

# 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.



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

# Contents

Getting Started	2
Selecting Your Architect	4
The Important Choices	6
Services Available from Architects	8
Negotiating the Agreement	10
Compensating Your Architect	12
Keeping the Project on Track	14

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

For more information about working with an architect, please contact your local chapter of The American Institute of Architects or the national headquarters of the AIA at 800-242-3837/[www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org).

## 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 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 in your interest within the building industry and can help you greatly to transform the design into a wonderful 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 provide the resources to realize your expectations.

Naturally, every owner starts from a different outlook. 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 serve 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.



## ask yourself these questions

- What activities do you expect to house in the project? Do you have specific ideas on how to translate these activities into specific spaces and square footage areas? In any event, an architect with experience in your particular building type can help you immensely to refine your design program (the collection of parameters from which design is derived).
- Has a site been established, or will this decision also be a subject of discussion with the architect and others?
- Have you and those with whom you are talking fixed a construction schedule and budget?
- What are your design aspirations? What thought have you given to the design message and amenities you are seeking in this project?
- What are your overall expectations for the project? What are your motivations, both basic and high-minded, and what role does this project play in achieving your overall goals?
- How do you make decisions? Will a single person sign off on decisions? Do you have a building committee?
- How much information do you need to make decisions?
- Where will the resources come from to create and operate this project? (Your architect can help you considerably here, for instance, to tap into reliable capital assistance or leverage modest first-cost upgrades into enormous life-cycle savings.)
- How much experience do you have in design and construction? Have you done this before? If so, where have you been most successful, and where were you disappointed?

# Selecting

Whether you are building your own home or designing a commercial

# your architect

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 9 or 10 people; many firms are smaller. There are also very large firms with staffs of 100 or more. Some firms specialize in one or more project or facility types. Others have very specific specialties. Some firms include in-house engineering (structural, mechanical, electrical, etc.) or other design disciplines (planning, urban design, landscape architecture, interior design, etc.). Many architects introduce specialty disciplines into their projects through appropriate consultants. Each architecture firm brings its own combination of skills, expertise, interests, and values to its projects. All good architects will listen to you and translate your ideas into a viable construction project. Look for a good listener and you'll find a good architect.

## The Right Architect

If you are a first-time client, or an experienced client facing a new situation, you probably

have many questions about architect selection. Some of the more frequently asked questions 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 may also do site studies, help apply for planning and zoning approvals, help locate sources of financing, and a variety of other predesign services.

### Should I look at more than one firm?

Usually, yes. One obvious 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 who can help you. (Look in the Yellow Pages for the AIA listing, or go to [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org).)

### What information should I request from firms?

At a minimum, ask to see projects the firm has designed that are similar in type and size to yours or that have addressed similar issues (for example, 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 you and the architecture firm. Interviews also allow you to learn how each firm plans to approach the project.

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

Most people advise that you interview three to five firms—enough to see the range of possibilities, but not so many that an already tough decision will be further complicated. Interview architecture firms that you feel can do your project because of their expertise, experience, and 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.

### **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 architect's team will approach your project by talking to key members. Ask how the architect will gather information, establish priorities, and make decisions. Ask what the architect sees as the important issues for consideration in the project. Evaluate the firm's style, personality, priorities, 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. Ask them to 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, or shortlisted firms, as soon as possible. Remember, conditions change, sometimes very rapidly: regulatory parameters, market conditions, and team availability.

### **On what should I base my decision?**

Personal confidence in the architect is paramount. Seek also an appropriate balance among design ability, technical competence, professional service, and cost. Once you've selected the best firm, enter into detailed negotiations regarding services and compensation. The AIA Documents offer an excellent starting point for contract negotiation.

### **What about selecting an architect by competitive bid?**

You can ask for a fee proposal from an architect at any time during the selection process that you think is appropriate. The U.S. government, by law, depends on qualifications-based selection, whereby qualification for a project is the first consideration, and fee is secondary. You are engaging the services of a professional with whom you will work closely throughout the life of the project.

Choose your architect at least as carefully as you would your dentist or doctor. Factors such as experience, technical competence, and available staff resources will be important to your decision. So, if you are soliciting proposals from more than one firm, make sure that you can provide all the information required for definite proposals to ensure that the proposals you get offer the same scope of services, and you can evaluate them on a consistent basis.

Yours will 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.

Ask questions. Approach the architect as a professional who will bring experience and specialized knowledge to your project. Don't be afraid to ask the same questions you've asked yourself: What does the architect expect to contribute to 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 you? 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 address them.

