



ASK A BESPOKE ARCHITECT

I WANT TO BUILD/RENOVATE, WHERE DO I START?

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BUILDING DESIGNER, A DRAFTSPERSON AND AN ARCHITECT?

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I WANT TO BUILD/RENOVATE, WHERE DO I START?

A lot of the clients that I talk to at the beginning of a process don't know where to start when they want to build or renovate. The first step is to ring Bespoke Architects, give me a brief overview of what it is that you want to do a rough timeline and the site address. The next step is for me to come to site, meet you, your family, talk about your brief in a lot of detail, talk about budget, talk about town planning restrictions, maybe talk about certain aspects of your own site and what your neighbours are doing and from that meeting we can sort of build up a brief for you.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BUILDING DESIGNER, A DRAFTSPERSON, AND AN ARCHITECT?

One of the questions I get asked a lot is what is the difference between a building designer a draftsman and an architect? A building designer and a draftsman are essentially the same thing. A draftsman is kind of just an older title that we used to use and now you use the term building designer. To become a building designer it's a two-year TAFE course, or three-year TAFE course now, it's actually what I studied first. There is a really strong focus on the TAFE course on how to document a building and how to do that really well. That's kind of it for a draftsman and then you can go on if you wish to, like I did, to university and do the five year architecture course. It's actually a double degree course that's got a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. The focus at university, or at least at Deakin where I studied, was a lot more on design so really thinking through the design of the buildings that we were presenting rather than how we document them or produce the drawings. After you've finished your university degree you then go on and have a couple of years of experience and then sit for your registration exam through the Architects Registration Board of Victoria in our case and that's a three part exam so we need a two-year logbook of experience we actually do a written exam and then we do an oral exam as well and at that point you are now an architect.





ASK A BESPOKE ARCHITECT

DO ARCHITECTS PREFER LARGER JOBS OR ARE THEY HAPPY TO DO THE SMALLER JOBS AS WELL?

A lot of the initial phone calls that we receive here at Bespoke Architects they're from clients wondering whether perhaps their project is too small and we only focus on larger projects and the answer is definitely not. We'll consider and have done in the past a wide range of projects. The key for us is are you as a client passionate is the project interesting and are we going to be able to challenge each other and the brief and the budget and achieve a great result. So it's certainly not something that has to do with scale or even budget. It really is about the passion and the drive.

WHAT IS YOUR ARCHITECTURAL STYLE?

A lot of clients ring Bespoke Architects after having viewed our website. And one of their questions is what is your architectural style? My response to that is our projects on our website demonstrate a wide range of styles. And that is the style of each and every one of those individual clients. We look forward to the challenge of discovering your style with you and taking you on that journey and providing you with a really well thought out edited version of your style.





ASK A BESPOKE ARCHITECT

I'D LIKE TO BUILD A HOME THAT'S SIMILAR TO ONE I'VE SEEN ON THE INTERNET - CAN ARCHITECTS WORK FROM PHOTOS OF HOUSES TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT LOOKS THE SAME?

One of the initial conversations I have with clients that approach Bespoke Architects is I have my inspiration, I have this dream home. Can I provide you with that image? And can you work with that? And that is a most definite yes. I'm a very visual person and I thoroughly enjoy being able to communicate with my clients visually and share a vision together. One of the tools I use a lot is Pinterest and that enables me to communicate with my clients better by asking them to pin a lot of the images that they really like and then to discuss what it is in those images that they're really trying to achieve with their project.

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO AN ARCHITECT?

I get a lot of phone calls from people who have just bought their dream project, and they're tripping over all their ideas, and what it is that they need to tell me in order for me to tell them what it is they need to know.

The first thing you need to tell me is your address from that piece of information, I can do some background research on planning and zoning and get some overall sort of macro information together so that when we meet on site we can go into more of the micro detail around the project. We can talk about the things like the planning overlays and zoning. We can talk about the fall of the site. We can talk about the brief and the budget. We can talk about the short-term and long-term uses of the house. And of course your style and what it is that you envisage on the site.





ASK A BESPOKE ARCHITECT

HOW DO I SET MY PROJECT BUDGET?

