



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER

Finding the Right Architect

Each architect has an individual style, approach to design and a method of work. So, it's important to find an architect who is compatible with your style and needs.

Build a list of possibilities

Ask around. Find out who designed projects in your community that you like. Get recommendations from friends, relatives and acquaintances who have worked with architects. Check to see if the architect is a member of The American Institute of Architects (AIA). Membership in the AIA means that the architect subscribes to a high professional purpose to advance standards of practice and service to society. This includes having a code of ethics and access to a variety of professional and technical resources. **Use the Architect Finder at the AIA National web site listed below.**

Find AIA architects interested in your type of project. Then access a wealth of local information from more than 300 AIA chapters nationwide. Call your local AIA chapter for details on firms that interest you, or to see examples of the firms' work. Many AIA chapters have directories containing details of local architecture firms and photos of completed projects.

Call each firm on your short list

Describe your project and ask if they are available to accomplish it. If so, request literature that outlines the firm's qualifications and experience. If the office is unable to handle your project, ask if they can recommend another firm.

Interview each firm

Interviewing a firm gives you a chance to meet the people who will design your project and to learn if the chemistry between you is right. You may be working with your architect for a long time, so look for someone with whom you feel comfortable. Allow at least an hour for the interview, preferably at the architect's office where you can see where the work will be done. Some architects charge for the interview; ask if there is a fee.

Ask questions

How busy is the firm? Does it have the capacity to take on your work? Who will handle the job? Insist on meeting the person who will actually design your project. What is the firm's design philosophy? Talk about a project budget and the range of fees that the architect anticipates for your project. Before you select an architect, ask to be taken to at least one completed project. Also, ask for references from past clients. These are invaluable. In addition, obtain an Architect's Qualification Statement (B305) from your local AIA chapter. This standardized document may be used to verify an architect's credentials and other information prior to selecting an architect for a project.

Making the final cut

Unlike buying a new car or new appliance, you can't see the product and test it out. The architect provides a professional service, not a product. The right architect will be the one who can provide the judgment, technical expertise, and creative skills—at a reasonable cost—to help you realize a project that fits your practical needs as well as your dreams.

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Visit the AIA Albuquerque web site at www.aiaabq.org

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