

# Robert Designs

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A GUIDE: FOUNDATIONS OF A WELL-PLANNED  
AND THOUGHTFULLY DESIGNED PROJECT

PROJECT PLANNING &  
DESIGN TOOLKIT

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# Before you begin: Defining Success

It's essential to define what you want this transformation to achieve and what success looks like. Your priorities, lifestyle, and long-term goals will shape every decision, ensuring your space is not only beautiful, but aligned to support your growth.

What is prompting this project? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of functionality
- Outdated aesthetics
- Increasing property value
- Lifestyle change (family, work-from-home, etc.)
- Recently purchased home
- Other:

Which areas of your home could / need to better support your day-to-day life? What is currently not working in your space?

- Kitchen
- Bathroom(s)
- Bedroom
- Living / common areas
- Dining / entertaining spaces
- Laundry
- Garage
- Outdoor space
- Entryway
- Other:

What are your top priorities for this project? (Select up to 2)

- Aesthetic transformation
- Improved functionality
- Maximizing resale value
- Staying within a defined budget
- Completing within a specific timeline
- Other:

Which two factors matter most to you? (Choose 2)

- Budget
- Timeline
- Quality

What would make this project feel like a true success for you, and what would you want to ensure is handled thoughtfully along the way?

What feeling or experience do you want your space to create? (Select all that apply)

- Calm & relaxed
- Bright & energizing
- Warm & inviting
- Minimal & uncluttered
- Elevated & refined
- Functional & efficient
- Stylized & Curated
- Other:

What level of involvement feels right for you during this process?

- Highly engaged every step of the way
- Collaborative with professional guidance
- Minimal involvement with a fully guided approach

# Planning Your Project with Clarity & Confidence

A well-executed renovation begins long before construction starts. Taking the time to create a detailed plan from the outset not only improves final outcomes, but helps prevent delays, unexpected costs, and unnecessary stress throughout the process.

## Key Considerations

- **Planning comes before progress** – Rushing into construction without a clear plan often leads to changes mid-project, which can be costly and disruptive.
- **Early decisions shape overall cost** – Selections, layouts, and material choices made early on directly influence pricing, timelines, and feasibility.
- **Design should come before construction** – A complete design plan allows trades to work more efficiently, reduces guesswork, and minimizes revisions on site.
- **Timelines are often underestimated** – Permits, design development, and coordination all take time. Building in realistic expectations early helps keep the project on track.



## Planning Checklist – A Simple Framework to Get Started

### Define your goals

Be clear on what you want to improve, how you want the space to function, and what success looks like.

### Establish a realistic budget

Understand your comfort range and allow room for contingencies. A well-planned budget supports better decision-making.

### Gather inspiration

Collect images, materials, and references that reflect your preferred style, mood, and overall direction.

### Understand your timeline

Consider when you'd like the project completed, and account for design, approvals, and construction phases.

### Engage a design professional early

Early planning and guidance can help align your vision, avoid missteps, and streamline the entire process.

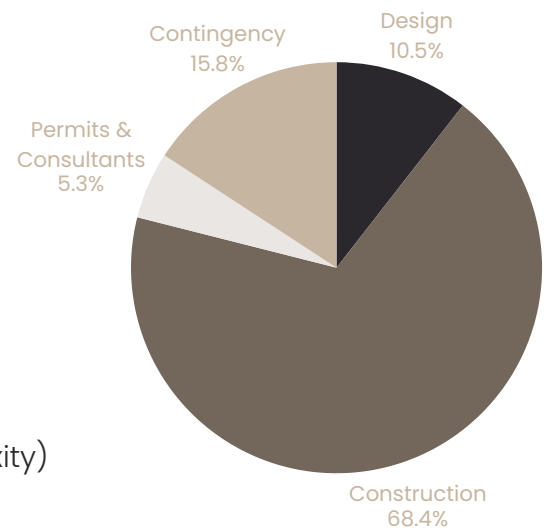
### Align your team from the start

Ensuring your designer, contractor, and consultants are working together early helps reduce miscommunication and delays.

