



PROJECT PLANNING PACK FOR YOUR DREAM HOME

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DESIGN

HELLO

Congratulations on embarking on one of life's greatest journeys - designing and building your very own dream home.

It can be both exciting and daunting to navigate this process. We created this planning guide to help you get started, sort your thoughts and make the important first steps. You will get answers to key questions and learn about the importance of following a systematic process to make it an enjoyable journey.

F. 
Fabian Graf
Founder / Studio Graf

#1 SUMMARY SHEET

**PROJECT PLANNING PACK
FOR YOUR DREAM HOME**

**THE #1 PROJECT PROBLEM
PROJECTS GOING OVER TIME
AND OVER BUDGET.**

On a daily basis, we see people moving projects into the design phase before the research is started. This is like a doctor starting surgery without a thorough diagnosis or trying to build a house on a bad foundation.

That is why we created the Rapid Project Planning Pack. Now, you have a simple process to help you move through the Research Phase. If you follow this tool, you will reduce project risk and improve project design.

“

**IF I HAD SIX HOURS TO CHOP DOWN A TREE,
I'D SPEND THE FIRST 4 SHARPENING THE AXE**

- ABRAHAM LINCOLN -

- 01 // RP3 SUMMARY SHEET**
Once you have ticked all the boxes below, you are ready to move to the Analysis Phase
- 02 // BUILDING PROJECT ROADMAP**
Review the roadmap and identify where you are on your journey
- 03 // BUILDING EXPERTS DIRECTORY**
Directory of professionals who can help you at each stage of your design and building process.
- 04 // BUILDING COST ESTIMATOR**
Simple do-it-yourself worksheet to estimate your building project
- 05 // FAQS & SAQS**
Frequently-asked questions and should-ask questions you need to know about working with an architect
- 06 // MYTH & REALITY**
Some things architects do outside design to complete a project
- 07 // HOW TO CREATE A DESIGN BRIEF USING ONLY 7 QUESTIONS**
Contact your short-listed architects to start your process
- 08 // READINESS SCORE**
Gauge of how ready you are to move to the Design Phase

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#2

BUILDING PROJECT ROADMAP

MAJOR STEPS REQUIRED FOR DESIGNING AND BUILDING YOUR NEW HOME

This is important ... please read carefully.

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 a 'Feasibility Check' to eliminate assumptions, identify constraints and find your best options. You will receive a document that can be used by us or any other architect that will ensure you reduce project risk and get the best options for your site and budget.

**WHEN YOU ARE READY TO
REVIEW THE FEASIBILITY OF
YOUR PROJECT, EMAIL OR
CALL US**



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01 // RESEARCH

Architects
Builders
Magazines

PRE-CONTRACT



02 // FEASIBILITY CHECK

Needs and options review
Select an Architect



03 // DESIGN

Concept sketches
Design development
Consultant coordination



04 // DOCUMENTATION

Planning approval
Construction Documentation

DESIGN CONTRACT



05 // BID

Bids from builders
Comparison
Contractor selection



06 // BUILD

Contractor builds
Architect advises

#3

PROJECT EXPERT DIRECTORY

OUR PERSONAL DIRECTORY OF TRUSTED PROFESSIONALS

WHO ARE THESE EXPERTS?

Understanding **WHAT** to do is one obstacle and working out **WHO** can help you is another.

On a daily basis, our team receives requests for us to recommend design professionals. To make this process easier, I have listed the design professionals that we trust for specific types of projects. Not only do they do a great job, but they provide excellent advice, as well. These are the experts we trust explicitly.

If you have other questions about your project, don't hesitate to reach out to me. If I can't answer your question, then I'll direct you to someone who can.

**THE RIGHT ARCHITECT WILL
MANAGE BOTH THE EXPERTS
AND THE PROCESS.**

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#4 BUILDING COST ESTIMATOR

THE SIMPLE, DO-IT-YOURSELF WAY TO ESTIMATE YOUR NUMBER

The #1 Question ...

