

You and Your Architect

Design and construction are inherently exciting. There are few things more satisfying than a successful project. The secret to success lies in the professional, business, and personal relationships between owner and architect. *You and Your Architect* provides guidance on how to establish and benefit from those relationships.

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Experience tells us that successful projects; those that achieve the desired results for owners, users, and architects; result from informed clients working with skilled architects to form sound professional, business, and often personal relationships. These relationships are formed early on and are nourished by clear communication, mutually understood expectations, and a willingness of both client and architect to understand and accept their responsibilities for realizing a successful project.

Building in today's marketplace is a complex undertaking requiring many different products and skills. Your architect understands the complexities and works with you to design an appropriate response to your requirements. In turn, your architect works within the building industry and watches out for your best interest in transforming the design into a building.

Getting Started

The best way to begin a new project is for you; the owner; to reflect on what you bring to it: knowledge, experience, needs, desires, aspirations, and personal opinions. You also bring the resources to realize your expectations.

Naturally, every owner starts from a different place. Some have had vast experience with design and construction and know what they want and how to go about getting it. Many owners have much less experience.

Whatever your situation, it makes sense to begin with some self-examination to assess what you already know about your project and what you will establish with your architect's help. The questions outlined below can be used as a guide.

You don't need firm or complete answers to these questions at this point. Indeed, your architect will help you think them through. A general understanding of where you are, however, will help you select the best architect for the project.

What activities do you expect to house in the project? Are you ready to translate these activities into specific spaces and square footage areas, or will the design program (the collection of parameters from which design is derived) emerge in working with the architect?

Has a site been established, or will this decision also be a subject of discussion with the architect?

Have you, or perhaps others, fixed a construction schedule or budget?

What are your design aspirations? What thought have you given to the design quality or amenity you are seeking in this project?

What are your overall expectations for the project? What are your basic motivations as a client, and what role does this project play in achieving your overall goals?

How do you make decisions? Will a single person sign off on recommendations? Are committees necessary?

How much information do you need to make decisions? Do you require a lot of detail?

Do you have the resources to do this project? Where will they come from, and what strings may be attached?

How much experience do you have in design and construction? Have you done this before? If so, where have you been most successful, and when were you disappointed?

Selecting the Architect

Whether you are building your own home or designing a commercial complex, choosing the right architect is vital to a successful project.

Architecture firms come in a variety of sizes and types. The statistically average firm is made up of nine or ten people; many firms are smaller (with as few as one or two architects), and there are some very large firms with staffs of 100 or more. Some firms specialize in one or more project or facility types; others do not. Some firms include in-house engineering (structural, mechanical, electrical, etc.) or other design disciplines (planning, urban design, landscape architecture, interior design, etc.), many other architects introduce these disciplines into their projects through appropriate consultants. Each architecture firm brings a different combination of skills, expertise, interests, and values to its projects. An architect is trained to listen to you-the client-and to translate your ideas into a viable construction project. Look for a good listener and you'll find a good architect.

The Right Architect

First-time clients, and even experienced clients facing new situations, have many questions about architect selection. Some of the more common ones are addressed here.

When, in the life cycle of a project, should I bring the architect into the picture?

As early as possible. Architects can help you define the project in terms that provide meaningful guidance for design. They can also do site studies, help secure planning and zoning approvals, and perform a variety of other pre-design tasks.

Should I look at more than one firm?

Usually, yes. One exception is when you already have a good relationship with an architect and it makes little sense to change.

How do I find suitable firms to contact?

Contact other owners who have developed similar facilities and ask who they interviewed and ultimately selected. Ask who designed buildings and projects that you've admired or that seem especially appropriate. Many local chapters of The American Institute of Architects maintain referral lists and are available to assist you in identifying architects in your area who specialize in certain types of projects (residential, institutional, corporate, etc.).

What information should I request?

At minimum, ask prospective firms to show you projects that are similar to yours (that is, of similar size and type) or that have addressed similar issues (that is, similar siting, functional complexity or design aspirations). Ask them to indicate how they will approach your project and who will be working on it (including consultants). Ask for the names of other owners you may contact.

