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ARCHITECT

The Architectural Process

Commencing with a building project can be daunting, especially if you don't have experience in design and construction. The architectural process usually consists of six design and documentation phases before building. Outlined on these pages are the tasks typically covered in each step.



The Phases of The Architectural Process

A modern house with large glass windows is shown at dusk. The interior lights are on, and the view of the ocean is visible through the glass. The house has a flat roof and a concrete base. The sky is a mix of blue and orange from the sunset.

PHASE ONE

Pre-Design
Research and Analysis

PHASE TWO

Schematic Design
Loose Hand Sketches

PHASE THREE

Design Development
Detailed Design

PHASE FOUR

Construction Documentation
Plan Preparation

PHASE FIVE

Permitting
Approvals
Bidding & Negotiation

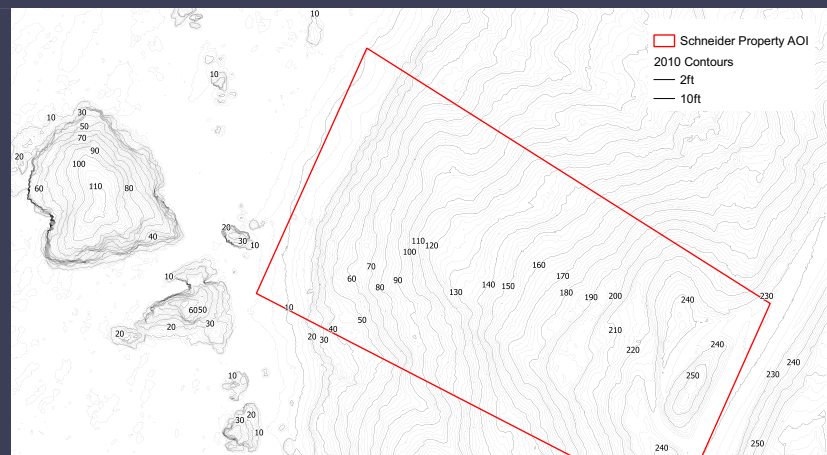
PHASE SIX

Construction Administration
Observation

Phase One

Pre-Design | Research and Analysis

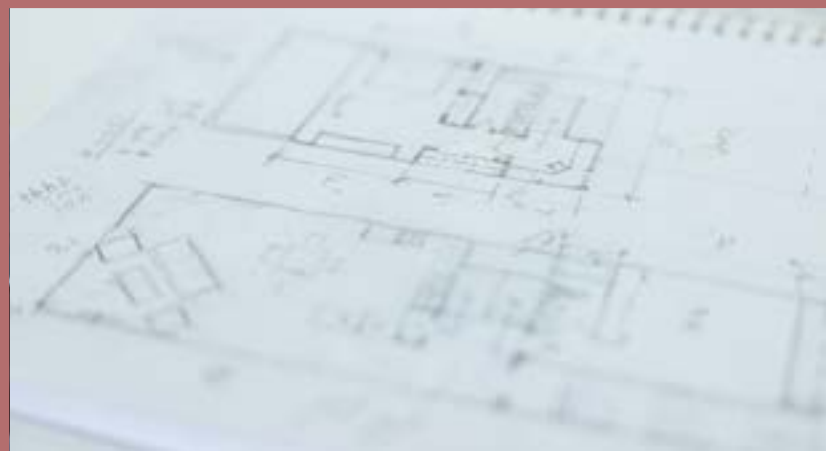
This phase is also known as programming and starts the architectural design process. The owner engages the architect and collaborates to learn about the site, existing structures, and their wishes for the building project. The architect researches local zoning and land-use regulations and may do some loose hand sketches of concepts for the design and make a preliminary cost estimate to ascertain the project's feasibility. The owner develops a program using the architect's programming guide. Ordering a survey and soil report is done at this time, as required by the project.



Phase Two

Schematic Design | Loose Hand Sketches

The architect interprets the client's program into a conceptual design in this next phase through loose hand sketches. These will include a preliminary site plan showing the location and orientation of the building on the site, schematic floor plans, building elevations, and perspectives. The architect also uses sun and wind studies to explore passive heating and cooling strategies. Other observations might include views and distinctive site features, such as trees or rock outcroppings.