The most dreaded question architects, builders and every other professional hates has got to be, *'how much will my project cost'?*

There are so many variables that a definitive answer is literally impossible. Even worse, the consequences of trying to answer and risk giving ‘bad advice’ will have most experts running away to avoid the question. The problem is that this question is VERY important. No one can proceed if they don’t have a ball park estimation of cost.

This guide will help you to determine an estimate of overall project costs. Your actual number may be more or less, but it can be helpful to see an estimated figure.

NEW HOME COST ESTIMATOR (US\$)

This is a rough guide to expected cost of construction in San Francisco and surrounding Bay Area for a contemporary custom home.

SIZE	BASELINE	COMFORT	LUXURY
	\$ 400 / SF	\$ 700 / SF	\$ 1,000 / SF
1,000 SF	\$ 400,000	\$ 700,000	\$ 1,000,000
2,000 SF	\$ 800,000	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 2,000,000
3,000 SF	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 2,100,000	\$ 3,000,000
5,000 SF	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 5,000,000

ESTIMATE YOUR COST

Note down your desired home size and calculate your ballpark construction cost.

FOR A DETAILED PROJECT COST ASSESSMENT, EMAIL ME



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#5

QUESTIONS TO ASK

**WHEN HIRING AN ARCHITECT,
IT'S HELPFUL TO HAVE A
PROCESS TO MAKE SURE YOU
GET THE BEST PERSON FOR
THE PROJECT.**

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Although extensive schooling and training are required for all architects, that doesn't mean all architects are created equal.

Finding the **RIGHT** architect for you depends on several factors, including: personality, design style, building for taste or to make money, budget and even whether your project requires a specialist skill set.

Choosing the right architect can mean the difference between an enjoyable experience and one plagued with problems and hassles the whole way through once a project moves into the Build Phase. How will your project go?

The questions are the answer ...

- What unique value do you have for our specific type of project?
- How can you add value to our home so that we maximize the return on investment when/if we sell?
- Do you offer a pre-design analysis service to help move us safely and efficiently towards the design phase?
- What are the specific challenges for our type of project and how have you overcome these in the past?
- If my budget, time line and scope of project are unrealistic, will you let me know?
- How would you like me to share my ideas, images, needs, wants and research?
- What can I do to help you deliver the best work for us?
- Do you have a team game plan that outlines how we will all successfully work together, even under pressure?
- Will you run the tender process to find and select the best construction team?
- What educational material do you provide so we can understand the requirements of our specific type of project?

**HIRING THE RIGHT ARCHITECT
IS THE SINGLE MOST
IMPORTANT DECISION TO
MAKE ON YOUR PROJECT.**

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#6

MYTH VS. REALITY

WHAT DO ARCHITECTS ACTUALLY DO?

An architects' role is a lot larger than most people realize. When an architect manages your project, they ensure that every part of process (and more) is handled to ensure that the biggest investment in your life or career is safe and secure.

MYTH

Sketches design that a builder uses.

REALITY

Checking the title and, in particular, any easements and land conventions 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.

**IN SUMMARY, THE ARCHITECT
IS THE CONDUCTOR OF THE
PROJECT ORCHESTRA.**

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#7

HOW TO CREATE A DESIGN BRIEF USING ONLY 7 QUESTIONS

FOCUS IS ALL ABOUT SAYING NO - STEVE JOBS

QUESTION	ANSWER
Outline your current situation?	
How do you live? Is that changing or about to change?	
What will you need to see to know your project has been a dramatic success?	
How do you want to FEEL as you move through your new space?	
Who are the important people this home needs to be designed for?	
What are the budget, timeframes and boundaries we need to work within?	
What does your home really mean to you?	

#8

READINESS SCORE

ARE YOU READY TO MOVE TO THE DESIGN PHASE?

DO YOU NEED AN ARCHITECT?

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.

"MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE!"

- Builders Mantra -

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Give yourself a current overall rating for readiness.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Don't worry if you are not at 10 on all scales yet. The Needs and Options Review process allows you to fill in the knowledge gaps and gets you ready to move to the Design Phase.

OUR NEEDS AND OPTIONS REVIEW IS THE PROCESS DESIGNED TO GET YOU TO 10 ON ALL SLIDERS.



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