

Know architect and his roles

Before you approach an architect to develop plans for your dream house, think about your goals for the project, the Michigan Association of Home Builders advises.

What kind of design and materials do you envision? Does your budget match your aspirations?

While your architect will help you think your project through, you should have a general understanding of your goals and resources to help you select the architect who's best for you.

Look at parts of projects similar to yours that you especially like. What is it about them you find appealing?

CONTACT THE owner and ask which architect they selected and why. Names and addresses of architects are available from the Detroit chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Keep in mind that some architecture firms specialize. Interview several architects.

When talking to candidates, ask to see photographs of projects they have worked on that are comparable to yours in size and type.

Ask for names of owners you can contact. Ask to meet any other members of the design team who may be involved in the project.

You should walk away from your meeting knowing how the architect expects to work with you and other members of the team. What does the architect see as the most important issues or considerations?

Is his style and approach similar to yours? Do you feel good about the architect as a person? Is the "chemistry" right?

DON'T HESITATE to ask questions. Think of the architect as a professional who will bring experience and specialized knowledge to your project.

Once you've found an architect you feel comfortable working with, sit down and discuss exactly what

services will be needed. Some owners bring their particular expertise to the owner-architect relationship; some will need step-by-step guidance.

Basic architectural services include: schematic design, design development, construction documents (working drawings, specifications and contract), bidding and negotiation (contractor selection), and construction contract administration.

BUT THE architect may be helpful in other ways such as providing financial feasibility studies, assisting in site selection and zoning applications, exploring energy-saving systems, providing landscape and interior design and helping you through the approval process required by many local jurisdictions.

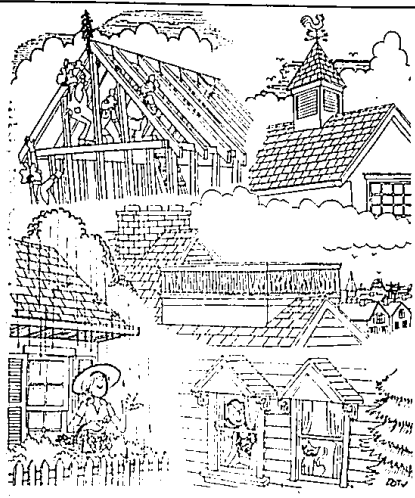
The complexity of the project will often dictate the level of service sup-

plied by the architect.

The formal agreement between you and your architect — the owner-architect agreement — spells out what both you and the architect expect from the professional relationship. If you've agreed to a list of services and discussed the budget, the formal agreement should follow without difficulty. Be sure to show the agreement to your lawyer before signing.

HOW MUCH MONEY an architect receives depends on how much work he does — the more complex or experimental the project, the more you should budget for architectural services.

Architects are sometimes paid a percentage of the construction cost. Other times, they charge an hourly rate and can estimate the total hours required to complete your project.



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