



Finding the right
ARCHITECT
for your luxury home



Selecting the right **DIRECTOR** to head up the most important **PROJECT** of your life can be daunting. Here are a few items to consider when making your decision.

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Congratulations on considering hiring an Architect for your home. Choosing to tailor the design of your home specifically around the way your family lives will have a profoundly positive effect on your family's quality of life.

The process of selecting the right Architect should be carefully considered. Most Architects have endured a very long road to achieve their licensing and many will be very knowledgeable about design and construction methods. The key to finding the right one for your project however will depend on a number factors.

The right architect, just like a movie director, ensures everyone involved in your project understands the grand vision and works in unison to execute that vision.

Our office has put together this booklet guide to walk you through the items you should consider.

Robert J. Evelyn
Principal teA

ONE. The Architecture profession.

Architects are trained to help you realize your objectives and guide you through the design and construction process. In particular, architects will help you through the complex regulatory building process including zoning regulations, building codes, and contractors' bids.

To become a licensed/registered architect in the U.S., an individual has to successfully complete:

- specific educational requirements; (6 years B.Arch)
- 3 years of monitored experience in all aspects of practice
- extensive examinations.

The average time for architectural licensure in the U.S. is: **11 years**

It is therefore crucial to ensure that your Architect is licensed for in the state of your project.

TWO. Finding an Architect

Actually finding a list of architects in your area can be a simple task, finding one that fits your style and personality can prove a bit more challenging. Like selecting most professionals it is best to start by asking for referrals from people that you trust.

Other trade professionals such as general contractors or interior designers may be helpful sources as well.

If there is a home or project that inspires you, don't be shy. Individuals who have worked with architects on their home are usually very willing to share their experiences.

Once you have a list of architects in mind it's important to consider to determine if their office is the right fit for you. Are you more comfortable with larger/smaller firm? Will you be dealing with principals or project managers that may change over the course of the project? What residential styles are they most comfortable with?

There are many more questions of course that we will get to next of course but the most important step in determining your new architect will happen in the interview process.

Clients love to share their experiences of working with Architects.

THREE. The Interview.

Imagine if you could interview a number of doctors before you actually decided to become a patient? Wouldn't that be helpful?

Well that's exactly part of the process in selecting an architect. Which makes a lot of sense since you will get to know your architect much better than you know your doctor.

The process of designing your house can be a deeply intimate process and you want to embark on this journey with someone you feel very comfortable with and can trust.

Communication skills are crucial for an architect. They need to be good at asking questions, listening, and understanding to what you desire for your home. They also need to be able to communicate to you how those desires manifest themselves in the project's design. Make sure you are comfortable with their firm's method of explaining the design to you. Only if you understand and can visualize the design will you have confidence in making decisions.

Do you sense that the architect is as excited and enthusiastic as you are about your project? There is too much on the line to hire someone who is not committed to the success of your project.

Here are a list of questions you should consider asking during the interview:

- Do you have the experience necessary to provide services for my project?
- Does your firm have a schedule that would allow my project to be a priority?
- Ask them to describe their firm's design philosophy. What aspects of the design process are most important to them.
- What kinds of services do you offer? Are you licensed or permitted to provide those services in the state where my property is located?
- Do you identify any special characteristics about our project that can drive the design process?
- Describe your design process. How and when do you involve the client.
- Who will be our point of contact during the project and how likely is it that to change over the course of the project.
- Ask for a list of past clients of similar projects that you can contact.
- How long do you estimate the design process will take for our project?
- What would you anticipate the length of the construction process to be for a project of this scale and scope?
- Would you describe the steps involved in the architectural process?
- Please discuss how do you establish fees for a project?
- Do you provide any cost estimating during the process?
- How do you help keep our project on budget and on schedule?
- If the scope of the project changes as it proceeds, will there be additional fees?

How will the architect
Communicate
the design
so that you understand?

- What should we anticipate as a per square foot cost range?
- Do you help us to select a general contractor?
- What services will you provide during construction for our project?

By the end of the interview, armed with questions like these that are most important to you, you should have a sense of chemistry between you and the architect. This really is an important factor in your selection process. The design & construction process can be at times enjoyable and at times trying. You will need someone in your corner that you have confidence in.

FOUR. Understanding the range of services.

For most architectural firms, the process from concept to construction takes a linear path through a series of well defined phases that will most likely come up during your interview.