# Where Your Investment Goes

## A Clear Understanding of the Full Scope

A successful renovation is not defined by construction alone. It is the result of thoughtful planning, coordinated expertise, and well-informed decisions made long before work begins on site. Understanding how your investment is distributed allows for greater clarity, more accurate expectations, and a smoother, more controlled process from start to finish.



## Typical Investment Breakdown

(Percentages may vary depending on scope and complexity)

### Construction - 60–70%

Execution of the build, including labour, materials, and site work.

### Design - 8–15%

Planning, layouts, detailed drawings, and coordination that guide the project and inform accurate pricing.

### Permits & Consultants - ~3–10%

Required approvals and specialized expertise to ensure compliance and feasibility. This may include building permits, zoning review, and consultants such as structural, mechanical, electrical, or energy advisors. Costs vary based on project complexity, jurisdiction, and required level of documentation.

### Contingency - 10–20%

Allowances for unforeseen conditions and adjustments during construction. Particularly important in renovations or older properties, where unknowns behind walls or site conditions can impact scope.

## A Key Insight

One of the most common budgeting oversights is underestimating the level of detail required before construction begins. A well-developed design provides clarity, reduces uncertainty, and allows for more accurate pricing – helping to avoid costly revisions once the project is underway.

# Finding a Direction That Feels Like You: Design Styles At a Glance

Establishing a clear design direction early on helps create a cohesive, intentional space. Below are a few commonly referenced styles to help define your overall direction.

## **Modern Sleek · Disciplined**

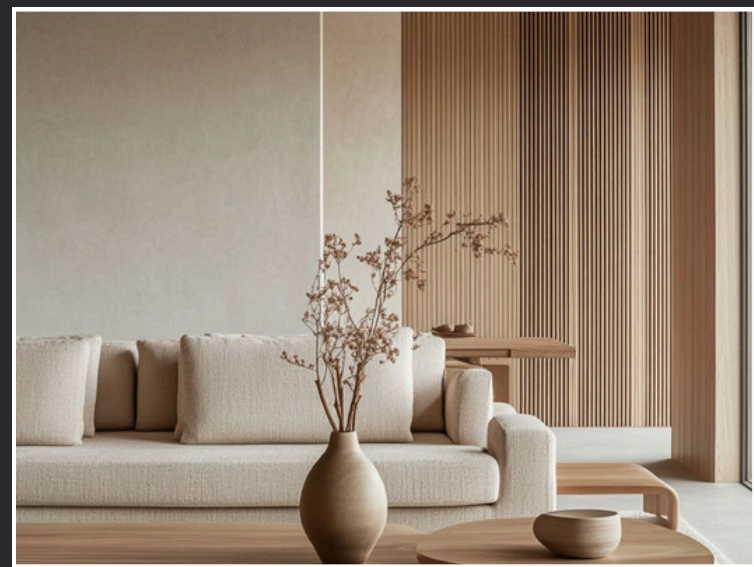
Defined by simplicity, strong lines, and a restrained palette, modern interiors focus on clarity, proportion, and intentional design without excess. Materials are often smooth and refined such as stone, metal, and glass, paired with precise detailing and minimal ornamentation. The result is a highly controlled, sophisticated space where every element serves a purpose and visual noise is eliminated.

## **Organic Modern Warm · Natural** (Scandi / Japandi / Wabi-Sabi)

A softer, more grounded approach to modern design, combining clean forms with natural materials, muted tones, and an emphasis on texture and balance. Spaces are layered with wood, linen, stone, and subtle tonal variation to create warmth without clutter. The focus is on calm, livable environments that feel both refined and relaxed, with an appreciation for craftsmanship, imperfection, and natural aging over time.

## **European Country Warm · Rustic**

Inspired by traditional European homes, this style blends natural materials, soft textures, and aged finishes to create a space that feels inviting, lived in, and effortlessly timeless. Think plaster walls, exposed wood, stone elements, and patina rich details layered with comfortable furnishings. The aesthetic balances rustic character with understated elegance, prioritizing warmth, authenticity, and a sense of heritage.



