



longhouse

A Brief Guide to Design Briefs

An introduction to the Design Brief, and some tools to help you develop one for your next home

OST - SEITE.



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What Is A Brief Anyway?

Most people who build a new home have never done it before, so nobody expects you to be an expert already (but it's awesome if you are!)

So first up lets talk about what a Design Brief actually is.

Put simply, it's a record of all the things which go together to show your designer what you want and need at the end of the project.

This can be as simple or as specific as you'd like, it's totally up to you! Maybe you want to go into detail on every aspect of the project and get everything just so. But maybe you just know you want a nice home and trust the experts to come up with good ideas. Either way works just fine, so be yourself.

The Brief is a "living document", which means it will shift and change as the project goes on and everyone learns more about each other and what is required. This living document starts with the Preliminary Brief.

Preliminary Brief

Turn your preliminary research into a sharable document

If you've read *The Home Design Process*, you'll know the first step is to do your research. The information that comes from that research will be used to form the first version of your Brief. It's your job at the start of the whole show to develop this Preliminary Brief and bring that along to your initial meeting.

This is the very best way to kickstart the design process by giving your designer all the information they will need to assess your goals and the project limitations.

On the next page is a list of topics we use to develop a brief, which should give you a great starting point to begin work on your own.

Context

Your details, who will live in the home, new build/renovation, lifestyle, inspirations,

Site

Sun, slope, views, vegetation, neighbours, features

Spaces

Types, number, relationships, usage, special needs

Style

Architectural style, personal style, colours, scale, inspiration, finishes

Environmental

Materials and building techniques, thermal needs, sound needs, passive design, power and water harvesting, food gardens

Features

Glass walls, attached greenhouse, green roof, Post and Beam, special equipment, furniture and art etc

Project

Budget, timeline, existing plans, stakeholders and communication channels

What Inspires You?

Designers are visual creatures and it helps to speak the same language

Once you have some ideas down on paper, it's time to start a good old fashioned scrapbook. Things have advanced over the years of course and there are amazing resources on the web to help compile your visual ideas.

This is hands down the best way to get the things which inspire you out of your head and into your home designer's head.

Here are our favourite sites to collect images:



www.houzz.com.au



www.archdaily.com



www.pinterest.com

Ideas To Help Write A Great Brief

Everyone thinks differently, so here are a few ideas to get your creativity fired up.

- Tell first person stories about amazing spaces you've been in or that give insight into how you live
- Think about the emotions of your home - that ray of sunshine in the morning, singing a bedtime song, a tearful goodbye on a front step. Tell us about those feelings.
- Write a list of activities you regularly do in your home. Note down when, where, and why you do it, and who is there.
- Think about your future in the home. Will you grow old there? Will your parents or adult children come to live with you? Do you want more or less space later on? Will you add a pool? Do you want a forest to grow up around the home?
- Tell us about those things that you really hate in your current home. Or a past one. Or that you saw on TV once.
- It's worth asking again - What inspires you? Beethoven? Tennis? Huge family gatherings? Tuscany? Mars? What is it that will make you fall in love with your home every day?

Question Time

Here are some questions we find valuable to ask when developing a brief. You can write your answers and bring them to your consultation, incorporate them in your Preliminary Brief, or skip any or all of them if you'd like.

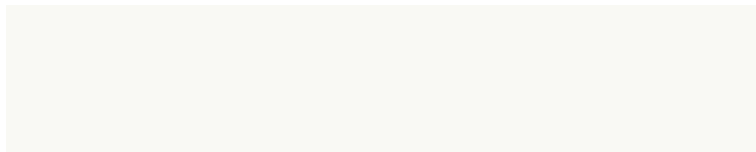
What do you want most in a home?

What is your career or main activity?

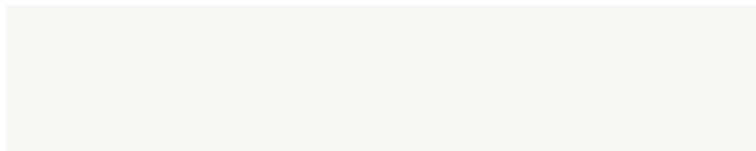
Do you work from home or need a studio/workshop?

Who will live in the home? Will they always be there?

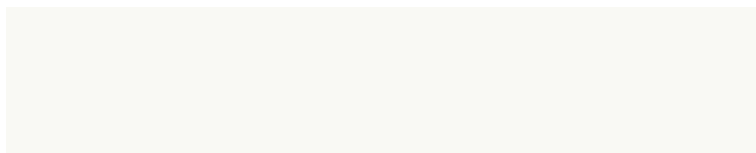
Does anyone in the home have special needs?