Why are formal interviews desirable?

An interview addresses one issue that can't be covered in brochures: the chemistry between the owner and the project team. It also allows the owner to investigate how each architect will approach the project.

How many firms should I interview, and how should they be selected?

Most people advise that you interview between three and five firms-enough to see the range of possibilities but not so many that an already tough decision will be further complicated. Select for interview architecture firms you feel can do your project because of their expertise, their experience, or their ability to bring a fresh look to your situation. Treat each firm fairly, offering, for example, equal time and equal access to your site and existing facilities. Insist on meeting the key people who will work on your project.

What can I realistically expect to learn from an interview? How can I structure the interview to make it as informative as possible?

You can learn how the team the architect has put together will approach your project. Ask how the architect will gather information, establish priorities, and make decisions. Ask what the architect sees as the important issues of consideration in the project. Evaluate the firm's interest in your project: Will your needs be a major or minor concern? Evaluate the firm's style, personality, and approach: Are they compatible with yours?

How should I follow up?

Tell each firm what you intend to do next and when you plan to make your decision. If you haven't talked

with past clients, do so now. Assess both the performance of the firm and the performance of the resulting architecture. You may want to visit existing buildings to see them in use. Notify the selected firm as soon as possible. Remember, conditions change. The firm may not be able to offer the same project team if you must take several weeks or months to decide.

On what should I base my decision?

Personal confidence in the architect is paramount. Then seek an appropriate balance among these factors: design ability, technical competence, professional service, and cost. Once you've selected the best firm, enter into detailed negotiations of services and compensation. The AIA standard form documents offer an excellent starting point for contract negotiation. If you cannot agree, conclude negotiations with your first choice firm and initiate negotiations with your second choice firm.

Some say that I should select a builder or contractor before selecting an architect. When is that good advice?

It works best to select your architect first. That way you will have help in understanding how to make the builder or contractor an effective member of the building team.

What about competitive bidding?

You can ask for a fee proposal from an architect any time during the selection process that you think is appropriate. Recognize that factors in addition to cost—such as experience, technical competence, and available staff resources—will be important to your decision. In addition, if you are considering soliciting proposals from more than one firm, you will want to make sure that you can provide all the information required for definite proposals, ensuring that the proposals you get offer the same scope of services, so that they can be evaluated on a consistent basis.

Some additional guidance:

You are engaging the services of a professional. You will work closely with the architect throughout the life of the project, and your relationship may extend to future projects. Invest at least the care it takes to select a financial or legal adviser.

Yours will also be a business relationship. Find out how prospective architects do business, how they work with their clients, how responsive they are to your management and decision styles, and how well their work stacks up against their clients' expectations. The best way to find out is to talk with other owners for whom the firm has provided professional services.

Ask questions. Respect the architect as a professional who will bring experience and specialized knowledge to your project. At the same time, don't be afraid to ask the same questions you've asked yourself: What does the architect expect from the project? How much information does the architect need? How does the architect set priorities and make decisions? Who in the firm will work directly with the client? How will engineering or other design services be provided? How does the firm provide quality control during design? What is the firm's construction-cost experience?

Be frank. Tell the architect what you know and what you expect. Ask for an explanation of anything you don't understand. The more on the table at the outset, the better the chances are for a successful project. Remember, a good architect is a good listener. Only when you have outlined your issues can the architect translate those issues to the project's schedule and budget.

Selection Is a Mutual Process

The most thoughtful architects are as careful in selecting their clients as owners are in selecting architects. They are as interested in a successful project as you are, and they know that good architecture results from fruitful collaboration between architects and clients.

Design as a Condition of Selection

What happens when you ask an architect to design a project as a condition of selection?

Even the simplest of projects are very complex. Each situation is different, including people, needs, site, financing, and regulatory requirements. Many of the owner's needs and expectations become specific only in the process of design. As the project proceeds, priorities are clarified and new possibilities emerge. The architect's knowledge, experience, and skill become part of the project and contribute still more possibilities. These facts suggest that back-of-the-envelope designs done as part of the architect-selection process are no substitute for the complex, time-consuming, and intensive dialogue and inquiry that characterize architectural design.

