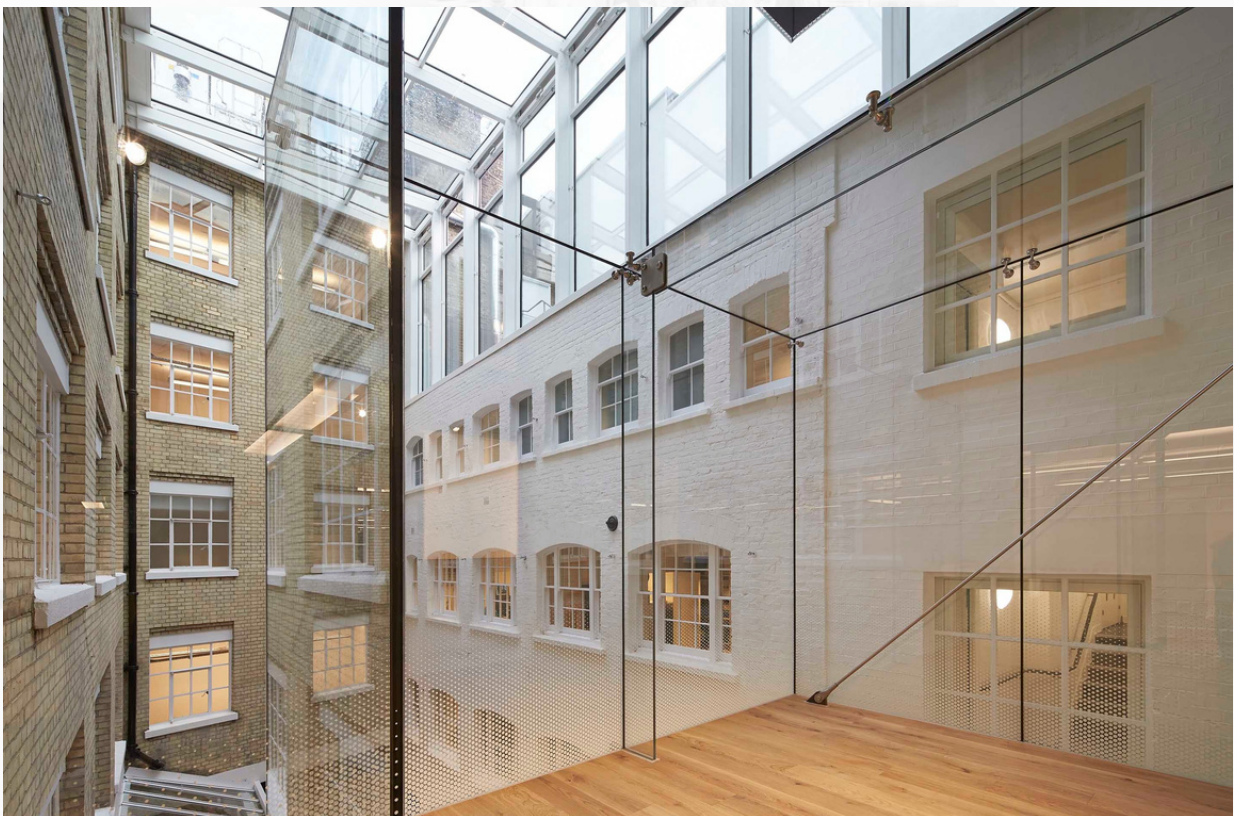
Social, economic, and environmental values include better thermal performance, wellbeing, productivity, employment opportunities, how your project will help connect communities, how all ages and groups will be able to access and benefit from the project. These less tangible dimensions will be crucial to articulate clearly in order to gain **planning permission** for your project.

What may happen if you do not work with us?

- You may end up with a rejected planning application
- Critical parts of the brief are missed, such as equipment you need installed in the building
- Your budget may be unrealistic
- You might build in the wrong place which prevents future projects.
- You end up working with the wrong builders who don't have the information they need to construct the building causing delays and extra costs.
- You may not end up with a valuable digital asset to help with facilities maintenance.
- You may not be ready for future changes which may impact your business.
- Your building may not be easily adapted in the future.



BMW Pavilion: Design manager for Nussli construction for London 2012 Olympic Games



Detailed office fit-out design in collaboration with John McAslan and Partners (2014)

Our methodology.

