

Design Project Planner



A step-by-step guide to help you better understand the design process and get your project off to the right start

Learn How-to

- ❖ Discover the design possibilities
- ❖ Understand your own style
- ❖ Define the scope of your project
- ❖ Set a preliminary budget
- ❖ Take the 1st step and consider your options in a cost-effective way

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What are the biggest worries most homeowners face when building a new home, room addition or remodel?

- ✓ **Not staying within their budget**
- ✓ **Being overwhelmed by the process**
- ✓ **Not knowing how to find the best potential design options**

These are common concerns and they often do happen. Why?

Because not enough time is spent understanding the needs, desires and possibilities before moving into the final design and construction phase.

And rushing ahead often leads to “designing while building” - which is an expensive way to go with results that can be disappointing.

What makes for a more successful project?

Identifying what you want, prioritizing for your budget, understanding the decisions that will need to be made and having the right architect as a partner.

When these pieces are in place, it's much easier to control costs, schedules and the process.

This Planner is a step-by-step guide that can help you consider the first steps that need to happen before you decide on the best design for your home and begin construction.

Questions about a project or your options? Call or email _____

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Here's what's included

1. Building Project Roadmap

A description of the basic process from beginning to end

2. How to Define Your Project

Understanding all the options

3. Building Cost Estimator

A simple do-it-yourself worksheet to estimate a ballpark budget for your project

4. How to Find Your Style

You have one (even if you don't know what it's called)

5. What Does an Architect Do and Should You Hire One?

Hint: It goes far beyond drawing plans

6. How to Find the Right Architect

Questions to ask when hiring

7. How to Determine Your Readiness

A straightforward method to let you know if you're ready for the Design Phase

8. Analysis & Feasibility Study

A low cost commitment when you're not yet ready to make a final decision

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Building Project Roadmap

Step 1: Research Phase: Begin studying all design types and see which ones you like, including materials and finishes. Note if there are common elements you're drawn to. If remodeling, look for design examples of those rooms. Make a list of what features your family needs and questions you have as you go through your research. Don't underestimate the importance of gathering information and considering all ideas.

Step 2: Architectural Analysis & Feasibility Consult: This can let you know if your initial ideas are feasible or if there are other options, as well as whether there are any site or budget restrictions that might constrain your project.

Step 3: Architectural Preliminary Design: As you begin reflecting on choices, explore your ideas sketched out to help you consider other scenarios.

Step 4: Design Phase: Continue working with your architect as you customize your design and develop the details.

Step 5: Construction Documents: This step includes completion of drawings needed to gain permit approval and build your project.

Step 6: Hire Your Builder: Your architect can assist in recommendations, contract negotiations and help you make the decision of who might be the best fit.

Step 7: Building Your Project: This is the fun part, watching your dreams expressed on paper rise up in reality. But it's also a critical time as decisions continue to be made. Your architect answers contractor's questions, helps make final decisions and visits the site.

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Defining Your Project

The decision to remodel, renovate or build new can be confusing. A room addition or enlarging a kitchen can be the perfect way to meet the changing needs of your family but a whole house remodel can often be more time-consuming and expensive than building new. Yet it's a great solution when you love your neighborhood.

Of course, building new comes with its own challenges, starting with removing an existing house on your lot or finding new land. But if you're ready to start fresh, this option allows you to begin with a blank page - and the end result is getting the house exactly like you want.

An architect can help you consider all your options, including advantages and constraints and advise what might work best for your family. Remember, it's OK to dream big in the beginning. Sometimes the best ideas get tossed early and are never reconsidered. Budget, land restrictions and regulations are a big factor for almost everyone however, so reality always has to be introduced. But an architect can guide you in defining what's most important and how to prioritize for your budget.

Answer these questions to help define your end goals

- 1. Does your current house meet your needs or could it be improved?**
- 2. Which rooms work or which need renovating to complement your family's lifestyle?**
- 3. Are there changes coming to your household? Parents moving in, kids going off to college or a baby on the way?**
- 4. Who are the people in your home that you'd be primarily designing for?**
- 5. Can you prioritize your family's needs or what's included on your wish list?**
- 6. What is your preliminary budget and timeframe for this project?**

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Architectural & Planning Services

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Building Cost Estimator

There are too many variables to create an accurate or meaningful estimate when beginning to think about a project. Size, materials and difficulty of the site are just a few of the factors that greatly influence price. But most owners have an upper limit they don't want to exceed.

Depending on your specific area and the level of finishes, price per square foot is a common means to create a preliminary budget. Your architect can help you estimate your costs. These numbers below are for example only.

New Home Cost Estimator

Style	Standard	Medium	Luxury
<u>SF</u>	<u>Cost/Sq.Ft</u>	<u>Cost/Sq.Ft.</u>	<u>Cost/Sq.Ft.</u>
	\$200	\$250	\$300
1,000	\$200,000	\$250,000	\$300,000
2,000	\$400,000	\$500,000	\$600,000
3,000	\$600,000	\$750,000	\$900,000

Renovation Cost Estimator

Style	Standard	Medium	Luxury
<u>SF</u>	<u>Cost/Sq.Ft</u>	<u>Cost/Sq.Ft.</u>	<u>Cost/Sq.Ft.</u>
	\$300	\$350	\$400
1,000	\$300,000	\$350,000	\$400,000
1,500	\$450,000	\$525,000	\$600,000
2,000	\$600,000	\$700,000	\$800,000

Estimate Your Cost

<u>Style</u>	<u>Cost</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Estimate Your Cost

<u>Style</u>	<u>Cost</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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Finding Your Style

Are you overwhelmed with the thought of designing a new home or remodel? Gathering ideas used to start by tearing pages out of magazines that appealed to you, even if you weren't exactly clear on why they did. Or you may know exactly what you want but struggle to put it into words.

