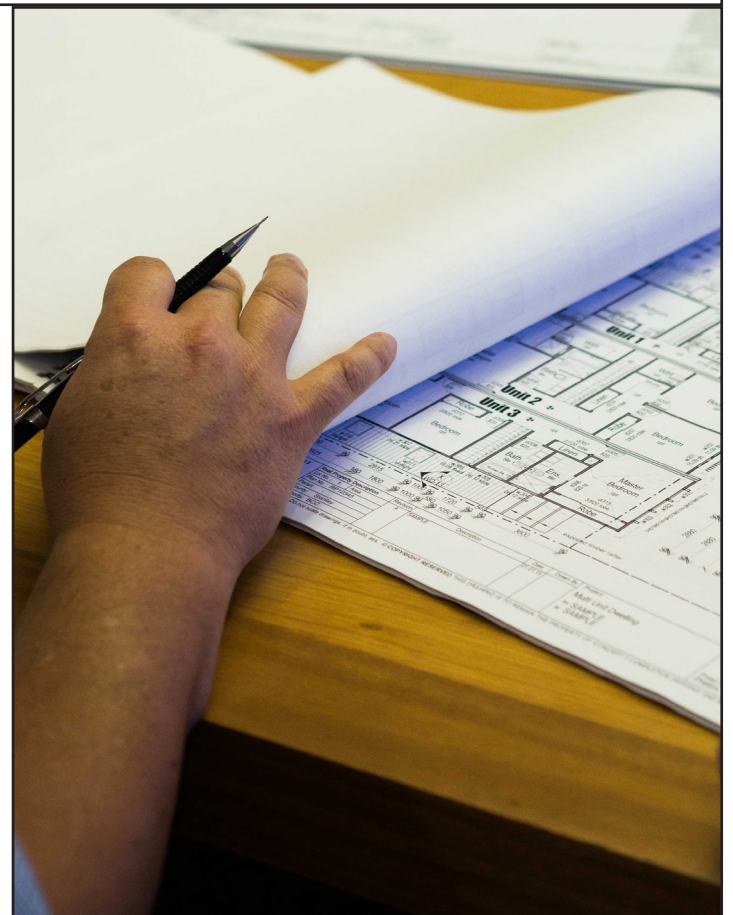


**cube** building  
design

Guide to Good Building Design



# **The Cube Building Design Guide to Good Building Design**

This guide has been designed to help prepare and inform you about the creative building design process. There are some tips and learnings that will help you to understand what we do, how we do it, and why we do it. Good design is all about good partnership. It will also prepare you to understand some of the questions we will ask and some of the information we will need in order to help you achieve your goal.

When you approach Cube Building Design about the potential to design a new building there is a systematic approach that will be triggered from your initial contact. That process has been designed with meticulous care and attention to detail.

There are a number of things we need to accomplish in order to meet your needs. For the purpose of this guide we are focusing on Good Building Design and what you can do to contribute to the success of your design project. Within the guide there are questions and blank sections where you can make notes and provide detail. By using this guide you are helping to create a Building Design Brief - a road map that will help us to create a building that matches your imagination. Please write as much notes and gather as many pictures as you can.

The cost assessment of that brief is where a builder's Preliminary Estimate is used. It is a fantastic tool, but what about the building design itself? After gathering as much information as possible from you and your imagination, we then use our experience, expertise and skill to provide you with a Design Solution that is:

- Practical
- Effective
- Efficient
- Goal Oriented

This is a Discovery Process and once we have undertaken the journey of discovery with you we can 'Test' our conclusions against your budget.

Our goal is for us to turn your imagination into reality and to help you bring your property to life. So let's get started with that in mind...

Here is an exceptionally helpful tip: Pictures tell a thousand words. Become a collector of pictures. If you don't want to go out and take some then you can go to <http://www.houzz.com.au>. At Houzz you can set up your own Idea Book and collect photos from across the entire globe that will express in great detail what it is you like and don't like.

# 1. The Function of Your Home

You need to consider, in some detail, what the specifications of your home are. So let's walk through your home room by room.

Use the Guide to make notes. This is your workbook to create an effective Design Brief.

In relation to these functions and specifications ask yourself questions such as:

Q: How big does the area need to be?

A:

Q: What are the needs of my entire family? (including pets)

A:

Q: What decorative specifications do I need?

A:

Q: What natural lighting will improve the space?

A:

Q: What cosmetic lighting will be needed?

A:

Q: What is my lifestyle now and what is it expected to be like in the future?

A:

Q: Where does each room need to be in relation to the other rooms?

A:

Other Building Functionality you need to consider:

a. **The Porch and Entry Area.** Imagine you are walking up to the front door of your home. Visualise.

