

REALM

creating inspiring spaces

**Must Have
Information to
Help You
Design
Your Dream Home**

TOP 14
DESIGN
TIPS FOR
SUCCESSFUL
PROJECT
PLANNING

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WELCOME

Successful home design begins a well thought out Design Brief which captures the Vision you have for your Home

The aim of this Guide is to provide Prompts, Information and advice to help you get clarity on your ideas, what you need to consider and how to organise and present your thoughts in readiness to prepare the Design Brief, the starting point for your Design Journey

With Designer's Tips, advice about the process, must know information and the right questions to ask that will make your Home truly a great fit for you, your family and your lifestyle

Let's get started!

01 YOUR STORY

Who & Why?

Our Homes are fundamental to the way we live. They express who we are and play a part in allowing us to live the way we want to.

Getting to know the occupants, the people that will live in the space, is the best way to inform the design. The design will then capture and reflect who you are and your lifestyle.

A well designed home that specifically suits you will be a pleasure to live in.

From the outset the Vision must be clear.

Knowing why you are building also impacts the design. Articulating why you are building and what you want to achieve will ensure that design is aligned with that vision.

**"Recognising the Need is the Primary Condition for the Design"-
Charles Eames**

Key Questions:

Why are you Building | renovating?

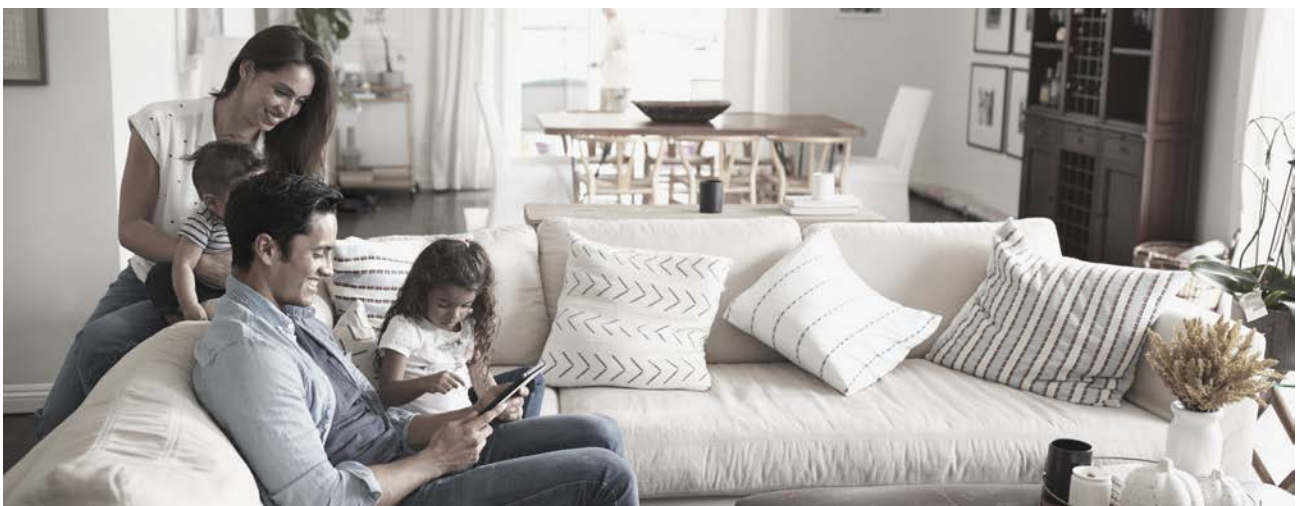
Who will live in the home?

How old are the kids & what do they like to do?

Do you have members of the extended family live with you or visit for long periods of time?

Is this your forever home?

Will the home be required to adapt to changing life and family situations?



02 PASSIONS & PRIORITIES

What's important to you?

Understanding what you are passionate about will establish the priorities for your home. This is not limited to functional or practical responses but also includes how it might look, what inclusions it may have but importantly how do you want to feel when you are at home.

What must your home have, how will it best suit your needs and how you live? Do you love to cook? Entertain & cater large numbers of guests? Or sit quietly in a sunny alcove surrounded by your favourite books?

Is your Home a sanctuary? Quiet, tranquil, peaceful and private? or lively, busy, bustling and bright? Or maybe a combination of the two!

These are fundamental considerations when designing an individual home. We don't need to follow suite, that is the beauty of this, your Home can be designed around your specific passions and priorities.