Great architects are also great listeners and communicators. They know how to help you express what you're looking for. But there are more design options and information sources today than ever, which can make it even more confusing to know where to start.

Here are 5 simple questions to consider when beginning to research or gather information.

- 1. What characteristics would a perfect home have for you?**
- 2. When you look at other homes, notice whether you're drawn to traditional, modern, mountain or urban design? Is there a common element you like?**
- 3. If you could choose only one, what would be the element or feature in your home that is most important to you?**
- 4. Many homeowners don't know what they want until they see it. Can you find examples of what appeals to you, even if you don't understand why?**
- 5. Choose 3 design elements in all the homes you've lived in that you liked the most?**

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Should You Hire an Architect?

If you haven't worked with an architect before on a custom design or solution you may wonder if you even need one.

But consider the difference a licensed architect can make, working with you to create a design that is customized specifically for your family alone. They see the big picture – exterior and interior and the best use of your space.

Here are a few ideas from the American Institute of Architects on how hiring an architect can help you end up with a well-designed project and add value to your home.

- ❖ Architects understand your special needs and translate them into square feet and three dimensional space
- ❖ They're creative problem solvers. They can show you alternatives you might not have even thought of.
- ❖ A well designed project can be built more efficiently and economically.
- ❖ Thorough plans make it easier for the contractor to accurately price and build your project.
- ❖ Architects design energy-efficient structures maximizing effects of the sun and natural light.
- ❖ They work with you and your budget, helping you select and prioritize your project.
- ❖ If your project requires an engineer or other consultants, the architect can coordinate and lead the team.
- ❖ Good design sells and a well-designed home has a higher resale value.

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What Exactly Does an Architect Do?

An architect's role begins by helping you decide and define your design style and how to integrate it best with what you need. But they're also your partner throughout the project. Here are a few examples of the role they can play.

- ✓ Discuss your ideas and needs for the project. Review if there are any restrictions on where or what you can build so that the design will be in compliance with the local building codes, planning regulations and homeowner associations.
- ✓ Site design is one of the most important aspects to take advantage of your lot contours, sun and natural light. With your input, the architect will create preliminary sketches to show the general layout of the project, rooms and site.
- ✓ After homeowner approval, detailed drawings are refined, including floor plans and materials.
- ✓ After homeowner design approval, detailed construction documents and specifications are prepared. This is what the contractor will use to bid the construction cost and build the project.
- ✓ At the homeowners' request, the architect can assist in interviewing contractors. They will also assist in choosing the consultants needed for the project and lead the team of professionals to best work with you.
- ✓ Provide visits to the site as construction continues to see if what is being built is in line with your approved design.

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Finding the Right Architect

Not all architects are created equal and it's important to find the best fit – with your personality, design needs and experience.

Choosing the right partner can make all the difference when planning, designing and building your project. When considering architects, here are questions you might want to ask them to better understand the value they will bring and how they'll help you achieve your goals.

1. What experience do you have with designing residential homes?
2. Will you work with us personally creating our design or does the project get handed off to someone else in your office?
3. Can your design help us add value and maximize the return on investment?
4. Do you offer a pre-design analysis service to help us make the decision whether we should move into the design phase?
5. If you see any initial challenges for our type of project, will you let us know if they can be reasonably overcome?
6. Do you let your clients know if their budget, timeline or scope of project is unrealistic?
7. How can you help us communicate our ideas, needs and wants?
8. What can we do on our part to help you help us?
9. How can we all successfully work together during the course of the project?
10. What is your fee rate and are there different options?

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Are You Ready to Start Designing?

This scale can help you decide if you're ready to begin designing your project.

Don't worry if you're not at 10 or close to it on all the questions. It just means you might want to continue working on key elements or ask more questions to fill in the knowledge gaps.

You don't want to be paralyzed with inaction but don't make the mistake of rushing into final design or construction before you're ready. Making changes during construction is often where the budget and time schedule gets broken.

Questions

Slider 0-10 Scale (0 = low 10 = high)

How clear are you on exactly the design you need and want?

0 _____ 10

Have you considered the options your house or site could accommodate?

0 _____ 10

How confident are you that your budget is adequate to achieve your needs?

0 _____ 10

Do you understand the process for a project to be completed on time and on budget?

0 _____ 10

What is your overall rating for readiness?

0 _____ 10

Questions about a project or your options? Call or email _____

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Analysis and Feasibility Study

Are you looking for a solution to a problem a well-thought out design could solve? Not sure about what choices are available or what is feasible? Here are a few ways we can help.

1. Are you considering a site to build your dream home?
2. Have you outgrown your current house or has it outgrown you?
3. Is your kitchen overdue for a renovation?
4. Do you need a main-floor master suite or an update?
5. Will you be aging-in-place and wonder what options could help make that possible?
6. Are your bathrooms ready for the modern designs now available?
7. Could you use a flex room that can serve as an office, study or guest room, whenever it's needed?

If you'd like to take the next step from our free initial consultation but aren't yet ready to commit to a project, we can provide a low-cost analysis to help you eliminate assumptions, identify constraints and uncover some possibilities.

After meeting with you on-site and discussing your preliminary needs, we'll research the project for any roadblocks and identify possible solutions. It's a low risk choice for you to gain valuable information that may help you decide whether you want to proceed. If you decide to go forward and hire us, we'll deduct that charge from your contract fee.