

# WHERE DO I START

## *How can I fix my house?*

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**W**E have all been there - stepping over a floor strewn with toys, lego pieces in the bath, tennis gear on the dining room table, hurleys down the back of the couch, the general chaos of our busy contemporary lives.

To further frustrate and disappoint ourselves, we watch aspirational TV shows, which highlight the lives we should be living and the homes, in which we should be living them, as Dermot, Kevin or George make another dream home come true. But where do we start? How do we get there? How do I even know what I really want? The dream home is attainable and achievable, but the key part is to know what you want and define your vision of the dream.

So, where do I start? We start at what we want from our house

and how it should work for us. A simple list - what we architects call a brief - is where to begin. This list can be spatial. Three bedrooms, a pantry and a kitchen. It can be a list of aspirations - I want somewhere to read a book in peace, I want to bring the outside in, I want a bedroom like a hotel, I want my kitchen to be somewhere we can all gather and entertain. It can be functional - a place to wash the dog, a place to store my golf clubs, somewhere for the kids toys. There is no right or wrong answer for your brief. It is just that, your brief, a list of all the minor and major things which you would want. What we are trying to establish is what your house needs to do and what you would like it to do and also, very importantly, what it is that you don't like about your current home. The same principle applies

whether you are planning a minor refurbishment, a large extension or a new build house. The RIAI gives some excellent guidance on their website in the form of 20 questions and these will help to prompt you in the type of questions to ask yourself, which you can use as a basis to start this dialogue with yourself and your family.

Over the next while, we will look in more detail at all things house, interiors and architecture and try to help to answer the question of "How do I fix my house?" Architecture, like all design, is creative problem solving, so to solve the problem, we need to know what it is. So question, reflect, review, analyse, write it all down, watch all those aspirational shows but most importantly, don't forget to dream.

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