Because you will be in a business relationship to acquire the professional skills and judgment of the prospective architect, you might also want to inquire about the ability of the architect to stand financially behind the services to be provided. For example, you might ask if the architect carries professional liability insurance—much like that carried by doctors, lawyers, and accountants. While not all architects carry such insurance, it can, in many circumstances, be an indicator of sound business acumen.

Be prepared to answer questions about your project's purpose, budget, time frame, site, and the team of players you anticipate being involved with the project. Once again, be frank, and inform the architect of any information you want to be kept in confidence. Protecting your confidential information is an ethical requirement for members of the AIA.

### **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.

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 come into focus only in the process of design. As the owner and architect mutually evaluate alternative approaches to the project's design, priorities are clarified and new possibilities emerge. There is no substitute for the complex, time-consuming, and intensive dialogue and inquiry that characterize the design process.





## The important

Your architect can help you analyze your project's

## choices

requirements and select the appropriate services.



## Identifying the Services You Need

The experiences of others may be instructive up to a point, but every project is unique. Your architect is prepared to advise and assist you in tailoring the array of professional services available to meet your needs and expectations.

Most building projects require design and construction documents, assistance in securing a contractor, and evaluation of the progress and quality of construction. The services an architect can provide for you—in house or through consultants—may include facilities programming; marketing and economic feasibility studies; budgeting and financing packages; site-use and utilities studies; environmental analysis; planning and zoning applications; preparation of materials for public referenda; special cost or energy analysis; tenant-related design; special drawings, models, and presentations; and facility operation services after project completion.

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. Discussion with your architect will be necessary to establish who will coordinate owner-supplied work or other services provided beyond the scope of the architect's agreement.

The AIA publishes a wide variety of standard form agreements with different approaches to defining a scope of services. From the most commonly used document, AIA Document B141, Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect, to documents used for special purposes, the scopes of services offered in the AIA documents range from the typical to highly customized applications. You may choose from a variety of formats that come prepackaged or a la carte, which are called designated services. The B141 document offers a choice of multiple scope packages that may be substituted for one another and that deal with a range of situations, from the typical to the highly specialized. This

approach gives you the flexibility to customize the scope of services that meet your particular needs.

Customization, however, may create more complexities than you want. Other prepackaged AIA documents, such as AIA Document B151, Abbreviated Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect, offer only one option in the scope of services. In the B151 document, the services are divided into two categories—basic and additional services. The services within these categories may also be modified to meet your needs.

## Services Required

The best strategy is to sit down with your architect and identify the services needed. 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 should set aside a contingency budget to fund changes in the services required from your architect. Tips for recognizing required services include:

- The specifics of your project will guide your choice of agreement form. The B141 scope of services approach requires upfront discussion to set the project's parameters, which, in the long run, will prevent misunderstandings. B163's 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.
- Use the list of services that appears on pages 8–9 as an initial discussion guide. Doing so provides a chance to talk about many possible service options.
- Contract administration services are a case of spending a penny to save a dollar. Once you have approved the design, you want it built as it was designed. Your architect can administer the contract between you and the contractor. This means evaluating

work for compliance with the drawings and specifications; approving shop drawings, materials, and product samples; reviewing the results of material tests and inspections; approving the contractor's requests for payment; handling requests for design changes during construction; and administering 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.

- Disputes that arise during construction need to be decided quickly and effectively. Under the AIA standard form contracts, your architect serves as the initial arbiter of disputes between you and your contractor. If the architect's decision is unacceptable to either party, the AIA standard forms call for formal mediation, with arbitration to follow if mediation does not succeed. Both are ways of resolving disputes without the delay and expense of courtroom proceedings.
- An agreement for evaluation of facility operation—perhaps a joint inspection by you and your architect within one year after the building is occupied—will help to serve as a checkup that the building is being used and maintained properly.

## What If There Are Too Many Unknowns?

Sometimes, the owner and the architect may discover that 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 a known set of services. If this is the case, engage the architect to provide project definition and other predesign services first, with remaining phases and services to be determined later.

# Services

available from **architects**

## Project Administration & Management Services

Project administration

Disciplines coordination/  
documents checking

Agency consulting/  
review approval

Value analysis balanced  
with budget & program

Schedule development/  
monitoring of the work

Evaluation of budget &  
preliminary estimate of  
cost of the work

Presentation

Construction  
management

## Evaluation & Planning Services

Programming

Functional relationships/  
flow diagrams

Existing facilities surveys

Marketing studies

Economic  
feasibility studies

Project financing

Site analysis, selection  
& development planning

Detailed site  
utility studies

On-site & off-site  
utility studies

Environmental studies  
& reports

Zoning process assistance

## Design Services

Architectural design  
documentation

Structural design/  
documentation

Mechanical design/  
documentation

Electrical design/  
documentation

Civil design/  
documentation

Landscape design/  
documentation

Interior design/  
documentation

Special design/  
documentation

Material research &  
specifications

Tenant-related services

As the owner, you will find it helpful to review this chart with your architect to acquaint yourself with the professional services your project may require.

