

THE COMPLETE HOLISTIC HOME

PROJECT PLANNING GUIDE



COOPER
& BLAKE
ARCHITECTURE



"Helping people who value quality and sustainability to create their unique home that is beautiful, site sensitive and timeless."

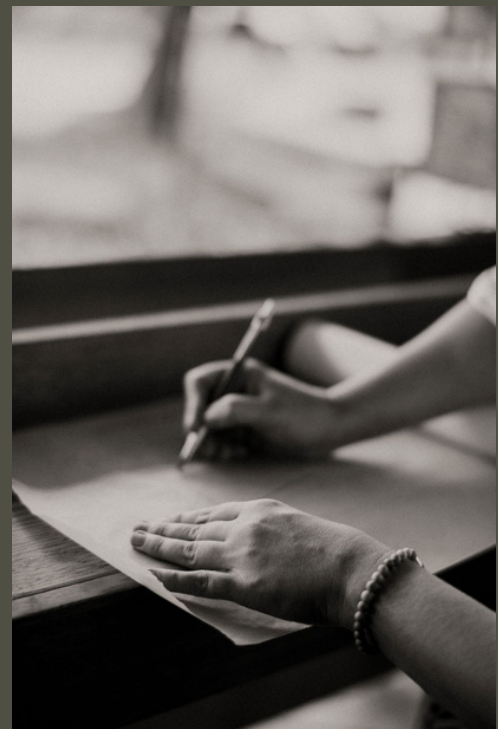
HELLO & WELCOME




Building a custom home can be an exciting journey. This is your opportunity to see your vision come to life, from initial sketches through to construction. In just a short period of time, you get to move into what might be your dream home. Such excitement may cause you to jump into the process without first taking the proper steps.

"Their innovative ideas, knowledge and expertise were essential in designing and planning a space that for us feels relaxed, modern, beautiful and encompasses our coastal lifestyle"

-Client Testimonial



A woman with her hair tied back, wearing a white button-down shirt and a necklace with a small square pendant, is looking down at a set of architectural plans. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an office or studio environment.

Designing a home and coordinating its construction involves complex planning, there are many opportunities for things to go wrong.

Poorly planned design can lead to expensive revisions and significant delays. You can end up with a low-quality build that fails to meet your expectations, even after going over budget and beyond deadlines.

To avoid finding yourself in this position, it's absolutely essential to find an expert team who will invest extra time and effort into pre-design consultations, site analysis and research that establish an informed strategy from the start.

So before you leap into your project, we recommend using this guide to prepare. You'll learn how to figure out how to pick the right team for your job, and how to thoughtfully determine your project goals. Once you've completed each section, you'll reach the point at which you're ready to start officially planning your project with the right professionals.

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HOW WE CAN HELP



Our Holistic Home process is supported by intensive pre-design work, which we offer in the form of consultations and preliminary planning and pricing packages. These early efforts have been instrumental in delivering projects that run smoothly and as-planned, ensuring complete satisfaction for our happy homeowners.

By creating this guide, we hope to arm you with some of the tools and exercises that we use in our own pre-design work. Leveraging these insights will help you get ready to plan a project that's destined for success. Should you choose to partner with our team for your custom home, you'll have already laid the foundation for a productive project kick-off that correctly addresses your needs, preferences, and limitations.

THE COOPER & BLAKE EXPERIENCE

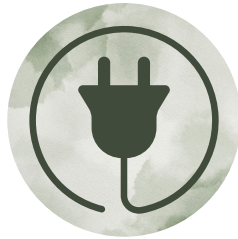


FREE CONSULT

Have your questions answered by our Director Jessica Murray

BESPOKE PRE DESIGN ANALYSIS

Receive a report providing clarity and cost calculations, brief analysis and a project concept.



ALL ELECTRIC

We design our projects to be fossil fuel free. Using passive design and all electric homes

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY
Make your spaces work harder for a better quality home within your budget,



FULL SERVICE FOR BUSY

PEOPLE

We provide full architectural services so your project moves ahead smoothly behind the scenes.

