Creative briefs are the foundation of an Interior Design project. They are the documents that outline the aims, objectives, client needs, and contextual considerations of a project. In this article, we will cover the different elements that make up creative briefs in interior design, and highlight the key points that should be considered when creating them.

## Defining Aims and Objectives

**Aims:** Aims set the overall direction for an Interior Design project. They include the broader goals and aspirations that the design intends to achieve. These aims go beyond the aesthetics and style of a project, and encompass broader targets, such as the implementation of functionality, evoking emotions, or championing sustainability. For instance, if the aim is to create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere in a restaurant, the design elements may focus on enhancing ambiance and seating arrangements to facilitate social interaction.

**Objectives:** Objectives break down the aims into specific, actionable steps. These are tangible milestones that assist in fulfilling the aims. Objectives are essentially the stepping stones used to achieve the overall outcome, which is the aim of a project. Continuing with the restaurant example, objectives could include increasing seating capacity by a certain percentage, improving traffic flow to reduce wait times, or integrating technology for more efficient order processing.



Fig 1. Canva (n.d.), Designers Project Planning

# Defining Needs

**Client Preferences:** Understanding the client's preferences is very important for the development of a successful Interior Design project, as they are the primary stakeholders, driving the project. This involves gathering information about their lifestyle, design preferences, budget constraints, and any specific requirements they may have, such as accommodating a large family or incorporating pet-friendly features. They also may have a particular colour preference, or require large storage solutions for example. Being aware of this information will contribute to a successful design proposal and final outcome.

**End Users:** In some cases, the client may not actually be the end user of the project. It is for this reason we will use a more holistic approach. Whether it's the residents of a home, employees in an office setting, or customers frequenting a commercial establishment (restaurant, spa etc.), understanding their needs for factors such as comfort, functionality, and accessibility should be prioritised.

# Contextual Considerations

**Location:** The geographical location of the project will influence various design decisions, such as material selection and design style. For instance, in tropical climates, designs may prioritise natural ventilation and shading strategies by focusing on certain colour schemes. Colder climates may require insulation and energy-efficient heating systems, as well as insulating materials.

**Surrounding Environment:** The immediate surroundings of the project site, including neighbouring buildings, landscapes, and views, will inform various design decisions. For instance, a building nestled in a lush, green landscape may incorporate large windows to frame picturesque views and blur the boundaries between indoors and outdoors. A living room looking out onto a main road that is busy and loud, may incorporate heavy, thick curtains that will absorb external noise and sounds.

**Cultural Significance:** Projects involving historically or culturally significant buildings require a delicate balance between preservation and adaptation. Design interventions should respect the heritage of the building, internally and externally, while addressing contemporary needs and advancements in material technologies. This may involve restoring original features, such as ornate mouldings or stained glass windows, while incorporating modern amenities and accessibility features. Being able to balance culture and technology requires an informed and respectful approach to heritage.



Fig 2. Canva (n.d.), Designers Brainstorming Meeting

# Collaboration and Communication

**Collaboration:** A successful Interior Design project requires effective collaboration between the stakeholders, including clients, Interior Designers, contractors etc. Sometimes, impromptu or indeed organised collaborative brainstorming sessions between you and the client, as well as between you and the contractors (where needed), allow for the exchange of ideas and expertise. This can generate both practical and innovative solutions that address unique design problems and requirements.

**Communication:** In order to make sure everyone involved in the project is constantly informed and updated on timelines, expectations and outcomes, clear and consistent communication is essential. Regular meetings, continuous emails or messages, progress reports, and presentations help keep stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the design process. This facilitates on time decision-making and problem-solving as well as an overall collaboration of all parties.

# Flexibility and Adaptability

**Flexibility:** Interior Design projects need to allow for flexibility, in order to accommodate for changes and unforeseen challenges that may arise during the design or installation process. Interior Designers need to be open to revising and refining the Design Proposal. Based on feedback they may receive, and the possibility of evolving project requirements, they need to make sure they are open to potential changes to their initial vision of a space or project. With this in mind, it is important that the final design meets the client's vision and expectations.

**Adaptability:** Interior Design proposals and Installations need to be adaptable to future requirements and trends, to ensure longevity and relevance. By incorporating flexible layouts, and timeless design principles, the spaces are able to evolve and respond to the changing needs of the client or user, the technological advancements, and ever changing design trends.

Creative briefs are the roadmap for all interior design projects. The brief outlines the intentions of the entire project and acts as a guide for all stakeholders to achieve the final outcomes.