In some cases, owners know just what they need. If you feel you are one of those owners, seriously consider engaging an architect on, for example, an hourly consulting basis to review and test your decision. Detailed professional evaluations of existing buildings can be valuable in uncovering problems and possibilities that may affect your decision. The process of adapting an existing building design to a new site may be more complex than it appears, considering, for example, topography, drainage, other soil conditions, solar orientation, views, traffic patterns, and community issues.

In the right circumstances, a formal design competition may be an appropriate method of selection. A competition generates a broad search for the best solution to a particular building opportunity. It can also be time consuming and burdensome to administer. The AIA publishes the "Handbook of Design Competitions" as a guide to the conduct of effective competitions.

Identifying the Services You Need

You may already know the scope of professional services required for your project, but most owners want to work with their architect to identify what is needed. Different projects require different combinations of architectural services. An early task is to identify those services essential to the success of the project.

The Important Choices

Most projects require a set of basic services typically provided by architects: preliminary (usually called schematic) design, design development, preparation of construction documents (drawings and specifications), assistance in the bidding or negotiation process, and administration of the agreements between you and your builder or contractor.

Some projects will require other services. For example, predesign work may be essential: facilities programming, surveys of existing facilities, marketing and economic feasibility studies, budgeting and financing packages, site-use and utilities studies, environmental analyses, planning and zoning applications, and preparation of materials for public referenda. Projects may also require special cost or

energy analyses, tenant-related design, or special drawings, models, and presentations.

Not all services must be provided by the architect. Some owners have considerable project planning, design, and construction expertise and may be fully capable of undertaking some project tasks themselves. Other owners find it desirable or necessary to add other consultants to the project team to undertake specific tasks. Here discussion will be necessary to establish who will coordinate owner-supplied work or other services provided beyond the scope of the architect's agreement.

There are two effective approaches to establishing services.

The first is to establish a set of basic services—a standard grouping of services common to many projects. When you use this approach, a second category of additional services is used to cover pre-design services as well as a wide variety of special studies or services that some projects require (like those mentioned above).

The second is to use the designated services approach, which asks owners and architects to select an appropriate complement of services from an array developed by the AIA and presented herein.

The AIA publishes standard-form owner-architect agreements for both of these approaches. AIA Document B141, Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect, and its condensed version AIA Document B151, Abbreviated Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect for Construction Projects of Limited Scope, each embodies the basic services approach. AIA Document B163, Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect for Designated Services, is used to employ the designated services approach. In fact, B163 provides a range of 83 separate architectural, interiors, and construction management services from which to choose. The owner pays only for the services necessary for the project's success, and the architect can effectively measure the firm's time and resources.

Deciding on Services

The best strategy is to sit down with your architect and identify the services needed. Some advice:

Use the AIA's list of designated services, a representation of which appears on pages eight and nine as an initial discussion guide. Doing so provides a chance to talk about all possible service options.

Recognize that even when a number of services are designated at the outset, other services may be required once you are under way. For example, you may require zoning approvals or you may wish to do economic analyses of a new energy-saving system. Other services may be added to an existing agreement at any time.

You may opt to set aside a design contingency budget under the joint control of you and your architect to fund design changes and refinements once construction begins.

Construction contract administration services are a case of spending a penny to save a dollar. When you've taken care to see that a building has been designed as you want, you certainly want it built as it was designed. Your architect can observe the construction work for its compliance with drawings and specifications, approve materials and product samples, review the results of construction tests and inspections, evaluate contractor requests for payment, handle requests for design changes during construction, and administer the completion, start-up and close-out process of your project. Getting the building that was designed; and on budget; is important. Attaining that goal requires considerable

experience, time, and effort. Ask your architect.

Most disputes arise during construction, which, for you, is an important consideration. In such a situation, according to AIA standard forms, your architect serves as an impartial mediator/arbitrator between you and your contractor. The AIA standard forms also call for arbitration and, sometimes, independent mediation, both of which are provisions to find solutions outside of a courtroom.

