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Practice Notes: How Important is the Design Brief?

By Team Yellowtrace on Sep 13, 2022 05:30 am



The third instalment of **Practice Notes** has landed, our video series in partnership with **ArchiPro**. As always, our mighty panel delivers, providing invaluable advice and insights into various topics related to the practice of design and architecture and offering a rare glimpse into the Australian design community. It's a series close to our hearts—and to ArchiPro's mission—which is to connect architects and designers with clients and empower people to create better spaces in which we experience life.

The conversation continues with our editor **Dana Tomić Hughes** at the helm, alongside industry leaders **Ian Moore** of **Ian Moore Architects**; **Domenic Alvaro**, Global Design Director at **Woods Bagot**; **Eva-Marie Prineas** of **Studio Prineas** and **David Flack** of **Flack Studio**. In this episode, the panel tackles the topic: How Important is the Design Brief? The panel explores the parameters and elasticity of a brief and how it may not be as conventional as you think. From learning the minutiae of people's daily lives to unlocking a problem, a brief can enrich a project and push the boundaries—transforming it from good design to a uniquely elevated space that functions to perfection.



Eva-Marie Prineas with her team at Studio Prineas' Sydney office. "We place quite a big importance on the brief," she says.



Domenic Alvaro considers the brief as a tool to push his own design process.

For Eva-Marie Prineas, the brief isn't so black and white. She explains — "We place quite a big importance on the brief, the quantitative aspects, but the big part of our briefing and our immersion is the qualitative aspects; so we ask the client what's not working in their house— not specific things about how they would fix it; but what doesn't work; what is working; what do you do on the weekend; what do you do during the week; all of these sort of things that start to build a picture of who they are and how busy they are and what they do... I actually quite enjoy hearing the minutiae of people's daily lives and figuring out how we're going to fix it, but also bringing joy to those bits of life at home that should actually be really enjoyable."

Projects are so much more than just the best use of space, as Ian Moore elaborates. "I think all of us around this table can walk into a space and just immediately know what's wrong and how to fix it. It's just [that] the brief gives us that little bit of extra information about what the clients are expecting to get in there."



David Flack shares a unique personal story of working with a client who developed onset dementia during the project.



On-site with Ian Moore at one of his current projects.

Domenic Alvaro considers the brief as a tool to push his own design process. "People don't necessarily tell me to put biophilia in my buildings but most of my recent buildings have had heavy amounts of embedded greenery. That's something I'll try to always push within the projects, so I think [the clients] are looking for us to create the joy, create the spatial experience. That's part of the fun of unlocking the problem, so we use the brief to help us with that."

David Flack shares a unique personal story of working with a client who developed onset dementia during the project, and how having a better picture of her and her life helped him engage with and breathe life into the home. "Just understanding her fashion, travel memories and talking about her career, and understanding all those sorts of things about her and just feeling those memories of their relationship and what their family were about... extracting old antiques or old and new artwork and just creating that space for her. It was a tricky process but I think in the end you could tell she felt very happy."

Check out the full conversation in the video below.



Practice Notes is a bespoke **Yellowtrace Promotion** produced in partnership with **ArchiPro**—one of New Zealand's most successful start-ups, which launched in Australia earlier this year, with a mission to simplify the end-to-end building process. Purpose-built for people at any stage of the building journey, the cutting-edge platform seamlessly connects those wanting to build or renovate an architecturally designed home with the Australian industry professionals and products that can bring their vision to life.

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