



Stage 2. Getting a New Home Design

Once the land has been purchased, the next step is to find an architect to produce a plan that outlines, in words and pictures, the best way to maximise its advantages. One of the options is an Archicentre New Home Design Report. This is where the thinking begins at the beginning of the project and not the end. With an architect involved, the house can be custom-designed for any shape block. The architect will produce a creative design that explores a range of design possibilities. A concept design includes sketches, suggestions, cost estimates and also looks at the affects of local planning guidelines and building regulations. The architect can work with any particular building style and show care and sensitivity to circumstances, lifestyle and budget.

A well-considered design concept includes:

- A sketch of the existing floor plan and a carefully-considered design concept, perhaps with some alternative ideas.
- Clear directions on how to undertake the project.
- An opinion of the probable cost of the building work.
- Recommendations on the best way to get your project built.

Archicentre's Essential Tips to Designing a New Home

1. Work out a budget

Be aware of costs that stretch beyond the shell. What can happen is the home owner only budgets for construction costs, so when it comes time to decorate, furnish and landscape, they are out of pocket. It's important to know that the builder will provide a finished structure, but the furnishings

are up to the owner. By not budgeting properly this can spell the difference between a house and a home. It's also worth remembering the hidden costs of building permits, energy rating, structural design, soil test, etc.

2. Overcapitalising

When developing a budget, be conscious of neighbourhood property values. Have a chat with a real estate agent to find out what the values are in the area. On a similar note, don't skimp. A kitchen or bathroom with poor quality finishes may hurt the resale value. The message here is get it right the first time.

3. Set a brief

Prior to meeting with an architect, have a clear picture in mind of what you want. First thing an architect will ask is 'what do you want?' and the second thing is "how much do you want to spend?" Be descriptive. Wanting a kitchen and a living room leaves a lot to the imagination. Wanting an open-plan kitchen/living room overlooking the rear garden with plenty of natural light is more specific.

4. Orientation

Situate living areas on the north, sunlit side to take best advantage of the light and sun during daylight hours.

5. Indoor-Outdoor

Create good indoor-outdoor relationship by extending living area into outdoor garden with full-length windows, wide opening doors and decking.

6. Green Design

Produce an energy-efficient design sensitive to the climate. Australian architecture has built a reputation as a pioneer of passive environmental design, which diminishes the impact of buildings on the natural environment and reduces energy and resources.

7. Climate sensitive

Make sure the design is well suited to the climate, especially in potentially storm damaging coastal or bush-fire prone areas.

8. Durable materials

Use durable materials because they last longer, require less maintenance and are less prone to deterioration.

9. Zoning

Consider the relationship between the passive (working/sleeping) and active (living) areas of a home, not just now but also in the future.

10. Functional circulation

Avoid designing useless spaces. It costs thousands of dollars to build each square meter and this should not be squandered. A clever design will create multi-functional areas and reduce space allocated for circulation alone.