An agreement for post-construction, building evaluation; perhaps a joint inspection by you and your architect six months after the building is occupied-will help to serve as a checkup that the building is being used and maintained properly.

The specifics of your project will guide your choice of agreement form. The designated-services approach requires a little more effort up front, as it involves the decision of which of the 83 possible services to include. However, designating services brings discipline and clarity to the process of deciding who will do what.

What If There Are Too Many Unknowns?

Sometimes, too little is known about the project to determine the full extent of professional services in advance and proceed to a contractual agreement based on designated services. If this is the case, consider engaging the architect to provide project definition and other predesign services first, with remaining phases and services to be determined later.

List of Design Services Provided By Architects

As the owner, you will find it helpful to review this chart with your architect to acquaint yourself with the various phases of design and construction and the services available for each. With that knowledge, you will be able to work with your architect to select services that are appropriate to your needs.

This chart lists types of services offered by architects. The chart groups services under seven broad classifications that track the possible phases of a project as delineated in AIA Document B163, Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect for Designated Services. This agreement contains an expansive listing of available services and allows the parties to identify in detail the specific services required for a given project.

Basic Services contained in AIA's standard owner-architect agreement (B141)

Additional Services contained in expanded list of services (B163)

Project Administration Management Services | Predesign Services | Site Development Services | Design Services | Bidding or Negotiation Services | Contract Administration Services | Project Administration | Programming | Site Analysis and Selection | Architectural Design/Documentation | Bidding Materials | Submittal Services | Disciplines Coordination/Document Checking | Space Schematics/Flow Diagrams | Site Development Planning | Structural Design/Documentation | Addenda | Observation Services | Agency Consulting/Review/Approval | Existing Facilities Surveys | Detailed Site Utilization Studies | Mechanical Design/Documentation | Bidding/Negotiation | Project Representation | Owner-Supplied Data Coordination | Marketing Studies | On-Site Utility Studies | Electrical Design/Documentation | Analysis of Alternates/Substitutions | Testing & Inspection Administration | Schedule Development/Monitoring of the Work | Economic Feasibility Studies | Off-Site Utility Studies | Civil Design/Documentation | Special Bidding | Supplemental Documentation | Preliminary Estimate of Cost of the Work | Project Financing |

Environmental Studies and Reports | Landscape Design/Documentation | Bid Evaluation | Quotation Requests/Change Orders | Presentation | Zoning Processing Assistance | Interior Design/Documentation | Contract Award | Contract Cost Accounting | Geotechnical Engineering | Special Design/Documentation | Furniture and Equipment Installation Administration | Site Surveying | Materials Research/Specifications | Interpretations and Decisions | Project Closeout | Postcontract Services | Maintenance and Operational Programming | Startup Assistance | Record Drawing | Warranty Review | Postcontract Evaluation

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Negotiating The Agreement

Owner-Architect agreements spell out what you and your architect bring to the professional relationship and what you can expect from it.

The formal agreement between you and your architect is an opportunity to assure that you both envision the same project, requirements, and expectations. Before committing these requirements and expectations to paper, use the five steps presented below to identify any items that may have been missed.

Establish project requirements

Write down your project requirements as either a short statement or a very detailed compilation. Address these points:

- Project scope: What is to be designed and built?
- Project site: Where will (might) it be built?
- Levels of design quality and amenity
- Role of the project (in the owner's life, business, community, etc.)
- Schedule requirements or constraints
- Target date for completion
- Budget estimate and sources of financing
- Codes, regulations, and required design reviews.

Describe project tasks and assign responsibility for each one

Owner and architect should identify the predesign, design, construction, and post-construction tasks that must be undertaken to achieve project objectives. The chart on pages eight and nine, taken from AIA Document B163, represents the potential scope of designated services and provides a useful starting point for this discussion. Both parties should then identify the services required for the project and who will be responsible for each.

Advice: To help produce a complete schedule, include all necessary tasks, even if they will be done by others (say, a regulatory agency's review).

