



## The Steps to Successful Architecture and Interior Design

The following is a sequence of steps most often taken in order to successfully develop an architectural project and create a high quality environment to live or work in. As every design project has unique requirements, often there will be deviation from this process. However this outline will help to provide you with insight to the design and construction process and give you a greater understanding of the steps you will be taking.

The first step in the process is the Programming and Documentation phase. The purpose of this phase is to acquire the necessary information to design and construct your project. The programming aspect entails discussion between you and your architect as to the objectives for the project. This would include discussion of how you envision use of the new spaces. From these conversations you and your architect will be able to develop a program for the project outlining all requirements.

The documentation aspect entails identifying any existing conditions which may affect design and construction. Your architect or designer will visit the site and conduct a survey. This survey will be used to create a drawing in Auto Cad of your existing building, it's existing spaces, mechanical equipment, vertical circulation and its overall current configuration. Using this drawing, schematic designs can be created.

The second step is the Schematic Design phase consisting of basic planning in which a series of design concepts are produced to illustrate alternatives available to you given the existing conditions and your programmatic requirements. These schematic designs will show the arrangement of spaces with relation to each other in plan. Depending on the program of your project they may include partitions, doors, windows, stairs, millwork, plumbing fixtures and proposed furniture layouts. As well as any exterior restoration or renovation work required. A number of schematic ideas will be generated which are then discussed with you and refined until an agreeable plan is found. Often elements from various schematic ideas are hybrid together to find the correct solution.

The Design Development phase is the third step which begins after the Schematic Design has been approved. This step further develops the design, including special features and details of the visual concept and any elements that may differ from the original design criteria. This development will be presented and discussed with you.

At about this point in the process your architect or designer will assist you in securing the services of any engineers that may be required based upon the scope of the project. This may include the services of a mechanical/electrical/plumbing/sprinkler engineer (this is typically a single engineering firm), a structural engineer, civil engineer (to handle site conditions and water drainage), a code consultant to help navigate local codes, and potentially a consultant to advise on sustainable design. Throughout the project your architect will work to coordinate these consultants and engineers and serve as your liaison to them.

The fourth step in the process is the Construction Documents phase. This consists of drawings and specifications for the purpose of assisting you in obtaining bids and construction permits as well as constructing the project. This is often what people call the "blue prints". Construction Documents will often include the following:



- Demolition Plan, indicating all elements of the existing space to be removed
- Dimensioned Floor Plans, indicating the location and types of partitions, windows, doors, millwork, stair cases, elevators, etc.
- Ceiling plans, showing height, material and lighting layout
- Electrical and data plan showing locations of receptacles
- Finish plans and schedules, showing the location and type of paint, wall coverings, wood finishes, carpeting, floor coverings, fabrics and other special finishes
- Elevations as required to show the walls of the spaces as if looked at straight on – this helps the contractor to place elements vertically, ie. the location of a wall sconce on the wall, etc. This also is applied for the exterior of the building.
- Details, as required to convey the design intent of the project – this includes how particular pieces come together and connect or how a fabricator will be required to construct components of the project.
- Specifications, door and hardware schedule, lighting schedule, plumbing schedule, and finish schedule.

The architect or designer will work closely with all engineers and consultants to ensure that their construction documents are in keeping with the design intent of the project while at the same time continue to coordinate properly between each discipline. This will ensure a more timely delivery of the project while minimizing conflicts arising on the construction site.

The fifth step is the Bidding and Negotiation phase in which your architect will assist you in obtaining bids and help you in evaluating and selecting a general contractor.

Step six is the Construction Observation phase of the project. Throughout the construction of your project your architect or designer will act as your representative to the contractor. This will likely include attending site meetings during construction to ensure the project is being built per the decisions that have been made throughout the design process. Your architect or designer will keep you informed of the general progress and quality of the work being performed, review and approve submittals made by the contractor, review the contractors requests for payment, answer questions from the contractor regarding issues arising due to site conditions and prepare and issue punch lists. Throughout the construction phase of the project your architect or designer will help you in making decisions brought about by unforeseen conditions arising during construction.

As you continue to consider undertaking the process of creating your ideal environment for either personal use or as an investment, you might consider taking the initial step of gathering any preexisting drawings or plot plans of your property and building. Once you retain the services of an architect or designer he/she will be able to help you navigate these documents and use them as a start point.