

10 Questions To Ask Before Hiring An Architect

Asking architects the right questions is key to getting the home you want. You can't build the custom home of your dreams without a proper plan in place, and many assume that there's no one better to help you design said plan than a qualified architect. Selecting the right architect for your project is easier said than done, as there are several factors to take into consideration. Of course, you want to make sure the professional you choose will collaborate effectively with you and your home builder during the design phase to ensure you love your home and that it is ready on time and on budget. Here are the top 10 questions to ask before hiring an architect.

What are the core values and principles you refer to when designing homes?

Answers to this question will vary greatly, but look for thoughtful answers such as: functionality, a connection with the outdoors, energy-efficiency, conversations (asking questions), a collaborative design process and transparency throughout the project.

1



CORE
VALUES

How will you gather information about my needs, goals, vision, ideas, etc.?

For everything to go well, your design team will need to gather a lot of information from you (needs, goals, design priorities, lifestyle attributes, design ideas, inspiration photos, etc.). They will use all of that information to make informed decisions about your design. Having a clear and systematic way of gathering that information is a really good sign.

2

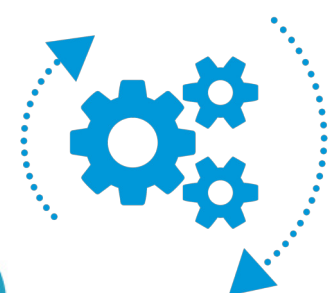


GOALS
& VISION

What are the steps in your architectural design process and what is the experience like for clients?

This should paint a picture of how they operate and how they organize their process to deliver a home you'll love through a process you won't regret.

3

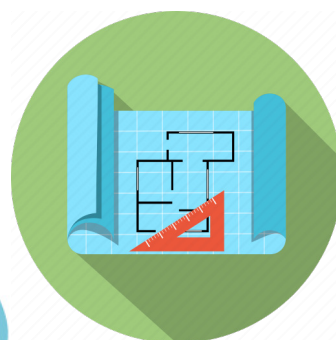


ORGANIZED
PROCESS

What will you show me along the way to explain the project and help me visualize the design (models, drawings, sketches, 2-D or 3-D renderings)?

This will give insight into how they help their clients visualize their home during this design phase. If you know it will likely be difficult for you to visualize your future home, the more tools the better.

4



DESIGN
CONCEPT

What do you see as important considerations or possible challenges in my project?

Listening to the architect speak about this will give you a glimpse into how they approach problems and identify potential solutions.

5



SOLUTIONS
ORIENTED

Pro-Tip:

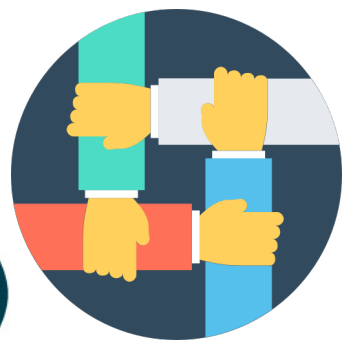
"Home builders work closely with different architects, taking their plans and bringing them to life in the real world of material, time and budgets. They are uniquely positioned to assess the work of architects, so getting the advice of a top of the market builder and asking if they have a recommendation for an architect is valuable."



Who on your team fleshes out the initial design concept, and who takes it from there to finalize the plans?

It is important to be sure that the experienced veterans and visionaries will have a hand in designing your initial concept. The answer will also give you more information about the experience and strengths of their entire team.

6



TEAMWORK

What is your current workload and capacity? What is the proposed timeline for delivering a design for a home like mine?

You'll want to know how long it will take for a preliminary design concept (basic floor plan and elevation) to be developed as well as how long it will take to finalize plans in CAD. Likely even before you have a preliminary design concept, your builder-- who will ensure that your design aligns with your budget-- should be included in the conversation.

7



TIMELINE

What is your fee structure? What is included in your basic services and what services would incur additional fees?

This will help you to better understand their program and serve to establish clear expectations for costs and payments.

8



FEE STRUCTURE

If the scope of the project changes later, will there be additional fees? How will the fees be calculated and communicated to me?

During this phase, changes in the scope of the project are possible. You may change your mind about design aspects, your builder may suggest cost-saving tweaks, or the architect may run into some kind of unforeseeable obstacle. You'll want to know how the architect handles fees in those situations.

9



ADDITIONAL FEES

Can you provide a list of references?

Be sure to follow up with their references. It's a given that the references will be clients who had a positive experience with the architect, but these conversations can be helpful in getting a feel for what the architect's specific strengths are.

10



REFERENCES