

# Working with an architect

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# Working with an architect

WHERE TO START, HOW TO CHOOSE AND WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WORKING WITH AN ARCHITECT.

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Architecture  
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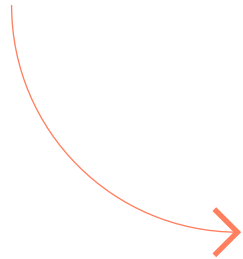
# Welcome

We have prepared this guide after seeing so many people struggle to understand the design and construction process. For some this process can seem like a complex and frightening roadblock for those who haven't been through it before. The first and most important step is to find and hire your architect.

You may be wondering: how do I find the right architect for my project? Do I really need to hire an architect? How much are architects fees? Who will build my project? And most importantly: what are the key, critical steps I need to take to ensure that I hire the architect that is the perfect match for my project?

In the following pages, you will discover the answers to these questions - and more.

We hope you enjoy this guide and it helps make the path ahead clearer.



**WORKING WITH AN ARCHITECT**



# Why you need an architect

## DOESN'T THE BUILDER DESIGN MY SPACE, WHY SHOULD I GET AN ARCHITECT?

Architects are highly trained professionals that have spent numerous years studying, and are registered and regulated by the Board of Architects in their state. They offer a very different level of service to the building designer who knocks up a few quick plans, or the mate next door who can use autocad!

Architects are trained to translate your brief and requirements for your project into a design solution that maximises the potential of your project. They understand the bigger picture, translating your brief in ways that can offer hidden opportunities, reduce costs or increase efficiencies. Architects understand how form, function, materiality and scale all have to work together to deliver projects that have an essence of place, while being aesthetically pleasing, functional and efficient.

Your Architect or Interior Designer will work closely with you on your project from start to finish. They understand the laws and regulations that govern the outcomes of your project and incorporate these requirements into the design and construction process.

They can also manage the construction process to ensure the built product is as per the intended design outcomes and build quality. They can assist with finding the appropriate builder for your project and compiling a team of professionals to deliver all the project requirements efficiently.

For a small portion of your overall budget your Architect and Interior Designer offer services that will be one of the most valuable decisions you make for your project, and potentially save you money in the long run.

# Researching architects

## WHERE DO I FIND THE RIGHT ARCHITECT FOR MY PROJECT?

Like many other fields, word of mouth can be one of the best ways to look for an architect. Ask family, friends and colleagues for referrals and details of their experiences.

Is there a particular home, building or fitout you admire? A knock on the door can yield an introduction to your project's potential architect. The Australian Institute of Architects also has a find an architect search for your local area, available free on their website.

Today there are an increasing number of publications readily available from your local newsagent or bookstore that show the current work of architects around the country, some publications like 'Houses' and 'Artichoke' also give you specific details about a project that can be useful for the design stages later on. If you are part of a professional organisation

they may have publications where architects advertise if they are specialists in particular types of projects.

Be sure to visit the websites of all your potential candidates and also use social media such as Instagram to 'stalk' your favorites and see what projects they are currently completing. Look at their previous work and get a feel for their design style and language - is it about blending in with the neighborhood, environmentally sustainable designs, or is it about making a big statement?

Then, start a conversation. Make an appointment for a consultation. Meeting face to face will help you decide if the architect you have researched is the one for you.

# Choosing your architect

## WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN AN ARCHITECT?

Make sure you prepare for your consultation appointments with your shortlist of architects. Think of a set of questions that you need to ask and take notes so you don't forget the important aspects later. It's important to understand the architect's vision for the project and where they think the challenges lie.

Importantly get a feel for their personality and the dynamic they bring to the table, you will work with your architect and potentially their team closely over many months. You need to be able to build a rapport, feel comfortable giving them honest feedback and most

importantly, trust their advice and their ability to deliver your project as you intend. Explain the most important aspects of your project and discuss how you would like to be involved in the process.

Even though the architect might have an attractive portfolio and good references, you still need to make sure their design process and approach is right for you and your project. As part of this initial stage ask the architect how they see their style and ethos fitting with your requirements and aesthetic for the project.

# Who will I be dealing with?

## WILL YOU BE WORKING WITH A SOLE PRACTITIONER OR A TEAM?

Be sure to understand who will be looking after your project. Unless you decide to go with a sole practitioner, make sure the architect you meet is the one you will have regular contact with. Architecture practices all have different structures so take the time to discuss who will be involved in the project and for which stages of the process.

Being able to communicate freely and openly with your project architect is vital to the success of your project. You should share a clear understanding of the project with your architect and feel completely comfortable.

