

What to Tell Your Interior Designer Before Drawing Begins

By [DirectHome Editorial](#)

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7 min read

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Tell your interior designer how the household lives before asking them to choose a style. Where belongings accumulate, who uses a room at the same time and which furniture must stay all affect the layout. Inspiration images help express what you like; those everyday details explain what the new design needs to solve.

Need advice for your home?

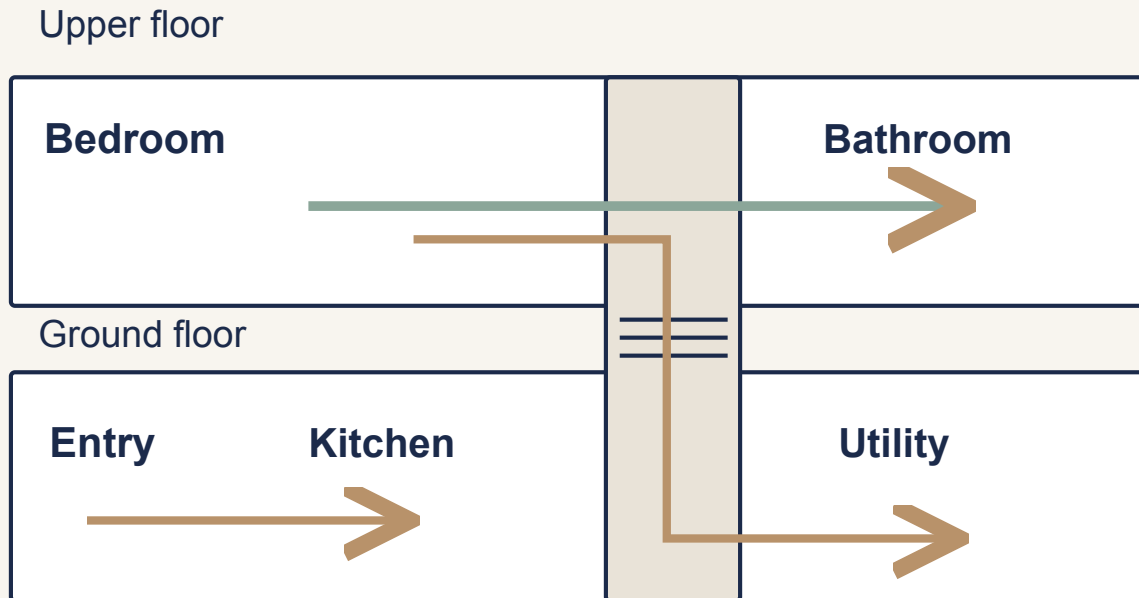
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Style images still belong in a [landed interior design brief](#). Use them to describe an atmosphere, material or feature you like, then show how each idea fits the way your household uses the room. A designer can propose a different-looking solution when the required outcome is clear; a folder of photographs alone leaves that outcome to interpretation.

Begin with an ordinary day in the existing house

Brief the journeys between rooms



Groceries, laundry and night routes deserve their own lines.

Map a few real household journeys on the existing plan. These routes are examples, not a prescribed room layout.

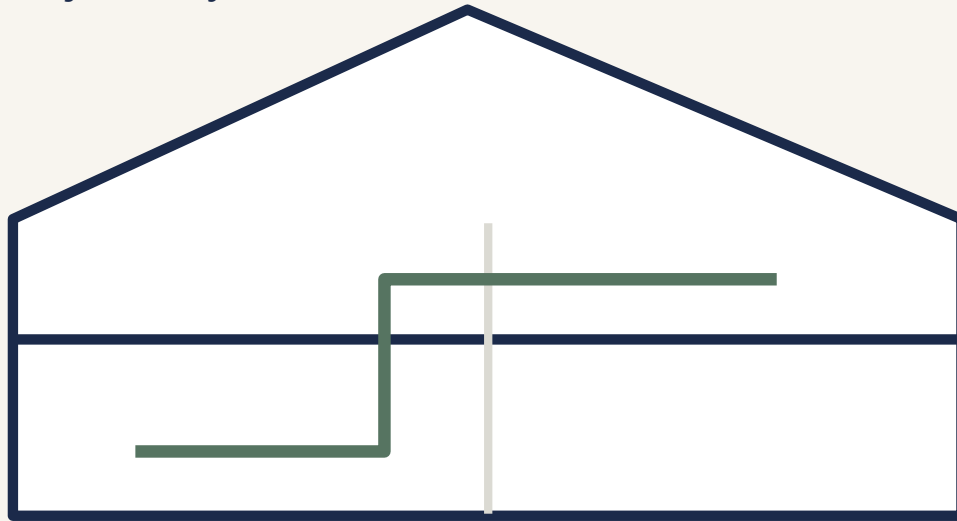
Walk through arriving home, putting things away, preparing a meal, working, doing laundry and going to bed. Make a note when an activity involves a repeated detour or an awkward handoff. You are looking for the small frustrations that a beautifully styled room can leave untouched.

