

The Bower Client Journey
Introduction Pack

bower





Bower Architecture took on board who I was, how I lived and my lifestyle. Bower exceeded my expectations and found solutions for every curveball I've thrown them.



Kate Cowen (Client)
Kate's House and Kate's New Place

Front Cover: Coastal Court, Flinders
Architecture & Interior Design:
Bower Architecture & Interiors
Landscape: Laidlaw & Laidlaw
Photography: Shannon McGrath
Talent: Michelle (Coastal Court, Client)

Back Cover: The Villa at Barwon Heads
Architecture & Interior Design:
Bower Architecture & Interiors
Landscape: Michael Pitthie
Photography: Shannon McGrath

Am I ready?

Bower Architecture & Interiors is an established and multi-award winning Melbourne-based design practice creating quality, sustainable architecture and meaningful interior design. With a spirit of collaboration, we create joyful, enduring homes for clients who believe in precious everyday moments.

Embarking on a journey to create a built project is often a once-in-a-lifetime experience. For us and our clients, the journey of creating and revealing your special place is as significant as the remarkable final outcome.

The following series of questions are designed to help you self assess if you are ready to dive into your project with us. It is important that you are well positioned to start the journey. A 'YES' answer to these indicates that you are ready to go.

1. Is your project a new house or a significant renovation?

We are experienced residential architects and our passion is to improve others lives by creating beautiful, bespoke homes. We focus on homes as we love working closely with the people who will love and use the spaces we create. We also believe it is our sustainable responsibility to create buildings for the long term and architectural homes are usually for the long term. We don't do work that is likely to be thrown away after a few years as is the case with most retail and some hospitality projects. We also don't undertake projects that are a quick lipstick polish to sell again.

2. Do you have an existing site or are you currently searching for a site for your project?

It is a quicker start if you have a site but we frequently help our clients to review the potential of sites they are considering purchasing.

3. Are you committed to a long term vision for a new home, for you to love and enjoy for many years?

4. Are you looking for a professional full service architect, to guide and inspire you from our first chat until you walk in the door of your home?

5. Are you in a comfortable and stable personal position right now to give a project your attention?

6. Are you in a comfortable financial position to invest in quality design and the long term wellbeing, joy and value that good architecture brings?



The Next Step: Get in Touch

If you answer YES to all the above and you are ready to get in touch please click [here](#) to book a call in with Anna. You can also click [here](#) to email Anna.

Our first call will be a casual chat and you can give us the big picture: is it a house or a large renovation? Where is the site and what do you love about it? What are the key desires or drivers for your project? You may have some burning questions for us too. There are some answers to some frequently asked questions on [page 10](#) of this document.

1. Introductory Zoom Meeting

If after this initial conversation it sounds like we could add value to your project we will arrange a Zoom meeting with you (free of charge).

This introductory meeting is about getting to know you, listening to you and hearing about your goals, hopes (and fears) for the project. We can also spend time talking about the process of working with an architect and the value we can bring. If we seem like a good fit for each other, we will then use the information you have shared to tailor a Proposal for Services for you.

2. Proposal and Q&A

We will email the proposal to you and then meet again, preferably in person and at the site, to present it to you. Here we run through the proposal, answer your questions and show you a real life example of the architectural journey and deliverables for each stage. We find clients love this presentation and it really helps to paint the picture of how a project is revealed and what to expect.

3. Further Research

After the presentation we encourage you to call some of our previous clients and builders we work with to hear about their experiences and the quality of our work. You may like to visit a previous project with us too.

Choosing your architect is a big decision and we encourage you to do all the research and exploration you need to feel confident in your choice.



Other architects I had met before Bower did not have the same energy, commitment and time for me that Bower did. Bower understands me as a person and has nailed my brief. I feel that we are both aligned on this project.



Chris (Client)
Chris's House

The Bower Process

Bower Architecture & Interiors offer a complete service and the Bower Process of revealing your special place has been refined and improved over our more than 17 years of delivering homes that our clients love. While all architects work through various stages to complete a project, we have tailored our stages to make the client journey as smooth and enjoyable as possible, and deliver the quality we are known for.

Every stage involves our research, management and design. You may like to imagine each stage as adding layers of design and detail refinement in a timely and clear structure, starting at a point where you just have a piece of land and a dream, and finishing with your completed Bower Home.

Stages Summary

A1 – Concept Design

Uniquely we split this stage into two parts which we have found our clients love!



Concept Design Part 1 – Pre-Design & Concept Plan Design

We start by getting to know you, the site and your brief. We establish and refine the big ideas that will make your house fabulous. We develop two plan options with opinions of cost for each. Average time for this stage is 4 weeks.



Concept Design Part 2 – Concept Finalisation & Schematic Design

Part 2 is focused on further defining the architectural plan and developing the external form and spatial design of the house. We show you the first 3D images of your home and key materials. Average time for this stage is 5 weeks.



A2 – Design Development

We focus on how the project is to be put together and resolve the full design intent including the interior design. Lots of 3Ds, material samples and a schedule of appliances and fittings will clarify the vision. Average time for this stage is 8 weeks.



A3 – Planning Application

After Stage A1 or during Stage A2, we submit the development to council if required. We have years of experience with councils and we will smoothly guide you through this stage.



A4 – Construction Documentation

We prepare the technical drawings and documents for the pricing, building contract, building permit and construction of your project. Average time for this stage is 10 weeks.



A5 – Contractor Selection

We obtain formal pricing of the project from a builder or builders. We have a great circle of builders who love creating Bower projects for our clients. Average timing is 6 weeks.



A6 – Contract Administration

We liaise with you and the builder as your new Bower home emerges on site. We manage site meetings, handle contractual details and answer questions right until you are settled in your new home.