Develop a First-Cut Schedule

Place the tasks and responsibilities on a time line, estimating duration for each task. Identify the tasks that if delayed for any reason will delay completion of the project. Compare the time line with the target completion date and adjust one or both as appropriate.

Advice: The owner, architect, and other key team members who must live with the project schedule should be involved in its development.

Take a Critical Look at the Results

Is the schedule reasonable, particularly given the project's requirements and budget? Have you allowed yourself enough time to review the architect's submissions, receive regulatory agency approvals, seek your own recommendations and approvals, and make your decisions? Many project schedules don't provide enough time for decision making.

Use This Planning Work as a Basis for Establishing the Architect's Compensation

Ask the architect to provide you with a compensation proposal that is based on the tasks and schedule outlined above.

The Owner-Architect Agreement

If you've done your homework, the written agreement should follow without difficulty. Although a certain amount of negotiation is inevitable, you and the architect should be of common mind on the key issues of project scope, services, responsibilities, schedule, construction budget, and architect compensation. Some advice on this subject:

Use a written contract. No handshake or letter agreement is firm enough to cover thoroughly all the roles, responsibilities, and obligations the owner and architect must carry out.

Use AIA documents. These standard forms of agreement, first developed in the 1880s, have been carefully reviewed, court-tested, and modified over many years. Widely used by and accepted in the construction industry, they present a current consensus among organizations representing owners, lawyers, contractors, engineers, and architects. They are coordinated with one another to work as a complete set. For example, the architect-consultant agreement serves as the subcontract for the owner-architect agreement, and the owner-contractor agreement, usually negotiated later, extends the architect's services into the construction phase. These documents are readily available from most local AIA chapters or by calling 800-365-ARCH(2724). If you want to modify the AIA forms, do so with great care. Since these documents form a cohesive whole, even simple revisions in one agreement may cause complications in another.

Do not expect your architect to warrant or guarantee results. As a provider of a professional service, an architect can only be required to perform to a professional standard. Perfection would be nice, but it is unrealistic and uninsurable. Courts recognize this, and so too must responsible clients.

Consult both your legal and insurance counsel before signing these agreements.

Compensating Your Architect

Appropriate professional compensation is important to meeting your goals; cost and value go hand in hand.

Experienced clients recognize that adequate compensation for the architect is in their best interest as it assures the type and level of services needed to fulfill their expectations. You may have questions about how to arrive at the appropriate compensation for your project. Some of the more frequent questions are answered here.

How much should I expect to pay an architect?

That will depend on the types and levels of professional services provided. More extensive services or a more complex or experimental project will require more effort by the architect and add more value to the project. You should budget accordingly for architectural services. And what methods of compensation are available?

These are the most common:

- A stipulated sum based on the architect's compensation proposal
- A stipulated sum per unit, based on what is to be built (for example, the number of square feet, apartments, or rooms)
- A percentage of the construction cost
- Hourly rates
- A combination of the above.

It is worthwhile to note that AIA Document B163 provides six separate methods of compensation that can be tailored to the types of services being provided.

My project is one characterized by repetitive units (bedrooms, apartments). Does it make sense to use these units as a basis for compensation?

Sometimes—for example, when the probable number of units (or, alternatively, the highest and lowest probable numbers) is known.

Percentage of construction cost has been a simple and popular method of compensation. Is it recommended?

Again, it depends. While the percentage method is simple in concept, it requires a rigorous determination of what the construction cost includes. The result may be too high or too low, given the complexity of the project and the professional services required. Finally, this method may penalize the architect for investing extra effort to reduce construction cost on behalf of the owner.

What does a stipulated sum include?

This is a matter of negotiation with your architect, but generally it includes the architect's direct personnel expenses (salary and benefits), other direct expenses chargeable to the project (such as consultant services), indirect expense or overhead (costs of doing business not directly chargeable to specific projects), and profit. The stipulated sum does not include reimbursable expenses.

When does it make sense to consider hourly billing methods?

Again, this is a matter of negotiation, but it makes good sense when there are many unknowns. Many projects begin with hourly billing and continue until the scope of services is defined and establishing a stipulated sum is possible. It may also make sense to use this approach for construction contract administration and special services, such as energy and economic analyses.