# Finding a Direction That Feels Like You: Design Styles At a Glance

## Minimalist *Serene · Intentional*

An emphasis on reduction and restraint, where every element serves a purpose. Minimalist spaces prioritize calm, clarity, and thoughtful simplicity through a limited palette, clean forms, and careful spatial planning. The focus is on quality over quantity, allowing materials, light, and proportion to define the space while maintaining a sense of quiet refinement.



## Mid-Century Modern *Retro · Iconic*

Characterized by clean lines, organic shapes, and functional design, this style balances simplicity with warmth and personality. It often incorporates natural woods, sculptural furniture, and subtle vintage influence, paired with a curated mix of textures and occasional bold accents. The result is a timeless yet expressive space that feels both structured and inviting.



## Traditional *Elegant · Enduring*

Rooted in symmetry and refined detailing, this style draws from classical influences to create a polished, timeless interior with lasting appeal. Rich materials, layered textiles, and architectural elements such as millwork and mouldings add depth and sophistication. The overall aesthetic feels balanced and composed, with an emphasis on comfort, continuity, and enduring quality.



# Colour & Cohesion: Creating Spaces That Feel Intentional

## Understanding Colour Direction

### Warm and Cool Palettes

Warm tones such as soft whites, beiges, taupes, and woods feel inviting and relaxed. Cool tones such as crisp whites and greys feel clean, calm, and more structured. Choosing a primary tone early creates a more unified result.

### Colour Psychology & Feeling

Lighter tones feel open and airy, while deeper tones add depth, intimacy, and visual weight. Muted palettes feel calm and cohesive. Higher contrast feels more dynamic when used intentionally.

### Contrast and Complementary Balance

A strong palette balances harmony and contrast. Complementary tones add interest, while consistency maintains flow. Too little contrast feels flat. Too much can feel disjointed.

### Layering Tones and Weight

Depth comes from variation within a controlled palette. Darker elements anchor a space, while lighter tones create balance.

