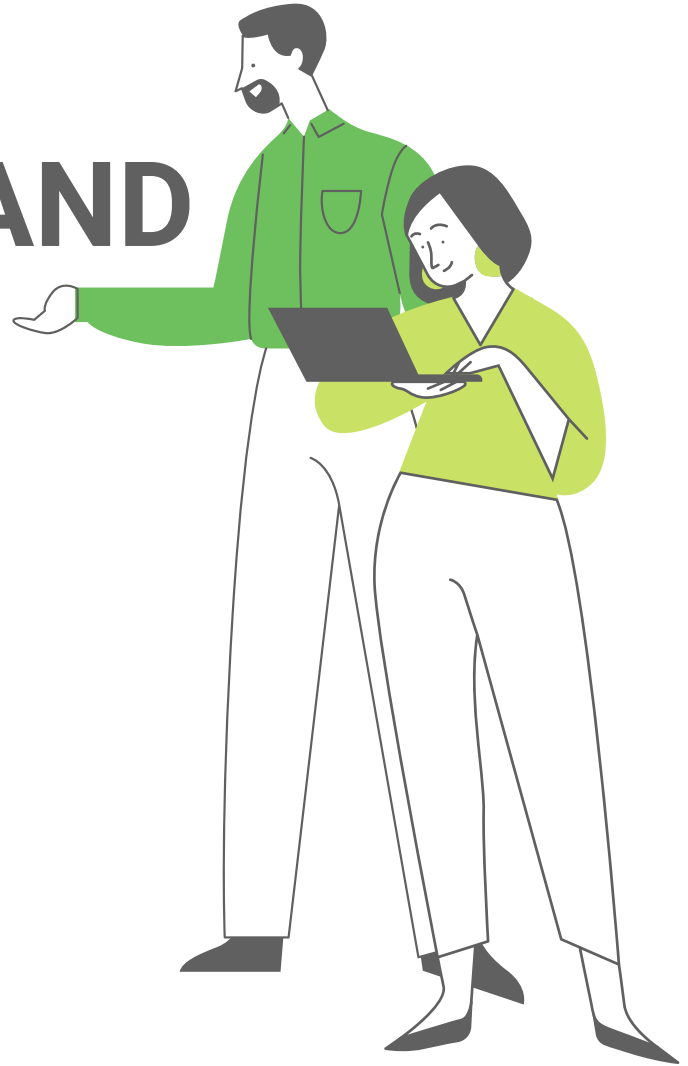


# GF+A

GRAHAM FORD +ARCHITECTS

# THINGS TO CONSIDER AND RESEARCH BEFORE YOU SPEAK TO YOUR ARCHITECT



Converting your home, or building a new one, is one of the most exciting events you can experience but it can also be very stressful. To ensure your building is successful here are some easy to remember considerations which will have you better prepared for what to expect and what is expected of you. When we meet, we will go through all these things so don't worry if you don't have full and well-developed answers to all these questions yet. We will help you with this.

## **The No.1 Project Problem: Projects going over time and over budget.**

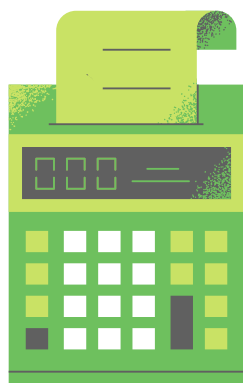
On a daily basis, we see people moving projects into the design phase before the research is started. This is like a doctor starting surgery without a thorough diagnosis or like building a house on a bad foundation.

That is why we created this resource document to help you prepare for the Discovery Phase. If you follow this tool, you will reduce project risks and improve the project design. We created this process a few years ago because there is a huge issue of people starting design and construction BEFORE they have fully done their homework, which causes renovation projects to consistently go over time and over budget.



### **1.0 What are your requirements?**

The first step to planning your building is to consider your requirements honestly and thoroughly. Do you need more space? Think about how you use your home and how long you are likely to live there. Do you need space for social events, or is it a space just for you? Will it be designed to satisfy the single life, or do you want to fill it with a family? By determining your needs early and how they might change in the future, you will be able to plan every aspect of the design to work for you and also, future proof the project. You should start this process writing down your brief for each room you think we will need and how these rooms will be used. If you do not have time, we will help you with this when we meet you for the first time.



### **2.0 What is your budget?**

Where you live and what you build is determined by how much you can afford to spend on the project. We will need to know your budget (excluding VAT) so that we can tailor what we do to ensure you can afford what we have designed. Setting out a firm, realistic budget will allow you to figure out what features are most important to you. Remember that a good design can significantly increase the resale value of your property, so an investment now may make a return in the future.



### **3.0 Who is required for the project?**

Some architects will be involved throughout, they will oversee the construction, find contractors and suppliers, while others will provide only the design. You may also not need the architect to be involved entirely, either because you can oversee aspects of the project yourself or you have separate professionals helping at different stages. We will help you find the right people for every stage, including engineers, quantity surveyors and party wall surveyors. A good well co-ordinated team, which includes yourself, is essential for the success of the project.



## 4.0 What statutory permissions are required?

Whether you're modifying your current home or building a new one, the first step is finding out from the relevant authorities whether planning permission is required. This is especially important in areas with old buildings and in conservation areas where there could be restrictions on what design solution is acceptable.

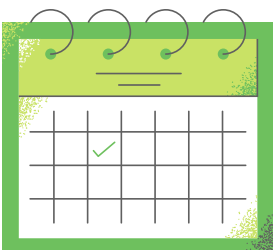
Do you want to have a striking design which stands out or one which fits elegantly into its surroundings? Do you want a modern or a period look? Present your architect with some examples resembling what you want to achieve but remember that planning permission will determine much of what is possible. An experienced architect will be able to work with local councils to increase the chances of having your plans approved.

Building control follows planning and we will produce a set of drawings with the information required to ensure we gain building control sign-off of your project at the completion of the work.



## 5.0 What ideas do you have for the design?

How hands-on you want to get with the design process will vary from person to person, but if you enjoy sketching or using Pinterest, we can help you realise your vision for the project. You may have specific items of furniture that need to be included into the design for example. We will ensure the layout of the space incorporates these by producing a set of drawings which will bring the project to life. Once the layout of the spaces has been designed you will then need to think about all the lighting, the internal finishes including timber floors, carpets, tiles and blinds and how these will complement the design of the house.



## 6.0 How long will the project take?

Building projects always take longer than people think as there are normally a lot of permissions involved. An experienced architect will be able to produce a realistic timeline for your project. Once you know how long it will take, it will be much easier to deal with the wait and disruption of building work. You may want to oversee the process yourself to save money, however an experienced architect will deliver a project on time, saving you a great deal of stress in the process.