

trifle*

OFFICE FIT OUT & REFURBISHMENT GUIDE

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROJECT KICK OFF

triflecreative.com

HERE TO HELP

Taking on an office fit out or refurbishment project is no small challenge. We've put together a handy guide to help you kick off your project.

If this document raises more questions than it answers then get in touch - we can help.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN OFFICE FIT OUT AND AN OFFICE REFURBISHMENT?

An office fit out is the transformation of a new space from scratch, i.e. from shell and core or CAT A space into a CAT B office space designed to match your specific requirements.

An office refurbishment is the transformation of an existing workspace (i.e. CAT B office space) into a space that is designed to meet your needs. This could be your current office space that you want to make work harder for your business or you may be acquiring a new office that has been fitted out but not bespoke to your business. Sometimes a project may be a partial refurbishment where you only intend to update part of the office space.

The design process for both an office refurbishment or office fit out is the same but there is generally more complexity to the design and construction process in a fit out project.

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1: TYPES OF SPACE

When you're considering a new lease, different types of spaces are available based on how much building work has been completed. We explain the terminology below.

SHELL AND CORE

This is a raw space where the external framework will be complete leaving an empty internal shell. You will typically see exposed concrete floors and unfinished ceilings. Core building facilities such as toilets and lifts may be provided if separate from your demise. This will need a full CAT A and CAT B fit out. When taking on a shell and core space the landlord will generally make a financial contribution towards the fit out of the space.



CAT A / CATEGORY A

This level provides core services, but leaves the space as a blank canvas for tenants to adapt to suit their needs. It typically includes raised access flooring, suspended ceilings, basic mechanical, electrical and plumbing services, HVAC and fire detection systems. This is the most common level of finish a landlord would provide. At the end of a tenancy, the landlord would usually ask that the space is returned in this condition.

CAT B / CATEGORY B

This is where personalisation comes in and the space can be designed to meet the needs of your business and your people. It will result in a fully finished space that is ready for occupation. This will include: wall, ceiling and floor finishes; cellularisation (e.g. meeting rooms or offices); tea points; re-routed services; power and data cabling; lighting; fittings, furniture and equipment.



CAT A + / FITTED OR FLEXI SPACE

A 'plug and play' option for tenants that is increasingly offered by landlords. CAT A+ is ideal for small businesses that might have struggled to fund their own refurbishment by offering a middle ground. Leases tend to be more flexible and shorter although as the space comes generically fitted out the rent is higher.

In the post-pandemic world we are seeing increased interest in people taking the CAT A+ option but who require our support with personalisation of the workspace with our office furniture consultation and styling services.

Trifle* has worked in all of these types of spaces. We can share examples and case studies to help you understand what is involved and take you through the pros and cons of the various options.

2. AMOUNT OF SPACE

The BCO guidelines set for 2022 and beyond state the 'sweet spot' is 10-12sqm per person. As hybrid working becomes more commonplace, offices need to offer a greater variety of choice of workplace setting type and there is a strong argument for building in multiple spaces for collaborative and communal working. Our Workplace Consultancy service can help your business to assess if a space is right for your requirements and to carry out test fit space planning.

We break workspace areas down into four categories:



CULTURE BUILDING

Often multipurpose spaces, these are communal, social areas that help to build connections within the workspace, e.g. Reception, Town Hall, Cafe.



INDIVIDUAL WORKING

Places that support individual, focused working, these could be active work areas, focus workstations with acoustic solutions or drop-in desk areas.



COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Spaces that support people working together, e.g. Meeting Rooms, Scrums, Breakout Areas, Meeting spaces, 'Zoom' rooms.



AMENITIES

Practical and wellbeing facilities for your business such as Zen rooms, exercise areas (gyms / yoga studios), lockers and storage areas, bike storage, toilets & showers.

[NEED HELP? CHECK OUT OUR WORKPLACE CONSULTANCY SERVICE](#)

3: ASSEMBLING YOUR DREAM TEAM

A successful project needs a great team with clearly roles and responsibilities.

We recommend clients have one main point of contact, your internal Project Manager who is involved with all aspects of the project.

This role is critical to a smooth running project. It's really important to ensure this person has the time, resource and skill set to run the project effectively.

You need someone who:

- Knows your brand inside out
- Is fully aware of your business needs
- Has project management experience
- Can coordinate your decision makers



As well as your internal Project Manager, you need to define your main decision makers for the project.

Consider who will provide:

- Budget sign off
- Creative sign off
- AV/IT decisions
- Facilities needs
- HR requirements

This team of people need to be available to review and sign off at the end of each stage of the process in a time efficient manner.

CONSIDER AN EXTERNAL PROJECT MANAGER

Office fit outs and refurbishments can be complex. Hiring an experienced external Project Manager ensures that you have someone on your team that speaks the same language as your external consultants and can manage your project timeline and budget effectively.

4: DEFINE YOUR PROJECT TIMELINE AND BUDGET

PROJECT TIMELINES



DO YOU HAVE A COMPLETION DATE IN MIND AND DO YOU THINK THIS IS ACHIEVABLE?

Delivering projects on a tight timeline is possible but will invariably require compromise, for example:

- You might have limited contractor and material availability.
- Short timelines require speedy decision making and can compromise the ability to achieve more economical results.

It is great to have an ideal end date in mind but also investigate whether your timings can be flexible. The longer and less pressurised your timeline, the more benefit you'll have from planning and the ability to manage your budget.

The design process can often take longer than, if not as long as, the building works. As a design focused business we take a candid, realistic and straightforward approach to a project timeline. We will break down how long each stage of the process takes so you can understand what you can expect and by when.

