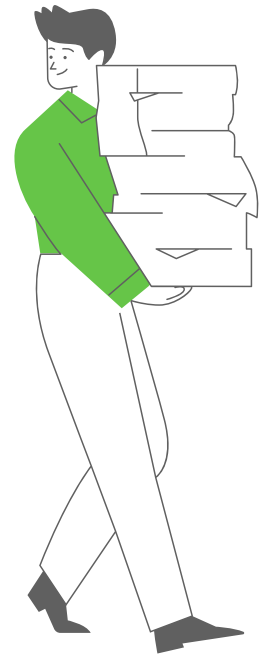




GRAHAM FORD +ARCHITECTS

HOW TO CREATE A GREAT BRIEF FOR YOUR RENOVATION



Having a great brief is the first step in designing your ideal home. Based on our years of experience we can help you arrive at this point.

To come up with an architectural brief can be a short and simple process. An architect will ask you to provide answers to some straightforward questions such as:

- How many bedrooms do you want?
- What is your budget?
- Do have any children (or plans for children) or extended family that you need to consider?

This information has proven to be very practical and important. However, what we discovered is that it doesn't allow us to get a chance to know you and hear your vision for your future home, which we would love to design for you.

Creating a great brief is a journey, a collaboration between you and your architect. In this document we will go through three important steps of the briefing process which can help you when working with an architect to design your home.

1

HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR ARCHITECT

We like to brainstorm together with our clients to get to know you and your project better. The purpose of this step is to ask the type of questions that don't normally make their way into a questionnaire but come up naturally in the flow of the conversation. Such questions could be:

- Do you hold frequent dinner parties?
- Are you avid cooks?
- Do you want your master bedroom to feel secluded, or connected to the rest of your home?
- Would you rather a visual or audible connection to your children around the house (or not!)?

Hearing your answers to such questions helps us to understand your needs, lifestyle, and vision for the project. During our early meetings we could also explore some quick sketches that will help our client to visualise different ideas and even spark new insights.

2

WORK OUT YOUR NEGOTIABLE AND NON-NEGOTIABLES

Once we are both on the same page about your brief, we can help you to work out your priorities within the limitations of space, budget and time. Sometimes we could ask you questions like, what is more important to you: having a large kitchen, or a spacious living room? Or do you want your kitchen to be one with your living room?

To establish a strong brief, you need to know the priorities for your home earlier rather than later, this will save you money, time, and frustration down the line.

3

THINK ABOUT THE INTANGIBLE THINGS

Once we go through the measurable and pragmatic things, we can then discuss if there are any less tangible things that you want for your home. How do you want your house to feel? Should it be grand, quirky or humble? Do you have a personal aesthetic style? Is there something or someone that particularly inspires you?

Through our years working with clients we have realised that some work well with words, others with images. If you are a visual person, tools such as Pinterest can be great to create moodboard of images. When collecting your visual material, it is valuable to understand why that image resonates with you.

Think about:

- What do you like about them?
- How do they speak to you?
- What kind of mood do they provoke for you?

As designers we are primarily interested in what you take from the images and how they resonate with you. For example: a Scandinavian cabin overlooking a lake at sunset might be a beautiful image, but how does it make you feel? We want to know why it is inspiring for you, so that we can do our best to recreate that feeling, tailored specifically for you and your home.

CONCLUSION

To come up with a perfect brief, we first and foremost need to understand you and what you want to achieve. The traditional questions relating budget, spaces and rooms help us to define the limitations of the potential project. However, we are equally interested in the creative opportunities for the project which arise out of our structured but conversational and collaborative briefing process or as we like to refer to it The Discovery Phase.

It is important that you as a client prepares for the briefing (discovery phase). You can do that in three ways.

Be ready..

..for a friendly, open, wide-ranging briefing meeting where we will find out a lot about you, your partner/family/pet and your goals.

..to communicate and discuss the negotiable and non-negotiable aspects of your brief.

..to cut, then dig a little deeper into your collection of inspirational material so that they can clearly communicate your taste, preferences, and vision to our team.

Most importantly be honest with yourself and think about “why”. Why are you creating this home, or undertaking this renovation? How does it tie in to your way of living? Is it to seek a calmer, more tranquil safe haven? Is it about creating a flexible space to connect with people and encourage interactions? Is it about living a simple lifestyle, in touch with nature? Is it to create the most beautiful escape from day to day life to the point where you want a resort for a home?

It is often that clients come to us with a design idea with an underlying “why”, but they do not share this essential information with us. Consequently, we begin questioning the idea without fully understanding the compelling feeling beneath it. We love to hear your “why” because we would love to help guide you to your ideal home.



Thank you for using our guide, by doing so you are taking a valuable step towards a great brief and ideal home!

If you have any further questions and you would like to get in touch email us on:

info@grahamfordarchitects.com