

BERO ARCHITECTURE PLLC

ARCHITECTURE SUSTAINABILITY PRESERVATION

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SOME THOUGHTS ON HIRING AN ARCHITECT

Interview several architects (at least two; three is better). Ask for references. Discuss scope of services, fees, schedule, organization, and philosophy.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Architects can provide any or all of the following:

1. Preliminary Services: Advice on site selection/feasibility (or measurements and drawings of an existing building).
2. Programming: A written description of your needs which is used as the basis for design.
3. Schematic Design: Sketches of various alternate schemes which will satisfy your program. After receiving your comments a single scheme is developed.¹
4. Design Development: Drawings, outline specifications, and estimates which fix and further describe the size and character of the project.
5. Contract Documents: Working drawings and specifications describe the work in detail. They are used for competitive bidding, obtaining a building permit, and construction of the building.
6. Bidding: The Architect can help you find qualified bidders who are interested in constructing your project.
7. Contract Administration: Site visits from time to time to assist the Contractor with interpretation of the Contract Documents and to verify that, in general, the work conforms to the Documents. The Architect will also certify payments earned by the Contractor.
8. Many other services such as space utilization studies, assistance with obtaining zoning variances, and maintenance planning.

FEES

Do not be reluctant to discuss fees with the Architect. The following arrangements are common:

- A percentage of construction cost
- Hourly
- Lump Sum
- Lump sum fee plus expenses

¹ We often provide the first three services under a separate initial agreement with a client. At the completion of Schematic Design, the scope, budget, and schedule of construction are usually sufficiently settled to determine the scope, budget and schedule of further architectural services.

Some Thoughts on Hiring an Architect

Fee Amounts - Amounts vary based on the complexity and size of the project. Guidelines for fees are sometimes based on a percentage of the value of the work designed. Examples for full services in new construction (increase 10-50% when working with existing buildings):

- 12 - 20% of construction cost for a custom-designed residence, church, monumental building, etc.
- 7 - 10% + for the average (?) commercial building.
- 4 - 6% for a simple warehouse.

SCHEDULE

Ask the Architect for a proposed schedule of services. Be aware that:

- How quickly or slowly you make decisions during the design process will have a direct effect on the actual schedule.
- Unless you have great economic pressure on you to complete the work rapidly, take time to enjoy the design process and to consider your options as the design progresses.

ORGANIZATION

Different offices have different methods of completing projects. Those methods are often determined by the size of the office.

A small office consists of a principal or two, sometimes with a drafter to provide support. The principal will perform most functions including field measurements, programming, design, contract administration, etc. You will probably work with one person (the principal) for the life of the job.

A medium-size office will generally have several principals and support people. A principal is usually involved all the way through the project but does not do all the work. You will probably deal with a principal and a project architect during the course of the job. Bero Associates is a medium-size firm.

A large office consists of many principals, project architects, and support people. Each phase of the project may have a different specialist involved such as a designer or a contract administrator. A project architect will be your primary contact.

PHILOSOPHY

Each architect works differently from every other. Differences in training and experience, age, personal likes and dislikes; all have an affect on an architect's work and relation with clients. Discuss some of these items with each architect to get a feel for compatibility with you and your project. Ask what she considers important in her work.