



V1.0

The Value of Architecture

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The Value of Architecture

At Habanero Architecture we believe that design is a tool to improve people's lives. A well-designed space is not only an economic asset but also a place for your personal and collective development. A functional space is beautiful and it transcends aesthetics.

This handbook serves as a guiding tool to illustrate the benefits of working with an architect and using architecture as a medium to accommodate life.

Thank you for viewing.

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01



Why hire an Architect?



“An architect is not only a design professional. He or she acts as a coordinator that seeks to efficiently organize the events required to successfully communicate the big picture of your project.”

Architects can solve problems or limitations inherited with your property and turn them into opportunities by creative means of design. Constructing a building is very complex endeavor. It requires hiring the right team to make a building look and function well. To design and build projects one has to place all the pieces of the puzzle together, one at a time.

Choreographing the design and construction sequences is a task that if done properly reduces redundancies and problems. In contrast, if done incorrectly, it can cost money, time and headaches. You want to do the process the right way, since you put efforts towards accumulating your assets to build a dream.

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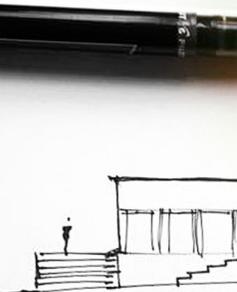
The sequencing of the events will be determined by a series of factors. Every project will be different, but generally speaking, the architect will be talking to many people though the course of the project to ensure everyone is on the same page. These can be the town or city building inspectors, stakeholders, general contractors,

engineers, and other consultants to name a few.

Thinking in three-dimensions rather than just the functionality of a two-dimensional floor plan is another good reason to hire an architect. Thinking in three-dimensions is different than just thinking about the number of feet and inches in a room, clearances and the technical ability to put a detail together.

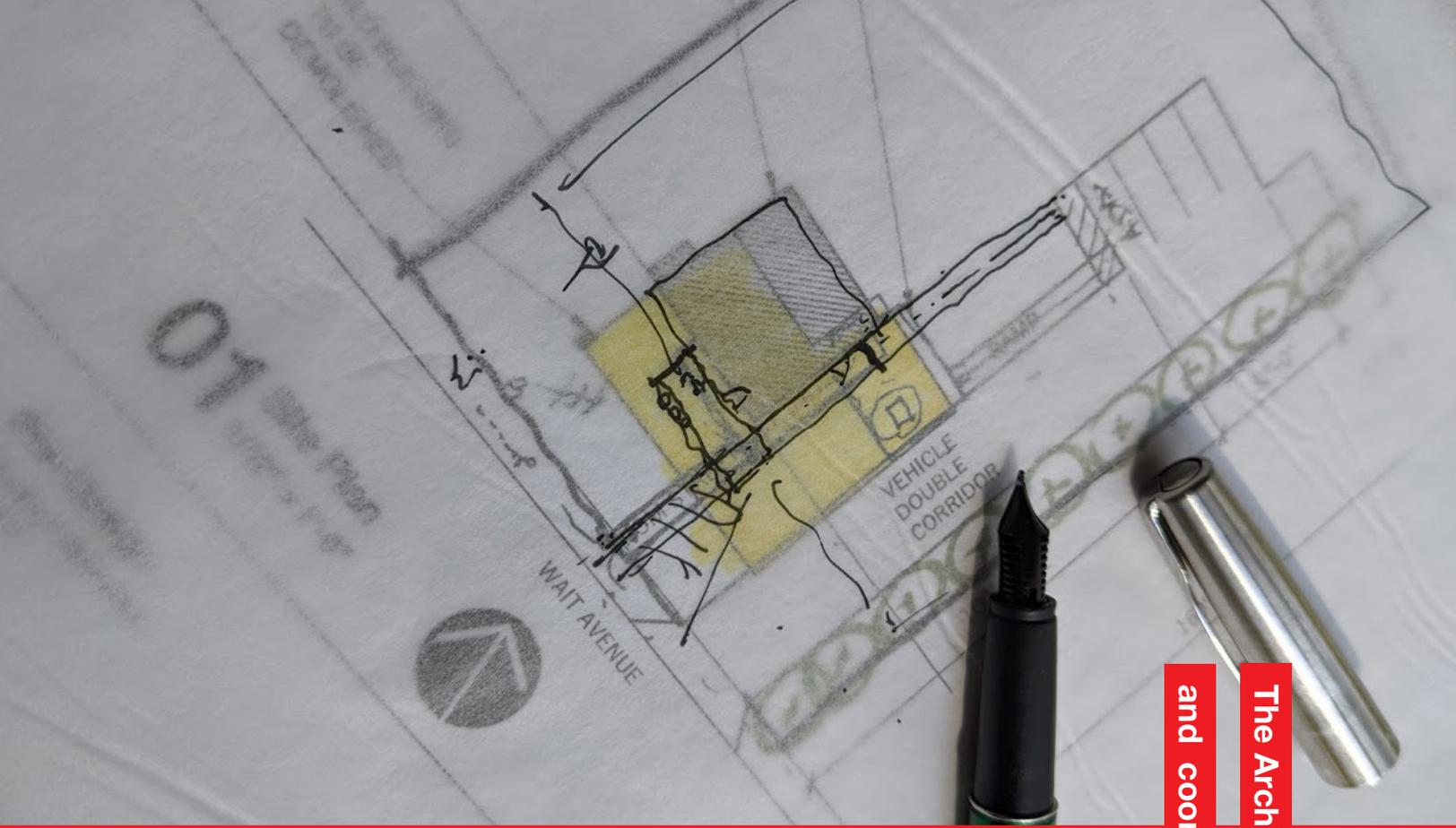
While thinking in a technical level is important, thinking about how the quality of the space is altered with every decision will affect the overall look of you project. It is important to incorporate knowledge into the creative design and understand the implications of allocating resources in your project. When we add a window, design a portico, or make a room big or small, an architect understands the effect pursued and therefore anticipates the final result.