**ON SITE
PROBLEM SOLVING**
We act as your agent during construction. Solving issues as they arise whilst on site.



LOW RISK

HIGH VALUE

TAKE RISKS WITH YOUR DESIGN.
NOT YOUR RESULTS.

THE COOPER & BLAKE DIFFERENCE



PRE DESIGN ANALYSIS

We offer a pre-design service where you will find we understand and believe in your vision, assess the project viability together and formulate a realistic project roadmap to move it forward.

"A surgeon would not operate without a diagnosis. Your home should be treated the same way."



UNLIMITED REFINEMENTS

We understand that the design process is an evolutionary process. We have experience with working collaboratively with clients and consultants to continue developing and refining to ensure the end result is the best fit and value for our clients.



FULL SERVICE FOR BUSY PEOPLE

We provide full architectural services so your project moves ahead smoothly behind the scenes.

There are many working parts and pieces to the puzzle. We have experience and confidence from beginning to end and act as your agent through to receiving the keys at completion!



LOW RISK HIGH VALUE

An experienced architect will have strong knowledge on the process, what permits and consultants are required and will be able to produce a high value building at completion. Being a registered Architect we are insured and registered with the ARBV so there is piece of mind for you.

HOLISTIC HOMES

Holistic architecture offers a solution to that feeling of needing something more out of your living environment. Blurring the boundaries between indoors and outside, it's an approach based on creating a unified whole that improves harmony and sustainability. Not only does holistic architecture bring beauty into residential spaces – it also brings practical advantages for everyone from busy families to young professionals in need of calm

Holistic architecture is a unique approach to design that recognizes the interconnectedness of all elements within a space. Beyond just aesthetics and functionality, this design philosophy takes into account the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the occupants. Holistic architecture embraces the complex aspects of our lives and merges them into a unified design that enhances the overall well-being of its inhabitants. It's an exciting and innovative approach that prioritizes sustainability, energy efficiency, and social responsibility. With holistic architecture, we're not just creating buildings; we're designing spaces that will improve the quality of life for generations to come.



Connecting to Nature & Our Surroundings

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to feel disconnected from nature and our surroundings. However, making the effort to create an environment that is soothing to the senses can make a world of difference in how we feel and function day to day. By incorporating elements such as natural light, plants, natural ventilation, calming colour palettes and natural materials, we can connect with nature daily and reduce stress and anxiety.

Reimagining Your Space Through Sustainable Solutions

As climate change continues to threaten our planet, many of us are looking for ways to make a positive impact. One of the best places to start is right at home. By making eco-friendly changes to our living spaces, we can significantly reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to a more sustainable future. From using energy-efficient appliances to incorporating natural materials into our decor, there are countless ways to reimagine our homes through sustainable solutions. Not only is it better for the environment, but creating an eco-friendly home can also create a healthier, more comfortable living space for us and our families. So why not challenge yourself to become a more conscious consumer and make your home a beacon of environmental stewardship?



PROCESS



Right now, you should be in the Research Phase. This is where you are gathering information and playing around with ideas. At the point you want to get serious, you will want to check the feasibility of your ideas and understand what the project constraints are.



If you work with us, we will move to the Analysis Phase by conducting our bespoke Holistic Home Method pre design analysis to eliminate assumptions, identify constraints and find your best options.

PROCESS



ANALYSIS

Select a design professional.
Pre design Analysis

RESEARCH

Gathering ideas from magazines and speaking to experts.



DESIGN

Concept design. Design development. Consultant coordination.

DOCUMENT

Planning approval and Construction documentation.



TENDER

Tender pricing process from builders.
Select a Builder.

CONSTRUCT

Builder Builds. Architect advises and problem solves.



MOVE IN!

Enjoy your new home!
You may even elect for post construction services like furniture styling and art curation.

