Design Phases Explained

Designing a building involves distinct stages with each one getting more detailed and precise. Within each phase we have different levels of Subject Matter Expert engagement to get the design right. Here is an outline of the different design phases at a glance.

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- Early strategic thinking
- What type of spaces do we want? What will we be doing in the spaces? What size should the space be, roughly?
- How do they relate to each other? Are there any specific connections between activities or spaces that need to be considered?
 Functional Design Brief is produced including high level requirements

Discovery

- Exploring ideas and checking everything can fit, testing adjacencies and flow
- Finding solutions as understanding grows and refining the Functional Design Brief
- Landing location of difficult items such as lifts and stairs

Sketches and basic floor plans are produced for review and comment

• Cost estimate completed, and timeframes for design phases finalised

Preliminary

Concept

- Space requirements planned in detail. Each room is drawn and spatially checked
- Main building structure, services, and facade are determined at a high level
- Floor plans, room data sheets, interior and exterior perspectives are produced
- Cost estimates are updated. Early contractor engagement is sought to check buildability
- Building Performance Specification (BPS) is drafted
- By the end of the phase, design is clearly defined and floor plan layout is frozen (walls are set in final location)

Developed

- Coordination of design elements. Main time for design development including location of furniture and equipment
- Key services such as HVAC, data, power, lighting, and security are planned out
- Site plans including landscaping, dimensioned floor plans, sketches of details, and detailed cost estimates are produced including initial construction cost estimate
- Initial ideas on materials and finishes are presented
- Overall design is fixed at this stage

Detailed

- Detailed and specific work done mostly by the design team alone
- Finalisation of all coordination elements between the different designers. Some specialist sub-trades appointed
- Building consents applied for
- Detailed documentation on the design and specifications of all building elements is produced for construction and to determine the final construction cost
- From the end of this design phase, changes are subject to strict change control and incur fees on top of the cost of the change