

# The STRUCTURA Architect Briefing Blueprint

**How to get the design you want, for the budget you actually have.**

A beautiful architectural drawing is useless if you can't afford to build it. One of the biggest mistakes homeowners make is giving their architect free rein over the design without anchoring them to a strict construction budget. This leads to heartbreaking moments when the builder's quote comes back double what the client expected.

At STRUCTURA, we build reality, not just concepts. Use this blueprint to instruct your architect like a seasoned Project Manager, ensuring your design is legally compliant, structurally viable, and financially realistic.

## Phase 1: Setting the Boundaries (The Initial Meeting)

*Before the architect draws a single line, you must establish the rules of engagement.*

- **State the Hard Budget First:** Tell them your absolute maximum *build* budget (excluding their fees and VAT).
- **Mandate "Value Engineering":** Instruct your architect that if they specify complex features (like massive bespoke steel box frames or custom-sized glazing), they must provide a cheaper, standard-sized alternative as a backup.
- **Function Over Form:** List exactly what you need the space to do (e.g., "I need a downstairs toilet and a utility room, I don't just want a massive empty kitchen").

## Phase 2: Planning vs. Building Regulations (The Big Trap)

*Do not assume your architect is providing everything a builder needs to start work.*

- [ ] **Planning Drawings (Stage 1):** These just show what the building will look like from the outside to get council approval. *You cannot build from these.*
- [ ] **Building Control Drawings (Stage 2):** These are the forensic, scaled, and dimensioned drawings showing insulation thickness, drainage routes, and timber sizes.
- **The STRUCTURA Rule:** Confirm in writing that your architect's quote includes creating the fully detailed **Building Control Drawings**. If they only provide Planning Drawings, your builder will be forced to guess the structure, which is illegal and dangerous.

## Phase 3: The Glazing & Steel Check

*These two elements can destroy a budget overnight. Manage them early.*

- [ ] **Standardise the Glazing:** Ask your architect to design the window and door openings around *standard* manufacturing sizes. Bespoke, custom-sized bi-fold doors can cost double the price of off-the-shelf premium sizes.
- [ ] **The "Steel Tax":** Removing entire corners of a house or knocking out massive rear walls requires immense structural steelwork. Ask your architect: *"Can we achieve a similar open-plan feel while keeping a central supporting pillar to save £10,000 on steel?"*

## Phase 4: The Handover Checklist

*When your architect says the design is "finished," make sure you actually have these three things before calling Structura for a quote.*

- **1. Full Scale Drawings:** Dimensioned floor plans, elevations, and cross-sections (usually at 1:50 or 1:100 scale).
- **2. Structural Calcs:** The architect must coordinate with a Structural Engineer to provide the mathematical calculations for all steel beams and padstones.
- **3. A Schedule of Works:** A written document specifying the exact materials to be used (e.g., specifying "Aluminium bi-folds" instead of just writing "doors" on the plan).

**The STRUCTURA Standard:** > Don't want to manage the architect yourself? You don't have to. With **STRUCTURA Consultancy Services**, we bridge the gap between design and construction. We will instruct the architect, manage the structural engineers, and ensure the entire design is engineered to fit your exact budget. No spiralling costs. No faff.

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