Notes:

b. **The Kitchen.**

Notes:

c. **The Main Bathroom**

Notes:

d. **The Spare Bathroom or Powder Room**

Notes:

e. **The Study or Office**

Notes:

f. **The Main Bedroom**

Notes:

g. **The En-Suite**

Notes:

h. **Bedrooms 2, 3 + 4** (as required)

Notes:

i. **The Living Room**

Notes:

#### **j. Any Rumpus or Media Rooms**

Notes:

#### **k. The Dining Area**

Notes:

#### **l. The Laundry**

Notes:

#### **m. Outdoor Living Areas: Alfresco, Verandas, etc**

Notes:

#### **n. The Garage**

Notes:

These are the basics and there are always variations on the theme. Make sure you have a logical flow in the relationship of the rooms and spaces as part of your home design.

Some tips:

1. Make the most of the available space. Be efficient.
2. Put your kitchen close to the garage with direct access if possible.
3. Consider all heating and cooling needs and where they will be best positioned.
4. Measure out Room Spaces and make notes of what you think you need.
5. Be conscious of hallways and stairways in terms of width, length and heights, etc.

Notes:



## 2. Sustainable Building Design

This is a complete design philosophy in itself and rather than go into it in great detail here is what we would suggest. If you are interested in doing more research we would suggest the following:

Pay a visit to the [Federal Government Website: Your Home](#). This is a comprehensive website that has a lot of really good information about sustainable building.

Another interesting site that might be worth some research is:  
[Passive House Australia](#).

Sustainable Building Design is not one single solution. It is a holistic approach to building design that incorporates many concepts.

For example:

### Cross Flow Ventilation

This is all about knowing how air flows into, out of, and through your home and when applied properly to the building design can help reduce your need for air-conditioning in the hotter months by taking advantage of natural air flow and breezes that cool your home.

A good and simple explanation can be found in this article:  
[Property mudgee: Simplifying Cross Ventilation](#)

### Solar Passive Design

Like Air Flow, the sun has a direct impact on all buildings. The sun changes position throughout the year and the impact on you and your home will be determined by your specific geographical location and your land and building envelope aspect. As a rule we are always trying to ensure that your main living spaces are facing North/North East which makes the most of the sun. The result is maximum warmth in winter and shielding you from excess heat in the summer months. So put simply it's all about orientation and aspect.

There is some additional information specific to this topic at:  
[Your Home - Passive Solar Design](#)

### Sustainable Building Products

There are a number of ways that a building product could be considered sustainable. You have to consider what impact you are making from the manufacturing, distribution and construction outcomes of your home.

There is a good article that provides some insight into environmentally friendly building products published by the HIA:  
[HIA - Environmentally Responsible Building Products](#)

### 3. Your Building Site

Your land or building site is critical to your building design.

The most important thing you can do on your site is research.

- a. If you haven't already got one; get a title document.
- b. Get some graph paper and set out to scale a basic site plan of the site boundaries. Make sure you put a North Compass Point on the sketch so you have an understanding of the aspects.
- c. Find out from your local council as much as possible about the site. Use the Council's PD Online service if they have one.
- d. Get a firm understanding of the slope on the site.
- e. Be conscious of any views you may wish to take into account in relation to your house design.
- f. Find out if there is any restrictive building envelope or building covenants relating to the land.

Early in our assessment process we will do much of that research for you. This will be presented to you in the form of a Site Assessment Report. You will hear us talk about this throughout our process. We encourage you to use this section to do the research because the more understanding you have about your site and the challenges it poses, the better placed you will be to incorporate design ideas that will meet those challenges in the most effective and efficient way possible.

### 4. General Design Tips

#### a. Kitchens

The thing everyone talks about with Kitchen Design is the 'Work Triangle'. This rule is how you design the relationship between the centre of the sink, to the centre of the cooktop and then to the centre of the fridge. These are your core kitchen work areas. The closer you are able to bring these together then the more efficient your kitchen becomes.

Consider your current kitchen. Consider all its functions and facilities. Break them into parts and then consider what you like, dislike about each. Then consider this in relation to the 'Kitchen Work Triangle Rule'. Make some notes and find some pictures. It will help you visualise what you want to achieve.

#### b. Bathrooms

These are high traffic areas and if you have a family they are critical and will need some attention. Each bathroom or powder room should have a purpose. Who is it provided for within your household? The main bathroom should function differently to your ensuite.

The size of your bathroom is always an issue. They are expensive to create. Lots of tiling and waterproofing, and products such as showers and vanities. It is important to be innovative and do what you can with the space allocated.

Do you need a bath? What size shower enclosure? How many sinks? How high will you tile? Well designed and appointed bathrooms make a difference to people and add value to a home.

Be conscious of lighting and ventilation. If possible ensure natural ventilation is incorporated as this is always a better solution, and can also provide good light.

