

# Beginning the building design process



The number of Ministry-led capital projects has grown significantly over the past few years and we have established a clear process to work with schools on what to expect when embarking on a new major capital project. This publication discusses the project brief, design guidelines and how they link to the overall design process.

## Developing the project brief

The school's project brief is an essential document that ultimately drives the design and construction of the project. It has two key elements:

- 1 **Education brief:** the school's specific vision for teaching and learning, which takes into account the school's cultural narrative. Developing the education brief is led by the school but supported and facilitated by the Ministry, if required.
- 2 **Property brief:** the school specific building parameters, such as entitlement areas, condition of buildings, current issues on weathertightness or structure. This part of the brief is completed by the Ministry on behalf of the school.

## Designing Schools in New Zealand (DSNZ)

The Ministry has produced a set of design guidance documents that provide an overview of the delivery process and establish design principles for working on school property. There are other key documents that also support the DSNZ including the Structural & Geotechnical Guidelines (SGG).

The guidelines help to ensure that new buildings and infrastructure align with key design objectives such as flexibility, durability and cost-effectiveness as well as responding to environmental factors such as prevailing winds, sunlight, and ground conditions.

The guidelines also describe the Ministry's objective to support and enable teaching and learning provision as it changes with ever-evolving pedagogical practices.

The Ministry's preference is for durable, regular-shaped buildings with simple roof lines to ensure they are safe, efficient and effective.

Together, the framework of documents supports the design process and outcome. The school's education brief assists in informing how the spaces will be designed and configured internally to support and enable the school's vision to be realised. The education brief is given to the architect before they begin the master planning process (see below). More information about master planning can be found over the page.



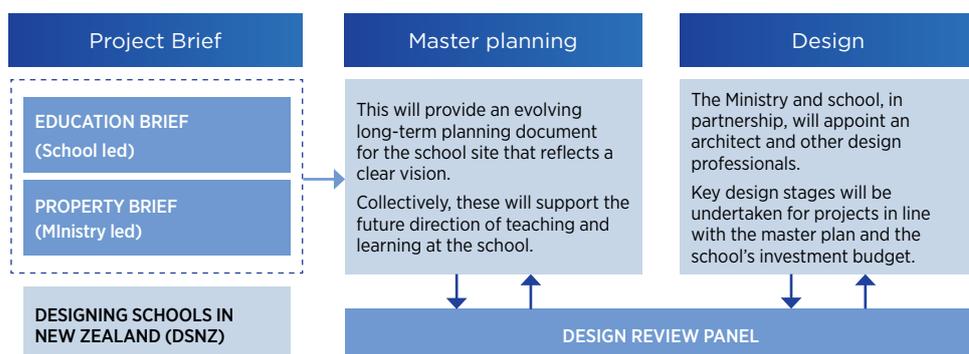
## School input is essential

The significant teaching and learning expertise within schools and school communities is critical to delivering successful project outcomes.

The Ministry will work with each school to understand their vision for delivering education, and help translate that into what it means for learning spaces in the school.

The education brief belongs to the school and will be the basis for developing the master plan and projects delivered under the programme.

One of the measures of success will be how well the master plan, and subsequent capital projects, meet the school's project brief.