What does your home really mean to you?

What's important to you?

How do you want to feel when you are at home?

Designer's Tip

Often it is really useful to know what drives you crazy in your current Home? Lack of storage? Rooms not laid out to accommodate your furniture? Lack of flow? Articulating these things will ensure that they are resolved and won't happen in your New Home.

What are your Must Haves? Your non-negotiables?

How do you entertain / socialise at home?

What do you love to do at Home? Cook? Garden? Sew? Paint?

03 DESIGN & SPACE PLANNING

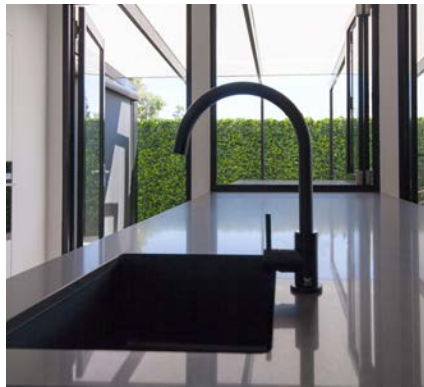
How the spaces work - Flow & function

It may seem like every house is the same, yes they all have bedrooms, bathrooms, utility areas and living spaces, however designing a Home is not just about assembling a series of rooms in a logical order,

Designing a Home requires each space being carefully crafted around it's occupants while considering the relationship between all of the spaces.

Considering the connections between the spaces, how they are furnished and how you flow through the rooms is important to good design.

Knowing you and your family and how you live in the space directly informs the arrangement and planning all of the space in your Home to maximise their usability.



**“Your home is a machine for living in”
- Le Corbusier**

Often the size of the rooms is determined by how best they will function, rather than adhering to strict assignment of particular dimensions. The location of the windows, doors and circulations spaces all affect the design of the rooms.

Think about how you move about the home. This can be reflected in the Design.

How do you enter the home? Via the garage?

Do you leave your bag, shoes and coat near the entry?

Then there needs to be curated space designed to allow this to happen with ease. A cloak cupboard for your coat & shoes, a bench for your bag, hooks for your keys and a phone charging point for your phone.

Consider

If the home is designed to suit how you use the space – your paths of travel and your flow will be a good fit with you. Creating the flow allows you to live in your house with ease.

04 SITE

The Where

An individually designed Home is not only responsive to the needs of the People who will live there but it also must be designed specifically for it's location.

Each site is a unique landscape that behaves differently and the design is a direct response to it's context. When designed specifically for a site it allows the Home and the Land to work in harmony.

Designing a Home to capture a particular view or focal point or maybe a number of views and things to look at becomes an inherent part of the design.

Homes need to be designed to take in the shape, size, orientation and topography of the land and have a layout that responds to the brief and the site context.



Spend some time on your site at different times of the day to observe the behaviour of the sun, Look for shadows cast by trees or other site features Take in the surroundings. Locate NORTH.

Look for focal points and specific views worth capturing and note the location of the following:

Trees & vegetation, habitat
Waterways, creeks and low lying land
Existing buildings, sheds, yards
Changes in levels
Views to and from the site
Location of services & infrastructure
The neighbours – where are they located?
What do they see of your site from their place?



Designer's Tip

Take a video on your phone as you rotate through 360 degrees to capture key views, aspects and site features. Upload it to your Pinterest Board together with images of your site. Find an aerial image and have a look at your site and the surrounding areas from above, it might reveal some interesting features not seen when on the ground

05 SUSTAINABILITY

How GREEN is Your Scene?

We all welcome the idea of an energy efficient home that embraces the principles of sustainability. A home that makes minimal demand on resources, is comfortable to live in and is sustainable is what we aim for in the design of all New Homes.

There are many other ways you can be a darker shade of Green and make choices that further improve the sustainability of your home. Such as incorporating Passive Design principles, selecting sustainable materials, integrating off grid services and infrastructure and using natural or organic finishes throughout.



Recycling building materials, re-purposing old furniture or items such as doors, timbers, fireplace surrounds. Using low VOC paints, materials and finishes.

It all depends how green is your scene.