A lot of the phone calls that I receive are people that have a really clear idea of their project in terms of a brief and what they're not so sure on is their budget. So after I've met with you for the first time, I'll come back to my office and I'll prepare for you a proposal that outlines all the services that Bespoke Architects offers. I'll also list all the Consultants your specific project's going to require as well as you're planning fees and your building permit fees and then I'll tell you how much your project is going to cost.

WHAT ARE ROUGH PROJECT TIMEFRAMES?

As part of the proposal Bespoke Architects can prepare for clients includes things like a project time frame. Now that does vary from project to project depending on location and scope whether we need to get planning whether we don't. It will also depend on time frames for the clients to externally make decisions that they need to inform the design with. As well as things like how long consultants are taking to provide that external information that we need to put together the package of information. Geelong is really busy at the moment in terms of a bit of a boom and so documentation is taking that little bit longer, but it's well worth the wait.





ASK A BESPOKE ARCHITECT

WHAT IS TOWN PLANNING AND WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS?

A lot of clients that approach Bespoke Architects are a little unsure on what town planning is and whether it actually affects their project. So town planning has zoning and overlays that affect every property in every location and they have certain triggers that require a town planning application be prepared and be submitted. At Bespoke Architects we pride ourselves on working hand-in-hand with councils from a very early point in the concept design to make sure that what we're proposing isn't going to raise any giant red flags and hold up clients and their projects moving forward.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OWNER BUILDER, PREFERRED CONTRACTOR AND NEGOTIATED TENDERERS?

I'd like to talk briefly about the difference between a preferred builder, a tender scenario and owner builder. So preferred builder is when the clients have a builder in mind for their project and we start talking to them really early on in the documentation process. A tender scenario is when we get all our documentation finished, then we take the project to market to try and select a builder that's right for our project. And finally it's the owner builder. So the client is in fact the builder they don't have to pay the builders margin, but they do take on a lot more risk around insurance.





ASK A BESPOKE ARCHITECT

WHAT OTHER CONSULTANTS DOES MY PROJECT NEED?

As part of the proposal Bespoke Architects prepares for new clients is a list of other consultants that your project is going to need. Now this varies from project to project. In general terms each project needs to start with a land surveyor. As we're moving forward through documentation we need a geotechnical engineer and a structural engineer. Depending on your specific site it may require a civil engineer as well. Every project will need a building surveyor. You may need a landscape architect. At Bespoke Architects we have a range of preferred consultants that we can put forward to you to use, but you're more than welcome to use any of your own.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO USE AN ARCHITECT?

A lot of people could call Bespoke Architects and say how much do you charge. That really is a project dependent response. The best way for us to establish that number is actually to meet on-site, talk through the brief, your project requirements in detail. I'll come back and prepare for you a fixed fee sum, that will outline all the stages that Bespoke Architects offer from the very start, which is existing conditions or concept right through to contract admin which is when the building's finished. Whether you want to engage us for all those stages is up to you, but at least you've got a really clear idea at the start moving forward what to allow for.





ASK A BESPOKE ARCHITECT

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO START BUILDING?

One of the reoccurring questions we get at Bespoke Architects is how long does it take to start building? Hopefully that's not the basis for decision making on the consultant that you use. This process, the documentation process, is very dependent on the size of the project and whether planning is required or not. It's also where we solve all the foreseeable problems for the project moving forward. So the longer we take working out the detail in documentation the smoother the build should go. For most residential projects it's about a 12-month process.

HOW DO YOU FIND BUILDERS FOR MY PROJECT?

Bespoke Architects have a suite of builders that we've worked with over the years on a variety of projects. We find it's very much about marrying the correct builder with the correct project. However, if you're a client and you have a builder that you want to use please put their name forward. We would love the opportunity to expand the number of builders that we work with. If you're a builder and you're listening to this there is actually a spot on our website where you can get in contact with us and show us a portfolio of work that you've done so that we can contact you in the future for the next lot of exciting designs that we're coming up with.





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I HAVE EXISTING DRAWINGS CAN I PROVIDE THEM AND ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR YOU TO DO THEM?

Bespoke Architects doesn't accept existing conditions drawings from renovation clients. The existing conditions drawings are really critical part of the design and the documentation process, they're the foundation. The actual cost and the time to do the existing drawings is quite minimal in the scheme of the project. If we don't have that accuracy at the start, there is a chance that the project timeline and the project budget will blow out when the project is on site and the discrepancies arise.

