

3. Concept Design - developing the basic idea.

Often referred to as Schematic Design
Client's Guide To Architecture Series

"Every good building results from a good architect, a good builder and a good client" How can you be a good client? This series follows the [Anatomy of Project diagram \(blog 54\)](#) and we'll continue with Concept Design.

Key Architect's Skill

This is frequently described as the key architect's skill. It is where most architect's education is concentrated. It is often where the greatest value is created.

The architect becomes a detective at this stage: seeking to fully understand the client's requirements together with the background aims for the project and then considering every aspect of the site; where the wind blows most often, how the sun tracks around, where does the access come from, what is the shape of the ground, its landscape features and adjoining property, and many other things that could influence the opportunity that the site presents.

During this process the architect often continues to work on the design until he or she feels comfortable with it; that it has reached a point where the architect is satisfied that it is the basis of the solution and asks:

- Does it meet clients needs and support their basic purposes?
- Does it respond to the site and its microclimate?
- Will it incorporate sustainability principles?
- Will it be enjoyable to use?
- Will it be beautiful?
- Can it be built within budget and will it have lasting value?

Envisioning

This is all taken into the melting pot of consideration by the architect who often has to apply lateral thinking in addition to experience and education. Out of this emerges the embryo of a design solution that needs to be tested and developed before it can be presented and workshopped with the client.

This process often results in a logical solution. It can be a better use of design time than asking the architect to prepare several alternative designs for selection by the client.

At this stage, what the architect conveys in drawing form to the client, is only part of the solution that they have developed in their mind with the aid of sketches or other representation. After receiving feedback and reaching agreement on the principles of the design, the project can move on to Design Development stage to put the "flesh on the bones".

Next time - Design Development - flesh on the bones.

Chapter list for [Making Property Serve Mission](#)

