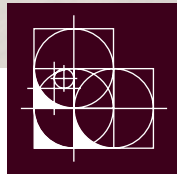




selecting  
the right  
architect



PLM Architecture + Design

Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™

PLMARCHITECT.COM 732.364.4528 RED BANK NJ 07701



## PLM Architecture + Design

Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™

Nothing is more exciting than creating a new home or customizing your space, and nothing will affect the success of your project more than selecting the right architect. Not only are an architect's answers to your questions important, but how they are answered speaks volumes. Do they take time to go over details to clear up any confusion? Do they conduct business in a transparent manner? Are they easy to communicate with? Do you feel comfortable with them?

**Ensure that the design of your home fits you, your family, and your life.**

**Make confident decisions from the beginning of the design process to completion of construction.**

**Protect and maximize your investment — both the financially and personally.**

The following guide will help you analyze the personality, design strategy, and communication skills of prospective architects when selecting the right architect for what may be one of the biggest investments of your life.

# 1.

**Ask for referrals from friends, family and professional associations.**

PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



**Like many other fields, word of mouth is the best way to look for an architect.**

Is there a particular home you admire? A knock on the door can yield an introduction to your project's potential architect. Professional organizations such as your city or local architectural institutions are also great sources. General contractors, interior design studios, and other trade-related personnel would also be able to furnish some referrals. Be sure to visit the websites of your candidates. Looking at their previous work will give you a good feel for their design style and language. Is there a style that is easy to discern? Or, is the architect comfortable in many styles? Either way, you should be able to see a distinct level of quality and detail. Then, start a conversation. Make an appointment for a consultation.

Meeting face to face will help you decide if you have a good fit.



# 2.

## Interview your potential architect candidates. Are they inquisitive?

PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



### **One of the most important attributes of any architect is his or her curiosity.**

The architect has to be truly interested in what will transform any house or space into your vision. For this reason, the word “why” is essential. Understanding what you want for your project is simply the first step. When an architect understands “why” you have that particular want or need, the solutions become much more effective and successful and far more personal. This inquisitiveness should be apparent during your first consultation. Communication skills are next, especially your architect’s ability to listen. When you speak, do you feel understood? Or does the architect tell you, this is how I do things, without taking your ideas seriously? Communication between you and your architect can include drawings, images and photographs; anything it takes so that you can understand the physical space being developed or that you need to communicate the desired space, feeling or atmosphere you want in your home. Ask to see a recent project. With this amount of financial and personal investment at stake, interview for an architect who is just as interested as you are in the project’s success.

# 3.

Have your own ideabook to communicate your design style.

PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



**It's common for an architect to be known by a certain design style: Spanish colonial revival, ultra-modern, French country to name a few.**

Though most architects are able to adapt their signature style to what you want, think twice about hiring an architect with a restrictive neoclassical signature style to rehab your craftsman style home. Have plenty of examples of the look you want. Magazines, and the internet with websites like HOUZZ and Pinterest allow you to collect images of spaces you are drawn to. If you are interested in environmentally friendly, sustainable "green" designs and construction, this can be applied to any style.

Discuss the importance of these elements with your architect from the outset. Get a sense of their knowledge base in the areas you are most interested in having reflected in your project.

# 4.

Know who you  
will be working  
with.

PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



**Signing a contract with an architect representing an architectural firm does not necessarily mean that person will be your Project Architect.**

Outside of single-architect owned firms, it is common practice to pass a project off to another architect within the firm. Be sure to meet the Project Architect, the person in charge of the day to day before making any final decisions. Being able to communicate freely and openly with your Project Architect is vital to the success of your project. You should share a clear understanding of your goals with the Project Architect and feel completely comfortable.

# 5.

## Insist on 3D modeling.

PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



### **Don't build your home without it.**

3D drawings allow the client and architect to visualize the space and to see how all of the components come together from different perspectives. Flat, 2D floor plans and elevations make it difficult to get the feel for a space and to “see” it as you would after it would be built. 3D drawings help clients be better informed about the design of their home without needing the extensive training architects have to understand conventional architectural drawings. Insist that your architect provide unlimited 3D renderings for your project. They bring clarity instead of confusion to your decision making. Too many examples exist of dissatisfied clients who didn't fully understand the design before construction began. When this happens you will have the urge to make changes on the fly during the construction process. Although this is feasible, it is not going to happen without an added cost. Design changes during construction have to be crossed checked against, framing, electric and your heating system. A contractor will always say yes, but not without adding on to cost. 3D helps you keep your project's budget on track when you understand your space more completely.



# 6.

If the services aren't offered, are they able to give you referrals?

PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



**Conceptual renderings and blueprints are not the only services architectural and planning firms provide.**

Ask about benefits of specific services to you and their corresponding costs. Ask your architect if there are any additional services offered and how they could be useful to you for your particular project. If a firm doesn't offer a requested service, they should be able to refer a firm that does. A typical architectural firm provides:

**Review Work**

**Design Work**

**Design Development Work**

**Structural Engineering**

**Building Permit Package**

**Bid Review**

**Kick off Meeting with General Contractor**

**Construction Visits**

**Computer Aided Design**

**3D Views**

**Green Building Design**

**Interior Design**

**Virtual Reality Rendering**

**Construction Administration**

**Home Automation**



# 7.

**All fees should be transparent.  
Billing is done on a monthly basis.**

PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



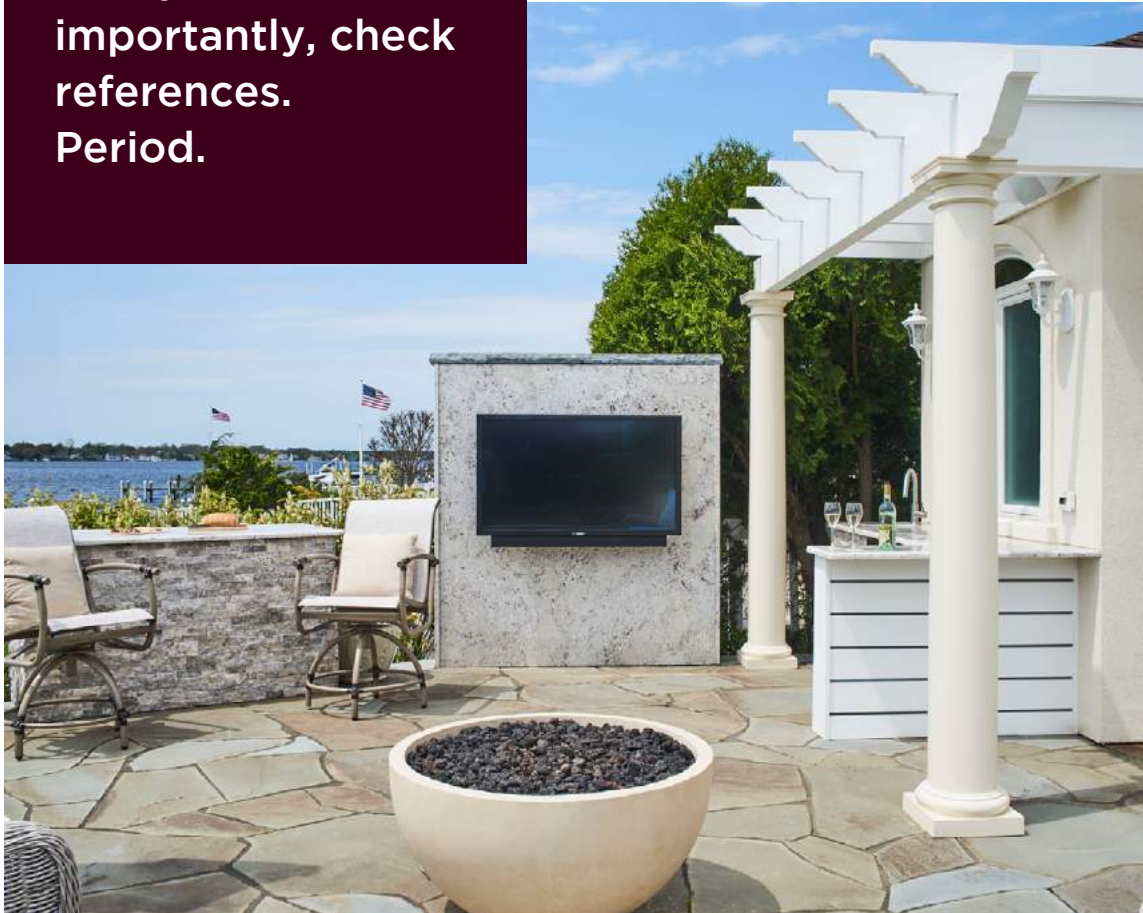
**The most important thing about fees is complete transparency. Insist upon it.**

Typically, an architect's fee is calculated as a percentage of the project's entire cost. Percent of cost however, is vague, and often times difficult to calculate. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) recently helped clarify this as a "percentage of the owner's budget for the cost of the work". This number is typically known at the onset of a project and is the target everyone is working against. Keeping this in mind, some architects will bill you as the project progresses and you will have a somewhat open financial agreement until the end of the project. Other architects will use the owner's budget and give a fixed fee proposal using a percentage of the estimated construction cost. Understanding how you will be billed is the key to having a good financial relationship with your architect. As you discuss how your architect gets compensated for his or her work, ask when payments are expected (due upon receipt, net 30) and the preferred method of payment, i.e. check, credit card, etc. Do they have a set schedule? How are changes to the scope of work handled? Ask, ask and ask. Everything should be transparent.

# 8.

**Lastly, but most importantly, check references. Period.**

PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



## **An experienced architect will have references.**

Your architect should be able to help you choose the best contractor for your project. Even if you already have a contractor, getting multiple bids on the construction of your project will hone in on the accuracy of the actual construction cost. Getting competitive bids, is the industry standard, however sometimes it makes sense to select your contractor during the design phase. Hiring your contractor at the beginning of a project's process ensures you will not be building more than you can afford. With a commitment upfront to a general contractor, you will add someone to your team who would be willing to "run the numbers" as the project progresses. More tips for hiring a contractor are available in our "Selecting the Right Contractor" guide.



PLM Architecture + Design  
Smartly Designed Space is Transforming™



732.364.4528

PATTIM@PLMARCHITECT.COM

PLMARCHITECT.COM

331 Newman Springs Road • Building One • 4th Floor • Suite 143  
Red Bank New Jersey 07701