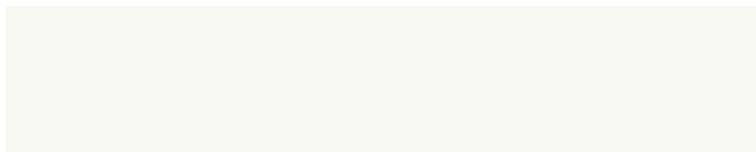
Are there any special features you'd like to include?



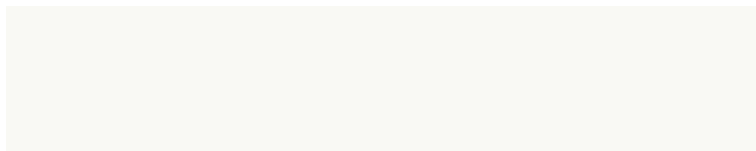
Are you interested in a particular architectural style?



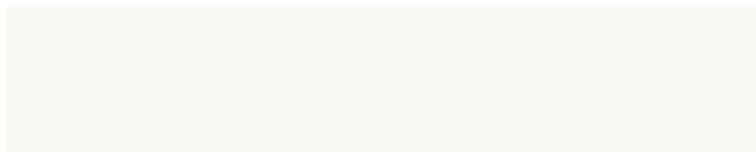
Do you have strong material preferences?



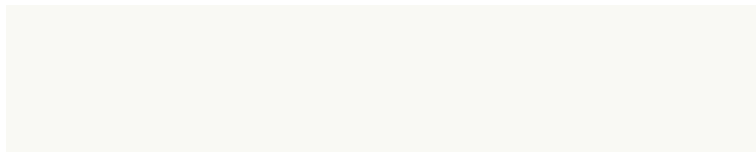
What are your colours or palettes do you love?



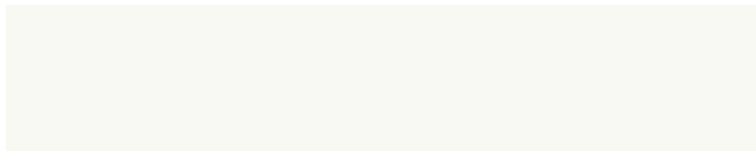
Are there any views on your site that should be captured?



Does your site have special or important natural features?



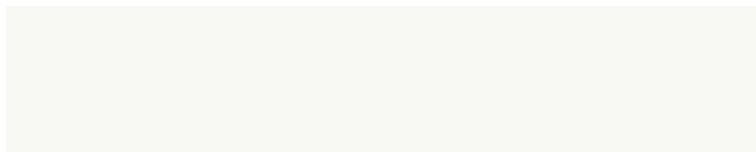
Do you have any health concerns around materials?



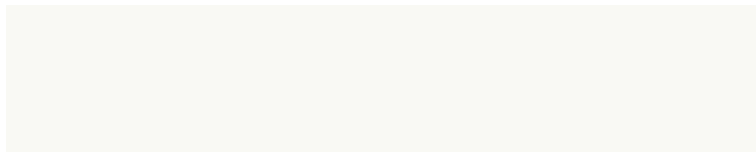
Are you interested in non-standard sustainability features?

Some ideas are:

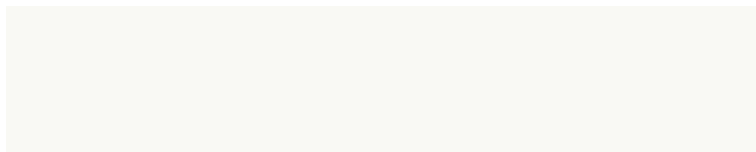
Battery storage/EV charger, Composting toilet/on-site
black water system, Natural building methods, Green roof,
Integrated Victory Garden



Do you have a preference for single or multi-level?



Where do people spend the most time in your home ?



Does anyone have hobbies which require a special space?

What is your favourite outdoor space?

Would you prefer a compact or sprawling home?

Do you have any special furniture, art or equipment?

Hopefully this guide has given you a reasonable understanding of what a design brief is and what goes into one.

You should have some great ideas down on paper now, or maybe just one or two key points. Whatever you've come up with though, you're a step closer to starting a concept design and seeing your dreams come to life.

Once you have your Preliminary Brief in hand you're ready to move on to the next step in the process. Send me an email, or make a booking via the Longhouse website and we will jump into Stage 1 of your new home design!

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