

Your First Interior Project, Step by Step



From the first client call to the final payment — how students and early-career architects and interior designers run a real home project, in the right order

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PRACTICE VARIES

Already mid-project? Start with the route finder on page 15. Every tool is listed on page 4.

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CASE FILE · FLAT 704

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CHECKPOINTS

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The whole project on one page

Six parts, each with its own actions, documents and money. Weeks are illustrative for a 2 BHK run as design + coordination (Flat 704).

PART	KEY ACTIONS	TOOLS	MONEY	WEEKS
01 Before you say yes	Decide the role; check readiness; set family boundaries	T01, T02	Nothing yet	0
02 Lock the client and the scope	First meeting; brief; measure; scope; fee; agreement	T03–T07	30% advance on signing	1–2
03 Design and documentation	Zones and direction; layouts; drawing set; materials	T08–T11	30% on design approval	3–5
04 Costing and vendors	BOQ; rates; like-for-like quotes; work orders	T12, T13	Client pays vendors by stage	6
05 Execution and site	Sequence; hold points; quality checks; changes	T14–T16	30% at carpentry midpoint	7–13
06 Handover and after	Snags; handover pack; photos; referral	T17–T19	10% at handover	14–15

The rule underneath

Nothing moves to the next part until its documents are signed or its payment is in.

Week by week

Flat 704's fifteen weeks are drawn on page 11.



PRACTICE VARIES

Payment stages and timelines vary between practices and cities. The 30/30/30/10 split is one common pattern — tie each payment to a stage and agree your own. Your client pays vendors directly in design + coordination.

Fifteen weeks, one flat

Flat 704's illustrative timeline. Site trades overlap; payments (blue markers) follow stages, not dates.

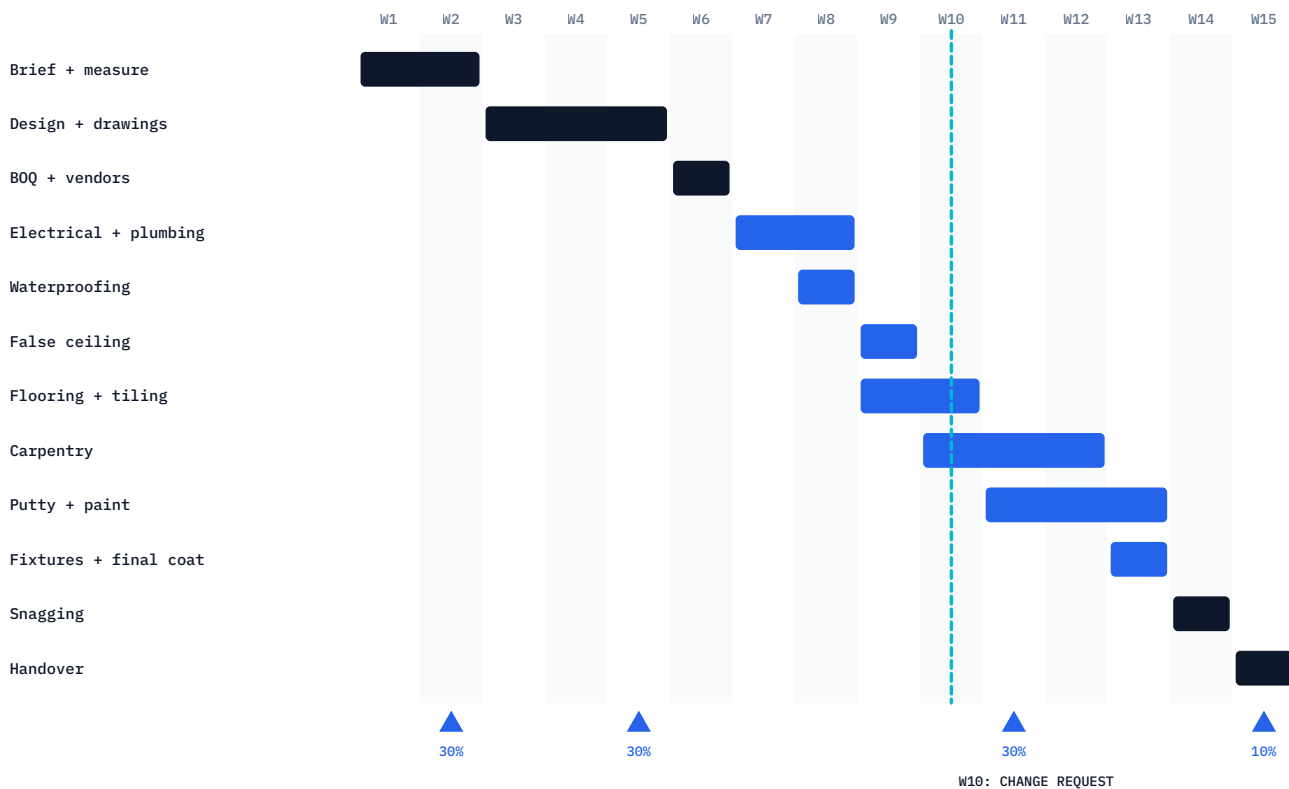


FIG 00.2 – Flat 704 schedule. The week-10 marker is the crockery-unit change, handled on page 111.

