

Newsletter May 2019

Quote of the month “You don’t get what you wish for, you get what you work for”

Grant update:

1. Over 25 individuals or businesses have signed up for a grant in the last 90 days. If you have not heard about our grants, these can be life changing. Please contact us with your questions.



2. Website: we now have the basic flyer and contracts on our site. Just click on “grants for real estate” on the front page, scroll down. Call us with your questions.
3. Our latest grant is to own a home up to \$200,000. This has really exploded with interest from our clients. \$500 will get the entire process started. It takes 8-12 months and you will be living in a MORTGAGE free home of your own.



Working with an architect: Why?

I have always used an architect anytime I was adding on to a home or building one. This may be a lengthy article but it’s the best article, worth keeping for future files. ENJOY!

How much it costs to work with an architect.

If you're planning to remodel your home or build a new one, an Architect could be a key individual to hire. These professionals can not only design your new home but can also manage the construction process so you have don't to. But how much does it cost to hire one?



Architects' fees will vary depending on the scope of the work to be done for you as well as the going rate for their services in your area. To get a snapshot of the range, we interviewed 11 architects around the U.S. Here's what to know about what these pros do and how they charge.





What Do Architects Do?

Architects listen to your ideas and build on them to design a home that's often better than what you

Originally imagined. They:

-Design homes and home remodels. Residential architects specialize in designing homes, both from scratch and as remodels or addition to existing homes. To get started, your architect will ask

Questions about how they live, why you want to remodel or build and, if you're remodeling, how you live in your home and what's currently not working for you.

Your pro will likely also want to see examples of homes you like. "I tell every single person... to start a houzz account and do an ideabook," says Rich McDermott of RDM Architecture in Kansas City, Missouri. The architect will use all this information to come up with ideas that ultimately become finalized plan.

Analyze your site. Architects can glean information about a particular property to help you decide where to best position your home on the land– or whether to buy a property in the first place. “we look at the topography, slopes, and flat spots, sink-holes, rock Outcrops and soil features that are significant” says Elizabeth Eason of Elizabeth Eason Architecture “we look at vegetation, especially if we’re wanting to preserve native plants or groupings of trees. We look at types of soils, views and orientation. We’re also looking at the wind, especially if we’re thinking about natural ventilation or protected outdoor spaces” This work is called a site analysis.

Document your home-When remodeling, it’s a good idea before you make any changes to understand which of your home’s walls are load-bearing and where the electrical and HVAC are located. Architects document a home’s existing conditions through “a detailed set of drawings that show the interior and exterior of the space,” says Jimmy Crisp of Crisp Architects in Millbrook, New York. “ We draw cross sections of the house and know where the main elements are”



Create Construction documents-Architects

Create the documents that your builder will follow. This work involves a lot of steps, from coming up with the Initial design concept to completing thorough plans Approved by a structural engineer. Architects are Concerned with the overall design of a home as well as details such as where a piece of molding will end or how to transition between floor materials in adjacent rooms. They may make drawings not only of new kitchen walls, but also of the cabinetry and backsplash tile layout on those walls. “We’re going through and putting together all the nitty-gritty details of “How does this connect?” “We put out paper on how to build the house”

Some local planning departments may be willing to Approve what’s known as a permit set of drawings rather than fully detailed plans from an architect. Be sure you understand what kind of drawings your architect will produce before you sign an agreement. “If the architect you are choosing has a particularly low fee, then they are likely giving you a permit set and not a fully Detailed set of documents” “This shifts the burden to the builder to work out all of the construction details, which may or may not work out so well”

Specify products and materials-An architect may specify product types or exact products to be used in the home, from technical elements such as roofing to decorative items like wall paint. “We do all the colors and materials and everything attached to walls or ceiling: Paint colors, sinks, faucets, lighting, window coverings, windows, doors , roofing, Some architects select furnishings or have an interior designer on staff who does, while others may collaborate with independent designers. Some architects even make plant selections for landscaping, though often they leave this to landscape architects or designers.



Manage bidding or negotiation with contractors-Your architect can help you select a contractor and may recommend specific firms. He or she can also oversee competitive bidding, your architect can review bids for errors and tease out costs if the contractors have grouped them differently. “we help the clients evaluate the bids” in an “apple-to-apples” way, Your architect may be able to offer insight into which contractor is fastest, who has the least amount of paperwork and more. If the bids come in beyond your budget, your architect can do some value engineering (changes to the plan that help you save on costs).

Not all architects oversee competitive bidding by contractors. Some prefer that a homeowner negotiate the agreement with that builder early in the process, and then they help the homeowner negotiate the agreement with that builder. This method has some advantages. “The point of having a contractor as part of the team is you can get budget feedback along the way and also feasibility (feedback) along the way”

Oversee construction– During the construction phase, an architect can make sure the job stays on track. He or she may visit the job site, communicate with the builder and review contractor invoices to check that they match the actual progress on the home. “We’re gatekeepers for the clients” schedule so they’re not getting peppered with requests”

How much does an architect charge? Architects charge for their services in a variety of ways, and then they may use more than one fee

method. Here are some terms you may hear when you meet with one. Percentage of construction cost. One common way architect charge is as a percentage of total construction costs. The percentage could range from 6% for basic plans not signed off on by an



engineer to 20% for full architectural services on a smaller home. But it commonly falls between 10-15%. This fee structure is typical for new homes (as opposed to remodels) Until exact construction costs are known, an architect may charge a %of their best estimate of construction costs. Alternatively, they may cover the costs of their initial work through a retainer or deposit. Hourly rate, may charge by hour, \$45 for work done by an intern in a low cost-of-living area to \$315 for principal at an upscale firm in a major metro, The common range \$110-\$200.

An architect who charges by the hour can estimate for you what the total fees will be for your project. Some even establish a cap to the fees and won't go beyond it.



Retainer or deposit. Once you've decided to work with a particular architect, he or she may ask for a retainer to begin the design work. This fee can range from \$1,000 to \$20,000 or more. Often, though, the fee falls between \$2,500 and \$4,000.

Many architects credit the client back for the retainer on the last invoice. Keep in mind that if you cancel the work for some reason, the retainer may not be refundable.

Fixed Fee. Another way architects charge for their work is through a fixed fee. This may apply to a specific aspect of the project— for instance coming up with ideas but not yet creating construction services. Some architects use these AIA phases as structuring principle for their billing, assigning different rates for each phase.

When do you pay an architect? After the initial retainer or deposit, it's common for architects to bill for their work on a monthly basis. Policies vary as to whether a client who pulls out of a job is able to walk away with completed drawings, so check with your pro for such details.



Do you need to hire an architect? An architect can bring creative ideas, professional management and a beautiful result to your new home build or renovation. “we’re trained to think outside the box,” You’ll likely be happy with your choice to hire one.

But not everyone needs to hire an architect. This pro may not be right for you if you know what you want, won’t mind being hands on in terms of managing your project and will be just as happy with the options a builder along can provide. “Someone who is focusing on building the most square footage for the lowest price should consider working directly with a builder and going with their most economical model,”

You also may not need an architect if you’re doing interior improvements that can be handled by a interior designer.



Can you afford to hire an architect? If you don't see how full architectural services fit into your budget, you might consider hiring one on a limited consultation basis. You could hire a pro at an hourly rate to do a site analysis of a property you're considering purchasing. You might hire one for an energy consultation, looking at materials and construction details that would give you the best return on your investment. You could hire an architect to act as your representative and project manager during construction. Or you might hire one to help you visualize a renovation to a fixer-upper you'd like to buy.





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