- **Programming:** Defining all of the desired spaces, their sizes and any special characteristics of those spaces.
- **Schematic Design:** Begins the design solution by establishing the location and relationships between the spaces identified in programming.
- **Design Development:** This is where the design begins to really take shape. You should now expect to fully understand the design of your new home. The ability of the architect to effectively communicate the design to you becomes critical. See section five for more.
- **Construction Documents :** The architect now finalizes all the technical design including structural engineering, HVAC systems, plumbing, electrical, gas, lighting, and "smart" systems. All products and materials are selected and scheduled. The complete document package is then presented to the Building Department for permit approval.
- **Bidding review :** The architect's role here can include assisting the client review contractor qualifications, respond to any information requests from the contractor and review and compare the bids for compliance and accuracy.
- **Administration:** (during construction) During the construction process it is important for the architect to have a presence to represent the client. Communication between the Architect and contractor will prevent errors and "shortcuts" can undermine the design intent and quality of the project. This portion of the architect's fee for this phase is typically between 15% - 20% of the total fee but it is the most valuable service that the architect provide.

Other services that are not part of the typical process but your project may require it:

- Landscape Design
- LEED Design and Documentation
- Civil Engineering
- A/V systems design
- Surveying services
- Detailed cost estimating
- Site analysis(pre- purchase)
- Interior Design
- Project animation

Can you feel chemistry in the air?

BUILDING INFORMATION MODELING



Real time 3 dimensional communication is not only crucial for the CLIENT'S comprehension of the project but also everyone involved during the construction process.

FIVE. Understanding the tools of communication.

Designing and constructing a luxury home is a complex task for any seasoned Architect. Hundreds of decisions are made during the design process that are time consuming and expensive to change during construction.

If it is important to you to be part of the design process and to be an integral part of decision making then it is vital for you to **UNDERSTAND** the design. This is where the architect's ability to communicate the design is crucial.

Ask if the architect uses BIM (Building information Modeling) software for the production of their documents.

Its very difficult for most clients to visualize a final product based on a traditional set of construction plans produced in many architectural firms. BIM software allows the architect to provide the client with unlimited views of the project from inside master bathroom to the private gym overlooking the pool.

This ability provides you with better tools to make decision and to have confidence in those decisions. Be sure to ask your architect if they can provide this service.

Does the architect provide unlimited 3-D views of the project DURING the design process.

INSIST ON IT

SIX. Understanding the climate.

South Florida is blessed with some of the most pleasant weather in the world. Does your Architect understand how designing homes for the local climate is different here than in other parts of the country?

How does their previous work embrace this fact? Does it provide great exterior spaces that allow for outdoor living? Does their work balance the desire for expansive views with shading and controls for light and glare?

Its crucial that your architect understand the local climate. Ask them how their design approach embraces the tropical climate of South Florida.

Climate change has resulted in an awareness and conscientiousness of new clients to ask about sustainable building practices.

Ask your architect about their approach to both passive and active design strategies that promote healthy environments for your family.

An "indoor - outdoor" connection is really more than just providing a sliding glass door.

SEVEN. Understanding the fees.

Architectural fees can appear to be mysterious to clients and even architects can have a difficult time explaining their method for arriving at fee proposals. This is because the process of producing good architectural design is not a linear one. Instead it is a rather complex process that can be time consuming.

Good architects explore multiple options before arriving at the best solutions for their client. This tends to take time and it is vital work of the process that ultimately the client may never get to see. In the end however, the client enjoys a well researched design tailored specifically to their site, their program and their desires.

Luxury residential projects fee rates ranges from 8% -12% of the anticipated construction cost. **Construction Cost** is the estimated cost of the construction as determined by the architect (or cost consultant's estimate), at the anticipated time of construction. This estimate accounts for construction materials and labor costs only and does not include the value of the land.

For a typical fee proposal, a gross price per sq. ft. is applied to the project area.
 E.g. 8,500sf x \$200/sf = \$1,700,000 (construction cost only)
 Architect's fee @ 10% = \$170,000 (Includes Arch., Structure & Mech. Engineering)

Landscape design is typically an option. (Add 1/2 - 1% to fee)(\$10,000 -\$20,000)
 Civil Engineering (if required)(Add 1/2% -1% to fee)(\$10,000 -\$20,000)

There are a number of project specific conditions that may cause a fee to vary from the example above. The Architect should be able to walk you through all these conditions and explain how they affect the process. Regardless, you should insist on complete transparency when discussing fees with your Architect and understand which services are included and which are not.

Think of the architectural fee as the best protection for your investment rather than an added cost. Regardless the size of your project, your Architect will be your best (sometimes only) advocate during the construction process. The right Architect will be personally invested in your project's outcome and work to ensure that the project is delivered with the quality that reflects their effort with you during the design process.

Typically your Architect will ask for a retainer ranging from 5% -10% before commencing their work. Monthly billing is the industry standard, however on smaller projects billing may occur at the end of each design phase.



So congratulations on completing the guide. Hopefully now you feel better prepared to find the right Architect for your project, your partner on the journey to creating the dream home for you and your family.

teArchitects wish you the best of luck.

Please visit our website for more free guides or call our office for additional information.

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The right Architect is your best protection for your

INVESTMENT



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