Describe the action rather than diagnosing the design immediately. 'We carry groceries through the living room before reaching storage' gives the team something to investigate. 'We need a second entrance' already commits to one response, which may be costly or impractical. Keep the problem and the proposed solution in separate lines.

Include the items that travel with people: a laundry basket, bags, cleaning equipment or a mobility aid where relevant. A route that feels comfortable empty may be less convenient while carrying something. Note where a door must be opened, where the item is set down and whether storage is available at the destination.

See the journeys across floors

Trace journeys between floors



Align the stair with related activities

Trace related activities between floors rather than reviewing each room in isolation.

Draw the floors separately but keep the stair or lift position aligned. Join the related activities with a route line. This exposes a convenience problem that can be hidden when each floor is designed as an attractive independent plan: the storage, appliance or bathroom needed for a task may be on a different level.

You do not have to eliminate every stair journey. Some households prefer bedrooms grouped upstairs and active living below. The aim is to decide which trips are acceptable and which repeatedly interrupt daily life, then place the most useful changes high in the brief.

If a household member has care or mobility needs, build the brief around their actual circumstances. An [occupational therapist or healthcare professional can help assess home hazards and suitable changes](#). Avoid treating a generic label such as 'future-ready' as proof that a bedroom, bathroom route or transfer space will work for that person.

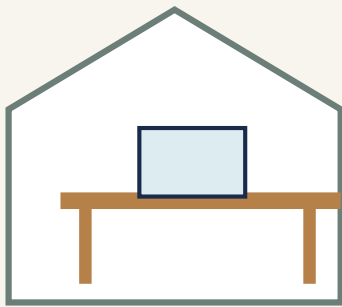
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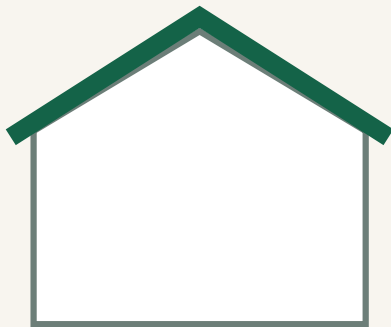
Write down which activities happen together

Two activities may happen together



Quiet work

Identify when concentration or calls happen.



Shared household use

Record the overlapping route, sound and activity.

Quiet work: Identify when concentration or calls happen. Shared household use: Record the overlapping route, sound and activity. Schematic only; no dimensions or site-specific approval are implied.

A kitchen layout should reflect whether someone cooks alone, another person helps or children do homework nearby. A study brief should explain whether work overlaps with calls, visitors or music elsewhere. These relationships help decide which spaces should connect and which need separation.

Describe the occasions that matter without designing the whole house around an event that rarely happens. If extended family visits only occasionally, say what needs to work on that day and what can be temporarily adjusted. This gives everyday comfort a fair place alongside hosting ambitions.

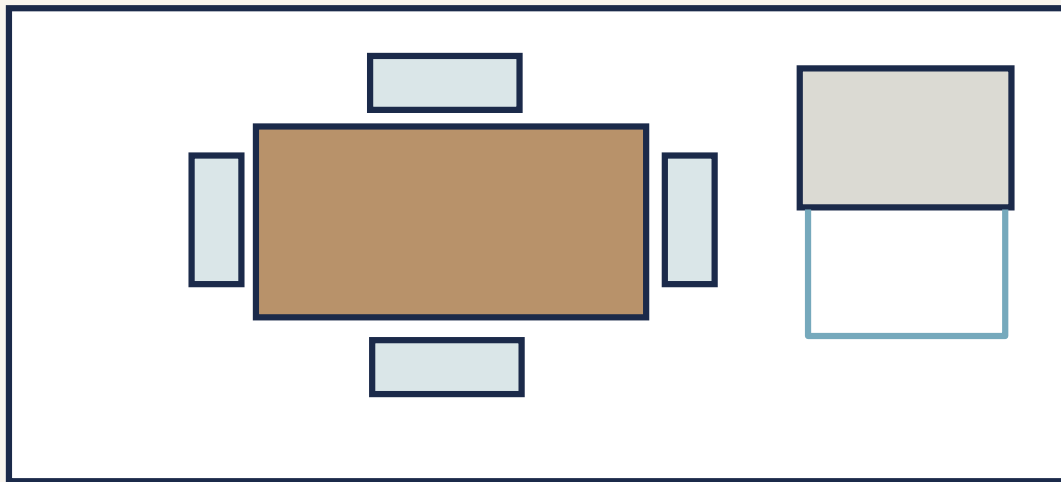
Privacy is part of a route as well. Consider what a visitor passes on the way to the bathroom and what someone in a bedroom can hear from the living area. The answer may be a room relationship, door position or storage arrangement. It should not be reduced automatically to a preference for an open or closed plan.