Weeks 1–6: paper

Brief, measure, design, drawings, BOQ and vendors. Most delays start here, not on site.

Weeks 7–13: site

Trades overlap. Hold points decide when the next trade may start (page 96).

Weeks 14–15: close

Snag, fix, hand over, collect the final 10%.

PRACTICE VARIES

Timelines change with flat size, society work hours, crew availability and material lead times. Use this as a shape, not a promise to your client.

Got a project today? Your first seven moves this week

Tick them in order. Each one links to the page and tool that does the work.

- 01 ☐ **Meet the family, in the flat if you can** → P25
Listen first; walk every room together.

- 02 ☐ **Capture the brief on paper** → T03 · P28
Household, routines, storage, must-haves, budget and what it includes.

- 03 ☐ **Measure the whole flat once, properly** → T04 · P37
Running dimensions, heights, beams, services, numbered photos.

- 04 ☐ **Write the scope** → T05 · P42
What is included, excluded and paid directly by the client.

- 05 ☐ **Agree the fee in writing** → T06 · P48
Rate per sq ft × carpet area, or a percentage — with the base named.

- 06 ☐ **Take the advance** → P47
No drawings before the advance. Tie it to a start date.

- 07 ☐ **Book the next visit** → P49
Date, time and what you will show. Send it in writing the same day.

DO NOT MOVE ON UNTIL moves 1–6 are done. The next visit comes after the advance, not before.

PRACTICE VARIES Some offices measure before the fee is agreed, some after. Either works — as long as nothing is designed before the advance.

Are you ready to take this project on?

Tick one box per statement: Yes = 1, Partly = ½, No = 0. Add your score and read your band. Do it before you reply to the client.

			YES . 1	PARTLY . ½	NO . 0
TIME	01	I can visit the site at least twice a week for about three months.	☐	☐	☐
	02	I can reply to the client and vendors within a day.	☐	☐	☐
	03	I can measure a flat completely without a second visit.	☐	☐	☐
SKILLS	04	I can produce drawings a carpenter can build from.	☐	☐	☐
	05	I can prepare a BOQ with quantities and units.	☐	☐	☐
	06	I know the site sequence and its hold points.	☐	☐	☐
ACCESS	07	The flat is within about an hour of where I live or work.	☐	☐	☐
	08	The society allows work during hours I can be there.	☐	☐	☐
MONEY	09	The client has agreed to pay a fee, in writing.	☐	☐	☐
	10	An advance will be paid before I start drawing.	☐	☐	☐
SUPPORT	11	I have a senior or an experienced designer I can call.	☐	☐	☐
	12	I know at least one carpenter I trust.	☐	☐	☐

My score: _____ / 12

SCORE 10-12

Go

Take it on as planned.

SCORE 7-9

Go with conditions

Write your conditions below and agree them first.

SCORE 6 OR LESS

Scale down

Take design-only, or decline for now.

MY CONDITIONS

CRUX SELF-CHECK — NOT A GRADING RUBRIC

FILLED WELL = every statement is ticked honestly and the conditions are specific enough to agree with the client.

NEXT → P21

PRINT THIS PAGE

The brief Ria took home — and the four lines that changed the design

Fictional case file. Figures are illustrative, not quotes or benchmarks.

T03 • CLIENT BRIEF — FILLED

PAGE 1 OF 1 (CONDENSED)

CLIENT	Masi (Ria's mother's sister) and her husband
HOUSEHOLD	Masi and her husband, mid-40s, both working · son, 9 · grandmother, about six months a year · cook in the mornings
HOME	2 BHK, 720 sq ft carpet, 7th floor · living-dining, kitchen, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, utility balcony
ROOMS AND STORAGE	"We have nowhere to put things." Tall kitchen storage · wardrobes for two in the master · study corner in the son's room
MUST-HAVES	Pooja unit · grab bar and anti-skid tiles in the grandmother's bathroom · study corner with good light
STYLE WORDS	Warm, calm, easy to clean · dislikes open shelves that gather dust
KEEP	Existing 3-seater sofa
PREFERENCES	Vastu: "consider it" — which points matter to them? Pooja position, entrance
STATED BUDGET	₹6.0 lakh "all-in" · includes kitchen, wardrobes, false ceiling, paint · appliances? decor? → ask
TIMELINE	Move in within four months · society allows work 10 am–6 pm, no Sundays
DECISION-MAKER	Masi — approves drawings and payments · husband and grandmother give input

1

1

The quiet user

The grandmother lives here six months a year. Her needs set the bathroom spec.

2

2

A preference, recorded

Ria asks what matters to them. She does not assume or impose rules.

3

3

Stated is not real

Ria asked what "all-in" covers. Appliances and decor sat outside the ₹6.0 lakh. The gap returns in Stage 03, page 43.

4

4

One decision-maker, in writing

Everyone else gives input. One person approves drawings and payments.

TAKEAWAY

Write down who uses the home, how, and what "all-in" really means. The design comes after.