Thank you all for making this happen and for holding our hands throughout this journey because we would never have done it without the positive energy and guidance of the Bower team.



Evelina (Client)
Four Gardens House

FAQ

1. Is there a minimum value for the projects that you work on?

Many clients come to us because they love the feeling of quality and the robustness of our projects, along with the seamless connection to landscape, feelings of openness and space, a journey of natural light and fine attention to detail. We believe there is a minimum scale of project that can capture these aspirations and allows us to give our clients and their project the attention and time that deliver the quality of projects we are known for.

For architecture and interior design projects the minimum project budget is \$1million + GST. Most of our projects of this type sit between \$1million to \$8million excluding GST. Interior Design only projects are generally \$600K and over.

2. How much do architectural new homes cost?

Architectural homes cost more than kit or 'off the shelf' homes from a volume builder. The two key factors that make up the cost are project size and quality.

We live by the mantra of quality over quantity and we are skilled in designing spaces that you will use, and enjoy, for many years to come. We will help you refine your brief so that your home is just the right size for you (and not too big!). Our new homes range in size from the Hover House at 224sqm upwards.

Most of our recent projects have cost approximately \$6,000 – \$7,000/sqm + GST.

3. What value does architecture add?

Many of our clients understand the value of architecture before they approach us but the three key components of the value of the work we offer are:

a. A quality, seamless and enjoyable experience: Our team's experience, our processes, our design and our project management skills ensure a smooth experience for our clients during the architectural journey. Clients often praise us for our friendly, open and approachable team, which we think makes it such an enjoyable process for Bower and our clients.

b. The long-term wellbeing, joy, comfort, wonder and ease that comes from quality design is what sets a Bower Home apart from others. We believe the true value is clear when you wake up each day inside your new home and discover a wonderful play of light on a wall and feel how the design is completely unique, and tailored to you.

c. Return on investment: While few of the homes we have designed have been sold by our clients, those who have moved on noted that the sale prices were significantly higher than the average, with some setting records for their area. Various results suggest that the long-term financial value of an architecturally designed home is higher than a non-architect designed home.

The University of Melbourne and Architeam conducted further research into this, read about it [here](#).

4. How do you manage the project budget?

The project budget is a key element of your brief. We will help guide you when it comes to setting the budget, and working towards it is a key part of our work.

At the very start of your project we will ask about your budget goal and your relationship to your budget. This means that we ask you to think about the following three elements and put them in your personal order of priority:

- The brief/wishlist
- The quality of spaces and detail
- The budget

How you prioritise these three elements will help us make informed decisions and assist us with how to best advise you throughout the project.

For example, if budget is your number one priority, we will choose not to show you options that sit outside of your budget, such as plans for a size that would exceed the budget, or options for services, appliances or finishes that don't fit within it.

During the Bower Process, we will discuss the budget at every meeting with you and will always let you know when a decision will affect the budget. We have accumulated years' worth of experience and insight that we will share with you so that you can make informed decisions relating to specific inclusions. You can then weigh up what value you put on that addition and instruct us to include it or exclude it.

5. How long does a project take?

Every project is unique but we generally suggest six months to one year for the Design and Planning Permit Stages and about 12-18 months for construction.

You can download our Bower Client Journey information Pack [here](#), including a helpful diagram and description of the Bower Process stages and timeframe of a project.

FAQ (continued)

6. Do you have builders that you recommend?

We have worked with a number of quality architectural builders on our projects who share our values of honesty, transparency, excellence, teamwork, respect, a love of their craft and a positive can-do approach. Like us, there is nothing they want more than a happy client who has enjoyed the overall process.

As we get to know you, we will match and suggest builders to you that we feel will be a good fit for you. We consider our builders the essential professionals that build our clients' dream home and execute the architectural vision.

7. I have already chosen a builder, will you work with them?

We frequently meet great architectural builders via our clients who may have a connection or recommendation from friends or family.

8. How do you charge?

For full architectural design and documentations services we charge a percentage fee based on the budgeted and then the final cost of the project. Once a building Contract is underway and construction commences we follow the build, support you and the building team on a monthly retainer.

We charge as a percentage because throughout our years in practice we have found that the cost of the project is the clearest reflection of the quantum of work, time and number of drawings required to deliver the quality of work we are known for. Fixed fees may be the mark of a less experienced architect (we were guilty of this when we first started!) or a cookie-cutter approach.

It is very uncommon for our clients to know how much they want to (or need to) spend to achieve their vision at the very start of the journey. As such, we start every project with an initial stage called Concept Plan Design. This is a lump-sum fee that is credited back to you if we continue.

This package will help you understand how the project might take shape, allows you to get excited about it, and helps us determine the project's scope and budget. We find this is a great way to start a project and get to know one another, and there is no obligation for you to proceed

with us beyond this stage. At the end of this stage, if you chose to continue the journey, we can agree with you on a project budget that we can then base our fees.

The total architectural fee for the design and documentation is broken into each stage of the architectural journey. When the final build cost is known our fee is adjusted to be based on this figure, if it differs. We invoice monthly based on the progress of the stage underway.

For interiors only projects under \$1million, furniture selection, assistance with artwork acquisition and window covering guidance we charge at our hourly rates.

9. Do you have a waitlist?

As a studio, we have made the decision to take on one new project per month. This allows us to give our clients and our projects the time and attention that we are known for. It also allows us to feel proud of delivering a smooth architectural journey that our clients enjoy. As a result, we normally have a waiting period of a few months.

10. Should I renovate or rebuild?

This is a great question and one we hear lots! As such, we have written a short piece with three simple questions that will help you make this important decision. You can read it [here](#)

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