Fill in the household-specific answer before requesting a layout response.

Routine	Brief the relationship	A useful acceptance question
Arriving with groceries	Entrance, set-down space and food storage	Can the bags reach storage without displacing another activity?
Laundry	Collection, washing, drying and putting away	Where does the basket go at each stage?
Working at home	Calls, quiet work and shared circulation	Can the normal work period coexist with the household routine?
Overnight bathroom use	Bed, route, door and controls	Does the route work for the actual person and assistance needs?
Hosting	Seating, serving and visitor bathroom route	Which temporary changes are acceptable on a busy day?

Measure the furniture and belongings you want to keep

Measure the furniture while it is in use



Openings and people need room too

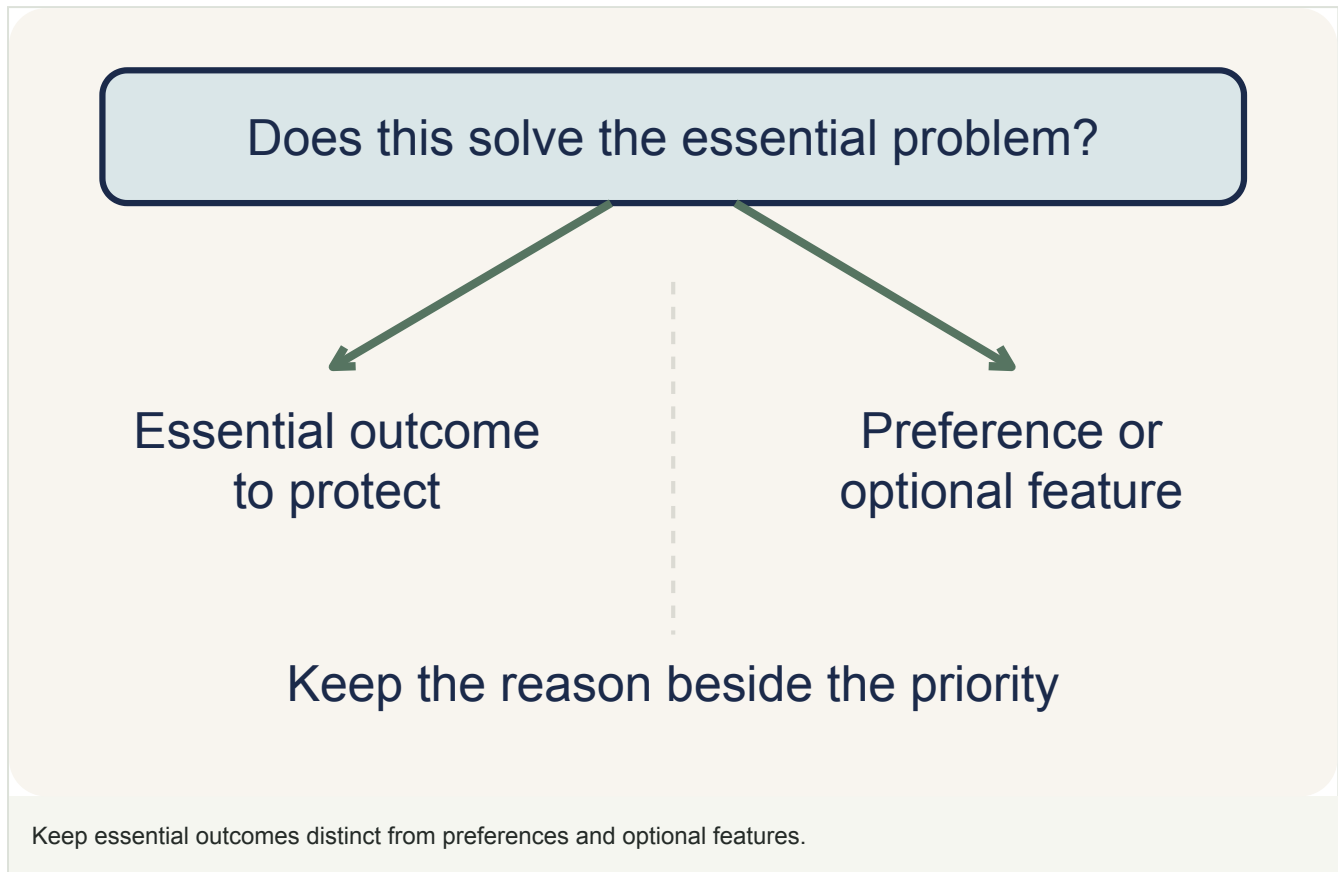
Measure furniture with doors, drawers and chairs in the positions used every day.

