



Top 10 Things to Look for When Hiring an Architect (and questions to ask)

1. They're Responsive and Attentive

How quickly does your architect respond to emails and phone calls? During any given season, an architect may be designing for a roster of clients – but he or she should always make you feel as though **you're** their priority. It's reasonable to expect a response on the same business day, or the next business day at the latest. An urgent need should be responded to as soon as possible.

2. They Clearly Define Their Process

Can your architect clearly explain the design and building process they will guide you through? The journey from initial planning to completion of your project should follow a set process of phases your architect can easily explain to you in advance, so you'll know what to expect along the way. Better yet, your architect will have a guide you can reference easily whenever needed.



Click to download and print the Cordtsen Design Together Journey

3. They're Connected to the Right People

Does your architect have a list of builders and consultants they've worked with, vetted and trust? One of the challenges for any design project is finding reputable, qualified builders you can have confidence in to carry your project across the finish line. And there are other important members of the team, too –

you may need a structural engineer, a civil engineer, or other consultants as well. Your architect should help you assemble a team you can have confidence in.

4. They Have a Tried-and-Tested Reputation

Can your architect provide references upon request? An experienced, reputable architect will have a list of clients who have been on the journey you're about to embark on and would love to share their experience with you. If it would make you more comfortable to speak to people who've worked closely with your architect, he or she should be able to provide a list of clients who would welcome a call from you.



5. They're Creative and Adaptable

Is your architect able to adapt to changes and challenges that may arise in producing a design you love? While creative design skills are to be expected, not every architect is able to easily change course and make changes as new ideas are imagined in the initial design phase. And should your project require review and approval from a Historic District Commission or a Zoning Board, you'll want to be confident in your architect's ability to design for the best chances at approval, or warn you when they believe you face an uphill battle.

6. They're Enjoyable to Be Around

Is your architect the kind of person you not only want for their talent, but someone you will enjoy spending time with? The design and build process can take months or even a couple of years, depending on the size and scope of a project. You'll be spending many hours together in design meetings, talking on the phone, and during any required approval process. Make sure your architect is someone you're comfortable with and enjoy being around.

7. They're Well-Qualified

Is your architect experienced with the type of project you're building? Just because they're known for beautiful restaurant designs doesn't mean they're able to design a home built with your needs in mind, one you'll enjoy living in day in and day out for many years. And even the most talented architect needs specialized expertise and experience to design medical facilities. Whether you're seeking an architect for a residential, medical, commercial, hospitality or urban planning project, you'll want to know he or she has the expertise, vision and talent to deliver exactly what you need.

8. They Keep an Eye on Your Budget

Does your architect have a plan to keep your budget in line? After discussing the scope of your project and receiving an estimate for the cost of your architect’s fees, you’ll want to know they will do their best to hold to that estimate and keep a close eye on your bottom line. Your architect should discuss up front any additional services not included in the basic services and have a plan to alert you immediately should your design needs and requests necessitate revisiting the initial estimate. If you have a written proposal in hand, all the better.

Project Phases	Hours		Budget				Set Budget by		
	Hourly	%	Hours	\$/Hrs	Fee	Cap	Hr Fee	Active	Delete
01 Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>		0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
02 As Built	<input type="checkbox"/>		0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
03 Schematic Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.00 %	0.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
04 Design Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	15.00 %	0.00	\$0.00	\$15,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
05 Interiors	<input type="checkbox"/>		0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
06 Construction Documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	40.00 %	0.00	\$0.00	\$40,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
07 Bidding	<input type="checkbox"/>	5.00 %	0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
08 Construction Admini ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.00 %	0.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
09 3D/Rendering	<input type="checkbox"/>		0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Client Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>		0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals		100.00 %	0.00		\$100,000.00		\$0.00	Budget Total	\$100,000.00

9. They Have a Website

Does your architect have a website? Think of an architect’s website not only as their online brochure, but a way for potential clients to learn as much about their team as possible before making that initial phone call or contact. An architect’s website should provide at the very least a portfolio of projects they have designed, information about the team members you will potentially be working with, and address and contact information. The more information they can provide while you’re “window shopping,” the easier for you to vet whether they’ll be a good fit before you waste time finding out they’re not.

10. They’re Registered and Licensed

Is your architect registered and licensed? While many architectural designers choose not to pursue licensing, the journey to become a licensed architect is rigorous and demanding, a sure test not only of character, but of perseverance, dedication, and a desire to pursue not only knowledge and experience but competency. Having a registered architect on your design team will give you confidence that your architect is knowledgeable not only about design and construction, but health, safety and welfare regulations, and much more. And should your project require stamped plans or other authoritative needs, your architect will be able to provide those for you.