FAQ's

We've met with a lot of clients who are in the initial phases of looking for an Architect or Design-Build team, and most ask very similar questions. Having an idea of the answers beforehand can help you ask more targeted questions during your sessions, and focus on specific points you need to devote more attention to.

Q: HOW MUCH IS IT GOING TO COST TO BUILD MY CUSTOM HOME?

There are so many variables that a definitive answer is impossible. Even worse, the consequence of trying to answer is a risk of giving 'bad advice', so most experts avoid the question.

Rider Levett Bucknall produced a new report on the price of a home-build per square metre based on different states, which identifies Brisbane as the most expensive city for home building, with the price ranging from \$2500 to \$4500. Sydney has a lower start price but a higher range, from \$2100 to \$6400, with Melbourne a more modest \$2000 to \$4300.

	<i>COST PER SQUARE METRE</i>	
<i>CITY</i>	<i>LOW QUALITY</i>	<i>HIGH QUALITY</i>
MELBOURNE	\$2 000	\$4 300
SYDNEY	\$2 100	\$6 400
BRISBANE	\$2 500	\$4 500
PERTH	\$2 200	\$4 100

Q: HOW MUCH TIME WILL I HAVE TO PLAN OUT MY PROJECT, AND HOW LONG CAN I EXPECT MY BUILD TO TAKE?

The right team won't rush the planning phase of your project. You should be able to take as much time as you need to feel certain about your design choices before starting construction. Your timeline will be heavily dependent on how much work you've put into thinking through your wants, needs, and budget.

While the project planning, design, and permitting required to start your build can vary significantly depending on your scope, site, decisiveness, and communication style, on average we recommend allowing 8 to 10 months for a project without special approval requirements.

Q: HOW DO I KNOW IF I'VE FOUND THE RIGHT TEAM?

The right team for your project will have an outstanding portfolio of work that demonstrates their ability to execute beautiful and harmonious home designs. They will have an understanding of what style you are trying to achieve in your build, and can communicate about design ideas with ease. You'll feel like you can attain a good flow when brainstorming with them and organizing the next steps of planning.

In this guide, we've included a section called "Finding the Right Team". There, you'll learn the hallmarks of a team with the level of professionalism you should be looking for, as well as a list of questions you can ask when interviewing candidates.

Q: WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT I WANT IN MY CUSTOM HOME?

Ideally, you should be coming to your first consultation with a pretty good idea of what you're looking to accomplish with your build. However, it's common for many to need some expert advice on what features are worth the investment, and what elements might add value to your property or lifestyle. Your Architect or Design-Builder should be able to walk you through your options and discuss how they may contribute to your home's performance and lifestyle. A quality Architect or Design-Builder will be able to suggest ideas that you may not have even thought of. This is yet another reason why consulting with a seasoned professional is essential for getting the most out of your custom home.

Just keep in mind that the more time you need to explore ideas, the longer your project will take. That's why we strongly recommend completing the exercises in this guide, and enlisting the pre-design services we offer before full project kickoff.



"Right from our first meeting they listened and took on board our hopes, requirements and ideas of what we wanted to be included in our new home."

-Client
Testimonial



QUESTIONS TO ASK

Before you start officially planning your project, it's a good idea to ask yourself some questions. Conducting an "interview" with yourself before you talk to an architect can help you get a better idea of what you're looking for and how to communicate your goals. You'll be able to arrive to your first meeting with the ability to clearly describe your wants and needs, shortening the design process and ensuring that you get results you're truly happy with.

While this step may not seem that critical at first glance, the truth is that it can go a long way toward preventing complications later on. Most problems with "runaway projects" result from under planning and not having full clarity from the start. Plans end up needing to be changed, or work has to be done over again because the results did not fully address project needs and wants. That's why it's so important to give these questions some thought and iron out the answers before you forge ahead with design.



1. What is your ultimate goal for your home? How should it feel, and what should it provide? (Think big picture!)

2. Why did you choose to purchase your current home? How long do you plan to stay once your project is complete? Is this a forever home or are you building to resell?

