



4 D ARCHITECTS

## How we work

Below is the list of steps we go through when we work together, from design through construction. It's a team process, and the goal is to work with you and your builders to make your dream project a reality.

### **Design, permits and bidding**

To get started, we help you develop a Residential Building Program, which is a brief list of rooms/spaces and their approximate sizes. We discuss the qualities of the building that are important to you, and important details of the rooms, such as creating displays of special items, or any other details that customize the space and make it more comfortable for you.

We visit the site and meet with you before we get started on the design. We also collect any local code information that is pertinent to your lot and the building. Ideally, you will send us a topographic survey of the lot before we visit the site, so that we can come prepared to review its unique features and opportunities.

In the design stage, we talk about the full uses of the various rooms, getting to a solid idea of how the various rooms relate to each other, the view, and the outdoors. Prior to the actual design drawings, we will need to be as specific as practical about the list that is the Residential Building Program. We also need to review the square footage in relationship to the overall construction budget.

We take you through the budget issues step by step. The total cost of the house will be the sum of hundreds of variables. Many of those highest impact cost items are in the finishes and others are in the bones of the building, the site work, the foundation, the framing and the heating system choices, to name a few. Our extensive experience has given us a specific awareness of systems costs and contractor pricing. We will share his information and these insights with you throughout the design of your home.

Next we begin Schematic Design Drawings. Our work in this phase includes floor plans drawn on the site plan and at least two elevations. We then meet to review these drawings. At this point, you should take some time to review the drawings, and then return with feedback and alternatives. For custom homes we often find that this schematic design stage takes two to three alternate plans before we arrive at the best choice. Our focus during this stage is to get the rooms positioned on the site to optimize the site features and to work them into the design. These schematic design sketches are quick and easy to produce. If you would like to look at different layouts and different architectural styles, this is the time to do it. We will work with you to confirm that you are ready to go into the next stage before proceeding to the Design Development Phase.

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In the Design Development Phase, we further define and detail the design of your home.

The following items will be addressed and included in the drawings:

- each room layout will be reviewed by developing furniture layouts and verifying that the rooms suit your specific needs
- definition of each space and its components, i.e. ceiling heights, framed opening or door alignments
- develop a preliminary room by room list of floor and wall finishes, built-in cabinets, etc.
- analysis of the relationship of the various rooms to the outdoor living space
- definition of outdoor living areas and the details of their design
- the look of the interior
- development of a conceptual structural system
- exterior materials will be further defined, we will discuss maintenance issues and cost
- review of display and related lighting design issues
- discussion of general lighting issues and your personal taste as it relates to the level of light in various rooms

During this phase, you may want to visit material showrooms to investigate the many items available. Should you decide to work with our office on the Interior Design stages of your project, our interior designer will visit some of these showrooms with you to help you review preliminary choices and to help direct you on issues of durability, cost, texture, and color.

We anticipate that we will spend 15-25 hours in a series of meetings and phone conversations to get through the two design phases for your home. If you have pre-selected a contractor, or if you elect to work with a different interior designer, that person should join in some of our discussions. You also might want to have the design estimated for cost at this point.

Next we move on to the building permit. We have found that making a simpler set of plans for the building department is a plus. The following items will be included in this set of permit drawings:

- the structural system, framing members and structural connection details
- the necessary construction details, not interior details
- all dimensions required for framing
- interior floor finishes, generic material identification
- door and window sizing notes on the drawings
- deck and terrace outlines and framing plans for decks and porches
- special cabinets, will be identified - not detailed
- interior stairs, shape and location
- generic exterior material selections
- driveway grading and minimal details

We assist with any communications with the building department until the permit has been obtained.

## **Lot development Plan**

This is a useful set of design services for larger lots and also helps to maximize small lot usage.

We review the house and the room locations in relationship to the view, sun angles, impact from neighboring properties and access to the various yard and garden areas from the indoor living areas. You can expand the plan to include a detailed landscape plan that defines the uses of the yard areas, the hardscapes and parking. In the end, you have a set of plans with far more detail than a basic house plan, including:

- garden locations and raised planting beds
- raised deck areas and handrails
- terrace areas and paving patterns
- retaining walls
- fences, location and design
- rockeries or retaining walls
- parking court, paths & hard surface locations and designs
- any built-in benches or seating areas
- barbecue area
- play areas
- water features

## **Interior Detailing and material specifications**

In this phase, we help you with the following interior detailing and material specification lists:

- fireplace mantel designs
- staircase and handrail details
- typical door and window detailing - a home may often accommodate more than one style of detail for the various types of rooms, i.e., perhaps a more formal detail in the larger "public" rooms and a simpler detail in the secondary rooms
- ceiling design and molding choices for all the primary rooms
- design layout of specialty built-ins; specifically, the kitchen, the den, a workroom, any stereo or TV cabinets
- delineation of and documentation of computer and communication systems

Our work will include the development of the material list that will assist the bidders with project pricing and materials ordering. We can work with you on the following materials list:

- generic interior finish materials list
- appliance list
- plumbing fixtures and fittings schedule
- door schedule
- cabinet schedule
- material allowance list for those materials not specified at the time of bidding

## **Lighting design**

Attention to lighting design is one of the qualities that makes a superior home. We work with you on lighting systems for the inside and outside your home.

We will be creating lighting plans, one for each floor plus a site lighting sheet and a fixture list. We find that there is a great deal of time spent actually selecting the final fixtures. The recessed fixtures are more direct to specify and we can do this with little or no involvement of your time. The selection of the decorative fixtures takes more time. The fixtures need to match the interior finishes and therefore we need to stay involved as the interior details evolve and you become more clear as to how the interior will look. This work will result in plan sheets for each floor, a site plan, details as required to define mounting and alignment and numerous Fixture Schedule sheets and specification sheets.

## **Field visits during construction**

The scope of our work in this phase of the project varies according to the complexity of the project, the experience of the contractor, the number of field changes, and the degree of detailing. When site visits are required, we will do our best to maximize their effectiveness. Our drawings are very thorough and often we only need to talk on the phone and make a visit every other month.

We will meet with you at the site to review the final details, tune up final material selections, and review any other late-breaking ideas.

Our involvement can vary greatly during this phase of the work. We have had clients who have required practically no assistance during construction, and others who want us at the site every other week. We will respond to your direction and needs.

## **Construction cost accounting review**

Another service that we can provide for you is to keep track of the monthly draw process. This process varies depending on the type of contract that you enter into with the contractor. Should you be working on a "cost plus" contract, our work involves having the contractor send us the details of his monthly payment request. We will closely review them and our bookkeeper will numerically audit the submitted paperwork. We will inquire directly to the contractor regarding any questions we might have. On "cost plus" jobs we usually like to start the project with a good line item budget. This gives us an opportunity to compare the actual cost against an original budget. This has worked in the past, although it is a bit unusual. We will keep a monthly log of all costs and submit that and an approved payment request amount to you for your release of funds. Should you enter into a "fixed cost" contract, the monthly review is more involved with percent of completion issues and review of more detailed change orders.