

1. Think carefully about your building needs. Ask yourself these questions:
  - a. Do I need more space?
  - b. What activities will I do in this space?
  - c. How much can I spend on this project?
  - d. How will I finance it?
  - e. Where will this space be located?
  - f. Can I do some of the work myself?
2. Next, build a list of potential architects. Call each office and describe your project to them. If they are able to take on your project request that they provide you with literature about their qualifications and experience. If they're too busy for your project, ask if they can suggest another firm. Once you've contacted the firms on your list and received literature from them, narrow your list down to two or three architects for you to interview in person.
3. The interview is one of the most important steps in the process. This is because you want to see if the chemistry is right between you and the architect. You will likely be working with this person or firm for a while, so you'll want to be comfortable expressing your opinions and giving feedback. The architect will also want to be comfortable with you. You can request this meeting to take place either at the architects office or in your home. You can also ask to see photos of past work.
4. Ask questions. It's difficult to get to know someone without having an honest conversation. Good way to do this is by asking lots of questions. Some questions to ask are:
  - a. How busy is your firm?
  - b. Does it have the capacity to take on my work?
  - c. Who will handle the job? (Ask to meet this person.)
  - d. What is your firm's design philosophy?
  - e. How does the architect intend to approach my project?
  - f. How interested is your firm in my job?
  - g. What kind of charges and fees do you anticipate for this project?
  - h. Can you do the work on my budget?
5. Have the architect take you to a completed work site and ask for references from past clients. These references will prove to be invaluable. Ask about their experience with the architect. What worked? What didn't work? Get their take on the whole process, even the things they didn't like.
6. Ask more questions. If there is anything you don't understand, ask the architect for clarification. If he or she can't provide a clear answer or they make you feel intimidated, then this person probably isn't a good fit for you.

7. Make a decision. Choose an architect that you think best fits your needs and one that you trust. An architect provides a professional service, not a product, so you should feel like your choice can provide technical expertise, creative vision, and good judgment. Don't forget to talk about price. These services should be provided at a price that is reasonable. The firms you interview may all have different ways of charging for different jobs within your project. Ask how their system works and make sure it works for you before deciding to hire anyone.
8. Put it in writing. Once you've found your architect, get a written copy of the terms of your agreement on the scope of work, services, schedule, construction budget, and architect's compensation. Make sure you fully understand the terms before signing anything.