Hiring a good architect that aligns with your vision will impulse the design aesthetics and function to levels that you would not otherwise have thought. Architects use creativity as a tool to solve problems based on your needs or wants. A good architect listens and interprets your requirements and provides valuable information in any stage of the project.





02



and coordinator

The Architect as a design expert

Architecture School / Bachelors or Masters Program
May vary depending on path

YR.01

Professional Practice hours [or Internship]

The professional designer works under the supervision of a licensed architect. The candidate is required to report a minimum 3,740 hours across six experience areas.

YR.05

Architectural Registration Exams [ARE]

The Architecture professional candidate will be required to take and pass six different exams to demonstrate education, skills and knowledge to become a licensed registered architect.

YR.08

YR.10

Registered Architect

YR.12

A Licensed Architect is required to have education and experience in order to practice. They have to go through an extensive period of training and undergo a rigorous examination process to become licensed in the United States.

Many people do not know this, but It could take as much as twelve years to get a license as an architect. Five years is usual for an architecture student to graduate from school, depending on his or her career path, Bachelors or Masters degree. After school, the graduate has to work in an office to do his or her internship and then take (currently) six different exams to demonstrate his or her abilities to practice the craft. The exams range from planning and design, contracts, and sustainability, to more robust technical knowledge areas. While the exams are not intended to cover all the specifics of what an engineer or builder knows, architects need to understand how buildings are put together and operate.

The National Council of Architectural Registration Board (NCARB) is the organization responsible for regulating the process. They make sure that whomever is called an architect represents the public's interest in the build environment. The NCARB's mission is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public through regulating the Architecture profession.

Is worth noting that every state maintains a level of autonomy and therefore there might be some regulation differences depending on the jurisdiction. An Architect practicing architecture can hold various licenses for many states where they conduct business. That is why some achitects are NCARB certified and can expedite a licensing request in any of the fifty-five US jurisdictions.

An architect can practice architecture through a firm or on his or her own. Depending on the state, a professional firm, might require an architectural seal in addition to the architect's seal to approve drawings. For instance, The State of North Carolina requires both. Generally speaking, an Architect is required to seal drawings for any commercial project and not residential projects. However, there are exceptions to these laws and a practicing professional needs to be aware.

03



**What is the difference between an Architect
and other design professionals?**

	Project Management Skills	Technical Knowledge	Design Skills	Drafting Skills	Code Compliance Knowledge	Building Knowledge
Architects	●	●	●	●	●	●
Engineers (Consultants)	●	●	○	●	●	●
Designers	●	●	●	●	●	●
Draftsmen	○	○	○	●	○	●
General Contractors (Builder)	●	●	○	○	●	●

Strong skills or knowledge	●
Possess general skills but may rely on other professionals to supplement information	●
Does not have Skill or Knowledge	○

“When hiring an Architect, think of quality.”

Not all projects are created equal, therefore they might require different professionals. If what you want is better design for your project, definitely an architect will always be the best option. A well designed project is an asset that can be valued monetarily when reselling the property, attracting clients for a business, productivity for an office, or a better dwelling space.

Engineers & Consultants

Architects work with engineers and consultants because they rely on expert hands to integrate specialized systems. Depending on the project various engineers might be required: Structural, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Civil, etcetera, to name the most common. Engineers will stamp their own set of drawings for their work and they are usually hired by the architect. They all contribute, advise and supplement the project's design.

Architectural Designers

An architectural designer is a non-licensed architect and they can design residential projects or a small commercial project up to a certain square footage or scope of work depending on the state regulations. An architectural designer can have enough experience to take projects on his or her own, however a host of insurance and budget limitations may incur problems depending on the nature of the project. Hiring an architectural designer for a small project might be a good match, but asking the right questions and verifying his or her credentials before hiring him or her is important.