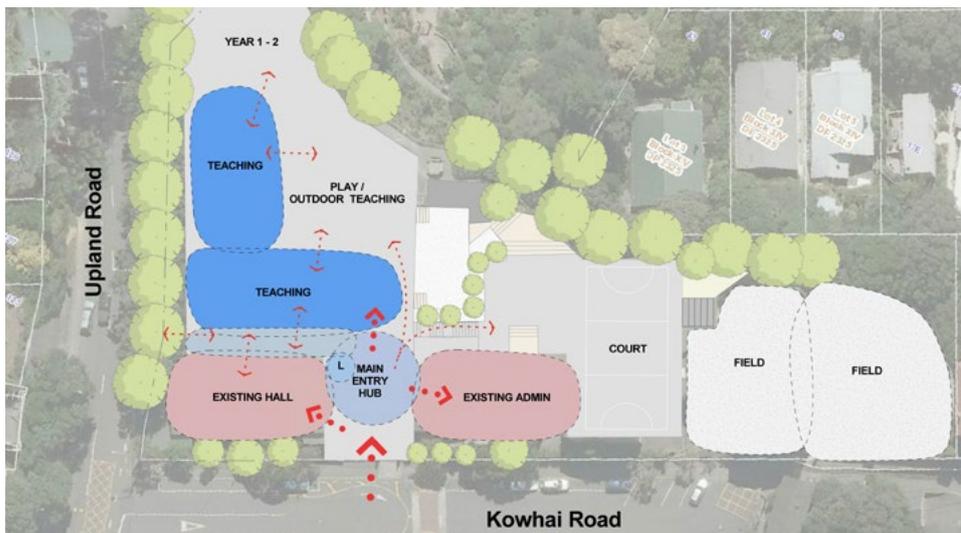


## What is a master plan?

Developing the master plan is the next stage in delivering a school's capital project. The master plan is a comprehensive long term planning tool intended to establish and guide the future development of the school site. It is a blueprint that reflects a clear vision for the future direction of teaching and learning at the school and is supported by policies, guidelines and priorities.

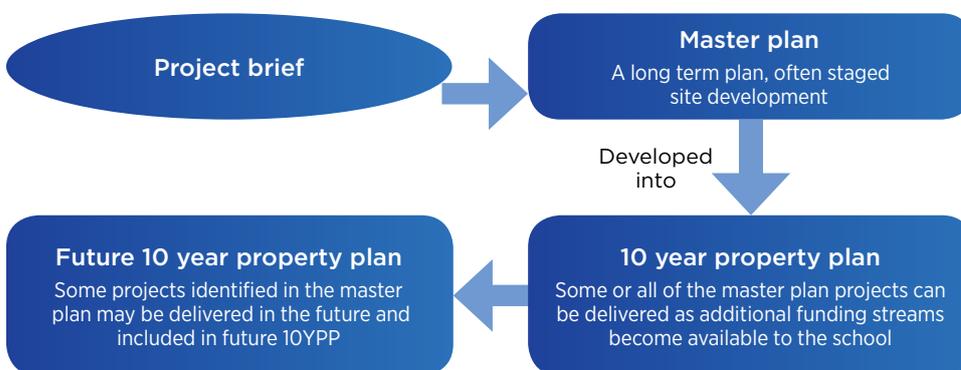
The master plan will identify priorities for action (based on the educational vision), set out suggested relationships between public and private spaces, plan for activities and uses which may take place in school areas and identify movement patterns around the school.

Master planning can help redefine a familiar place, opening up its potential and offering new insights into the place it could be. The master plan can help bring out the best in an area in terms of its landscape, topography and ecology. An example of a site layout drawing within a master plan report is shown below. The master plan is informed by the project brief and design guidelines.



## Why do schools need a master plan?

To ensure a coordinated approach to property development and maintenance, each school will develop an overarching site plan that will be delivered over the long term. The school will develop their 10 year property plan (10YPP) from the master plan. The master plan will include an implementation strategy and a staged approach for site development. This is shown in the diagram below.



*"We are delighted with our new school and our work with the Ministry in developing the school design that meets our vision for teaching and learning. The Ministry team were responsive, proactive, and fair in their dealings with the school, BOT and community. I understand how hard the Ministry team work to meet our needs (and deal with my ideas, expectations and revisions) and they do so with professionalism, a positive attitude and in the best interest of our tamariki."*

Neill O'Reilly - Principal, Waitākiri School



## Support in developing your education brief

In greater Christchurch, Grow Waitaha is now well established and is supporting schools through the 'navigators' to develop their brief and provide opportunities for professional development.

Schools outside Christchurch should contact their Property Advisor or Project Delivery Manager for support to develop your brief.

## Design Review Panel

The Design Review Panel (DRP) has been established to provide quality assurance over the technical aspects of school buildings, as they are designed.

The panel is made up of industry experts who ask questions such as, have the prevailing wind and sunlight factors been adequately considered in the design, is the building going to be weathertight, and does the design meet the education brief.

The DRP doesn't review the educational aspects of the brief, but considers whether the designs will support the school's vision, as it is set out in the brief.

The DRP was established for the Christchurch Schools Rebuild programme but has expanded to provide assurance over all capital projects across the country. The Ministry aims to have local expertise on the panel for each review.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about the design process, please contact your Property Advisor