

THE ARCHITECT BUILDERS COLLABORATIVE'S



PREPARING FOR YOUR RENOVATION

HOMEOWNERS' GUIDE

THE ARCHITECT BUILDERS COLLABORATIVE

fighting climate change with great green design



THIS GUIDE IS FOR YOU IF:

- You're ready to begin renovating your home
- You don't know where to start your renovation planning

AND

- You want a Healthy, Beautiful Home
- You care about the environment



Daniel discussing study models
with the whole family

TABC

Daniel Hall, O.A.A., LEED AP shares the knowledge he has acquired from 30 years of working in construction and renovations. Daniel founded The Architect Builders Collaborative in 2009 to focus on making Great Green Design. Prior to studying Architecture, Daniel was a licensed Carpenter and has over 15 years of hands-on experience in renovations and fine woodworking. What began as a deep interest in sustainable sources of wood and healthy finishes has blossomed into an obsession with all aspects of Green Building, particularly at the scale of houses and small buildings.

WHERE TO START

THE MOST IMPORTANT FIRST STEP BEFORE YOU HIRE AN ARCHITECT

Renovating a house can and should be really exciting. However too often we hear stories of unexpected surprises, misunderstandings between the Contractor, the Client and the Architect, and disputes over items not specified in the contract. I have decided to do something about it.

IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THE BRIEF

A good working relationship with your Architect is based on open, honest communication. This starts with a good brief that helps the Architect understand your expectations, preferences, wants, needs, aspirations and lifestyle. If your expectations are not clearly outlined and understood by all parties, you run the risk of spending unnecessary money, project complications, and costly delays. The Architect and Contractor will struggle to understand what to include when pricing your project.

A WELL THOUGHT OUT DESIGN BRIEF IS THE FOUNDATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

This guide will help you cover critical aspects of a design brief and includes work sheets that will help you outline your design brief.

RIGHT THEN! LET'S GET STARTED...



WHAT DO I WANT?

YOUR STARTING POINT

Spend some time in and around your house to get a real feel for it.

- Where is the sun in summer?
- Where is the sun in winter?
- Where are the views you want to enjoy every day and those you want to exclude?
- Where are the surrounding houses, other buildings and trees you may or may not want to see?
- Which parts of the house / yard are most/least noisy?
- Does the site slope?

Put all the information you have about your site in a file to share with your Architect (Photos, legal paperwork/covenants, existing plans or previous site information).

DESIGN FOR MOOD AND FEELING

This is important. This is your home, where your children and other loved ones are, where they're going to grow up and you're going to have all your family memories.

- Modern? Traditional? Transitional?
- Think about your feelings - yes really! For example, what is your favorite time of day? Do you worry about shutting the curtains to protect the furniture from the sun, or do you like to enjoy coffee on the terrace? Is curling up with a good book your favorite hobby, or is it taking the dog for a walk no matter what the weather?
- Describe spaces, design features and styles that appeal to you and those that don't.
- Use Houzz.com to gather inspirational images. Put them in 'Ideabooks' to share with each other and your Architect.

INDOOR SPACES

A good design can transform the way that we live. Think hard about your family's current and future needs. Map out your daily routine.

- How many people live in the house?
- How old are they?
- Who does what, where?
- Do you want to 'zone' spaces, separate family members, or functions?
- Make a list of who needs rooms to sleep, work and relax in.
- Where do you want to eat – in a large kitchen? separate dining room?
- Is your lifestyle formal, casual, relaxed or active?
- How often do you entertain? How many people?
- What type of home entertainment do you want to include e.g. music, television, projector or areas for storage of equipment?
- What method of heating do you want?
- Do you prefer natural ventilation or air conditioning?
- List any special requirements you have:
 - Accessibility
 - extra storage areas
 - garage loft space
 - built in furniture/shelving, home office.

OUTDOOR SPACES

What do you want to do outdoors?

- Entertain? Relax? Play? Swim?
- What kind of space do you need for children?
- Garden?
- Do you want a high or low maintenance scheme?
- What features are important to you?
- Think about the sun and the wind
- Think of your external areas as outdoor rooms
- Consider privacy and connections between spaces.



GREAT GREEN DESIGN

We at The Architect Builders Collaborative believe that green buildings must first and foremost be beautiful and comfortable to enjoy. “Great Design is Green Design”.

- How important is a ‘healthy home’?
- One in which the air is fresh and not full of toxic off-gassing.
- How important is the local environment to you and your family?
- How can your decisions on the small things contribute to making a better world for all of us to enjoy?
- How can we build for enjoyment now and for years to come?

We strive to create homes that are a pleasure to be in and healthy environments for our families.

THE DETAILS

Think of the special pieces of furniture that you love or would like to have. Don’t forget the artwork you want to showcase so your Architect can provide spaces and lighting for them in the new plans. Better to include it in your planning from day one, than to move in and wonder where you are going to hang your Basquiat.

MATERIALS

Materials and finishes play a big part in creating the feeling you want in your home. They can be warm and soft, or cool and elegant. Contrast defines spaces, while continuity of finishes pulls things together. In the hands of a skilled Architect, materials are one of the most powerful design tools we have.

- List materials you like and dislike (inside and out)
- Your budget may be a determining factor in your final choice.
- Do you have any specific wall, ceiling and floor finishes in mind?
- Do you like warm natural stone and wood or elegant crisp glass and steel?
- Choices you make will determine how much you spend upfront, and how much you spend on maintenance in the longer term.

Your Architect can suggest appropriate green materials for a healthy home and many years of pleasure.

TIMETABLE

Think about and share with your Architect key target dates that are important to you.