Draftsman

A draftsman is someone who draws plans for a living. He or she may know how to lay out rooms and details, but does not have the professional experience nor training to do what architects deliver. If you want a “straight-forward” shed or a small room addition hiring a draftsman might be your best choice. But remember that draftsmen are limited to drawing and do not offer all the benefits of working with an architect.

General Contractor (Builder)

A General Contractor is the person who is responsible for coordinating all building activities for your project. Depending on their company structure and expertise, they may or may not have designers in house or hire them as a third-party. In comparison, a design done by a builder may be very different than an architect's design. Just like a draftsman, builders are not trained to do what architects do. A good builder is an integral part of the construction process. Bringing them on early is always a good idea.

In conclusion, when hiring an architect, think of quality. “Good design is good business,” that is the bottom line. You will be paying for services that will match or exceed your expectations. Architects not only design, but can find ways to save money and time by minimizing waste and maximizing spaces.

04

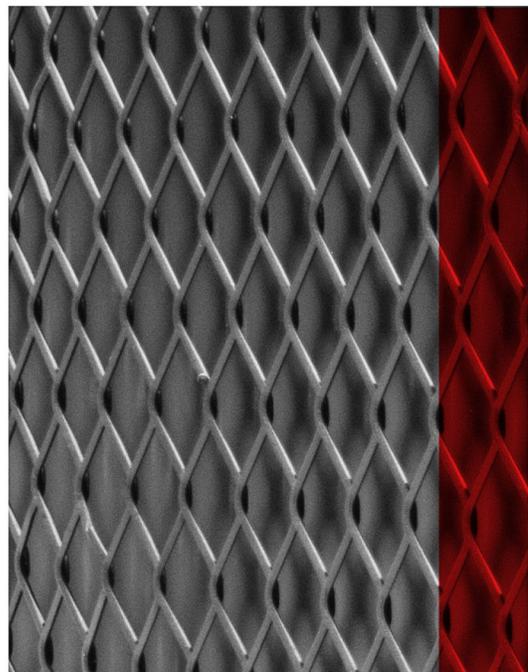
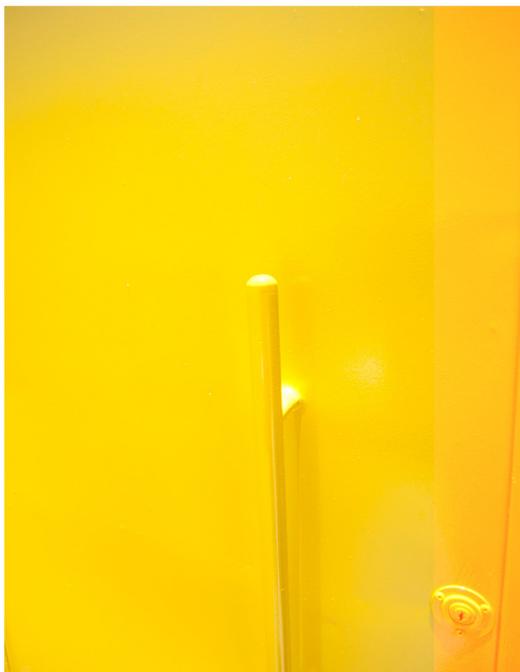


What is the role of the Architect?



Architects design buildings, advise owners, advocate for the client, and coordinate projects. Depending on the type of service required by an owner and his or her project, an architect may conduct the following activities:

- 01 Schedule planning.
- 02 Conduct due diligence and data research for the project and its site.
- 03 Design & explore spatial ideas according to clients' needs and aspirations.
- 04 Give cost opinions about the project based on a benchmark (dollar per Square Foot)
- 05 Present design options during Schematic Design to the client or stakeholders.
- 06 Present the project design on behalf of the owner in public meetings
- 07 Advise the owner acting as his or her agent.
- 08 Balance budget vs. design and offer options to the client.
- 09 Coordinate communication between consultants, stakeholders and third parties.
- 10 Draft, seal and sign contract documents, including the project manual with the specifications and construction drawings.
- 11 Prepare contracts on the owner's behalf.
- 12 Recommend builders and consultants for the project.
- 13 Administrate the bidding and negotiation process.
- 14 Conduct site visits and report observations to the owner.
- 15 Review shop drawings, product data and samples through a submittal process.
- 16 Review request for information from the general contractor.
- 17 Amend construction issues related to the design including structural, plumbing, mechanical, electrical and civil engineering.
- 18 Review pay applications on behalf of the owner.
- 19 Review punch-lists at termination of the project.
- 20 Sign substantial completion certificates.



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05



What is the role of the Owner?

The Owner has three important tasks during the course of the project.

1st

The first responsibility of an owner is to provide the initial information pertinent for the architect to commence the project. This refers to all records of the property, a survey, a list of aspirations, a list of needs and a list of spaces. Also any testing required to initiate the project is included. This includes the percolation tests if there is a septic tank, traffic survey if it is a new development, topographical survey, etc.