- Small projects can take 4-9 months to complete
- Medium projects can take 6-12 months to complete
- Large Projects can take 6-18 months to complete

BUDGET



DO YOU HAVE A FIXED OR FLEXIBLE BUDGET IN MIND?

If you don't already have a set budget and need assistance working this out, we have a handy calculator that can give you some guidance. We purposely avoid making this downloadable because it needs a conversation along the way to make it as useful as possible. Just contact us to access this.

CBRE and Cushman & Wakefield (amongst others) bring out annual reports detailing project cost guidelines that are easily downloaded. It should be remembered however that these guides can often relate to 'build only' costs. Your budgets should separate out construction / FFE (Fixtures, Furniture and Equipment) / IT /AV and Professional fees - no matter what procurement route you go down.

For financial peace of mind on medium to large projects, it is advisable to hire an independent Quantity Surveyor (QS).

A QS is responsible for managing all aspects of the financial side of construction projects. They help with ballpark, industry standard costs for creating a budget and then work with you and the contractors to see that the project is completed within its budget.



[Get in touch to use our project budget calculator](#)

5 - CHOOSING YOUR PROCUREMENT ROUTE

The procurement route is the method by which your office space gets refurbished. If this is a partial refurbishment then you may only need a design partner like Trifle* and a small works contractor (decorator/electrician/builder) and we can assist with this.

Large or small, please bear in mind, there are many ways in which to get your office built. The internet can be misleading and only lead you to design and build companies but it's worth understanding all routes before embarking on your project.

TRADITIONAL METHOD

Appointing consultants for full design and completion of tender documents that can be priced by multiple contractors to ensure a comprehensive budget and competitive price.

DESIGN & BUILD

A one stop shop. Main contractor is employed to design the scheme and then build as per the design. Benefits can be speed. Negatives can include lack of transparency.

DETAIL & BUILD

Teaming up with a design partner (like Trifle*) to define the brief, strategy and concept before going to tender. The design is then detailed by the contractor under guidance of Lead Designer.

CONTRACTOR APPROVED

Common if you already have a preferred contractor. Involves working with consultants / designers to work to costs from contractor. Can be fast but not always competitive.

You can read more about procurement routes in our article: *How to get your office refurbished, designed and built*

If you are unsure which Procurement Route suits your project then please talk to us we can help guide you.

6 - CONSIDER EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS



There are many elements of a fit out or refurbishment that can benefit from the expertise of an external consultant.

To help make this decision it is a good idea to think about what's important to making you space work and then your design partner (like Trifle*) can help guide you to decide if specialist advice is needed.

For example, it could be that your space needs a lighting upgrade or there are specific areas like meeting rooms that require more specific acoustic solutions.

Understanding these needs in the early stages will help define your extended project team which will also influence costs and timeline.

[NEED SOME HELP?](#)
[GET IN TOUCH TO HAVE A](#)
[CHAT.](#)

TYPICAL EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Mechanical & Engineering (M&E): Often provided by a subcontractor or facilities management company. Would cover Electrical Service and Power ,Data cabling, Fire Alarm systems etc.

Acoustic Engineers: Assessment and advice in order to control sound diffraction, refraction, absorption and reverberation.

Lighting Consultants: For general / architectural lighting. Will provide calculations and advice on suitable light levels required for the space and the systems and products required.

Graphic Design: Execution and implementation of branding and way-finding around the space

Furniture Consultancy: Specification, procurement and installation of furniture specific to the environment. Office Furniture procurement is a service that Trifle* provide also.

7 - GET FAMILIAR WITH THE DESIGN PROCESS

The method that we and many other design practices follow was created by RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects). This is a seven-stage process created to ensure an efficient project delivery with clear accountability.

Each stage needs approval and sign off before moving onto the next one.

Our fee proposals are aligned with each stage so it is clear how much time is required in design, what the output will be for each stage and its associated cost.

Project planning and designing can take longer than the building work of a space. Therefore, do make sure you leave enough time for a comprehensive process to be worked through to avoid unnecessary delays or errors. Mistakes can be costly!

[DISCUSS THE DESIGN PROCESS IN DETAIL](#)

STAGE 0
STRATEGIC DEFINITION

STAGE 1
PREPARATION & BRIEF DEVELOPMENT

STAGE 2
CONCEPT DESIGN

STAGE 3
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

STAGE 4
TECHNICAL DESIGN

STAGE 5
CONSTRUCTION

STAGE 6
SNAGGING AND HANDOVER

STAGE 7
IN USE & REVISIT

8 - THINK ABOUT HOW YOU WANT YOUR SPACE TO FEEL

Do you have any ideas about how you want your new office space to look and most importantly, feel? What kind of story do you want to tell and how do you want to support your staff?

Well-being may be an important part of the brief which impacts both space and the look and feel. Your brand or culture will also have a significant impact which could be executed in a number of different ways.

We will run workshops to help hone in on the bespoke look and feel for your business but it's always a good idea (and a fun one!) to start thinking about what your end result might look like.

Great visual tools to help you

A great way of getting inspiration is by looking at what already exists and thinking about how close it is to your brand and why. Great places to start:

- Pinterest - start from our page
- Project pages on our website
- OnOffice Magazine
- Mix Interiors Magazine



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GET IN TOUCH TO DISCUSS YOUR PROJECT

If you'd like to discuss any of the questions raised in this guide, please get in touch and we can advise you on your next project.

C O N T A C T U S

[TRIFLECREATIVE.COM](https://triflerecreative.com)