



How to brief an Architect?

The first RIBA stage is Preparation and Briefing, so what does this involve and mean?

Stage 1: Preparation and Brief

The core objectives for an architect here is to:

Develop Project Objectives, including Quality Objectives and Project Outcomes, Sustainability Aspirations, Project Budget, other parameters or constraints and develop Initial Project Brief. Undertake Feasibility Studies and review of Site Information.

Essentially, what we'd do is explore with you through conversations and sketches, what you're hoping to do and come up with a brief document that outlines your must haves and your nice to haves. So what do we include?

Time, cost, quality

1. Time, when do you want to be moving in? It's worth bringing this up at the start to understand whether your aspirations are feasible or not. From here, it'll help inform a design and construction programme ensuring your architect works to a strict programme to meet your aspirations.
2. Cost. What are your budget aspirations? Your architect will have a general grasp on costs, usually based on a cost per sqm basis, this is a good start to see if your budget aspirations align to your quality aspirations. If not, then you'll be able to adjust your aspirations early doors to avoid budget issues later on down the line.
3. Quality. What kind of architecture do you like? What are your must haves? What are your nice to haves? It helps at times to have some mood boards of things / buildings that you like but I like to suggest to clients not to be overly prescriptive here. In order to get your worth from an architect, give them some creative freedom as that is after all what they are there for – to help you explore and visualise architecture that is personalised to you.

Sometimes clients come to us with a brief in written form but more often than not it's an iterative document that evolves as the design grows. Your architect will come back to you with a written brief after the first meeting anyhow, so don't worry too much about having a word document setting out every fine detail of your brief.



Reigate Architect: Manor Road Brief

In our project in Manor Road, Reigate. The brief was very simple – a space to enjoy a cup of tea with my wife.

Although the brief was simple, it never means that the project is! The brief was evolved throughout design discussions as iterative designs help the client visualise and understand the potential of each space. The design became clearer and clearer with each discussion and meeting but the core idea of the space – to enjoy a cup of tea – never changed. It was the only and must have point of the brief and something we centred the design on.