The client and architect need to have clarity of the objectives of the project, therefore knowing how much the client will desire to spend and how much area the client will require for his building is a crucial piece of initial information. In some situation the client might not know exactly what they require, therefore a feasibility study or a pre-design phase might be required in order to better define the scope of work, before the commencement of the design.



2nd

The second responsibility and perhaps the most important one, is to make decisions. The project is the client's, not the architect's or anyone else involved in the project. Therefore the owner is left with the primary responsibility to approve or disapprove. Milestone decisions regarding the design, money and time are important to take. Your professionals will guide you along the way and make recommendations for you.

The ideal scenario is that all ideas and issues are solved prior to the commencement of the erection of the building. Is the builder's responsibility to advise the owner if issues arise during construction for the owner to make a decision on how to move forward. The architect will act on behalf of the owner depending on the contract arrangement, however the owner will always make the final call.



3rd

The third responsibility of the owner is to pay fees and testing. These fees must be paid on time for the continuous flow of the project. If the cash-flow comes to a halt, the architect, engineer, or general contractor will reserve the right to stop his or her work until getting paid within a period of 7 to 21 days depending on the contract. Putting a project to rest slows the momentum, therefore making the sequencing of the activities and preparations irregular. The aforementioned equates to wasted time and that translates into money. Having a good understanding of the funding before the commencement of the project is important.

An additional responsibility of the owner would be to make the site accessible to the professionals, authorities and general contractor. If a project is a renovation, access during business hours, or some arrangement must be made to allow the professionals to do their work without interruptions. If a project is a new build, the site must be cleared for the crews to allow their operations.



06



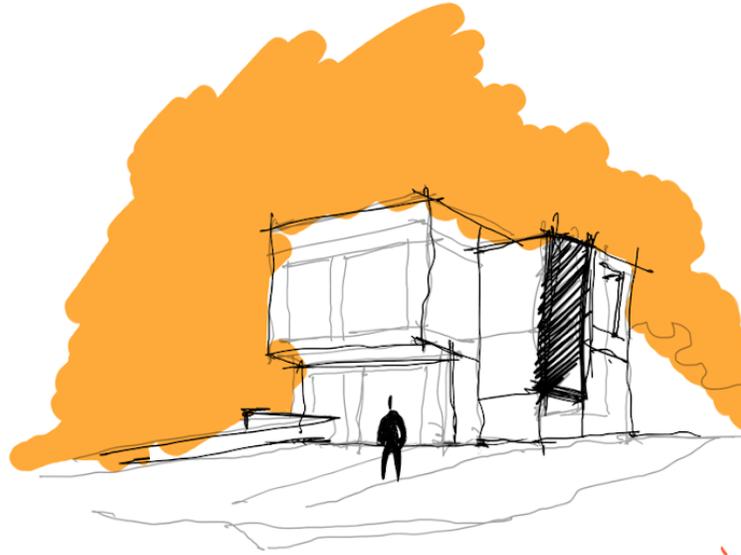
How does an Architect work?

Architects work in design phases.

Every firm has its own operational standards and every project is different. A firm with experience that does only residential projects will work in a different way than commercial firms would work. Furthermore, a commercial firm that does laboratories would have a different flow than one that does retail and offices. There are multiple ways to deliver a project.

An Architect usually works in design phases. There are five basic design phases that many firms use to deliver projects. If the client has some unknowns and requires clarity before committing to the undertaking of the project, the client might require pre-design services offered by the architect, adding a sixth phase.

These six phases are described below:





01

Pre-Design

Pre-design is a planning phase with the aim to uncover information before the design starts. This phase allows the architect to break down the available data to analyze any issues, constraints and opportunities projects might present. Any planning and research of information done during this phase is pertinent to the feasibility of the project. It can consist in a site analysis, feasibility study, massing studies, code research, data collection or a combination of all of these.

02

Schematic Design

Sketches, site diagrams, big ideas, paper models, presentations and rounds of iterations and studies are presented to the client. This phase serves as exploratory time to uncover the essence of your design. The Architect and owner are trying to look at what they will be creating. The time frame will depend on the size and complexity of the scope of work.

03

Design Development

The architect will refine the agreed design option. Among activities he will start integrating structure systems as well as plumbing, mechanical and electrical. A construction price check will be run either by the architect as a cost opinion, by a general contractor if pre-selected or by a professional cost estimator. The main goal of this phase is to refine the rough schematic design into a more detailed project before finalizing the drawing set.

04

Construction Documents

This phase is where the nuts and bolts are put together. All details, schedules and systems integrations are depicted into a set of drawings. A project manual will be included in the contract documents where the specifications and construction drawing will act as the bidding document to build the project. This is the most labor intensive phase for the architect as he or she has to coordinate and finish the drawing set.

05

Bidding and negotiation phase

If required by the project, the architect will aid the owner in the administration of the process of soliciting biddings from several contractors. The Architect will respond to questions from all general contractors during a determined period of time and then recommend the owner to hire the best option for the project.