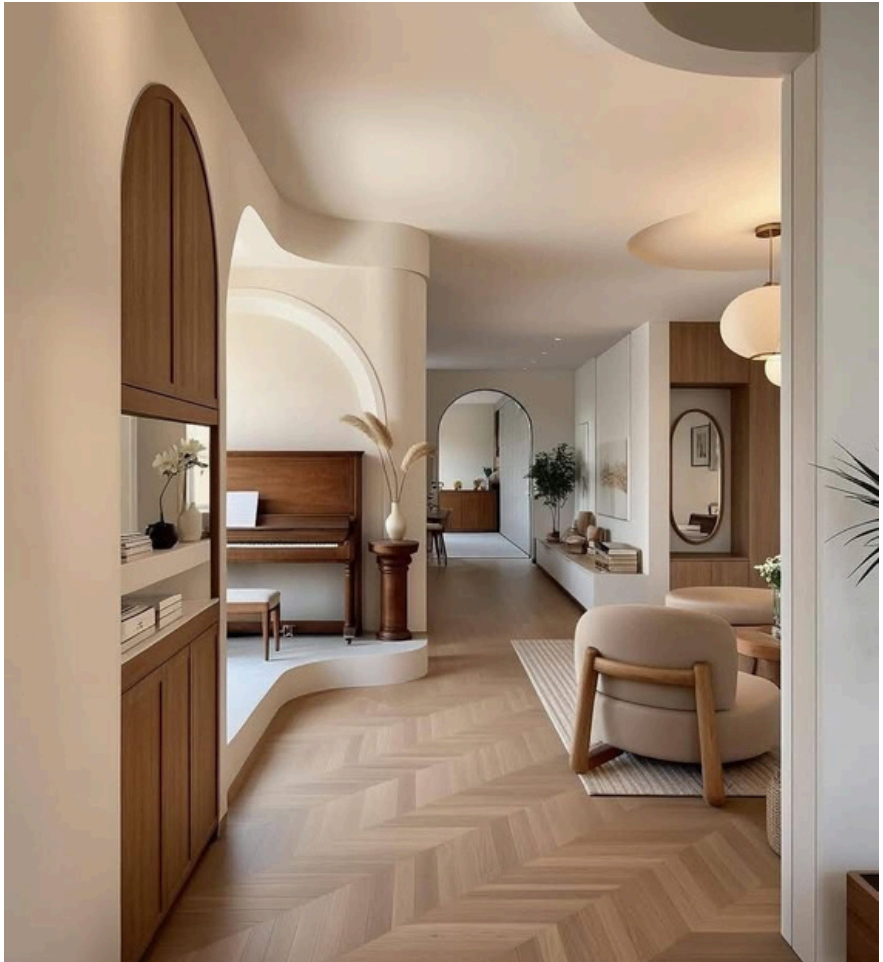
### Neutrals That Work

Layered neutrals create a strong foundation. Consistency in undertones is key to avoiding a disjointed result.



**A well-designed space is not defined by individual selections, but by how colour, material, and form work together as a whole. When thoughtfully considered, these elements shape not only how a space looks, but how it feels and functions day to day.**

# Cohesive Spaces



## Consistency in Materials

Repeating key materials and finishes throughout a space creates continuity and strengthens the overall design. Consistency helps each room feel connected rather than separate.

## Repetition of Tones

Carrying colour tones across surfaces, furnishings, and details reinforces a unified palette and supports visual flow from one area to the next.

## Balanced Contrast

Contrast should be introduced with intention. It adds clarity and definition while still supporting a cohesive overall direction.

## Material Durability and Maintenance

Material selection should consider not only appearance, but how each surface will perform over time. Durability, ease of cleaning, and resistance to wear are essential factors, particularly in high-use areas. Choosing materials suited to your lifestyle helps maintain the integrity and appearance of the space long after completion.

## Function First, Then Aesthetic

The most successful spaces are designed to support daily life first. When function is resolved early, aesthetic decisions can be layered on with clarity and purpose.

**A cohesive space is created through consistency, intention, and attention to detail. When materials, tones, and finishes are thoughtfully aligned, the result feels seamless, functional, and visually balanced.**

# Planning Your Team & Process: Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Contractor

The right contractor can be the difference between a seamless, well-managed project and one defined by delays, miscommunication, and unexpected costs. Establishing clear expectations from the outset helps set the foundation for success.

## **Are you properly insured and covered?**

- Confirm liability insurance and, where applicable, WSIB coverage to ensure protection for both you and the project.

## **Will permits be required, and who will handle them?**

- Ensure all necessary approvals are obtained before work begins, and clarify who is responsible for coordinating them
- Beware of contractors suggesting to forgo required permits

## **Who will be completing the work?**

- Understand whether the work is completed in-house or subcontracted
- And who is ultimately responsible for quality and execution

## **What exactly is included in your scope of work?**

- A detailed scope should clearly outline all work, materials, and responsibilities
- This helps avoid gaps, assumptions, or unexpected omissions once construction is underway

## **Under what circumstances could the quoted cost change?**

- Discuss potential factors such as unforeseen conditions, design changes, or material selections
- Ensure that any additional costs are clearly communicated and approved before work proceeds

## **How are changes or unforeseen conditions handled?**

- Understand the process for addressing unexpected findings such as structural issues or outdated systems
- No additional work should proceed without your knowledge and approval

## **How will I know that subcontractors and suppliers have been paid?**

- Confirm how payments are tracked and documented
- In some cases, unpaid subcontractors or suppliers can create liability for the homeowners so transparency in this process is important

## **How do you communicate updates and progress?**

- Set expectations for how often you will receive updates and through what method

## **Can you share examples of similar projects or client references?**

- Reviewing past work and speaking with previous clients can provide insight into quality, reliability, and overall experience

