

# A brief look at home planning

**FRANCES COSWAY**

A BRIEF is not something everyone thinks of when they decide to build a new home.

However, a formal document is a really good exercise to get everyone on the same page and ensure your thoughts and ideas are captured as cohesively as possible.

And it's not something to limit to just your builder.

A brief can be used for your architect, interior designer, landscaper, and so on.

A brief communicates your vision for how you want to live now, and in the future, to the people who will be designing and creating your home.

Here are a few tips on what to think of when you create a brief.

First, think about your wants, your desires and the functionality

the home has to have. How will the home have to respond to your lifestyle? Think of the site as a whole, not just the building itself.

Second, get everyone involved — your partner, children, and whoever else will be living in the home. What do individuals want out of the home? How do they want particular areas to be?

Allow everyone's input so the brief is comprehensive and all the ideas are in the one document.

As an added bonus, when you've put all these thoughts down on paper, you can refer back to them easily when reviewing plans and concept drawings. It's a great way to check the design response so you don't forget areas.

It's also worth thinking about your brief in terms of the three key communication methods: written, visual and verbal.



The brief for your new home should be a collaborative effort.

For the written part, you should have a list of "must haves" and "nice to haves". Also include the overall look and feel you're after, a snapshot of how you live your lives, what's important to you, what are critical spaces you feel you need and for what purpose.

The visual brief could be a portfolio of images of things you

love — either online or from magazine cuttings.

Finally, the verbal brief should take the shape of a discussion that reviews your ideas and ensures your brief is understood.

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## TIPS FOR CREATING A BRIEF FOR YOUR NEW HOME

- Think about the whole site and not just the building. Landscaping can be just as important as architectural considerations
- Consider the interaction between interior and exterior spaces, and how you want your future garden to work for you
- Ensure your main spaces can be multifunctional and don't just have one purpose
- When creating your brief, don't just think of your needs now. Consider what they will be later on when there are small children in the home, teenagers, or when you're empty nesters. And remember, room functions will change in time
- Include a portfolio of images, from magazines or online, that show what you want in your new home



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