06

Construction administration

As the name implies, the architect serves as an administrator on behalf of the owner during the construction process. The architect conducts site visits and reports observations to the owner. If the contractor requires supplemental instructions from the architect, the architect will make him or herself available to answer those in a written way. At the termination of the project the architect will issue a certificate of substantial completion when the building is considered by the architect to be ready to be inhabited.



While a small project might not require the six phases and might be shortened to just two steps, a bigger and more complex project might require all of the six phases. In general these phases delineate the progress of the project and how decisions take place through milestones.

Sometimes compensation is also reflected on the progress of these design phases. Make sure to speak with your professional about their timelines and progress payments.

**“An investment
in knowledge
always pays the
best interest.”**

Benjamin Franklin

06



How much does an Architect cost?

To answer that question we first need to determine approximately how much money you will allocate to your building.

The architect quotes his or her services by guiding themselves with the market trends. They will determine their cost by how much time the project will take and which skill you will be using from them. By sharing your expectations and budget limitations with the architect, he or she will be able to put a monetary value to services. Construction costs as well as architectural design services will vary depending on the project's size, complexity, timeline, restrictions, and the expected quality.

It is daunting for many clients to put their money into something not knowing what exactly are they are going to get. This is why hiring an experienced professional that you trust is important as he or she will guide and sort your expectations and design something that tailors specifically to you.

When writing an estimate, a letter of intent, a proposal of work, a fee proposal or a contract, the architect will base his or her design fees based on the anticipated amount for the scope of work and budget. This amount will be a benchmark that will serve as a parameter, or a not to exceed number.

Here are ways that an architect gets compensated:

% 1. Fixed rate with a percentage of construction cost:

The method anticipates a total amount that the owner wants to spend on his building. The Architect then writes a proposal for a set percentage of the assumed construction cost. A normal range is 8 to 18% depending on the project's nature.

For example:

The owner informs the architect that she has \$800,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00 range to build the project for a single-family residence. The architect decides to charge 10% of this amount towards his design services. Therefore the architect's compensation will be \$100,000.00 based on a one million dollar amount.



2. Fixed rate with a price per square-foot factor:

This method offers a price per area factor to be multiplied by the anticipated square footage of the building. This method is popular with commercial projects, however some architects also use it for residential projects.

For example:

The owner expresses that they are pursuing to build a 10,000.00 SF office building. The architect writes a proposal that charges a \$12 per square-foot factor. The architect then will charge \$120,000.00 for his or her services.

@ \$120.00 / Hr

If \$80 Hrs

⇒ \$9,600.00 50% Credit

Total for

Feasibility Study

Total Construction Loan @

\$800,000.00

Arch. Fees = 12%

⇒ 800,000.00 x 0.12 = \$96,000.00

For Architectural Fees

(-Minus) Feasibility Study Credit

0.5 x \$9,600 = **\$4,800.00**

Total Fees

\$96,000 - \$4,800 =

\$91,200.00



Feasibility Study



Lender Funding Approval



Architectural Services Agreement

Hybrid Method Example Calculation



3. Hourly Rate:

This method of compensation is adequate when conducting pre-design services when the owner perhaps requires to do a design exploration study before committing to the full services amount. This compensation method can also be used if the project is small or requires to be fast, like a renovation or an addition.

Some clients prefer this method, because it gives them control of the amount of time used to study a design. The Architect and owner usually put a cap for these services. The architect would alert the owner at 75% or so before reaching the cap to make final decisions.

Usually you will see hourly rates ranging from \$85 to \$250 per hour depending in the firm's size, location, seniority of the staff member, firms prestige, etc.



4. Hybrid:

This method combines two of the previous methods. Usually you would convert an hourly rate to one of the fixed rates.

If you agree to sign a hybrid plan with your architect, expect to get a percentage of your hourly fees rendered credited back toward a fixed contract.

For example:

You and your architect are conducting a feasibility study for a bank loan in an hourly rate plan at \$120 per hour. When the owner's lender approves the project and secures funding, the architect would then credit back 50% of the hourly rate (as previously agreed). This percentage is credited towards a fixed fee agreement based on a construction cost at 12%. If the architect spends 80 hours during the feasibility study and the total cost for building the new offices is \$800,000.00, then the architect would charge a total of \$91,200.00 for his fees.

08



Can the Architect save

money on my project?

YES,

they can

Some examples:

If you are talking about creating a custom solution, regardless of style and taste, architects find ways to solve problems before design, during design and during construction. Generally speaking, an architect's fees will create a better project that is meant to last and look beautiful. Architects can maximize your square-footage uses and create better building envelopes so you save money in energy bills.