- When do you want to start and finish the project?
- Bear in mind that, as a rule of thumb, it takes at least 4 - 6 months to complete the design, obtain planning permission and prepare construction drawings before building work can commence.
- Allow 4 - 8 months for construction work on existing buildings and about 12 months for new buildings

BUDGET

Your budget is an important design tool. Ask yourself how much you are prepared to spend. Is this a firm amount? Will you make compromises to stick to the budget? Or will you spend a little more to get what you really want.

Lastly, have a conversation with yourself and keep asking why you want what it is you say you want. That way you are slowly elaborating your brief into more detail. Include the emotional aspects, as this is the overriding deeper reasoning behind what you want to change about your house. Use the checklists provided below to help you get a deeper understanding of what you want and why you want it.



WHY DO YOU WANT TO RENOVATE YOUR HOUSE?

1.

2.

3.

4.

FEATURES

Some features, such as lots of daylight, space for outdoor gear, heated floors, etc will be more important to you than others. Thinking of things in terms of ‘must-haves’ and ‘nice-to-haves’ can help make the difficult design decisions easier. Take some time to list below (in no particular order), the features that most interest you.

‘MUST-HAVE’ FEATURES

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

'NICE-TO-HAVE FEATURES'

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.



WHAT ARE YOUR IMPORTANT AT HOME ACTIVITIES?

Some people want a house geared towards entertaining and dinner parties, some need an in-home studio or creative space, while others need space for a growing family. What do you need to use your spaces for most?

INDOOR SPACE

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

OUTDOOR SPACE

1.

2.

3.

CALCULATING YOUR BUDGET

TOTAL BUDGET:

SUBTRACT 25% SOFT FOR COSTS:

Soft costs are everything that is not considered a direct construction cost. This may include architectural, engineering, financing, legal fees and other pre and post construction expenses.

= CONSTRUCTION BUDGET:

3 THINGS I MIGHT CHEAP-OUT ON

1.

2.

3.

3 THINGS I WOULD NEVER CHEAP-OUT ON

1.

2.

3.



MORE WAYS TO GET STARTED

There are lots of things you can do on your own to get started brainstorming and collecting ideas for your renovation. Start a scrapbook, do some quick and messy sketches, take pictures of homes around your neighbourhood, or in oth-

er neighbourhoods that inspire you. By preparing yourself with ideas and images before you meet with an architect you can really speed up the process and start developing the design that YOU want.

IDEATION RESOURCES

- Houzz.com
- Pinterest.com
- Azuremagazine.com
- Archdaily.com
- dwell.com
- finehomebuilding.com/design

Keep projects and products that you like together in your TABC starter kit folder, or better yet, save them all to a USB flash drive and give it to your ar-

chitect. This will put you in the drivers seat of your renovation and save valuable time in the design process.



Some TABC study models in our studio

TABC

A GREAT DESIGN IS ALL ABOUT COLLABORATION

There are many great architects out there who are ready to sell you on their own amazing designs, but the fact is that what works for one person in one place, may not work at all for someone else. Realizing a great design is about working with the specifics of your project, your location and your existing structure and working to create solutions that cater to your specific needs. Remember that a renovation is an opportunity for a fully customized

space, and that it can be whatever you want it to be. Talk to as many people as you can about your ideas, visit people's homes who have renovated recently and don't be afraid to leave an idea completely and start fresh if it doesn't feel right. Nobody can design a great home all by themselves - great design is about collaboration and communication. This booklet is here to help get your design started in the right direction.



Clean, bright, healthy and eco-friendly - this kitchen hits all the marks

TABC



CONGRATULATIONS!

You now have the key information that will help you lay a successful foundation for how to prepare your design project.

Unfortunately, we can't include every important piece of information about this very important step in the design and construction process successfully in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the brief will differ based on a multitude of factors. But, with the concepts explained in this guide, you have the critical information to help you create a design brief that will ensure that your project is a success. If you are in the process of looking for an Architect for your project, let's talk. We can help you wade through the

necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking crucial a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure. We offer a custom **GREEN DESIGN DISCOVERY PROCESS** where we will identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically the **Green Design Discovery Process** saves our clients *thousands of dollars* and *weeks* of lost time, not to mention the stress and headache of getting something wrong.

To find out more about the **Green Design Discovery Process** as well as the price for this service and why it is critically important to your project's success give me a call.

HOW TO REACH US

When you're ready to book your **Green Design Discovery Process**, or simply have some questions about renovating, give me a call or email:

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Capitalize on Architect **Daniel Hall**,
O.A.A., *LEED AP* and his 30 years of
experience both building and designing
renovations with one of our affordable
pre-design services.



Above: An open concept kitchen makes full usage of a small space

Front Cover: Skylights and smartly placed windows fill a bedroom with natural light

All photos by TABC



PLANNING A RENO?

Avoid costly mistakes and start planning your Green Reno the right way. Book your personal *Green Design Discovery Process* now and have Daniel Hall visit your home for an in-depth exploration of your needs and wants and how they can be aligned with the potential in your house and site. You will receive one-on-one advice and a detailed follow-up report with analysis of zoning issues, renovations options, phasing, and project budgets to help you start your planning on a solid foundation.

THINKING OF BUYING AN OLDER HOUSE?

Discover what your best renovation options are BEFORE you make your offer with our *Pre-Purchase Reno Review*. Learn what is and isn't permitted, avoid costly money-pits, and discover the hidden potential of a 'diamond-in-the-rough'. Daniel will visit the house with you and then share his insights into the potential possibilities and pitfalls of renovating so that you can make an informed decision before you make your offer.

For a FREE 45 minute initial consultation by phone or at our office, contact Daniel Hall, O.A.A.
416.504.0405 design@tabc.ca

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