### Bidding or Negotiation Services

Bidding materials  
Addenda/responding to bidder inquiries  
Bidder inquiries  
Bidding/negotiation  
Analysis of alternates/substitutions  
Special bidding  
Bid evaluation  
Contract award

### Contract Administration Services

Submittal services and rejection of defective work  
On-site visits  
Full-time on-site project representative  
Testing & inspection administration  
Supplemental documentation  
Quotation requests/change orders  
Contract cost accounting  
Furniture & equipment installation administration  
Interpretations & decisions  
Project close-out

### Facility Administration Services

Maintenance & operational programming  
Startup assistance  
Record drawing  
Warranty review  
Postcontract evaluation

The chart lists some of the services offered by architects. The chart groups services under broad classifications that track the services in AIA Document B141, Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect with Standard Form of Architect's Services.



# Negotiating

Owner-architect agreements spell out what you and your architect bring to

# the agreement

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 use: What is to be designed and built?
- Project site: Where will (might) it be built?
- Levels of quality and amenity
- Role of the project (in the owner's life, business, community, etc.)
- Schedule requirements or constraints
- Target date for completion
- Budget and sources of financing
- Anticipated key team members.

### Describe Project Tasks and Assign Responsibility for Each One

Owner and architect should identify the administrative, design, construction, and facility operation tasks that must be undertaken to achieve project objectives. The chart on pages 8–9 represents some of the services an architect may provide and is 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 an initial schedule, include all necessary tasks, even if they will be done by others (say, a regulatory agency's review).

### Identify Your Schedule Requirements

Place your 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—for example, obtaining financing or securing zoning approvals. Compare the time line with your target completion date and adjust one or both as appropriate.

*Advice:* The architect and other key team members who must live with the final project schedule should be included in the creation and revision of these schedule requirements.

### Take a Critical Look at the Results

Good project schedules allow enough time for decision making. Is your 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?

### 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 requirements outlined above.

### The Owner-Architect Agreement

If you've done your homework, the written agreement should follow without difficulty. You and your architect should now 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. A handshake or letter agreement is rarely sufficient to describe thoroughly all the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of the owner and architect.
- Use AIA documents. These standard forms of agreement, first developed in the 1880s, have been carefully reviewed, court-tested, and modified over many years of practice. Widely used by and accepted in the construction industry, they present a current consensus among organizations representing owners,

lawyers, contractors, engineers, and architects. AIA documents are coordinated with one another. 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 construction. These documents are readily available from most local AIA chapters or by calling 800-365-ARCH(2724). You will need to modify the AIA documents to adapt them to your particular project. However, do so with great care. Since these documents form a cohesive system of contractual relationships, even simple revisions in one agreement may cause complications in another document.

- Understand that your architect cannot warrant or guarantee results. As a provider of professional services, like your lawyer or doctor, an architect is required to perform to a professional standard. Courts recognize this, and so too must responsible clients.
- Consult both your legal and insurance counsels before signing any agreement.



# Compensating

Cost and value go hand in hand: appropriate professional

# your architect

compensation is important to meeting your goals.

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 frequently asked questions are addressed here.

### **How much should I expect to pay an architect?**

The amount of payment depends 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.

### **What methods of compensation are available?**

This is a matter for negotiation, but the following methods are in common use. Compensation may be based on one or more of them.

**Time-Based Methods** These include:

- *Multiple of Direct Personnel Expense*, in which salaries plus benefits are multiplied by a factor representing overhead and profit
- *Professional Fee Plus Expenses*, in which salaries, benefits, and overhead are the expense and the fee (representing profit) may be a multiplier, percentage, or lump sum
- *Hourly Billing Rates*, in which salaries, benefits, overhead, and profit are included in rates for designated personnel.

**Stipulated Sum** Compensation is stated as a dollar amount.

### **Percentage of Cost of the Work**

Compensation is calculated by applying an agreed-upon percentage to the estimated or actual cost of the work, whichever cost is most certain at the time the calculation is made.

