IAN MCDONALD ARCHITECT, PLLC

Why Hire an Architect

As an Architect we add more to a client's house than studied aesthetic and engineering. Some of these benefits are:

1. We can assist you during property selection to visualize solutions to best utilize the property and point out the pluses and minuses in regards to the social, natural, legal, and built factors. We can warn you of the hidden costs of developing a particular lot; and in some cases, we may be an aid to negotiating a successful offer by raising the perceivable negative attributes of a specific property.

2. During design we creatively develop spoken and observed wish lists into a well thought through and detailed package that can be constructed within your budget.

3. As the design progresses toward construction, we coordinate architecture, interior design, landscaping, structural engineering, and mechanical systems into the building package.

4. Good Contractors appreciate an Architect's involvement during bidding, negotiating, and construction. Our documents provide Contractors specifics with which to work and diminish project ambiguities. We are able to answer questions and infill detail that helps with project quality, speed, and economy.

5. During Bidding, our documents are used to solicit competitive Contractor bids to help keep the pricing honest. Non-competitive bids have the potential of being greatly inflated. During Negotiating, we can assist with project modifications to finalize the desired package.

6. Our documents become part of the homeowner's contract with the Contractor. They become specifically enumerated in the contractual paperwork.

7. Our fully detailed documents limit project Change Orders. Change Orders, additions or subtractions, outside of the competitive process, are often inflated expenditures or devalued credits.

8. During construction, we can periodically visit the construction site to ensure that the documents are being followed and that our clients receive the quality and detail for which they are paying.

While it's true that Architect's fees are an additional project cost, hiring us can actually save you money and/or add value in each project phase. We can monitor your budget and negotiate to get the best materials and workmanship at a good price. Our design can reduce energy and maintenance costs. We can turn a difficult lot into a successful building site. And we spend time planning and fully developing your ideas to avoid changes once construction is underway.

Our compensation can be based on time, a stipulated sum, or percentage of the cost of the work. During an initial consultation, to discuss the Process, your Program, and what Services might be appropriate for your project, we will discuss what form of compensation is most appropriate and comfortable for you. After the consultation, we will draft a proposal, specifically tailored for your project, for architectural services that outlines what we discussed.

A Word of Caution

If one does not have an architectural license, it's illegal for him/her to call themselves an Architect, Architectural Designer, or deliver "Architectural" Services?

Not only is it illegal in New York State for a Contractor to offer in-house design services, it degrades the construction process and removes from the owner the protections gained by working with a licensed professional. It is likewise illegal for an Architect or Engineer to "stamp" drawings that they have not substantially participated in developing. Contractor provided drawings that are "stamped" for Building Permits do not provide the homeowner with the detailed Health, Safety, and Welfare review required by code and expected by, and owed to, the homeowner.

To call oneself an "Architect" is a privilege gained through extensive education, professional internship, a rigorous licensing test, and required continuing education. A New York licensed and registered architect has completed a combination of 12 years of education/experience credit and then passed the 33 ½ hour national architecture licensing examination.