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## USING AN ARCHITECT

As part of an architect's education and training, they acquire specialized knowledge in design concepts, the building process, and construction costs. As an advocate for the Owner, an architect's first obligation is to ensure that plans are executed as designed. This is especially important during construction if changes in materials and construction procedures are proposed. An architect's services encompass the following:

### Programming

The initial phase involves the architect and owner discussing the goals, needs and function of the project; design expectations and available budget; and pertinent building code and zoning regulations. The architect assists the owner in developing a realistic design and budget estimate. Following the initial discussions, an architect will produce an outline of the scope of the proposed project.

### Schematic Design

The architect provides concept sketches of the design options and explains how they meet the requirements discussed in the programming stage. The overall scope of the project, building materials proposed, and a preliminary budget related to the schematic design is also discussed. Refinements are discussed until the owner approves the design.

### Design Development

The architect prepares detailed drawings and finalizes the design plans, showing actual room sizes and concepts. Also included is an outline of the construction specifications, which lists the major materials that will be used. When the owner approves the design drawings, the architect prepares a cost estimate.

### Construction Documents

This is one of the most important elements of an architect's services. The architect develops detailed drawings and material specifications. The contractor will use both to estimate construction cost and to perform the construction.

### Hiring the Contractor

The owner has several options available, including asking the architect to make contractor recommendations or choosing a contractor on their own. The architect can assist the owner in selecting contractors by reviewing bids and estimates based on the construction documents.

### Construction Phase

The architect represents the owner to the contractor and observes the pace and quality of construction. As the owner's agent, the architect looks out for the owner's interest, ensuring the construction process go smoothly by keeping the owner informed of the project's progress and overseeing any changes or problems that may arise during the construction process.