**Square Footage** Compensation equals the square footage of the structure multiplied by a pricing factor.

**Unit Cost** Compensation is based on the number of certain units such as rooms, apartment units, etc.

**Royalty** Compensation is a share in the owner's income or profit derived from the project.

### **Suppose my project has many repetitive units, such as bedrooms or apartments. Does it make sense to use these units as a basis for compensation?**

It may. Will the number of units bear a reasonable relationship to the responsibilities of the architect? If the answer is yes, unit cost may be an appropriate method of compensation.

### **When does it make sense to consider hourly compensation?**

It makes good sense when there are many unknowns. Many projects begin with hourly billing and continue until the scope of the project is better defined and establishing another basis of compensation is possible. It may also make sense to use this approach for contract administration and special services, such as energy and economic analyses.

### **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.

### **What are reimbursable expenses?**

These are out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the architect on behalf of the owner, such as long-distance travel and communications, reproduction of contract documents, and authorized overtime premiums. Detailed in the owner-architect agreement, they are usually in addition to compensation for professional services and are 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; geotechnical 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?**

Discuss it. Try to 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 a separate basis. 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

Both you and the architect can take specific steps to help

## **project** on track

meet your quality, time, and budget goals.

Design and construction are team activities. Many individuals and firms come together to do a project. Often they will not have worked together before, and they 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 typically provides the following supporting services, although if need be the architect's supporting services may be expanded to include some of the services instead:

- 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 geotechnical engineering services and professional recommendations (including test borings or pits, soil-bearing values, percolation tests, air- and water-pollution tests, hazardous materials testing, 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 to meet the interests of the owner.

### Recognizing Some of the Fundamental Realities of Building

We spend more than \$300 billion annually for new construction and renovation projects 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 client's 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 the project requirements in detail. The analysis may also reveal latent problems or opportunities.

As design proceeds, important issues will surface. The architect's services bring increased client understanding of the project, and the project evolves as a result. Each milestone, usually marked by the submission of documents to the owner from the architect, should be used to assure continuing consensus on project scope, levels of quality, time constraints, estimated cost, and the owner's 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. Following is a summary of what the owner can do to keep the project running smoothly through design and construction.

### Schedule for Architect's Services

Carefully review the architect's schedule for services. Ask that the schedule be updated on a regular basis and after any major change in scope, services, or time requirements.

**Team Member** Take part in the appropriate portions of the project-planning process. Be sure that your own deadlines, as well as your own decision processes, are reflected in the schedule.

**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 is authorized to speak for you. Multiple sources of 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 minutes are prepared that clearly identify what was discussed, and what items require further action and by whom. 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.

**Milestones** The AIA standard forms of agreement designate three documentation submissions by the architect: schematic design, design development, and construction documents. You may wish to require additional submissions, recognizing that each can add 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—with contingencies—should be allocated for review of submissions?

**Decisions** Make decisions promptly. Keeping the project on hold 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 reflected in each submission will be further developed in the next. All questions should be resolved before construction 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.

### The Project Team: Owner, Architect, Contractor

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 and the architect 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 and the architect may choose to include the contractor as a member of

the team at the outset of design. 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 the contractor is selected, it is likely that the architect will assist with the bidding documents and the owner-contractor agreement forms as part of the architect's responsibility for preparing the construction contract documents. It is sound practice to engage the architect's assistance in the bidding or negotiation process and selection of the contractor.

### Maintaining the Professional Relationship

The architect's services should continue following the award of the construction contract. During construction, the architect can:

- Administer the construction contract. This includes evaluating the work for compliance with the contract documents, checking shop drawings and other submittals to confirm the contractor's understanding of the design, and checking the contractor's payment requisitions against the progress of the work.
- Make design changes during construction. These may be required due to unexpected conditions in the field, the need for further refinements in the design, or changes in your own requirements as construction proceeds.
- Inspect the facility to determine that it is complete and ready for use, and that the contractor is entitled to final payment.

Your architect's involvement with the project does not end there. As a design professional, the architect has a continuing interest in knowing that your building works. You may wish to retain the same firm to assist with start-up, to review operations at a later date, for tenant-related services, or for later alterations and modifications. You now have a working relationship with your architect, and no one knows your building better.

# The Value of an AIA Architect

The American Institute of Architects, founded in 1857, is the professional organization for more than 65,000 licensed architects and associated professionals. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., and nearly 300 state and local chapters worldwide, the AIA helps to build public awareness of architecture and supports the practice of architecture.

In addition to meeting professional standards for licensure to practice architecture, AIA members adhere to the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, assuring clients, the public, and colleagues of their dedication to high standards of professional practice. AIA members must also fulfill annual continuing education requirements to maintain their professional standing and to stay current in the profession.



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