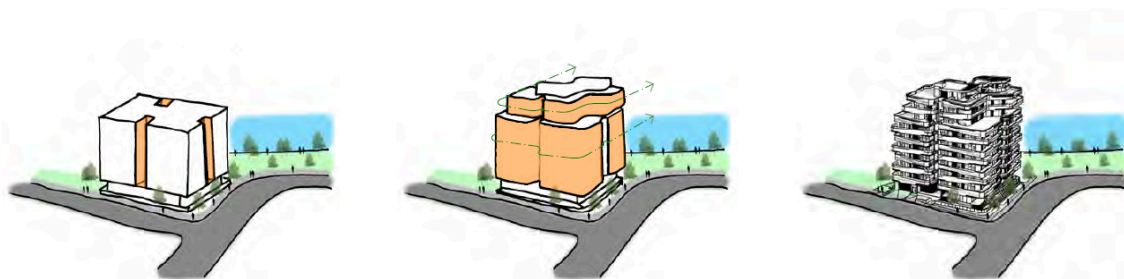


BOX FORM ON SINGLE SITE

REDUCED SETBACK TO  
NEIGHBOUR

LARGER BOX FORM ON  
CONSOLIDATED SITE

DEFINED PODIUM FOR  
COMMERCIAL



ARTICULATION TO  
FACADE

MOVEMENT ADDED TO  
FACADE

DEFINED BANDING TO  
BALCONIES

# 12 STEPS

OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

## STEP EIGHT: DESIGN

You might remember way back at Step 1 where I set you a challenge task to review developments in your local area. This was to give you a feel for the styles and designs currently on the market. This also lets you see what other developers are currently offering, and the trends and designs currently on the market.

Most people have a pre-conceived idea of what the market wants, and are influenced by their own preferences and styles. That is mistake number 1. The market doesn't care what you like or would prefer. Your opinion will be one of two things, right or wrong, and you can't afford to let your opinion dictate your results.

Visiting open houses (of brand new completed developments) and display villages gives you an insider's look at the latest in design styles and what is popular in the market. Talking to agents and home consultants about what is selling well also helps you work out what is currently important to buyers in your target market.

Good design has just as much to do with the interior design of your development as the exterior aesthetics. The look and feel of your property will have a huge bearing on the final outcomes you are able to achieve. Often I see tiny living spaces designed in a project in an effort to get more units out of a specific site. Be careful by being just driven by the yield outcome of your site. Ultimately the spaces you design will impact on your sales prices, and a poorly designed product will prove difficult to sell.

Armed with this information you will be able to make wise decisions moving forward. Remember, an inquisitive mind is your most valuable asset at this point in time.

The design process is often more of a "creative" process as opposed to a budget driven approach. Many Architects can be more concerned with their "vision" of the project rather than the practicality of construction or the costs involved.

The more you are involved in the design, and understanding the implications of certain features or inclusions, the better you will get at containing expensive design aspects that, might look good but don't always add value. Spending excessive money on good design does not make a good development unless it translates to additional profit.

The risk of handing over complete control to your Architect with the ability to make all design decisions is that you are effectively "giving away" control of your project to a third party, who may not have the same motivations as you in delivering the final project. Although they will be a critical part of your team and lend necessary creative vision to the development, many architects do not take into account important factors such as the final cost or complexity of construction.



Don't get me wrong, a good architect will add considerable value to your project by designing a product that will be appealing to your target market and appropriate for your end goals, whether you intend to rent or on-sell the completed development.

Some beginners try to save money at this stage and enlist the cheaper services of drafts people. Investing a little more at the important design stage of your project means you have a better chance of ending up with a development that has good appeal and a proposal which should work its way through council much quicker.

I suggest looking at other projects that your potential Architect may have already designed. Check out the look and feel of the development, paying particular attention to the interior size and flow of the development. One thing is the design on paper, another is the actual completed product. Room sizes and the flow of the design is crucial to the success of the sales process, and there is nothing like actually inspecting completed projects to give you a better feel for this than looking at a 2D representation on a piece of paper.

Ask them to provide you with a list of their recently completed projects for you to look at as well as the names of some past clients to contact for a professional reference.

## **THE DESIGN BRIEF**

After selecting your architect, the next step is to provide them with a brief. The brief should give them an indication of the nature of the project you want, its general shape and the number of dwellings to be built, together with some broad design elements such as the materials you'd like to use. If you have a specific look you are looking to replicate, provide them with photos of other properties with these features.

The more detail you provide your Architect at this stage, the better the outcomes are bound to be.

Once they have prepared concept design drawings you will need to review in detail. Ask for an elevation and room sizes so you can get a feel for the look and size of the project. If you're not sure on the size of rooms, grab a measure and mark the room sizes out. Compare these to the room sizes you already live in or the plans available online for properties currently being sold on the market. This is your opportunity to make sure your design brief is being met, before you progress too far and end up having to do wholesale changes and re-design.