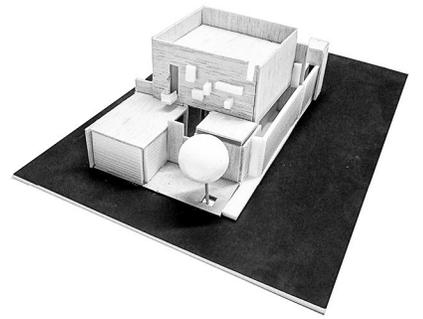
Architecture might seem like a commodity nowadays since there are developers and builders bypassing architectural services. Far from building neighborhood communities, some developers destroy the identity of these places with designs that are mass produced, prototypical and generic. Investing in architectural services will always produce a better design and therefore a better sense of community, pride and value for our buildings.

That being said, other than creating a well conceived project, an architect maximizes resources.

- They can create more functional spaces.
- They can minimize material waste during construction.
- They will balance the design against the budget and make sure they stay in budget.
- They will help save/preserve the quality of the project.
- They will mediate between builder and owner
- They look at life cycle of material and systems to recommend the better product
- They will propose sustainable strategies to minimize energy waste that in the long term will save money
- They will coordinate teams and sequence activities to keep the project moving forward in the most efficient way.

In conclusion, the architect will save you headaches. While the architect's fee seems like an added value to the design, remember that good design sells better and it pays off later. As an investment, good quality buildings will not only perform better, but in the right circumstances will yield a better profit as an asset.





09



How to communicate with your Architect?

Setting up expectations from the very first meeting is important.

All parties should convey information in the most simple and effective way. Clarity in communicating is key for the whole design and building process. Over communication is good as long as there is a point to be made when holding an exchange of information.

At all times be honest about your expectations. Architects will listen and collect data and thoughts and use this parameter to design your project. A good understanding of the project's goals and scope of work needs to be established from the very first meeting.

- **What is the style of the project?**
- **Where is the project located?**
- **How much money would you like to spend on your project including fees?**
- **Why are you hiring an architect?**

These are all initial pieces of information that will become the core structure of your relationship with your architect.

It will be necessary to meet with your design expert a few times to present design ideas during the course of the planning and design phases. During construction, site visits are required at established intervals. During these visits the architect may or may not be present, depending on the contract agreement. Although not always necessary, it is always recommended to have an architect help you during the building process as your project manager during construction administration.

Documenting important decisions as the project progresses is definitely the most important aspect of conveying information. Many things are said during a meeting, phone conversation or site visit. Reporting them in a written fashion is necessary to document decisions and actions. Architects usually have the responsibility to document these actions as meeting minutes or site reports. The information gathered by the architect will be coordinated and shared to all parties involved in order to be on the same page.

Some official written statements can be in the form of emails, PDFs, or hard-copy letters. Just like a contract, these examples of official written statements are binding documents, meaning they can be used during a dispute among any of the parties. That is why written statements help everyone get the same news and be on the same page.

The importance of decision making



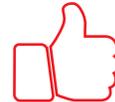
A project with a continuous flow is one that progresses at the right speed. Time is of the essence when designing and building. Sustaining momentum in the process depends heavily on the level of decision and commitment of all parties, especially the stakeholders of the project.

A project can get delayed unnecessarily if a decision has been put on hold or if there is a last minute change of heart during a critical point. The responsibility of an architect is to advise the client of options at the right time and to remind the client of the timeline. If decisions are unclear the project can ultimately suffer economically or in design quality.



Chemistry

Chemistry with your design professional and builder is something that you will need to develop before hiring him or her. Everyone prefers to communicate differently, so an architect that resonates with your ways is a good option since you need to feel comfortable.



Tell your design professional how you would prefer to be notified:

- Email
- Text Message
- Phone
- Meeting Notes

A word about text messages

Although electronic messages are convenient, they can become chat rooms and release unessential information and quickly overload a thread of conversation. For this reason text messages can hurt communication rather than help. Use this technology carefully.



10



Ten questions you should ask before

hiring an Architect

These are some basic questions to be used when speaking to your design professional. They are just ideas. Try to come up with some of your own that will not only help you understand the process of designing and building but will also help you see if you and your architect's personality and vision come together well.

- 01 What would you say is your architecture style and firm's philosophy?
- 02 Have you done a project similar to mine?
- 03 Can you explain your design process?
- 04 What are the tools you use and how will you present your ideas to me through the design process?
- 05 How busy is your office right now? Would you be able to design my project and deliver it within (insert #) _____ months?
- 06 How do you charge?
- 07 What is included in your fees?
- 08 What specifically is not included in your fees?
- 09 What steps do you take to ensure that my project will stay on budget?
- 10 Who will be the team lead for my project and who will be the team assisting him or her?

Bonus Questions

- 11 What do you think is the biggest challenge for my project and how would you tackle it?
- 12 Do you know any General Contractors that you would recommend for my project?

11



When to hire an Architect?

**It is never
too early
to hire an
Architect**

The earlier you bring an architect into the process the more resources you will get to do things the right way. From site selection to doing design research and due diligence items, A design consultation can benefit you greatly and help you avoid missteps. From the get go you will have a better panorama of what is to be expected of the design and construction process. Engaging the architect as a professional consultant for a pre-design study can help you prepare all that is required to start your project.