### **c. Entertaining**

Indoor and Outdoor entertaining needs to be considered. How much, how big and what types of entertaining are likely? Outdoor living is critical in our environment and wherever possible it is more effective to have an outdoor living/dining area under your main roof. Whether that is a veranda style, a deck or an alfresco area will depend on other elements of the design needs.

Access and aspect are also critical to outdoor entertaining. What sort of sliding doors will you use and are Stacker Sliders going to be effective in bringing the outdoors inside so to speak. Modern home design is about opening up the entire living area so that it flows from the inside to the outside.

Pretty much everyone has a BBQ outside. Do you want one purpose built? If so, consider gas and power fixtures and smoke exhaust fans. Have you ever seen what happens to paintwork under eaves or outdoor ceilings when a BBQ has been there for a while? Look up and you will.

### **d. Storage**

Storage design is limited by imagination and you can find some great ideas on the net and on [Houzz.com.au](http://Houzz.com.au). Once again give it some thought. Don't just consider what you need and where you need it - also consider access. Sliding doors and hidden doors are much more effective than swing doors.

- What do you need to store?
- Can it be stored in the garage or under the stairs?
- Do you want to consider modular storage units?

Do some research on the topic - you'll discover some clever ideas out there.

### **e. Garage**

Go and look at your garage right now. Is it just a garage or is it a storage shed... workshop... garage... studio... etc. If all you need is a place to store one or two cars then the solution is quite simple. If your needs are different then make a list of what you need and consider either a single garage / workshop or a larger space.

Always try and ensure that your garage has internal access to your home, and if possible near your kitchen. When you shop you want to be able to access your kitchen and pantry as simply as possible.

### **f. Technology and Lighting**

Lighting is a critical element in the relationship you have with your home. Not just natural light, but artificial light as well. Also consider how the two forms of lighting need to work together. Good Building Design needs to be combined with innovative lighting solutions. There are many different techniques that can be employed to create just about any lighting effect. So once again: planning and pictures! But please be aware - lighting solutions can make a dent in your budget.



We are surrounded by technology now. The technology you use and may use in the future is a major consideration. Electrical power and Wi-Fi planning is now critical. Nearly all devices in the future will be wireless. In addition to that you need to consider things like home automation systems, including auto-controlled heating and cooling systems. It comes down to your determining the needs of your current lifestyle and the tools of the future that will add value to your home. All of which needs to be incorporated into your building design.

#### **g. Pools and Landscaping**

Pools in particular need to be addressed if they are going to form part of the total plan. If there is to be a pool all of your landscaping and outdoor living design needs to be planned around it. The main points will be access/location, services, drainage, engineering requirements, exposure to the sun or will shade be required.

Once this has been determined in the design brief then it can be catered for as part of the landscaping design. Alternatively you may have a specific idea in mind for your garden and outdoor areas and once again there are plenty of pictures around to help out.

## **5. Building Products**

Where do we start?! Like everything else in the world these days there are just so many choices. It is impossible even for the most active Building Designer or Architect to keep up with all of the Building Products that are available in the world today.

Just to give you some idea of the sheer scale of choice, have a look at the website that is used by the Building Design and Architectural Industry:

[Specifier](#)

Here are the main points to consider with your building product shopping list.

#### *Outdoors:*

- Facade Style
- Lighting
- Brickwork or Lightweight
- Roofing
- Paving or Concrete Finishes
- Balustrade