Measure furniture and appliances that must remain and photograph them from useful angles. Record not only their closed dimensions but the space they need in use: chairs pulled away from a dining table, a drawer opened or the intended approach to a favourite armchair. Ask the designer to show them at their real size.

Be equally specific about storage. 'More storage' is less useful than knowing that the household needs space for travel luggage, cleaning equipment and a particular collection of books. List the categories and how often they are used, then place frequent-use storage near the relevant activity.

This may reveal a worthwhile tradeoff. A tall cabinet near the entrance can reduce clutter, but it might also interrupt a view through the house. A lower unit may preserve the view while losing capacity. Neither answer is automatically correct; the brief should let the team compare the consequence against the household priority.

Choose what the renovation must improve



Separate essential outcomes from preferences and optional features. Essential outcomes might concern an unworkable daily route or a room needed for work. A preference might be a material or a way of arranging the room, while an optional feature can be deferred without defeating the project.

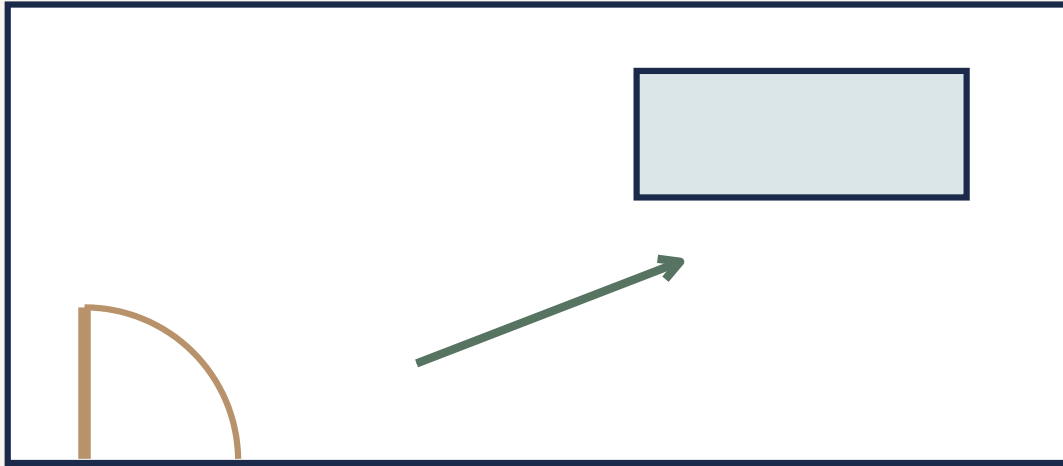
Keep a reason beside each priority. If the budget requires a choice, 'shorten the laundry route because it is used daily' is easier to weigh against an optional display wall than two equally enthusiastic image references. You are giving the design team a basis for proposing sensible alternatives rather than guessing which idea you will protect.

Also state the constraints that cannot move silently: retained furniture, a room that must remain usable during work, a maximum acceptable loss of storage, or a confirmed finish choice. The [landed interior design buying guide](#) connects this household brief with appointment scope, coordination and procurement.

Record who supplies, checks and installs any fittings you plan to buy yourself. [Buying your own renovation fittings: who supplies, fits and fixes them? →](#)

Review the proposed plan by walking the same routes

Walk the same route on the new plan



Open doors and place retained furniture

Walk the original daily routes through the proposed layout with doors and furniture in use.

When the first layout arrives, trace the same journeys with the designer. Open the doors on the drawing, place the retained furniture and ask where the objects are stored at each stage. The review then tests whether the design solves the original problem, rather than becoming a discussion only about what looks different.

Where a solution depends on a wall change, opening or altered building arrangement, have the team establish feasibility and the requirements for the actual proposed works. A promising room relationship can stay in the design discussion while that question is resolved; it should not be mistaken for an approved construction instruction.

Finish the brief with a short description of a successful ordinary day in the house. You should be able to explain what is easier, what stays familiar and which compromises you accept. Bring that description, the existing plans and the retained-item measurements to the design discussion. They give the project something more useful to achieve than resemblance to an image.

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