



HOW TO HIRE AN BUILDING DESIGNER



Welcome.

I have prepared this guide after seeing so many people struggle with understanding the design and construction process. This process can seem like a complex and frightening roadblock for those who haven't been through it before. The first and most important step is to find and hire your building designer.

You may be wondering: how do I find the right building designer for my project? Do I really need to hire an building designer? How much are building designers fees? What about builders? And most importantly: what are the key, critical steps I need to take to ensure that I hire the building designer that is the perfect match for my project?

In the following pages, you will discover the answers to these questions – and more.

I hope you enjoy this guide and look forward to your feedback on the contents.

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Nothing is more exciting than creating a new building whether it's your home or a commercial project and nothing will affect the success of your project more than the right building designer. The building designer determines the design and function of a building as well as the emotional toll and financial costs involved in its construction. Finding your perfect match in an building designer is not impossible and the following seven points can guide you along the way. Use these to help analyze the personality, design strategy and communication skills of your candidates. Your goal is to find the right building designer for your project, for your budget and for you.

1. Finding a building designer

Like many other fields, word of mouth is the best way to look for a building designer. Ask family, friends and professional colleagues for referrals. Is there a particular home you admire? A knock on the door can yield an introduction to your project's potential building designer. Professional organisations such as your local building design association are also great sources to find building designer. Be sure to visit web sites of your candidates. Look at their previous work. Get a feel for what is their design style and language – is it about blending in the neighborhood, is it environmentally sound designs or is it about making a big statement? Then, start a conversation. Make an appointment for a consultation. Meeting face to face will help you decide if it is a fit.

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2. A building designer's biggest success and largest obstacle

How will the building designer approach your project? Let them know the most important aspects of your project and ask how they will be incorporated into a process. If you are doing a home remodel or an addition, start with what aspects of your home you currently like and ask how they can be improved? Typically, a remodel should try and blend seamlessly with the rest of the home. Ask how will this be achieved? Even though the building designer might have an attractive portfolio and good references you will still want to make sure their design process and approach is right for you and your project.

3. Signature Style: Who's got it and do you want it?

It is common for an building designer to be known by a certain design style – although not all the time. The style taken is about you and what your needs are and the block. Have plenty of examples of the look you want; these can be found from catalogs, magazines or the Internet. Environmentally friendly, sustainable “green” designs and construction however can be applied to any style. Discuss the importance of these elements with your building designer from the outset.

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4. Meet your project building designer

Signing a contract with a building designer representing an designing firm does not necessarily mean that person will be your project building designer. Actually, outside of single- building designer owned operations, this is common procedure. Be sure to meet the project building designer before making any final decisions. Being able to communicate freely and openly with your project building designer is vital to the success of your project. You should share a clear understanding of the project with your building designer and feel completely comfortable.

5. The full-service building designer firm

Conceptual renderings and blueprints are not the only services architectural and planning firms provide. Ask about other services your candidate's firm offers. Ask about benefits of specific services to you and their corresponding costs. Ask your building designer if there are any additional services offered and how they could be useful to you for your particular project. If a firm doesn't offer a requested service, they may be able to refer a firm that does.

Below is a glimpse into some additional services a typical architectural firm provides:

- Project Need & Option Study
- Planning
- Evaluation Of Potential Building Block
- Architectural Design

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- Comprehensive Construction Documents
 - Interior Design, colours etc
 - Furniture, Furnishings & Appliance Specifications
 - Construction Administration

6. Figuring out the fees

Building Designer's fees may be worked out in various ways so you need to ask. Some may be calculated on a project basis, some charge on an hourly rate and some on a percentage. At the start of the design stage it is good to have this conversation with your designer to estimate what the fees are likely to be.

Billing monthly is the industry standard. Also, ask when payment is expected and the preferred method of payment, i.e. check, credit card, etc. It is good to keep in mind that there will be other consultant fees that may not be known at the initial stage of quoting until the project has advanced for those fees to be calculated.

The most important thing about fees is complete transparency. Insist upon it no matter how big or small the project is.

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7. Hiring a Contractor

An experienced building designer may have a list of builders they like to work with. Your building designer should be able to help you choose the best builder for your project. Always get multiple tenders on the construction of your project – even if you already have a builder in mind. This is an industry standard and gives you better leverage at the bargaining table. Additionally, having a builder during the design process ensures you will not be building more than you can afford.

These tips are meant as a guide to choosing the best building designer for your project. You will be working very closely with your building designer on what may be one of the biggest investments of your life. Not only are a building designer answers to your questions important, but how they are answered speaks volumes, too. Did they take time for details to clear up any confusion? Did you feel comfortable with them? Did they conduct business in a transparent manner? The creation process is exciting but can get intimidating at times, however choosing the right team can make it an enjoyable process. That team always starts with choosing the right building designer and we hope these tips will help you with that for your next project.

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The Next Step

Congratulations! You now have the key information that will help you lay a successful foundation for understanding how to find and hire a building designer.

Unfortunately, I can't include every important piece of information about this most important step in the design and construction process successfully in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the requirements differ based on a multitude of factors. But with the 7 steps explained in this guide, you have the critical information to help you hire the building designer that will ensure that your project is a success.

If you are in the process of looking for a building designer for your project, let's talk. I can help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure. I offer a custom **need and options review** where I will identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically, the **need and options review** saves my clients *thousands of dollars* and *weeks* of lost time, not to mention the stress and headache of getting something wrong.

To read more about the **need and options review** as well as the price for this service and why it is critically important to your project's success visit my website. If you are ready to talk now, please give me a call.

Best wishes for the success of your project!

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