

## Before you meet with the architect to **Step 1**

- You have to consider all the information that will be needed in order to have your first conversation. I.e: what are you aiming to achieve, what is your budget, what type of time scale are you looking at?
- Look on the internet and understand the role of the architect as there are many things which need to happen that you may not be aware of. I.e: who is going to manage your project? How do you get a reliable builder? Is it cheaper to get it provided by one builder or are you better bringing in trades as you need them?
- I accessed self build/home renovation magazines as they have lots of information on costs, step by step processes, pitfalls etc. It was good to have the information before we started making decisions.
- What do you want your architect to do?
  - Purely provide plans or take you through all the stages to completion.
  - Each additional stage will cost you more money but it is best to understand this as some of the paperwork is very time consuming: so it is back to budget and the role you want to play in the project
- Use Pinterest or other apps which allow you build your own portfolio

## Once you have agreed to proceed: **Step 2**

- You should have enough discussions with your architect that they understand your vision, tastes and purpose
  - They won't give you what you want unless you describe it well
- Be sure you are clear about the type of fee arrangement you have entered into.
- You need to understand the written quotation provided as it will outline the structure of payments and what is or isn't included. Don't make any assumptions!
  - External fees are not included and can be costly, such as
    - Local Council planning and building application fees
    - Engineers fees
    - Site insurance
    - Services: plans for access/new service supply drawing details

## Initial design **Step 3**:

- This is where it all becomes real and very exciting!
- Not everyone has the ability to see a set of 2D plans and visualise what they could look like. Don't beat yourself up if this is you...use the 3D modelling to get the detail and make changes at this point.

## Planning/Building warrants **Step 4 + 5**

- This can take a bit of time but the architects meetings are essential to get it right.
  - The moving from Planning to Building Warrant stage can take significant time. Councils are not as quick as you want them to be!
- Attention to detail is important: is everything where you want it to be? Is the specification right?
  - When the Council agree your plans, you only have permission to do what is in them. Re-submission costs extra from both a Council and Architect fee perspective, so it is important to get it right first time where possible.
  - You must also remember that the builder puts his tender in against these plans and changes in the project will increase costs.

## **Step 6**: the tender

- My biggest piece of advice is...go and see work that the builder has done on other projects. Talk to the customers as you will get a feel as to whether the builder is reasonable, timely, accurate, has attention to detail. Don't rush into it under pressure...make sure they are the right builder for you.
- Recommendations are always helpful but get several tender options and not just the one!

## **Step 7**: Project management:

- You need to make sure the builder is building to the specification requested.
- You need to invite building control out at various points to see the construction
- You need to sign off all costs/payments using small works contract
- Ultimately you need to decide what you are able to do well and effectively.
  - Talk to your architect about this

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