

## The Life of a Room

*A simple guide to the process and steps for transforming a location at Talliston*

Transforming a room at Talliston is a fairly lengthy and immensely costly enterprise that allows for little room for error. Go down the wrong path and precious time and money is wasted – and both are in very short supply. Though the original 25-year timescale may seem generous, the shortest time to build a room comes out around the two and a half year mark, with a price tag to match. So, forward planning and budget management are crucial, yet not at the expense of allowing a sense of freedom to explore possibilities and encourage ideas. This is why we created the Talliston room lifecycle. A way to approach each unique space in a creative *and* managed way.

### The Talliston Room Lifecycle

Here is an overview of the six distinct phases of each location at Talliston. Sometimes we get to fully focus on one particular room, though most of the time we are moving through a variety, especially swapping outside for inside as we juggle the unpredictability of the English seasons and weather.

#### 1. Dream

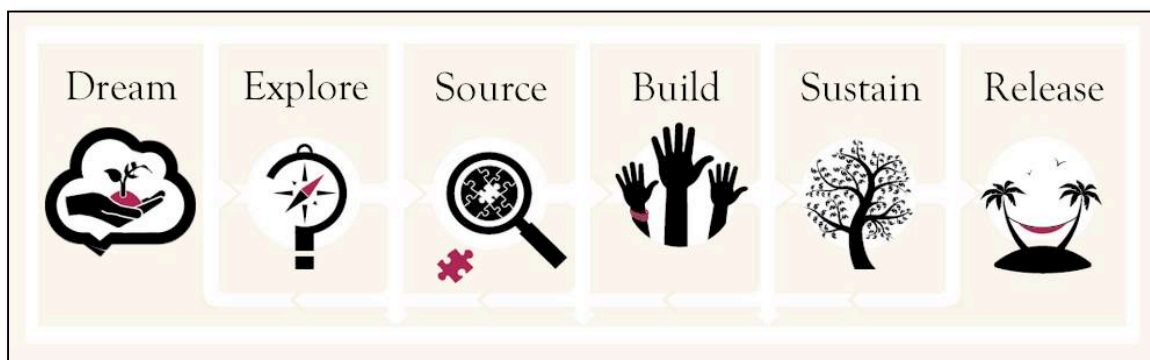
Without thought of budget or time scales, the first step is to create the what, where and story the project is to encompass. To do this we approach the room emotionally, rather than practically,

trying to find that moment or feeling that informs as to the time and place, occupant or even first object from which all other ideas and associations flow. So The Voodoo Kitchen posed the question: “Where in the world would you like to eat Sunday morning breakfast?” and all the easy sense of relaxation that comes with it. For The Cabin it was more about the feeling of being in the middle of the wilderness rather than ten paces from the main house.

Dreaming without judgement or self-criticism is a great habit to engender in our lives, anyway. Just here we get to live, breathe and experience the room before lifting a single finger to create it.

#### 2. Explore

Once we have the idea, the time comes to discover how we are going to achieve the vision. Here we decide upon budgets, time scales, start collecting designs and really honing the dream into a realistic plan. Mood boards are created to link colours, major objects are located and the time period is researched to begin filling in the gaps and







fleshing out the story we want to tell. Here we try to fill in as much detail as we can, map out phases of the project (for example, if it is an outdoor garden, planning across multiple summer months) and starting to decide when would be a good time to visit the real world location.

### 3. Source

With the plan in place, sourcing for the project can begin. How many people are required? Are there any specialist skills needed to be learned? Where are the raw materials and items coming from? Realising the room's vision is a very long path, and not all aspects need to be decided at the beginning. It is better to focus on the smaller tasks rather than the entire room and all the many things that need doing, buying and building.

### 4. Build

In this stage of the lifecycle it's time to start constructing each piece of the final vision, bringing together people, tools and materials to create something extraordinary from the ordinary. The cycle of Explore, Source and Build is constant throughout the project, requiring many iterations to bring the final room into being. Each one feeds the other, and when there is doubt or conflict, we can shift through these stages before progressing.

### FROM DREAM TO REALITY

Because of the Dream to create a dining experience on par with the lavish Victorian dinner parties of yesteryear, creation of the actual chapel dining area was made manageable – and achievable!

### 5. Sustain

After the many iterations of sourcing and building, and with the completed location comes the time when we enter a phase of continuous upkeep and maintenance. Each room is not a static environment; gardens grow, bulbs burn out and paint becomes cracked or chipped. Keep a room fresh and clean requires a lot of planning and house management, though with vintage items, a little dust and wear is good for the overall feeling of this being a real location – rather than a themed area.

### 6. Release

The final stage is vital and inevitable, and requires planning as to when you are to let your vision go and pass it on to those that will come after you. With Talliston, the journey was to create the final house, not for any specific purpose or intent. Like writing a novel, there comes a time when each of the chapters is written, editing is done and it goes off to be published. The book is created and the story is ready to be read by people independent from the author. That is why we know that one day will come the time to give the house and gardens away, to pass the vision on to another – and for the house to enter a new phase of its history.