3. Who lives in the household, and what are their individual needs? Does anyone in your household work from home?

4. What will your entertaining habits be? Do you expect to host many guests? Is the exterior just as important as the house itself?

5. What's working well with respect to your current home? What's not working?

6. What are your top priorities for the project in terms of design? What do you consider "must-have" features?

7. Do you have any particular goals when it comes to sustainability or energy efficiency?

FINDING THE RIGHT TEAM

Although extensive schooling and training are required for all Architects, that doesn't mean all Architects are created equal. Finding the best Architect for you depends on several factors, including personality, design style, whether you are building for yourself or an investment, your budget and whether your project requires a specialist skillset.

Hiring the RIGHT Architect is the single most important decision to make on your project.



At your first consultation, you'll have an opportunity to scope out an Architect or Design-Builder's methods and personality. This session is essential for learning whether or not they will be suitable to lead your project, so we recommend that you treat it like an interview.

You should be asking questions about their typical protocols, the nature of their services, and how they facilitate your collaboration. Their answers should give clear information about their business practices and demonstrate that they have plenty of experience pulling off custom builds, even in challenging conditions. You should get the impression that they have established a proven workflow for every project phase, with contingencies in place for any complications that may arise.

We have provided a list of questions you can ask to better understand an Architect's or Design-Builder's approach and service philosophy.

1. How do you make sure you understand all of my needs and preferences before finalizing the design?

2. How can I expect the design process to unfold?

3. What services do you offer in-house other than architectural design? Do you select finishes and fixtures? What about landscape design?

4. What would be your involvement in my project's construction?

5. Who works on my project, and at what stages do they work?

6. What pre-design services do you offer to help me prepare for the actual design planning?

7. Do you offer any informational resources to help me understand what the custom building process entails?

8. What is your process for collaborating with sub-contractors and consultants?

COMMON MYTHS



1. “Architects are too expensive. I can just hire a drafter to draw up plans I come up with myself.”



What sounds like a clever shortcut is actually a recipe for disaster. It’s true that a professional drafter will be able to put your plans to paper, but they don’t have the experience to point out potential problems with your design. That means that once building begins, you may realize that there are a lot of issues that will need to be resolved with extra work. Budgets can quickly bloat in such scenarios.



Drafters (or home designers) also often lack the skills to help you develop innovative design features. Their work is typically suited to more basic types of builds that don’t put a lot of emphasis on aesthetics. In fact, a drafter will usually recruit the services of an architect when their clients want a design that is more complex, so the costs rise anyway.

What people think an Architect does...

Sketches design that a builder uses.

What an Architect actually does...

Checking the title and, in particular, any easements and land covenants that may restrict what or where you can build.

Ensuring Compliance with building and safety regulations, local planning regulations and restrictions. Depending on the project, there may be laws surrounding the preservation of the local environment or any historic parts of a building.

Leadership - heading up the team of professionals who will work on this stage of the project including builders, tradespeople, engineers, designers and financial professionals.

Construction documentation - translates the design into instructions and technical specifications for contractors and construction experts. Ensures those specifications are met.

Project management - site visits and meetings, overseeing the construction and validating quality of work, negotiating with contractors and dealing with and resolving any problems that arise.

ARE YOU READY FOR DESIGN?

This exercise allows you to assess how ready you are to move to the Design Phase. If you are not close to 10 on ALL scales, then it's best to seek help from an expert to do this research.

If you rush into the design phase without this information available, you'll run the risk of making too many assumptions, which is the # 1 reason projects go over budget and over time.

0 (low)

10 (high)

On a 1-10 scale, how clear are you on exactly what you need?

On a 1-10 scale, how aware are you of all the various options your site will accommodate?

On a 1-10 scale, how confident are you that you are aware of all the legal requirements?

On a 1-10 scale, how aware are you of the process you will need to have in place to get the project completed on time and on budget?