Consider

Passive Design

Orientation | Shading | Passive Heating & cooling | Thermal mass | Improved Design

Materials

Embodied energy | Recycled-reused materials | Alternative construction methods
Reverse brick veneer | earth | concrete

Energy Options

Renewable Energy | photovoltaic systems

Water

Rainwater | grey water | tanks | rain gardens

Interior Finishes

Reclaimed materials | low voc paints and products | natural materials



Designer's Tip

Research to establish your ideas on achieving a thermally efficient home & sustainable home. The 'Your Home' website is a great resource for information when considering GREEN design <https://www.yourhome.gov.au/>

06 LANDSCAPE

Indoor & Outdoor Living

Outdoor Living is such an important part of our rural & regional Lifestyles.

The design of your Home does not stop at the entry doors. When designing a Home, the entire site is considered.

Taking a holistic approach allows a seamless connection between the indoor and the outdoor spaces and allows the creation of outdoor areas to sit, garden, entertain, swim, that are perfectly placed.

Shaping the wider landscape including long driveways, creating views and vistas or outdoor rooms work to create focal points that can then be viewed from the inside of your home serving to strengthen the connection between the home and the landscape.

Designing the landscape in conjunction with the home also ensures that the look of your garden fits with the aesthetic of your Home.



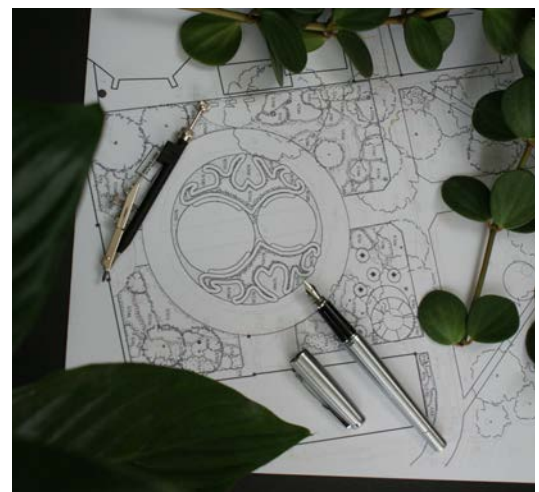
**"To Plant a Garden is to believe in tomorrow" -
Audrey Hepburn**

Outdoor Spaces include

Access from the indoors
Passive spaces | Courtyards
Covered Outdoor Living
Lawn Areas | Active Play spaces
Swimming Pool

Plantings include

Native vegetation
Deciduous Trees
Exotic species | formal gardens
Drought tolerant species
Hedging | wind breaks | buffers
Edible Gardens | veges | herbs



07 AESTHETIC

The Look

The overall aesthetic of your home is the most tangible expression of your taste, your lifestyle, your site and your passions.

This is a totally individual thing and is one of the most exciting parts of the design journey to see how the melange of ideas, thoughts and information presented in the Design brief as words, images and discussion translates into a Home with it's unique Design, personality, form and aesthetic.



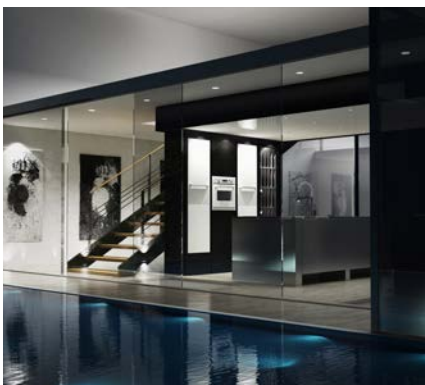
"Fashion is made to become Unfashionable" - Coco Chanel

Homes are always individual and unique and can reflect reference to to past style or design ideology

What style reflects your taste?

Classic? Country? Contemporary? Minimalist?

An individually designed Home that is not anchored in current trends will remain timeless and sit comfortably on it's own terms now and into the future.



08 INTERIOR STYLE

Define Your Style

Each person has a unique style that can become an intrinsic part of their space, within the architecture and design of their home.

It is often not just about one individual component but the combination of all the design elements that creates an authentic space.

A home that flows and has a sense of calm when all the elements combine in a fluent expression of the personality and lifestyle of the occupants.

Daring to be different and expressing your individual style in your home can be a super huge challenge. Having the confidence to be different, to stand apart from the crowd relies on pin pointing exactly what is **YOUR** style and understanding how to achieve it.



"Why Change? Everyone has their own Style. When you have found it, you should stick to it" - Audrey Hepburn

Make a list of your treasured items - That gorgeous comfy chair, the framed prints, the opulent and oversized sofa. If these are the things that are the essence of your style the design will need to work around them.

Be wary of fads and the latest trends – they will date as fashion changes.

