

Reading the Brief

Architecture

How to turn a client's wish list into a schedule you can plan from.

A brief is a starting position, not a specification.

1

Separate need from want

What fails without it, and what would simply be nice to have.

2

Build the schedule

Every space, its area, its occupancy and what must be next to it.

3

Add the hidden area

Circulation, plant, structure and stores. Often 25 to 40 per cent.

4

Test against the site

Footprint times storeys against the buildable area. Do it early.

5

Question one thing

The best projects challenge one assumption in the brief, with evidence.

Gross area is net area plus circulation, structure, walls and plant. Briefs are usually written in net.