

# Working With an Architect

## On your residential project



The American Institute of Architects, founded in 1857, is a professional organization of more than 83,000 licensed architects and associated professionals. Headquartered in Washington DC, with nearly 300 state and local chapters nationwide, the AIA helps to build public awareness of architecture and supports the practice of architecture.

**AIA Minnesota** members are architects licensed by the state and required to adhere to the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, assuring clients, the public, and colleagues of their dedication to high standards of professional practice.

### Who Is An Architect?

Architects are required to meet rigorous education requirements, pass a licensing exam, complete continuing education, and to maintain their license. Architects are the only people, who by training and education are licensed by the State to prepare plans for the construction of most buildings. They are trained to solve complicated problems addressing the needs of the owner, the resources available, the restrictions of legal regulations, the selection of appropriate materials and design of energy efficient structures. As licensed professionals they must protect the health, safety and welfare of the public, coordinating the multiple parts and systems in buildings making them safe for their inhabitants. Trained in design, the professional practice of architecture encompasses historic, cultural, construction, material and aesthetic considerations.

### Architects Are Your Advocate

An AIA Architect's education, training, experience and vision serves to not only maximize your investment, but also provides a more creative, functional, pleasing and lasting environment. AN AIA Architect acts as the owner's agent to represent your best interest, protecting the integrity of the project throughout the entire design and build process. An AIA architect will work with you, tailoring the design to suit your personality, lifestyle, needs and budget. They are trained to see the big picture, find a balance between function, aesthetics, economics and the numerous cities, state and environmental codes and regulations.

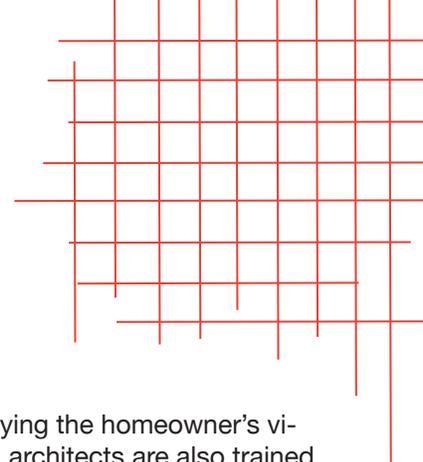
### The Value of Services Offered By An Architect

Architects work with clients to understand their needs, desires and resources, to use them wisely, and develop a plan that adds value to their investment. An Architect can work with you to evaluate a new home site or an existing house, measure and prepare plans, define the project, coordinate site design and building systems, and more.

Throughout the design process, your architect works with you in a step-by-step process starting with the larger design issues and moving toward detailed construction drawings and specifications. An architect will guide you through the planning, design and construction to arrive at a solution that reflects your needs and desires, maintains the design integrity, acknowledges your budget, and ensures that you receive the best value for your investment.

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# THE PROCESS



## Step 1: Site & Programming

Programming is the process of discovery. The initial conversation and work focuses on identifying the homeowner's vision, goals and priorities. Depending on the homeowner's needs and the scale of the project, architects are also trained to research codes, zoning and building requirements, make recommendations on soils testing and coordinate surveys. Site planning can be a significant consideration or focus on a very specific aspect including light, views, drainage, landscaping, privacy and connections. An open discussion on budget expectations is critical to a successful project.

## Step 2: Schematic Design

Schematic design is focused on developing broad ideas, and defining the direction and the scope of work to be included. This includes identifying all of the challenges and opportunities, as well as developing potential options. Typically this will include site and/or floor plans, exterior views, and may include modeling or other work that explores the overall design of the project.

## Step 3: Design Development

Refinement, exploration and research occur during this phase including window selection, defining details and finishes, studies of various interior and exterior materials, plumbing selections, and other systems to be incorporated. The architectural drawings will typically include refined floor plans, exterior and interior elevations, and usually sections and preliminary details.

## Step 4: Preparation of the Construction Documents (CDs)

Construction documents are the graphic (drawings) and written (specifications) directions of how things are to be built. This defines the quality and level of craftsmanship, coordination of structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and relationship to the site. Work focuses on refined, detailed drawings including floor plans, elevations, building and wall sections, and details required for permit, pricing, and construction.

## Step 5: Bid Process and Selecting a Contractor

Architects can help a client find qualified contractors, including any that a client would like to have bid on their project. This may occur during an earlier step, if a contractor is selected early on, or after the construction documents are completed. The architect can help clients evaluate bids, clarify questions, define schedules and coordinate contracts.

## Step 6: Construction Phase - Contract Administration

In this phase the architect makes site visits as defined in the contract and works with the contractor to coordinate construction through completion of the project. This includes: coordinating structural and other construction questions, and review of window, cabinetry, plumbing and appliance selections. The architect reviews pay requests, issues change orders, and acts as the owners agent to help assure a successful project.

As a collaborative process, you and your architect can determine what services outlined above are appropriate for your budget and project.

Visit [aia-mn.org](http://aia-mn.org) for more resources about working with an architect.