Go with what feels right for you, this is your home

Designer's Tip



Not all of the information that we need to talk about can be adequately expressed in words. Collecting visual material is very important and will help tell the whole story. It's great to collect a range of images—take a look at colors, textures, materials, furniture and architectural elements they all contribute to the look and feel of your home. The best way to doing this is to use Pinterest. Collect and Pin a range of images onto your Boards to capture the desired look and feel of your Home.

Don't overthink things when you start Pinning your images. You can always refine your collection later. Extend your Pinning to include images of your land, the trees, the sunset...all these things effectively evoke the mood & help define the overall vision

09 DESIGNER

Selecting Your Designer

The role of the Designers in the realisation of your Home is not limited to the Architectural Design. They are skilled in Space Planning, Interior Design, Sustainable solutions, and have knowledge regarding Construction & Building contracts.

Designers manage all the stages of the Design journey from the initiation of the Project and assisting in the preparation of the Design Brief & Project Planning, Concept Design, Construction Plans and staying with you through to completion of the build.

Designers by nature are multifaceted in their approach - Creative, Technical, Organisers & Drivers, Negotiators and Problem Solvers!

Using a Designer who can bring a complete suite of services including Coordinating the team of specialist Consultants, applying for permits, tendering and administering your building contract is a huge benefit to ensuring a seamless integration of information throughout your project.

Your Designer must be a great listener and be able to interpret your needs and add expression to your ideas.

You and your Designer must be 'on the same page' and be able to communicate comfortably.

"How well we communicate is not determined by how well we say thing, but how well we are understood" - Andrew Grove

Designers come in all shapes and sizes!
Here's a few questions to ask

Do they Specialise in Residential Design?

And have a portfolio of quality individually designed homes?

What is their design philosophy?

Does that resonate with you? Are you on the same page?

Are they passionate about Design? And helping you achieve your Dream Home?

Are they interested in your project? Are they listening? Are they hearing you?

How creative are they?

Do they design and sketch on the drawing board? Provide hand drawn sketches?

Do they provide a holistic approach and provide an integrated suite of design services? And handle all the key parts of the project as well as the Design?

Do they stay with you through the entire journey? From design to project completion?



10 BUILDING

What to look out for?

Using Registered Building contractor who has had experience and success in this type of work is essential.

Spend time discussing your project with potential Builders to gauge if they are on the same page, listening and embrace your overall objective. You will be working closely with them over many months so you need to establish a good working relationship.

Checkout their credentials – registrations and former building projects.

Most builders will provide you with addresses of homes that they have built for you to view and may arrange for you to visit a site and meet with former clients. This is the best way to view their work.

Tendering & calling for quotations requires knowledge of the tendering process. Make sure that you are fully aware of the protocols here and understand the information that you need in order to make such a big decision.

"An Idea that is Developed and put into Action is more Important than an idea that Exists only as an Idea - Edward de Bono



It is critical that when assessing quotations you are comparing “apples for apples” and that all things have been included in the Contract Price.

Obtaining independent advice before signing your contract is a must, to ensure that your side of the deal is fair and that you fully understand your rights and obligations under the contract. Building Contracts are like any other legal contract and you need to be informed.

If you are proposing to administer your own contract through the build, ensure that you are crystal clear on payment terms, variations and progress claims. Alternatively, seek the assistance of your Designer who can act as Administrator of the Contract and handle all the details for you.

Designer's Tip

The building industry in Victoria is regulated and there is plenty of information available for consumers. Visit the Victorian Building Authority website <https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/consumers>

11 PERMISSIONS

Permits & Approvals

Most building projects will require a Building Approval be issued by your Council or Consultant Building Surveyor. In some instances you may also require Town Planning Approval to allow the works on your site.

Town Planning Approval needs to be granted prior to a Building Approval being issued.



Your Designer will check the Regulatory requirements early in the Project and plan this into the project scope accordingly. Incorporating this phase into the project to ensure that the necessary approvals are obtained at the correct stage in the project and in the correct order. This is the most cost & time effective way to do things. Regulatory compliance is mandatory and must be included in project planning to ensure the right boxes are ticked along the way.

Without the necessary approvals the project will not get off the ground or be delayed while the approvals are obtained.

12 PLANS & DOCUMENTS

What's their purpose and why are they so Important?

Comprehensive project documentation consists of Plans, reports, specifications, schedules, computations & certificates that communicate all the information about your new Home or Renovation to the Builder, Contractors, Council and others.

