



Get expert advice in planning your dream home

Planning and designing your own home can be both an exciting and daunting time in your life. You're in charge of how your future home will look and you are the one who gets to call the shots. You'll decide what colour floorboards to put in the living room. You'll get to pick whether marble countertops will look good in your kitchen. You'll get to decide if you want your dream walk in wardrobe in your bedroom or stick with the one you spotted in Ikea. One thing that will make this process easier says **Kat O'Connor** is getting an architect involved, because even though you've watched every episode of *Grand Design*, the experts always know best.

The best way to find an architect in your local area is by going online to the [Royal Institute of Architects](#) of Ireland website where you will find a list of eligible architects that will put your plan into action. When looking for an architect make sure you look for someone with the right experience, as well as similar taste to what you're looking for. An architect that solely works on extensions or corporate buildings won't be as beneficial to you as someone who mainly focuses on building new homes. It's important to look at their previous projects and the architects' portfolio before hiring them. Viewing past work will give you a better idea of their style and whether it caters to what you're looking for.

Wojechiech Kordyl, the director of A1 Architects, believes that is crucial to get

your architect involved in the early stages of planning your new home. "Think about the timescale, the sooner you involve the architect the better, so contact them as early as possible," he advises. In the early stages of planning you will have numerous meetings with your architect so make sure you give them as much detail as possible about the future home that you want. Have a clear idea in your head about what you want and what you don't want. A great way to get inspired is to think of your past homes and pick out what you liked and disliked and incorporate those factors into your initial plan. Another helpful way to inspire you in the early stages is to look at your architect's previous work to see what designs of theirs you like and what could work for your new home. Pinterest is another great way to find design inspiration, as well as interior ideas.

The most important thing to remember is your budget. Making a budget is one of the most crucial things you can do in the early stages of planning your home. Architect Wojechiech Kordyl says that it is important to "...put your funds into what is essential and avoid spending your money on luxuries". You can always make changes down the line and change your windows or floorboards for more luxurious alternatives, but don't do it when you first build your home, as it will damage the budget. You don't want the construction to come to a half when the budget has run out, so make sure you speak to your architect about affordable, yet good quality materials that won't put a huge dent in your budget.

You will have many meetings with your architect about the design of your home so it is vital that you tell them exactly

what you want. Your architect will draw up numerous designs for you to view, but don't be afraid to make suggestions and edits. Remember that they are the experts, so listen to them if they also have changes to make, especially when it comes to space. According to Wojechiech Kordyl, one of the most popular trends is open space. "What most people are looking for are open plan rooms – mainly in the kitchen, dining and living area."

One of the main benefits of open plan rooms is the fact that there's more natural light in your home. Open plan rooms create a natural and warming feeling in your home, especially if you have a big family.

Another crucial thing to remember in the planning process is the future. You may want to expand your family in the future or your kids may be planning on moving out soon, so make sure you think of those factors when deciding on how many rooms you want in your new home. Wojechiech Kordyl recommends that you "...should think about the future. Some people build too many rooms and others don't build enough. Your family will grow and your children will grow up and so you need to find a good balance when it comes to space".

With the right architect, a stable budget and a strong design plan it is possible for you to build the house of your dreams. If you follow the tips that Wojechiech Kordyl of A1 Architects shared then the process of planning and designing your own home will be that bit easier.