Phase Three

Design Development | Detailed Design

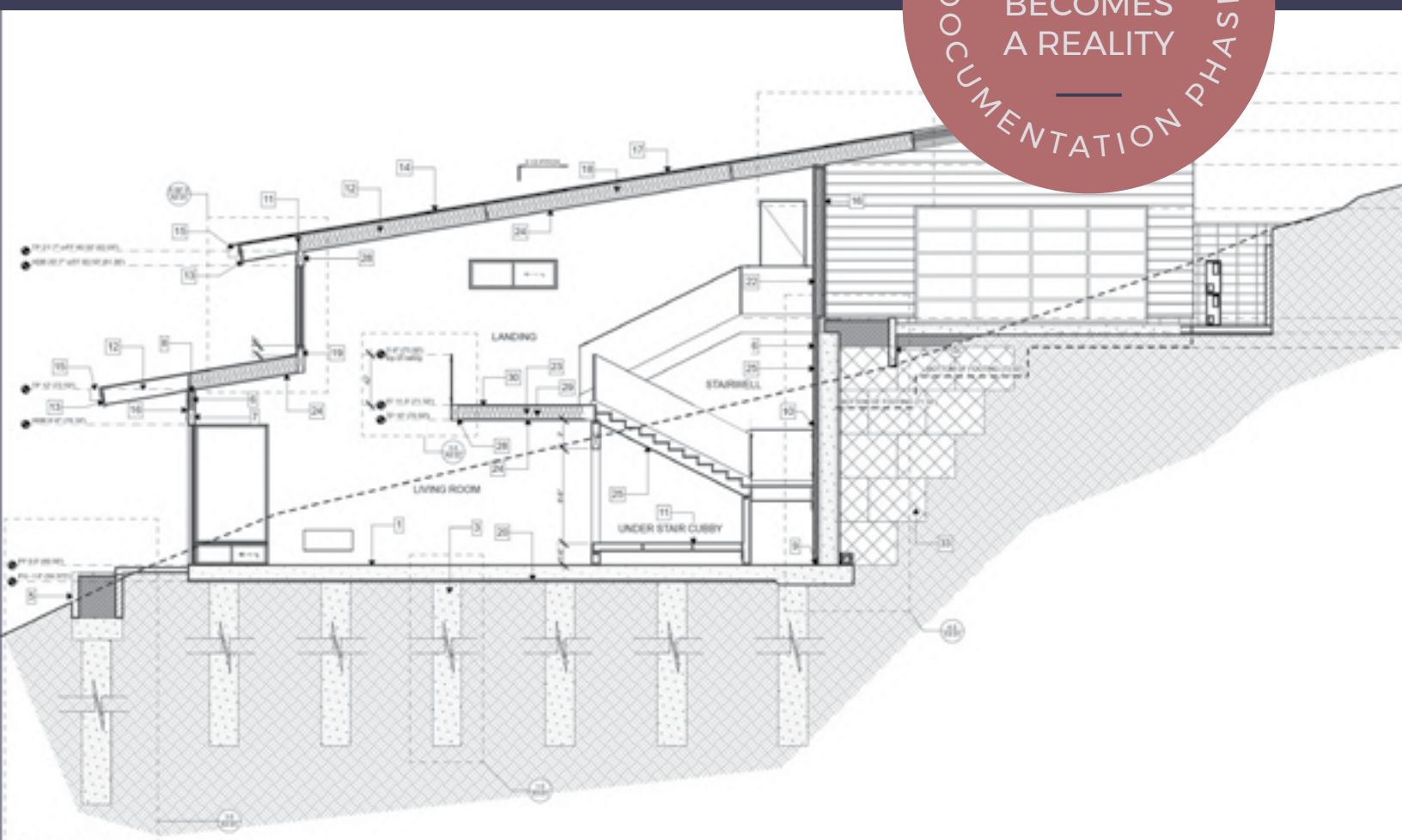
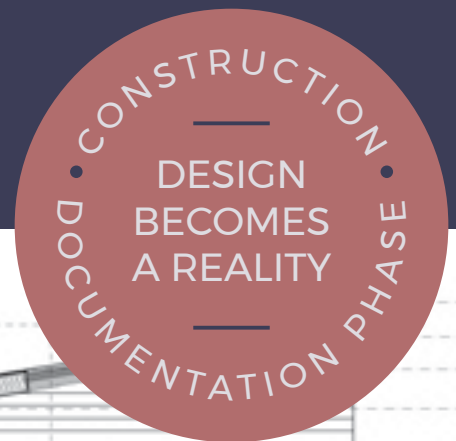
The architect starts to develop and express the design intent in this phase through a more detailed plan. Engaging a structural engineer and other consultants required for the project occurs, and the client, with the architect, determines material finish selections for the exterior and interior. These selections can significantly affect the total cost of a construction project or the construction schedule. Also, identifying a contractor and requesting a preliminary cost estimate ensures the design and budget align. Often, this is the phase where plans are submitted to Design Review Boards or Homeowners Associations for initial approvals before starting the final construction documentation phase. Changes to the design based on comments from the review boards, or pricing that affects the budget, are made now.



Phase Four

Construction Documentation | Plan Preparation

Design becomes a reality in the construction documentation phase. The architect works closely with the engineering consultants to design and develop every detail and specification needed to build the project in preparation for permit processing.



Phase Five

Permitting | Approvals | Bidding & Negotiations

The architect now begins the permit process by submitting an application and several sets of plans for a plan check review. The planning, building, and engineering departments review the submittal package for zoning, building, and engineering code compliance. Permitting can be lengthy, but it protects architects, builders, and property owners from adverse construction errors. Some municipalities approve simple construction projects over the counter or within days. But if the project is more complex, the process could take months.

During the plan check process, the architect and owner interview builders to solicit competitive bids. Contractors seek shovel-ready projects to keep their crews busy throughout the year. Finding a contractor and getting a competitive price for your project will be easier if it is already permitted and ready to go.



Phase Six

Construction Administration | Observation

Once the plans are approved and the contractor hired, the architect's role shifts from creative design to construction administration. While architects do not manage the construction site, they regularly visit to observe the process, answer questions, and ensure the contractor follows the plans. The contractor and their crew assume control of the project and are responsible for the schedule, means, and methods of construction. Changes in the field lead to cost overruns, but careful planning will keep your budget in line.





Hopefully, the information in this booklet will assist you in understanding the architectural process and the steps required for a successful project. If you're ready to start, let's talk!

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