



## **Do I need an architect?**

*How architects can also serve as trusted advisors*

Construction. Dreaming about the end product is easy, but managing the budget and the process is much more difficult. Whether you are visualizing a new build, embarking on a renovation or considering an addition, start by consulting an architect.

### **Vision**

Architects see the big picture when it comes to your project. They help you explore what appeals to you aesthetically and what you require functionally. Together with your architect, you develop and refine a vision for the project. Your architect will lead you through an exercise to help you explore the needs of those who will live, work or play in the space you create. Plus, when architects are involved at the earliest planning stage, they gain more opportunities to develop creative solutions, and propose ways to reduce costs.

### **Design**

Once you've determined your needs and requirements, the design phase begins. Your architect gives shape to your vision through drawings and written specifications that define construction methods, materials, equipment and standards for workmanship your contractor will follow. You will provide feedback and your architect will incorporate your feedback into plans that will eventually guide construction.

### **Cost**

While it's true that an architect's fees have an upfront cost, hiring an architect can actually save you money in many ways. Architects can monitor your budget and negotiate to get the best materials and workmanship at a good price. An architect's design can reduce energy and maintenance costs. They can turn a challenging space into a thriving, workable building site. And, thorough drawings also make it easier for the contractor to accurately price and build your project and curtail costly changes during the construction phase.

An architect's compensation can be based on time, a stipulated sum, a percentage of cost of work, the project's square footage, unit cost (based on number of rooms/apartments, etc.), or royalty in which compensation is a share of the profit derived from the project. Time-based compensation and stipulated sums are most common.

### **Construction**

Architects serve as project leaders. If your project requires engineering or other design services, the architect can coordinate this team of experts. Your architect will sort out complex building codes and zoning laws, and will help you find qualified construction contractors based on your requirements. Finally, your architect will visit the construction site to help verify that the project is being built according to plans and specifications.

*\*content sourced from [howdesignworks.aia.org](http://howdesignworks.aia.org)*