# What services do they offer?

## ARCHITECTURE PRACTICES CAN OFFER MULTIPLE SERVICES

Conceptual renderings and sketch plans are not the only services architectural practices provide. Ask about other services your candidate's practice offers and benefits of those services that are relevant to your project.

A particularly suitable pairing of services is a practice that offers both architecture and interior design services. Depending on your project type this could be particularly relevant, as interior fitouts such as hospitality spaces, medical suites and commercial workplaces all have large internal components. An interior designer that is part of the same practice as your architect will work be able to work closely with the architect to develop the internal spaces alongside the form and functionality of the

project.

If a practice doesn't offer a particular service, they should be able to refer you a professional that can work with them to deliver this service for you.

Below is a glimpse into some additional services a typical architectural firm provides:

- Project feasibility studies
- Master planning
- Architectural & Interior design
- Project renderings
- 3D Visualisation
- Comprehensive construction documents
- Construction Administration

# The 3D model

## THE VALUE OF ARCHITECTS THAT OFFER 3D MODELLING SERVICES

Architects understand how elevations and floor plans translate into actual buildings; their clients necessarily don't.

Seeing lines on paper and being able to visualise how these will appear in your space or on your block of land is not what most clients have been trained to do. How architects convey their vision for your project is vitally important. Discuss early on if your architect uses 3D modelling and what it can offer your project.

Many architects today automatically include 3D modelling in their design process as an established convention, but you need to make sure before you agree to your architect's fee. To add on 3D modelling at a later stage can be a costly exercise.

The biggest advantage of 3D modelling today is that it gives clients the ability to review the design from multiple angles and tour the space using fly throughs or computer game like walkthrough technology.

Being able to see the design in 3D helps clients to be more involved in the design process and also means clients have a far better idea of what to expect of the finished product in the early design stages, reducing the likelihood of costly design changes during construction, or even worse when the finished product is complete.

# Do I just need an Architect?

## YOUR ARCHITECT CAN DO MANY THINGS BUT NOT EVERYTHING!

Architects and Interior Designers are trained professionals that can provide services that relate to many aspects of your project. However, depending on your project requirements they won't be able to do everything. Your architect will always recommend you seek the services of another professional when the scope of work is outside their expertise and their insured qualifications.

In the industry we generally refer to these professionals as 'consultants'. Depending on your project type, these may include consultants such as Building Certifier, Structural Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Hydraulic Consultant (plumbing), Mechanical

Engineer (air conditioning), Town Planner, Site Surveyor, Cost Estimator and Landscape Architect.

Don't be daunted by the thought of hiring multiple consultants. Your architect will be able to advise which consultants you require and which may be optional further down the track, and will assist in preparing a brief for each of the consultants so a fee proposal can be obtained.

It is important to keep in mind that consultants fees are separate to the fees of your architect. Whilst your architect will coordinate all the consultants for your project, they are unlikely to pay their bills!

## The fee proposal

### DO ARCHITECTS ALL CHARGE THE SAME, OR DO I JUST CHOOSE THE CHEAPEST FEE?

There is no regulation governing the fees an architect can charge for their services. Make sure when assessing your fee proposal that you also consider the other aspects the architect or practice has to offer. Did you particularly like their style, communication or personality, can you develop a rapport and work with them closely, are you confident in their ability to deliver what you are after and more?

These are often the key factors when choosing your architect, remember the best outcome does not always come from the cheapest fee.

Depending on your project type and scale your architect may present you with a lump

sum fee or an hourly rate or a combination of the two.

The fee proposal should list all the services that the architect will provide for the duration of the project. Make sure you are clear on what is included and what is excluded and their hourly rate for any additional services.

If in doubt about any components of the proposal, make sure you ask for clarification before you sign on the dotted line. Your architect should be only too willing to clarify any queries further.

# Congratulations!

You now have key information that will help you lay a successful foundation for your next project.

As every project is unique, it is impossible to include every important piece of information in this short little guide. But with the concepts explained in this document, you have crucial information to get you on the right track and prepare your project for success.

We wish you all the best!

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### READY TO PROGRESS

If you are in the process of looking for an Architect or Interior Designer for your project, let's talk. We can help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you're not overlooking crucial factors that could impede your success.

02

### DOWNLOAD ALL OUR TOOLKITS

Our toolkits are there to help you get started and each one provides valuable foundation tools for your project. Find our other guides on our website.

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### OUR INITIAL CONSULTATION SERVICE (ICS)

We offer a custom action plan service which will identify specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options. Please visit our website for more information about this service.

[www.designfolk.com.au](http://www.designfolk.com.au)



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