



BUILDING DESIGN PROCESS

You have a vision of what you want for your new building or renovation project. Now you need to make that vision a reality.

Architects are specially educated to help you define what you want to build, present options you might never have considered, and help you get the most for your valuable investment. Architects create total environments, both interiors and exteriors, that are functional and exciting places in which to work and live.

Building is a long process that is often messy and disruptive, particularly if you're living or working in the space while it's under construction. We look out for your interests and smoothes the process, helps find qualified construction contractors, and visit the worksite to help protect you against work that's not according to plan.

At Cynthia Zahoruk Architect Inc. we can help reduce building costs, decrease your building's energy needs and increase its future resale value through good design. We have the education, training, experience and vision to maximize your construction dollar and ease the entire design and construction process.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

We will help you choose materials, color and design schemes, builders and trades people that can bring your design to life. We can help you choose materials and finishes that are durable as well as beautiful, saving on frequent maintenance and replacement costs. New building materials come out surprisingly often, and architects have knowledge of their quality and effectiveness.

If there is one element of building that the average client will have trouble with, it is the permitting process. We assist you in filing documents required for review and approval by local building, zoning, landmark and/or historic commission, and obtaining proposals and awarding the contract for construction. Building codes and zoning laws can get complicated—having us at your side will ensure they are filed properly, keeping your project on schedule.

While bringing the drawings to life using the materials specified is the job of the builder, we will act as your agent in working with the contractor. As the contractors set to work assembling your vision, there are often obstacles. Having good chemistry between the architect and builder can turn a potential problem into a solution. We administer the contract between you and the contractor, including meeting with the contractor and vendors to answer any questions, review contractor submittals, address any field changes, reject nonconforming work, and review and certify payments. In other words, we make certain the project goes according to plan, on budget and on time. If a problem with a contractor does occur, most notably in the quality of the work, we will be your greatest ally.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the basis of getting a design that best meets your needs. Communicating your needs will assist in getting the most from our collaboration. It is essential that a single client representative represent the project and be the contact person for our firm for critical decision making. Regular project meetings will provide a natural opportunity to discuss issues and problems that arise.

It is very important to establish formal channels of communication with our client at the inception of the project. On commercial projects, there are often a number of people who need to be involved in decision making and review. Many organizations find it helpful to organize a committee to include all the people who need to be involved. However you structure your decision-making process, make sure that one person is designated as the point of contact between your organization and our design team.

As you enter the design phase, it is more important than ever to establish a clear decision-making process. It is important that decisions are made promptly to minimize impact on schedule and budget. Setting a clear method for decision-making early in the relationship with us will help keep your project on course.

THE DESIGN AND BUILDING PROCESS

Remember that while the information and decisions made in one of these phases' forms the basis of the subsequent phase, design is seldom a linear process. Instead, one typically moves back and forth between the phases, allowing ideas from more detailed designs to influence and modify the overall design direction previously established. Furthermore, in practice these phases often blend into one another.

Cynthia Zahoruk Architect Inc. uses an Integrated Design approach to developing design construction details. The Integrated Design approach is based on the well proven observation that changes and improvements in any design process are relatively easy to make at the beginning of the process, but become increasingly difficult, disruptive and costly to make as the process unfolds.

When carried out in a spirit of cooperation among key participants this process results in a design that is highly efficient, with reduced long term operating and maintenance costs. The benefits of this design approach are not limited to environmental performance. Experience shows that open, inter-disciplinary discussion and a synergistic approach will often lead to improvements in the functional program, in the selection of structural and mechanical systems and in architectural expression.

The most important tool in design development is the interaction between the client, other stakeholders and the designer. We emphasize the need for good communication with our clients and therefore encourage frequent face-to-face meetings with staff and key management people in order to determine the needs, outline process/timelines and implement the work. Client involvement during critical design stages is imperative for a successful outcome to the project. The early stages are particularly characterized by an increase in client participation. This is the point when fundamental choices are made about the direction and character of the project.