What are reimbursable expenses?

These are out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the architect on behalf of the project that usually cannot be predicted at the outset, such as long-distance travel and communications, reproduction of contract documents, and authorized overtime premiums. Detailed in the owner-architect agreement, they are usually outside the stipulated sum or hourly billing rate and normally billed as they occur.

What about payment schedules?

Once the method and amount of compensation have been established, ask the architect to provide a proposed schedule of payments. Such a schedule will help you plan for the financial requirements of the project.

What other expenses can the owner expect?

The owner-architect agreement outlines a number of owner responsibilities, some of which will require financial outlay. These include site surveys and legal descriptions, soil-engineering services (for example, test borings or pits), required technical tests during construction (for example, concrete strength tests), an on-site project representative, and the necessary legal, auditing, and insurance counseling services needed to fulfill the owner's responsibilities.

What happens if the owner and architect can't agree on compensation?

Keep the lines of communication open so that each will understand the other's basis for negotiation. Often, differences result from incomplete or inaccurate understandings of project scope or services. Perhaps some services can be performed by the architect on an hourly basis or by the owner. Perhaps coordination of owner forces, special consultants, or other team members mandated by the owner are adding to the architect's costs. When everything is mutually understood and there is still no closure on the details or method of compensation, both the owner and architect ordinarily have no choice but to discontinue negotiation.

Keeping the Project on Track

Both you and the architect can take specific steps to help meet your quality, time, and budget goals.

Design and construction are team activities. Many individuals and firms come together to do a project. They usually will not have worked together before and may not work together again. They collaborate to produce a complex and often unique result on a specific site. As the project unfolds, hundreds of individual design decisions and commitments are made. Needs and conditions change, and work is modified. A strong and healthy relationship between owner and architect is essential to keep the project on track.

Recognizing the Owner's Responsibilities

The owner-architect agreement and general conditions of the contract for construction provide clear guidance on what is expected of the owner. AIA Documents B141 and A201 (General Conditions) outline several responsibilities. Your architect will assist you in clarifying them.

The owner must provide:

Design objectives, constraints, and criteria, including space requirements and relationships, flexibility, expandability, special equipment, and site requirements.

Budget (including contingencies for bidding, changes in the work during construction, and other costs that are the owner's responsibility) and a statement of available funds for the project.

A legal description and survey of the site (including available services and utilities) as well as soils-engineering services and professional recommendations (including test borings or pits, soil-bearing values, percolation tests, air- and water-pollution tests, and ground-water levels).

Necessary services during construction, including testing services and (on some projects) an on-site project representative.

Timely information, services, decisions, and approvals.

Prompt notification of any observed faults or defects in the project or nonconformance with the contract documents governing the project.

Legal, accounting, auditing, and insurance counseling services needed for the project.

Recognizing Some of the Fundamental Realities of Building

We spend more than \$300 billion annually for new construction and renovation in the U.S. Architects and their clients have had the opportunity to gain some collective wisdom from these projects—wisdom that may be of value to you in project planning and follow-through.

Project scope, quality, and cost are inextricably related. Any two of these variables can be fixed and controlled in design; the marketplace takes care of the third. You will need to establish priorities among them and set acceptable ranges for each one.

A good architect challenges the program, schedule, and budget. Even when these have been developed through painstaking effort, it is in the client's best interest to encourage this challenge. In this way, the architect comes to understand project requirements. The analysis may also reveal existing or potential problem areas.

As design proceeds, important issues will surface. The architect's services bring increased client understanding of the project and the project changes as a result. Each milestone, usually marked by the end-of-phase submissions written into the owner-architect agreement, should be used to assure continuing consensus on project scope, levels of quality, construction cost, and budget. It may also be necessary to adjust the services required from the architect at these points.

The secret to successful projects is effective project management by both owner and architect. A summary of what the owner can do to keep the project running smoothly through design and construction is presented below.

Project Plan Insist on a project work plan, preferably as part of the process of negotiating the project agreements. Ask that the plan be updated on a regular basis and after any major change in scope, services, or schedule.