On a 1-10 scale, how confident are you that you that your budget will achieve your needs?

Give yourself a current overall rating for readiness.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO MOVE ON TO DESIGNING YOUR CUSTOM HOME, YOU'LL HAVE IRONED OUT THE KEY POINTS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SMOOTH PLANNING. SEE OUR CHECKLIST BELOW.



YOUR BUDGET RANGE IS SET

You've worked up the numbers and you have a clear understanding of what you can afford. You've established a ballpark budget for your project with a firm maximum, and you already know how you'll fund it. If you're counting on financing, you've verified that you have the credit needed for approval.



YOU KNOW WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR HOME

You have decided whether or not you're planning on staying in the home or reselling soon. Therefore, you know whether you should be prioritizing your personal needs and preferences, or designing for optimal market value.



EVERYONE IS ON THE SAME PAGE

Every person who has a say in the design and scope of your project can agree on the budget and the main goals. While there still may be differences of opinion when it comes to the small details, there's solidarity on project priorities and vision.



YOU HAVE A REALISTIC PICTURE OF YOUR LIFESTYLE NEEDS

You've thought long and hard about how you're actually going to be using your home. You know what every household member needs out of the design, and you feel like you've determined what functions the spaces should be able to perform. You've also figured out what ideas aren't actually going to be very useful in real life. If you still have some uncertainties, you understand which topics you need to ask for advice on.



YOU'VE IDENTIFIED YOUR MUST-HAVES, NICE-TO-HAVES, AND DON'TS

After determining your lifestyle needs and style preferences, you know exactly what features need to be present in your design, which ones would be nice to have but can go if they don't fit in your budget, and which ones you absolutely don't want. You can clearly describe these to your Architect or Design-Builder and explain why they're necessary (or why they don't work for you).



YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE & CONFIDENT WITH YOUR CHOICE OF ARCHITECT OR DESIGN-BUILDER

You've been through the consultations and you've established enough of a rapport to pick the right design team.

SERVICES & PRICING



INITIAL CONSULTATION

FREE

Make a 20 minute appointment to speak with our Director, Jessica Murray. This is for people at the very beginning of their building and design journey, with intent to start within the next 6 - 12 months.

HOLISTIC HOME REPORT

\$1 600 - \$3 600 AUD

This is our bespoke pre design service that sets your project up for success. Together we formulate a solid brief which is the foundation for a project to be completed ON TIME and ON BUDGET. Receive a detailed report that puts you on the right track for a high end architectural designed sustainable home.



PLAN REVIEW CONSULT

\$599.00 AUD

Make a 90 minute appointment to speak with our Director, Jessica Murray. This is if you have a design or layout for your project and want a collaborative approach.

SERVICES & PRICING



PROJECT VISION BOARD

\$1 299.00 AUD

Make a 60 minute appointment to speak with our Director, Jessica Murray. We will discuss the vision you have for your project and work together to refine the concept.

INTERIORS CONSULT

\$399.00 AUD

Make a 60 minute appointment to speak with our Director, Jessica Murray. This is if you already have a design documented or are looking to only complete non structural renovations



INTERIORS PACKAGE

FROM \$5 000.00 AUD

Make a 60 minute appointment to speak with our Director, Jessica Murray. We will discuss the vision you have for your project and work together to refine the concept and discuss the scope of services required.



THANK YOU!

& TO GET STARTED



If you've reached the point where you're ready to start planning your project, the first step is to do an initial consultation with our team.

These calls serve as springboards for your project, allowing us to get to know each other while we discuss your overall goals. From there, we'll make recommendations on what services will best suit your planning needs, and help you prepare for the next phase.

Learn more about our consultation calls and how to book them via our website.

Jessica Murray

Director

B. Architecture | Ma. Architecture
ARBV registered Architect no. 20473



[0466 857 873](tel:0466857873)



hello@cooperandblakearchitecture.com



[@cooperandblakearchitecture](https://www.instagram.com/cooperandblakearchitecture)