

# HIRING AN ARCHITECT

Now that you've come to the decision that you need an architect for the design of your new home or remodeling project, how do you go about finding a good architect?

First, it's important to have a good understanding of the definition of an architect and architecture, and what an architect brings to a project.

## Recommendation sources

- Friends who have experience with architect(s)
- Business associates who have experience with architect(s)
- Local building department
- Acquaintances' that have used an architect
- Realtors
- Builders
- American Institute of Architects
- The internet

When you have selected a few architects to interview, meet with them at the site (if you already have the lot) of the new home or at your current home. Both locations are relevant to the discussions (the architect's office/studio is not appropriate at this stage).

- Determine if you want an architect to lead you thru the design process or do you want to lead them?
- Explain your vision for your new home, in generalities and with some specifics. Try to limit it to around 5 minutes.
- Ask the architect to tell you about themselves/firm & explain how they might approach the project.

Listen to the answers the architect gives and how they explain their capabilities and vision. Does this sound like they understand *your* vision and you could work with them? You are listening for the architect's philosophy, without having them specifically state one. Do they listen to you when you want them to listen? Will they lead and create when you want direction? Although this is typically a first meeting, you should be evaluating the chemistry and ease of communication, two of the most important factors in hiring an architect. It's a sense or a feeling that will lead you to the right architect for you.

When you have either narrowed down the choices or have decided on the architect you want to work with, you can get some additional support for your decision by asking for references (realize no architect is going to give you a reference that won't speak highly of them), ask to see some design examples, but understand these designs were the result of the architect creating something specifically for another client (whether you like the design or not).

## Questions you shouldn't have to ask:

- Do you specialize in luxury home design?
- What's your design philosophy?
- How extensive is your experience?
- Do you like a lot of input from the client or a little?
- Are you licensed?
- Does my project interest you?
- What problems or challenges to you foresee?
- Will I be dealing with you throughout the project?
- How busy are you?
- Will you be able to start the project right away?
- How are you compensated?

Once you have selected an architect whom you feel confident will bring your vision to life, the actual designing of your home can begin.