Every project's genesis starts with the owner having aspirations to build something for their next steps in life. Whether an business place, building your home, or a public building for a community, planning the steps to get your from idea to construction requires a process. Therefore architects will be able to provide you planning, design and administration services to guide you though this process from start to finish.

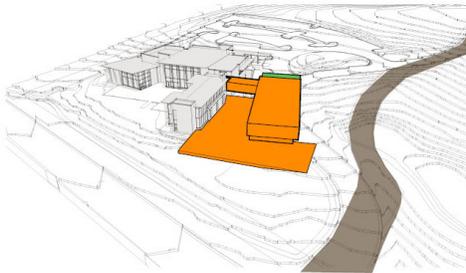
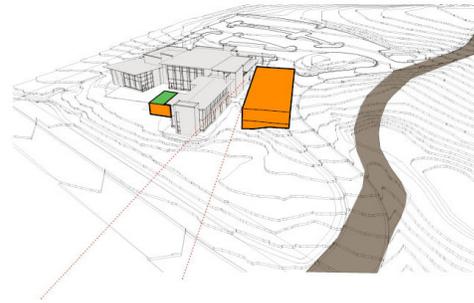
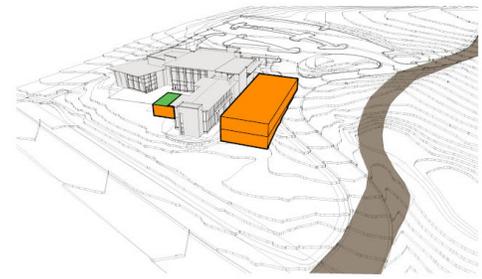
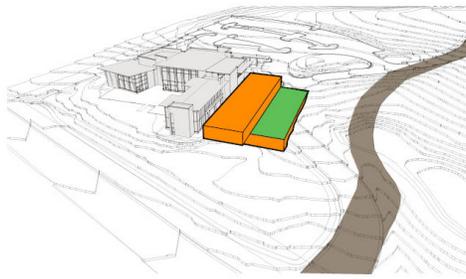
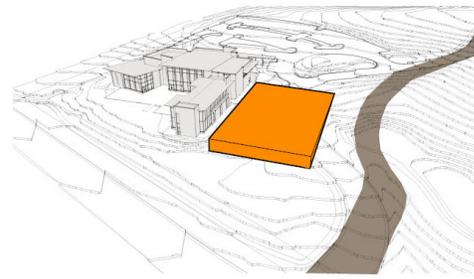
It is normal to see a 3 to 8 month range to plan and design a residential project. However, as

mentioned in previous chapters, various factors will determine the exact range of time. The bigger and more complex the project, the more time is required to plan and design. Generally this would translate the same for the construction process

Commercial projects are more structured in terms of scheduling and they depend mainly on the size of the project. For institutional, state construction or public projects were committee boards and stakeholder meetings are require approvals the timeline tends to be stretched out. Projects of this nature can take years to get approved and get ready to get constructed.

Habanero Architecture likes to nurture relationships early on. Other than a firm's credentials, when hiring an architect it is all about the trust and chemistry. Read Chapter 10 of this handbook for a list of 10 questions you can ask you architect before hiring him.

12



Conclusion



An architect is an experienced and trained professional that will design a building according to your wants and needs.

He or she will make sure that your requirements meet your budget while coordinating efforts with other professionals. The quality of your project should be of enough value to consider hiring an architect. They will in many instances save you time, money and headaches. An Architect will help the project run smoother. Namely, they will help you make decisions and solve problems in a timely way.

Is crucial to stick to your budget and maintain the quality of the design itself. An architect will be mindful about thinking holistically and viewing the complete picture before and during construction. Although the process can be daunting and overwhelming an experienced architect knows what to expect and how to handle situations on your behalf. He will offer you guidance and options as he or she has a good understanding of design and construction.

Communication is important, if you do not feel comfortable making a decision, let your architect know. Transparency and honesty should be reciprocal and leads to better results and avoids misunderstandings. Be concise with your communication, why you do not like something and why something is not working for you. The Architect will be able to interpret the feedback given and offer what you require.

Habanero Architecture takes pride in the value of its services. Our clients understand our comprehensive approach as an asset. An Architect is only as good as his or her clients, therefore our studio wants our clients to be excited and engaged throughout the design process. The results of this process produce better buildings that are long lasting, beautiful and meaningful to the users and communities.

