

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are Natalie's answers to our most commonly asked questions...

What is an architect, and why do I need one?

Architects are professionally trained and licensed persons who help design and create a vision for a project. We take it from conception to final construction until a project is a finished piece of work. Re: Design Architects can take it even further and organize the installation of furniture and see everything through to move-in day. Building and construction can be a difficult process, but I see part of our job as taking away some of the burden. I might not be able to take away all of the headaches, but hopefully, we can work together to come up with creative solutions to solve any problems that arise and enjoy the journey, with a beautifully finished space at the end of it.

What is the difference between an architect and interior designer?

An architect is professionally trained and licensed in the art of architecture and will have an architecture degree. Architects are required to be licensed by the states in which they operate. Interior designers may or may not have a degree but have an eye for design and a talent for creating beautiful interior spaces. Re: Design Architects offers both services. We typically include interior design as part of our architectural services but will happily work with you on only interior design or architectural needs if that is what you're seeking. We are currently licensed in NY, NJ, and IN but would be happy to seek reciprocity in other states if necessary for a project.

What is the initial consultation like?

At the initial meeting, we'll take time to get to know each other, and you'll talk through your vision and dreams for the space. If it's a renovation, this is also when we will review the issues you're having with the space and how we can solve them. After that consultation, the team will create a proposal that gives you an estimated range of hours to complete the project from start to finish. The initial consultation and walkthrough will be via video conference. If an onsite walkthrough is requested, Re: Design Architects has a fixed \$250 fee which will be applied as a credit towards the total project cost should we end up working together.

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How long does it take to complete the initial design and drawings?

This question is a tough one to answer because every project is different and will have different needs. All projects have several phases that you should be aware of:

- Phase 1: Review existing conditions, which will help us understand the project site, and get to know it better.
- Phase 2: The Schematic Design phase which is where we create the designs and solutions to previously discussed issues, and then review them. Be prepared for the Schematic Design phase to involve several meetings, depending on the scope and scale of the project.
- Phase 3: Create a package for a general contractor based on the design agreed upon in our meetings, and then determine the budget.
- Phase 4: Now it's time to get into the fine details and refine the project. Once you have reviewed the budget and the drawings, you approve both. Some projects will have Design Development and Construction Documents phases. Once we complete a set of Construction Documents, which provides sufficient detail of the design to allow a contractor to build the project, multiple contractors will typically give us a price. Depending on your project, we might need to pull permits for the project or go to a co-op/condo board before pulling permits. Once we pull the permits, we will then move onto the construction administration phase where we can be on-site to review issues with the contractor answer any of his/her questions, and create sketches. But bear in mind that every timeline is project-specific, and there are other regulators/oversight boards like the Department of Buildings, Landmarks, and co-op boards that may also need to review the drawings and the work. These reviews can take some time. Whenever permits are required for a project, you should look at adding at least three months to the timeline of the project, if not more.

What do I need to know about construction and contractors?

One of the best parts about working with an architect is that they can often bring you reliable and trustworthy contractors and teams that they've worked with before, eliminating some of the hassle for the client.

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Do I have to have a permit for my renovation or build?

Typically you need a permit for your project if you are moving walls, installing new electrical, or adjusting and/or installing new plumbing. The easiest way to think of whether or not you need a permit is to ask yourself, "are major items in your project moving around?"

- If you are not moving the plumbing but you're just putting in a new faucet in your sink then you don't need a permit
- If you are painting the inside of your house, you don't need a permit.
- If you are replacing the cabinet doors to your kitchen cabinets, you don't need a permit.
- You do need a permit for any addition that you might do or any ground-up building. You do need a permit if you renovate your kitchen or bathroom and you plan to move the plumbing and electrical around.
- If you live in a co-op or a condo, the boards of those entities will likely require you to pull a permit for most work in the interior of your apartment.

How long does it take to design and build a house or complete a renovation?

Typically, we would recommend to clients renovating a home, building an addition, or creating a ground-up building that they should expect it will take at least one year to a year-and-a-half; This of course depends on the size of the project and the speed of any approvals needed from governing agencies like the Department of Buildings, Landmark Review Board, Board of Trustees, Wetlands, etc. For example, for a large project, you would ideally allocate at least nine months to a year for design, and another three-to-six months for the governing agencies. As previously mentioned, every project is different, and once we meet with you and discuss the full scope, we can give you a better idea of timing. We are "movers and shakers", and if we see opportunities to move the schedule along without cutting corners, we absolutely will.

What are your specialties?

We feel that one of our specialties is to create jewel box spaces in existing buildings that complement the historic aspects while modernizing the space We have extensive experience in the educational, residential, and commercial sectors and seek to pull from experience with previous projects in all three to achieve the best results in any new venture.

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What kind of project management and support do you provide?

The Principal Designer or a Senior Designer will be the point person for all projects. We are here to provide a very hands-on approach to managing the project from start to finish. There are additional team members who will run support on projects to help the design progress, but one of the most important factors—and why clients continue to come back to Re: Design—is that the owner and Principal Architect are there and fully involved throughout the entire process. It's also really important to us that the client is involved and part of the process, and that we're truly capturing your vision. Depending on the project, scope, and scale, other consultants might also be needed, such as mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection, structural, geotechnical, and audio-visual, to name a few; but know that our team will take care of interfacing with any third-party partners. If and when we work together, you'll receive a welcome packet that includes the full list of potential consultants, as well as estimates for their fees. For a full list of potential consultants that might need to be hired for your project, please review our welcome packet.

Will you manage permits and other regulatory issues?

Depending on the scope and scale of the project, permits and landmarks approval may be necessary to start construction. We are fully equipped to help you through this process. If necessary, we would sign and seal drawings for any required regulatory permits. We will work with an expeditor to help pull the permits and answer any questions posed by the Department of Buildings or Landmarks.

What is included in your fees and how are they charged?

Re: Design charges hourly fees for services rendered. The Principal Architect is billed at a rate of \$250 per hour with associates ranging from \$90-200 per hour for their time. The proposal reflects a range of how many hours we expect to spend on your project. Typically you can expect to spend approximately 12% of the overall construction cost on architectural and interior design fees.