Workshops

- We will run workshops with your senior management team and identify the weaknesses and the opportunities for improvement.
- We will interview you and your key team to discuss your vision for the future.
- We will identify what data you need to assist with decision-making.
- We will identify what technology will you need to help you effectively manage your assets in the future.
- We will discover the purpose of your project, who is going to use it, and why.

Storyboard

- We will create a storyboard looking at possible and preferred futures and identifying trends, and known and unknown factors that may impact your operation.

Test Fits

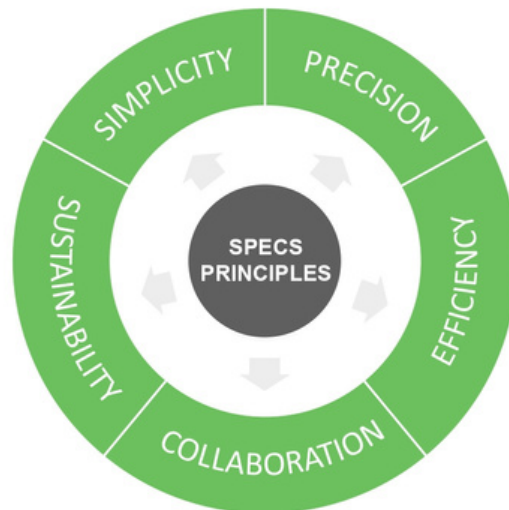
- We will create a block diagram of test fits to test what the possibilities are on your site and explain the key objectives.

Written report

We will produce a written document that:

- details your vision and priorities for the project
- Identifies possible ways to maximises the value of your site.
- Helps to define and deliver the best long-term solution for your project
- We identify which consultants you should work with.
- We work with a project manager to advise on procurement.

Key principles to help overcome the obstacles you may face?



These are the principles we use to guide all stages of your project.

Simplicity: Through many design iterations we reduce complexity to simplicity so the masterplan or building diagram accurately represents your vision and what you need.

Precision: Precision comes from accurate design documents.

Efficiency: Everything your consultants and contractors do should be designed to minimise the disruption to your business or home and ensure your project runs as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

Collaboration: We are specialists in gaining planning permission in London and will give you peace of mind by building a great team that works closely with the local authorities, guiding your project through the application process.

Sustainability: One of our main aims is to ensure your design team develops a design that reduces your energy bills which will also result in your project having less impact on the planet.

What our clients say?

“...So it was reimagining the space that we really needed help with and then on top of that, we wanted a fresh new look and feel to it. The new dining space works really nicely. I wanted it to have quite a clean, clear style. We didn't want it to be really cluttered. The customers really love the kind of light feel that there is in here even though we don't actually have enormous windows that it has quite nice look and feel to it....it has a very airy feeling which is what we all worked on to achieve.”

Camilla Schneiderman, Managing Director, Leiths School of Food and Wine.

“I had the pleasure of working with Graham and his team on a project that required a quick turnaround for detailed practical and viable solutions. I always found Graham very approachable, and nothing was too much trouble. I would have no hesitation in using Graham Ford again, or recommending him to anyone. Job well done!”

Rob Walker, Senior Design Manager at Buckingham Group Ltd.

“...It comes to life this great two-star listed building and you see the original iron and brick work and the woodwork....All the materials that you chose like the steel and flooring are really robust and hardwearing so that when you have 400,000 people a year in this space and the loads of theatre shows, circus and music gigs and private events we have can be turned around really quickly. We don't have to spend weeks the year rebuilding it, its robust. We are bringing audiences in every day, giving them a fantastic time and they can go out into the night and feel that they've been to a place that has been uplifting for them.”

Marcus Davey Chief Executive The Roundhouse Theatre

“We employed Graham Ford Architects to provide construction stage technical design assistance on a large residential development in West London. Graham and his team brought significant value to the project and their detailed knowledge of construction detailing and the building regulations helped us to overcome some significant challenges. I look forward to working with Graham and the GFA team in the near future.”

Ross Nutchey (client) Design Manager Galliford Try

Contact Graham
(all conversations are confidential)

+44 (0)20 8748 2024
Britannia House, 11 Glenthorne Road,
London, W6 0LH

info@grahamfordarchitects.com



www.grahamfordarchitects.com