

Terminology and Symbols: Architecture

DESIGN BRIEFS are used by architects to keep projects on time and budget and to solve any problems that may occur during the design process. Appropriately used symbols, schedules, notes, and legends convey information on the drawing that cannot easily be understood in any other way.



Objectives:



1. Describe a design brief, and use one to solve a problem.
2. Create appropriate symbols, schedules, notes, and legends for an architectural drawing.

Key Terms:



block
design brief
general notes
group

legends
local notes
notes
schedules

symbols
symbols library
template

Describe a Design Brief

A **design brief** is a document used to focus the efforts of a designer and to outline the client's needs, stating the parameters of the project with a creative solution. When using a design brief as a planning document, you should clarify three important issues. First, you need to understand what the project should achieve (e.g., needs, objectives, and priorities). Next, you must understand how the goals will be achieved and what the criteria for success will be. Lastly, you should know the project timeframe and budget.

Symbols, Schedules, Notes, and Legends for an Architectural Drawing

Architects have their own “language.” If you want to join their club, you need to know how to use symbols, schedules, notes, and legends to communicate clearly. Misunderstandings result in the loss of time and money.

DESIGN BRIEF COMPONENTS

Solving a problem with a design brief ensures the success of the project. It states the problem situation, along with any limitations or special conditions. A design brief provides specifics about the problem and tells the designer what must be done. It describes what the successful design must accomplish.

Symbols

Symbols are simplified drawings of common objects found on an architectural drawing. Architectural drafters can easily read and understand symbols. Manual drafters often create symbols using a thin sheet of plastic with standard shapes cut in it—a **template**. CAD drafters often use a **symbols library**, which is an area that contains pre-drawn shapes stored on the computer. With CAD drafting, symbols may be created by the drafter and stored as a **block** or a **group** (unit) and may be reused repeatedly. Libraries of symbols may be purchased from numerous independent vendors who create symbols for specific types of drawings. Some manufacturers create symbols libraries for their specific products. These specialized symbols libraries may be purchased from the manufacturers or, occasionally, the manufacturers provide these symbols libraries to designers at no cost. Window, door, and plumbing manufacturers are examples of industries that supply these types of libraries.

Schedules

Schedules are lists of products or materials that would be used in the construction of the architectural design. Schedules usually list items that would make the

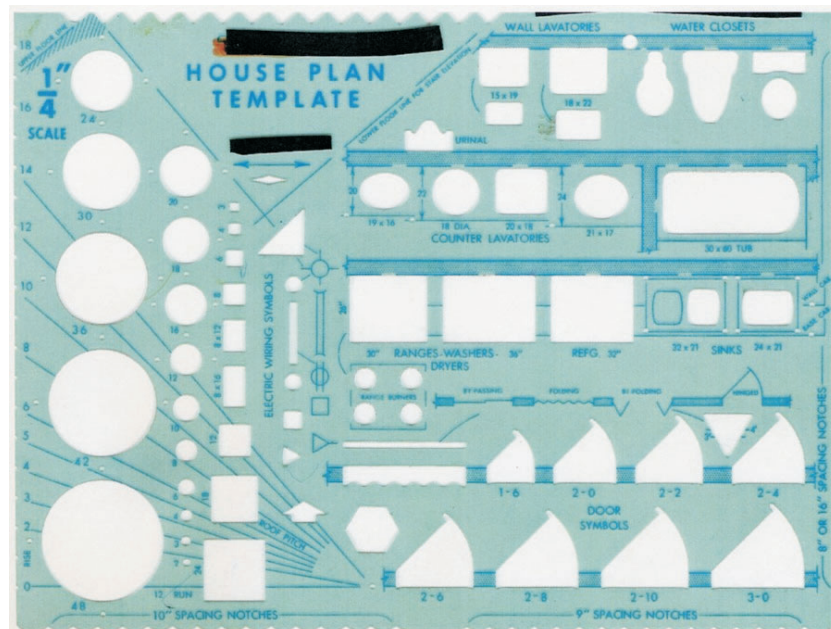


FIGURE 1. When creating a drawing by hand, an architectural symbols template offers consistency and ease of use.



ON THE JOB...

CAREER CONNECTION: Using Design Briefs

Architects use design briefs to organize and manage projects, such as residential and commercial architecture during the design process. Creating design briefs allows architects to keep their projects on budget and on time. Design briefs can be used to solve problems that may occur. Also, architects use symbols, schedules, notes, and legends to communicate important information that would not normally fit on the floor plan.

A career as an architect involves planning and designing projects (e.g., houses, offices buildings, schools, and hospitals). The job requires attention to detail, and the work can be tedious. However, the advantages are a creative, interesting, and dynamic job. Architects enroll in five-year college programs for a bachelor's degree and must pass extensive testing for state license.



Architects create symbols, schedules, notes, and legends in commercial projects (e.g., office buildings, schools, and hospitals).

drawing more difficult to read were they noted in the drawing locations where they occur. Examples of schedules include windows, doors, floor coverings, paints, and fixtures. Schedules can include specific types of information such as manufacturer, size, quantity, material, and other remarks.

Notes

Notes are comments used in architectural drawings to convey information that may not be shown clearly in any other way, such as scale, information about the company (or individual) that created the drawing, location, and information about detail drawings. **General notes** are comments that apply to the entire set of prints (e.g., scale: $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'$). **Local notes** are comments that apply to a specific design consideration (e.g., maple threshold). Notes that convey specific information include environmental conditions, structural specifications, and specifications for the systems in the building, including HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and fire suppression.

Legends

Legends are keys used in architectural drawings to explain the specific conventions used by the architects. Legends explain such things as line types and their specific meanings and the meaning of specific symbols used.

Summary:



When working in an architectural firm, using a design brief organizes and focuses the project, stating the project needs, priorities, and objectives. Design briefs can be used to solve any problems that may occur. To more completely describe an architectural project, appropriate symbols, schedules, notes, and legends are used to clarify the design to the client.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Explain the elements of a design brief.
2. What are symbols, and how are they used in an architectural drawing?
3. List four items that might be included on an architectural schedule.
4. How does an architect use general notes?
5. How does an architect use local notes?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



A great way to find out about the importance of understanding using a design brief to solve design problems is to interview an architect. In advance, write at least five questions that would help you improve your understanding of their experience. Create a PowerPoint to share with your classmates.

Web Links:



Advantages and Disadvantages of Being an Architect

<http://www.goarchitectureschools.com/advantages-disadvantages-of-being-an-architect.html>

Architect: Technical Reference

<http://archtoolbox.com/representation/graphic-symbols/30-archsymbols.html>

Architectural Symbols

<http://www.sfponline.org/Uploads/14/architecturalsymbolsandconventions.pdf>