#### *Indoors:*

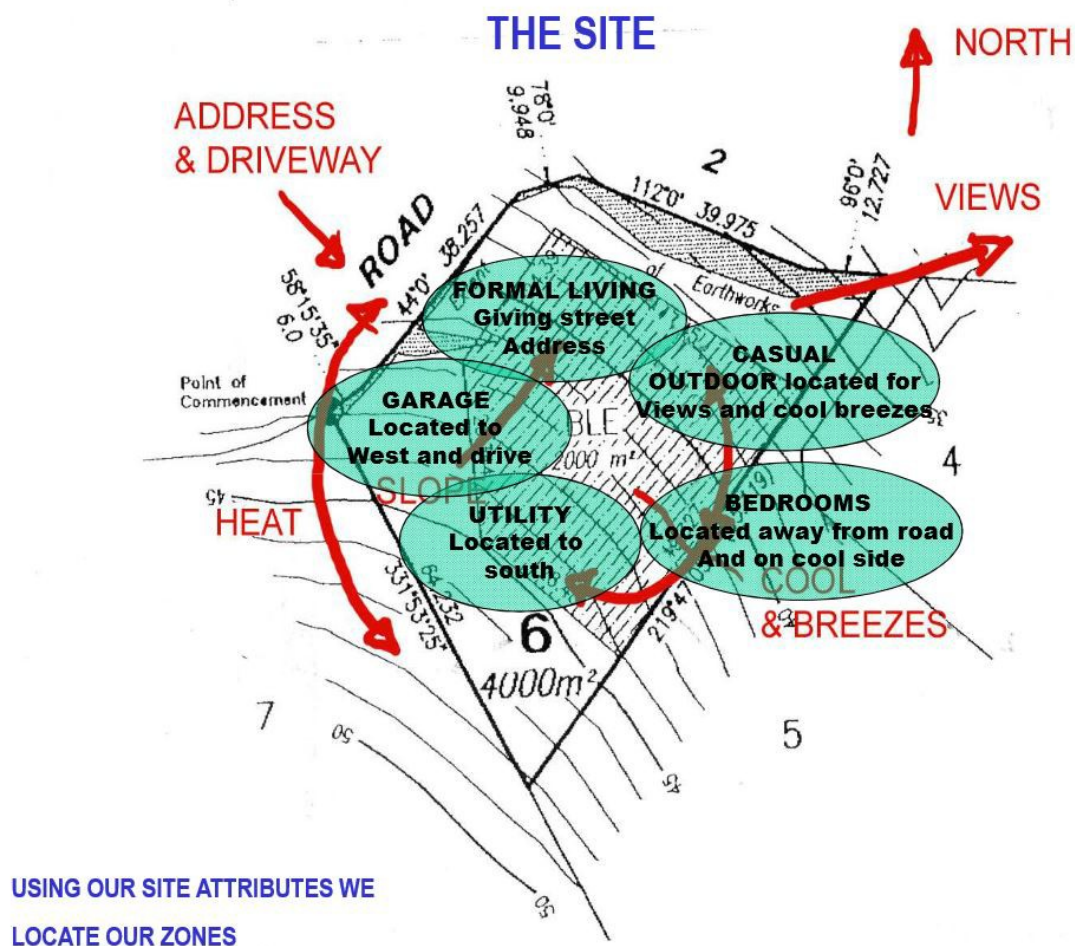
- Windows
- Tiles
- Carpet
- Lighting
- Kitchen Finishes
- Bathroom Finishes

The choices are endless and quality does make a difference - but shop to your budget and be practical when and where you have to. Remember, we are always here to help with ideas and input regarding price.

## 6. Bring it all Together

So by now you have some sense of what we are trying to accomplish on a collective basis.

Once you have a Land Title Document and the dimensions of the site then you can re-create a basic scale outline of your block of land. Use some simple graph paper to help this along. Use simple building zones to try and set out the room and flow structure that you want. You'll see below samples of what you are trying to achieve. Of course, it doesn't have to be perfect. What you are trying to do is present an image that represents what you want to achieve. You are not expected to be a designer.



[illegible]

In any Building Design or House Plan process our job is to ascertain with some clarity what it is you want to achieve and then use our expertise to apply some architectural design flair and practical building skill to the outcome so that you get the home you need and built to the budget you have set. By using this guide you will help us to help you and that then has the makings of a great partnership that will successfully bring your property to life.

# Creating the First Draft of Your Design Brief

## Step 1

Bring together all images and documents in relation to your design ideas. Use the guide to help you as a road map to collate this information. In addition create your own idea book on [Houzz.com.au](https://www.houzz.com.au) to support your design ideas and wish list.

## Step 2

Put a summary together with the following information:

- Your Name (Company or Trust Name, etc)
- Property Address
- Email Address
- Phone Number
- Total Construction Budget (Include Pool, Landscaping, Fencing: Everything. What is the total amount that you cannot go over and which will provide you the capacity to move into your home with nothing else to do).
- What type external style are you trying to accomplish? (modern/queenslander/tuscan, etc)
- What internal goals are you trying to achieve? (open plan/light/flow)
- Single Storey, Two Storey or Split Level?
- What ceiling heights will you require?
- Do you want a pool?
- Are you having ducted Air Conditioning?
- What type of Hot Water System will be required?
- Are there any special requirements that must be considered in the design?
- Have you completed all the notes specific to the room specs in Section 1 of this Guide?
- What room sizes do you want for each room?
- Do you have any sample sketches of your own that try to reflect what you are trying to achieve?

Combine this with the information, images and notes that you have gathered using this Guide.

That is Your Building Design Brief. Congratulations. You have made great progress.

## 7. Conclusion

While you are working through your Design Brief we will be preparing a Site Assessment Report. Now you understand that when we come together it will be a team effort to create an action plan that will bring your property to life.

When you feel that you have made enough progress in relation to your design brief then we will have a meeting to work on the Trial Budget Report.

With our Site Assessment Report and a builder's Preliminary Estimate you will be in a sound position to make a decision about your next step towards your goal...

Feel free to call us at any time to assist you through this process.