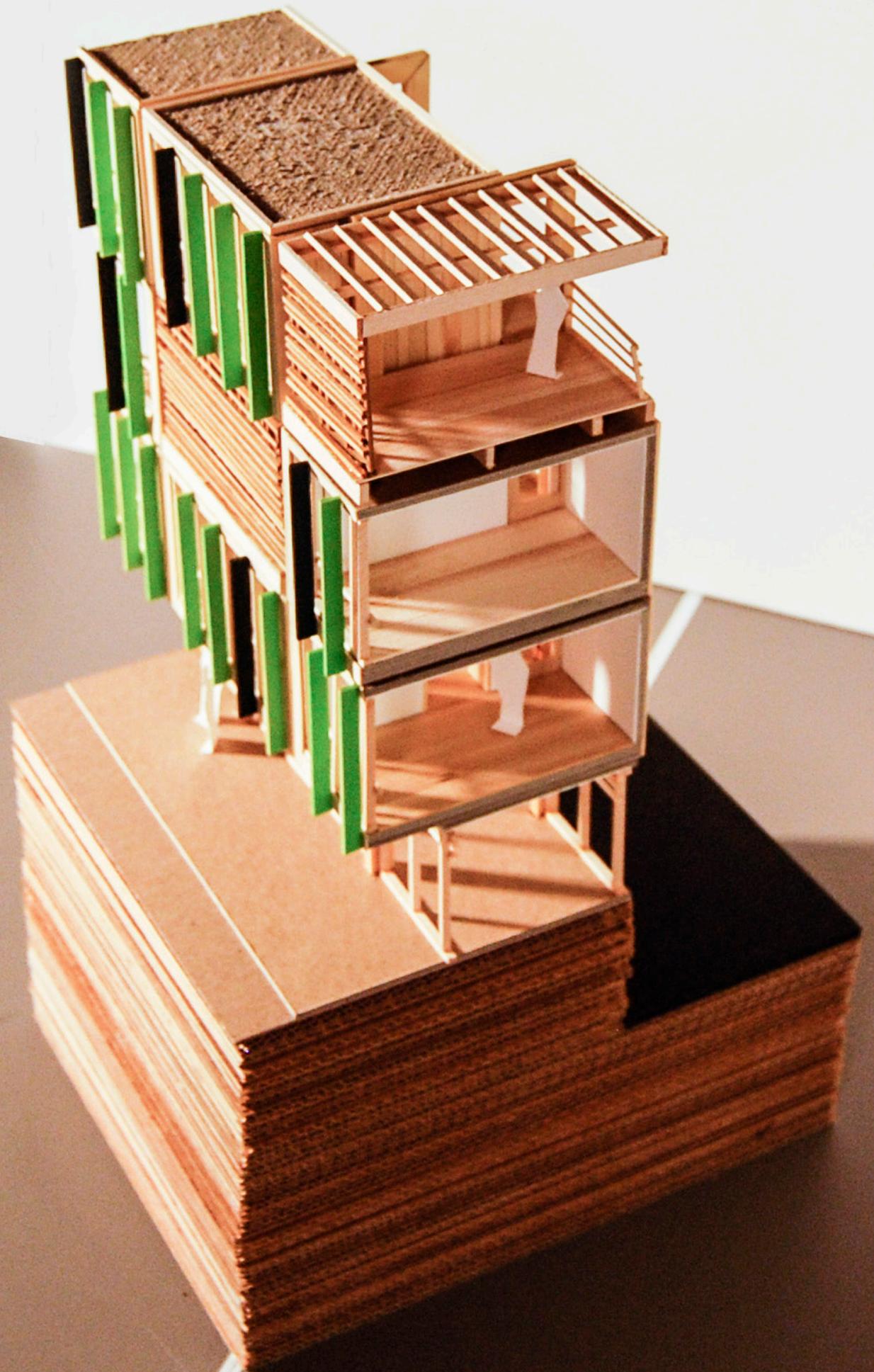




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Ten reasons why you should hire an Architect



There are more than ten reasons why an architect will be a great asset for your project. Providing guidance, options, knowledge, efficiency, quality, understanding and meaning are some descriptions of what an architect brings to the table before and during construction.

01 An Architect offers clarity on the definition of your needs and goals. He represents your vision and acts as your agent throughout the process.

02 An Architect will look beyond your immediate requirements for future growth.

03 An Architect will manage and coordinate your project. If your project requires consultants, the architect will work hand in hand with the engineering teams and building teams.

04 An Architect will maximize your investment through savings in energy efficiency and material selection through life-cycle analysis and similar comparison methods. An architect will select the best materials for your project based on the design and durability.

05 An Architect sees the big picture. They create a whole experience and not only four walls and a roof. Their design enriches the places where people dwell and do business. They marry function and aesthetics in a way that other professionals will not. They amplify your design statement.

06 An architect solves problems with creative means. They will interpret your needs and limitations and find a way to fit both. Their knowledge of construction and design allow architects to come up with cost-effective solutions.

07 An Architect can save you time and money.

08 The Architect works with your budget.

09 Good design sells better. For example, a well-designed house has a higher resale value. A well-crafted space attracts clients. A great office retains employees. Natural light in spaces makes employees focus better, therefore they are happier and more productive.

10 Planning and building can be overwhelming. An architect can make your life easier by acting on your behalf, keeping you informed and offering options to solve any issue.



**“Simplicity is
the ultimate
sophistication.”**

Leonardo da Vinci



**■ Thanks for reading.
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