Team member Be part of the project-planning process and all project meetings. Be sure that your own deadlines, as well as your own decision processes, are reflected by that plan.

Client Representative Identify a single person to represent you and to speak for you at planning sessions and project meetings. The scope of the client representative's authority should be understood by all involved.

Internal Coordination If yours is an organization where several people or departments must be involved in the project work, make it clear that the client representative speaks as the boss. Conflicting advice or requirements will inevitably cause problems later.

Meetings Plan on regular meetings of the project team and participate in them. Meetings should have clear agendas. Persons with assigned tasks should have them done in time for the meetings. Be sure that the architect prepares minutes that clearly identify what was decided, what items now require a decision, and who is responsible for the next steps. Minutes should be circulated to all team members.

Documentation Require that contacts between architect and client (for example, phone conversations and data-gathering sessions) be documented, and the results shared with appropriate members of the project team. This system keeps everyone informed of what's being discussed and decided outside of formal project meetings and presentations.

Phases The AIA standard forms of agreement designate three major design phases and submissions by the architect: schematic design, design development, and construction documents. You may wish to include additional submissions, recognizing that each adds time and cost to the project. Use these milestones to review what has been done and approve it as the basis for moving forward.

Decision Process Be sure that both you and your architect understand the process by which you will make decisions: Who requires what information, whose approval is required, how much time should be allocated for review of submissions? Diagram the process if you are unsure.

Decisions Make decisions when they are called for. Keeping the project on hold while the team awaits your decision increases the possibility of changes in conditions that may upset the delicate balance between project time, cost, and quality.

Agreement Modifications Keep the owner-architect agreement up-to-date. Modify it when project scope or services are changed.

Questions When you have questions, ask them. Pay particular attention to design submissions, since the work of each phase is further developed in the next phase. All questions should be resolved before the construction contract documents phase begins, as changes beyond this point will most likely result in increased time and cost.

Problems Address problems when they arise and before small ones become large ones. Regular project meetings provide a natural opportunity.

Bringing the Builders on Board

At some point, the project team must be expanded to include the firm or firms that will build the project. There are two basic approaches:

The owner may select the contractor or contractors based on the construction contract documents prepared by the architect. Public entities generally must engage in an open competitive bidding process. Other owners may choose open competitive bidding, competitive bidding by a few invited firms, or negotiation with a single selected contractor or builder.

The owner may choose to include the contractor as a member of the design team. The contractor may be paid a fee for consultation during design. A method of compensation for the construction work is negotiated when the design has progressed in sufficient detail to serve as a basis for a cost proposal.

However and whenever contractors are selected, it is likely that the architect will assist in preparing the bidding documents and the owner-contractor agreement forms as part of the construction contract documents. It is sound practice to engage the architect's assistance in the bidding or negotiation process and recommending of construction contractors.

Maintaining the Professional Relationship

The architect's services should not end with the award of construction contracts. It is highly advisable to retain the architect to:

Observe the construction work, evaluate it for compliance with the contract documents and help to determine that the project is being built as designed. This service is especially important. The contractor's failure to construct what has been designed can have major consequences for the owner.

Review shop drawings (detailed drawings of specific building components) and product and material samples to confirm the contractor's understanding of the design intent.

Make design changes that result from owner decisions, design refinements, or unexpected conditions in the field.

Provide a variety of other important services for the owner-checking contractor payment requisitions against the progress of the work, providing final inspections and certifications for the owner, and assisting with building start-up and user education.

Keep an eye on your bottom line. As the team member who has been involved with your project from the outset, your architect is capable of helping you control your construction budget throughout construction and initial occupancy of the project.

So we arrive at the bottom line-the need to complete projects that respond to owner needs and aspirations, are accomplished within schedule and budget, and contribute to the quality of our communities and our lives within them.

This booklet-originally written for The American Institute of Architects by David Haviland, Hon. AIA, professor of architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute-is updated periodically to reflect current industry practices.

For more information on working with an architect, please contact your local chapter of The American Institute of Architects.

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