NEXT → MEASURE • P31

NEXT → MEASURE • P31



FIELD NOTES — FEATURE 04 • MEASURING

Read the whole room before you pick up the tape

Stand at the entrance for two minutes before you measure anything. Find what will decide the design. In this bare living room there are seven.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Concrete beam
Record depth and width. Decide early: box it into a bulkhead or leave it exposed.</p> | <p>5 Column and wall return
It eats usable depth for furniture. Measure it separately.</p> |
| <p>2 Switch box, loose wires
Record every point. They fix where the TV and sofa can go.</p> | <p>6 Opening and window, next room
Note the sill height and the grille.</p> |
| <p>3 Hanging wire points
The builder's light points. Note them before you plan the ceiling.</p> | <p>7 Rough screed floor
Check levels. New flooring raises the floor and changes door and threshold heights.</p> |
| <p>4 Sliding door to the balcony
Keep the path and the curtain-track space clear.</p> | |

FIG 04.3 – Bare living room, first visit. Pins mark what changes a drawing later.

Four details that are easy to miss — and expensive to find later

A • BEAM DROP



RECORD	Depth below the slab, width, and distance from both walls.
WHY	It sets the false-ceiling level, loft tops and curtain track.
IF MISSED	A loft or pelmet that clashes with the beam on site.

B • PLUMBING STUBS



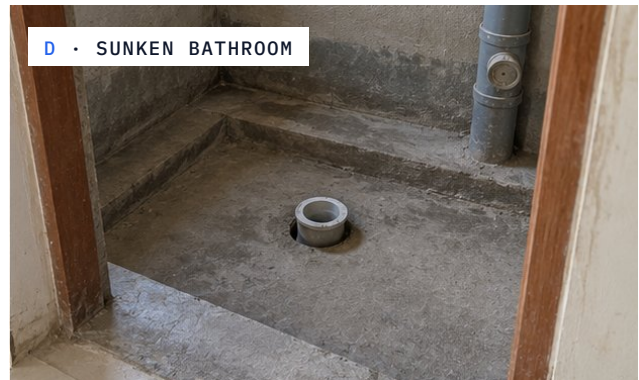
RECORD	Each inlet's height and distance from the corner; hot or cold; drain position.
WHY	It fixes where the sink, vanity or washing machine can go.
IF MISSED	A vanity on the wrong wall — and a plumbing change nobody priced.

C • DAMPNES



RECORD	Location, size and height above the floor. Photograph it; check the other side of the wall.
WHY	Damp has a source. Fix the source before paint or wardrobes.
IF MISSED	Fresh paint blisters; a wardrobe against the wall swells.

D • SUNKEN BATHROOM



RECORD	Depth of the sunken slab, drain and outlet positions, and the state of any old waterproofing.
WHY	It decides filling, waterproofing and the finished level at the door.
IF MISSED	Water runs towards the bedroom, or a step appears at the door.



WINDOW SILLS

Measure the sill from today's rough floor and write "rough floor" beside the number. The finished floor will sit higher, so the sill ends up lower than it measures today — plan furniture and radiator-height units against the finished level.



FEATURE 08 — SPACE PLANNING

Plan every room for a real Indian morning

Tiffin at 7, office at 9, a grandparent who needs a clear path. Good layouts start from how the family actually moves.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Fan over the seating
Centre it on the sitting zone, not on the room.</p> | <p>5 Kitchen in the line of sight
Closed storage keeps the view from the sofa calm.</p> |
| <p>2 Bulkhead with cove light
Hides the beam; carries the AC and light wiring.</p> | <p>6 Clear route to the balcony
Keep the main walkway about 900 mm or more.</p> |
| <p>3 Split AC, kitchen side
Throws air along the room, not onto the sofa.</p> | <p>7 Chair pull-back
About 750–900 mm behind each chair; more if people pass.</p> |
| <p>4 Floating TV console
Usually 300–450 mm deep; wiring hidden behind the panel.</p> | <p>8 Large-format floor tiles
Fewer grout lines make a small flat look larger.</p> |

FIG 08.1 — A finished living-dining room, read as eight planning decisions. Sizes are indicative — see page 59.

That was 11 of 128 pages.

The full kit takes you from the first client call to the final payment – in the right order, with a tool for every step.

6 parts

In the order a real project runs

18 features

One for every stage of the job

19 tools

Print them, or fill them on screen where marked

PLUS ONE FICTIONAL FLAT, FLAT 704, FOLLOWED THROUGH ALL EIGHT STAGES

01	Before You Say Yes	Choose the role, set the terms, then say yes.
02	Lock the Client and the Scope	Brief, measure, scope, fee and agreement.
03	Design and Documentation	Zones, rooms that work, drawings, materials.
04	Costing and Vendors	BOQ, like-for-like quotes, work orders.
05	Execution and Site	Sequence, hold points, money and changes.
06	Handover and After	Snags, handover, portfolio and referrals.

Also inside: AI assistant pages with 12 copy-paste prompts for free AI tools.

GET THE FULL KIT

Your First Interior Project, Step by Step

cruxlabstools.com/toolkit/first-interior-project-step-by-step

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