The more information that is captured and included in the documentation the better. You may think that saving money on the preparation of the plans presents as “good value”, however it will almost always cost you more in the building stage.

Most people will seek quotations from more than one selected Builders. It is important that all of your Builders are quoting on the same thing - ‘apples for apples’.

Detailed project documentation – plans, engineering computations, energy rating information and your selections for the interior fit out of your home are needed to make sure that all the information about your project is provided.

Project documentation that does not cover all of the necessary information will leave ‘grey areas’ in which the builder will need to make assumptions in his costings to cover the “what ifs” and may result in you not getting the end result that you thought.

Insufficient information may also create variations in the contract price that were not anticipated.

13 BUDGET

It is CRITICALLY important for you to set a budget for your project not only to ensure that your project is achievable , but having a budget assists in making design decisions throughout the Design stage.

There are a myriad of things that impact on the construction cost of your home including the type of home, size, location, site conditions, construction method, inclusions and level of finish.

About the Budget

My budget is

fixed

flexible

indicative

My budget is \$.....

Seeking the advice of a Building Contractor to get ‘a feel’ for current construction costs is a good idea. It is difficult to establish an exact \$ for your home as there are so many variables, but having an indication will be beneficial at the outset

A construction cost estimate should also be obtained in the early stages of the schematic design phase to confirm that the project aligns with the Budget. This is done by a Quantity Surveyor or Building Estimator and can be arranged by your Designer.

Other items

Swimming Pool

Landscaping

Shedding

Other

Window furnishings

Furniture

Other

Total

\$.....

\$.....

\$.....

\$.....

\$.....

\$.....

\$.....

\$.....



14 TIMELINE

Establishing a realistic timeline for your project will ensure that you can dedicate time to each step, make good decisions and move comfortably through all the stages of the Design journey without feeling pressured.

The Design process takes time. As the Design is the most important element, you must get it right! Unlike what you see on reality TV renovation shows, the design and preparation of the project documentation.

takes time - it doesn't happen in one day!

Each project has a unique set of requirements which is reflected in a timeframe.

Timelines can also be affected by your needs, necessity to obtain complex Approvals & builder availability. To define a timeline, consider the key project milestones in reverse.



Dates

Complete building & moving in

Commence building

Obtain quotations from builder

Issue of Project Plans

Commencement of the design

Project Planning

CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	01 YOUR STORY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	02 PASSIONS & PRIORITIES	
<input type="checkbox"/>	03 DESIGN & SPACE PLANNING	
<input type="checkbox"/>	04 SITE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	05 SUSTAINABILITY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	06 LANDSCAPE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	07 AESTHETIC	
<input type="checkbox"/>	08 INTERIOR STYLE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	09 DESIGNER	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 BUILDING	
<input type="checkbox"/>	11 PERMISSIONS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	12 PLANS & DOCUMENTS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	13 BUDGET	
<input type="checkbox"/>	14 TIMELINE	



WELL DONE!

You have covered quite a bit of ground and
no doubt have compiled your thoughts
and have a clear Vision for Your New Home
or Renovation

You're all set to take the next step and
prepare your Design Brief
to get your project underway

A little bit about us.....

REALM Building Design specialises in connecting people with place through the creation of inspiring spaces in which to live, work and play.

We believe that good design enriches our lives in so many ways. By creating beautiful, authentic spaces in which to live, it allows us to operate with ease, flow and efficiency in our homes and everyday life.

When we design, we are not merely assembling a series of rooms together in random order. Every element is designed to fit the use and context of the landscape, lifestyle and surroundings - ensuring each space is carefully wrapped around its occupants. Successful design is a synergy of creativity, artistry, practicality and beauty.

Over the past thirty plus years, we have worked closely with our Clients and have created many beautiful homes for our people to enjoy. This has established our reputation for excellence and quality in residential building design to which we are very happy to have been part of each and every individual project. Our Clients are busy people who rely on our extensive suite of design services to bring the dream to reality.

We rally our Team of Design Professionals to cover all aspects of the project. We stay with you for the entire time, providing expert knowledge, assistance and advice throughout the design phase, continuing until after you have moved in!

We know the Industry, we know how best to assist our Clients and at all times have their best interests at heart. We know the ropes and that's why we can provide an extensive suite of Design Services as we know that ultimately this achieves the best outcomes for our Clients and for us - that's our reward

To touch base

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