## **How many projects are you currently managing?**

- This helps gauge availability and ensures your project will receive the appropriate level of attention

## **What type of contract, payment structure, and warranty do you provide?**

- Ensure all details are clearly documented, including scope, materials, timelines, and payment schedule
- Clarify what is covered under warranty, including both labour and materials, and for how long

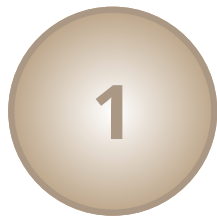
## **A Final Consideration**

You should always feel comfortable having your contractor in your home. Before settling on one, ask yourself: Can I get in touch with my contractor? Do they answer my questions or call back in a timely manner? Do I feel they really care about my project? You'll likely be working with them for a few weeks or months, so take your time making the decision. Don't just pick the cheapest or quickest contractor without considering any of the above questions, and always trust your gut!

# Our Process:

## A Clear, Structured Approach

A well-defined process ensures clarity, alignment, and a more seamless experience from concept through completion. Each phase is designed to guide the project forward with intention, minimizing uncertainty and supporting a successful outcome.



### Phase 1: Discovery & Programming *Insight · Direction*

This phase establishes a clear understanding of project goals, priorities, and overall vision. Through consultation, review of existing conditions, and applicable requirements, we define the foundation that guides all design decisions moving forward.



### Phase 2: Schematic Design *Layout · Flow*

Preliminary layout concepts are developed to explore how the space can function most effectively. This phase focuses on workflow, circulation, and overall efficiency, forming the framework of the design.



### Phase 3: Design Development *Materiality · Expression*

The design direction is further developed, establishing the visual language of the space. Material selections, finishes, and furnishings begin to take shape, defining the overall look and feel.



### Phase 4: Construction Documentation *Clarity · Coordination*

Detailed technical drawings and documentation are prepared for permits and construction. These documents align all trades and consultants, ensuring clarity and accuracy during execution.



### Phase 5: Construction Support *Oversight · Adaptation*

During construction, we provide ongoing support to help ensure the design is implemented as intended. This includes clarification, coordination, and adapting to site conditions as needed.



### Phase 6: Furnishing, Styling & Final Layering *Composition · Completion*

Furnishings and decor are thoughtfully selected and layered to complete the space. This final phase brings cohesion, comfort, and refinement, ensuring the finished environment feels intentional and fully realized.



# Why Design Comes First

**A thoughtful design process is not an added step, it is what allows the entire project to run more smoothly from start to finish.**

## **A Strong Foundation for a Better Outcome**

The most successful projects are not built on site, they are built through thoughtful planning and clear design direction before construction begins.

A well-developed design establishes the layout, materials, and key decisions in advance, creating a clear roadmap for everyone involved.

## **Clarity Before Construction**

Detailed drawings and specifications reduce guesswork on site and allow contractors to price the project more accurately from the start. This helps prevent gaps, assumptions, and unexpected changes once work is underway.

## **Better Coordination Across the Team**

When design is resolved early, trades and consultants can work from a shared, consistent plan. This improves communication, reduces overlap or conflict, and helps the project move forward more efficiently.

## **Fewer Revisions, Delays, and Disruptions**

Many of the most common project challenges stem from decisions being made during construction rather than before it. By resolving key elements early, the likelihood of rework, delays, and misalignment is significantly reduced.

## **A More Controlled and Predictable Process**

With a clear plan in place, timelines are easier to manage, costs are better understood, and the overall experience becomes more streamlined and less reactive.

# Taking the Next Step: Moving Forward with Clarity

If you're planning a project, having the right guidance early on can make a meaningful difference in both the process and the outcome.

Book your in-home  
design consultation  
with Robert Designs  
today to get  
started with clarity



**Begin with Confidence: Whether you are ready to move forward or still exploring your options, this conversation is designed to provide clarity and direction without pressure.**



# Robert Designs

**ELEVATED DESIGN  
INSPIRED BY THE LIFE YOU'RE BUILDING**

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