

Your Role

What can you do to realise your project?

- Be as clear as possible about what you want to achieve, what you need, and what you can afford.
- Clarify any aspects of the Client-Architect Agreement that you don't understand before you sign it.
- Make sure you have a clear understanding of what is included and excluded in the architect's scope of works.
- You can make design changes once you have reached the detailed drawing stage, but if you do costs will usually increase. It's best to try and avoid this by being as specific as you can as early as you can.
- Provide prompt site access to the architect and other consultants.
- Be ready to select and engage other required consultants as advised by your architect.
- Agree on a schedule of approving progress, and sign off on the changes as the project progresses.
- Make sure you clearly understand the different roles played by your architect, builder and certifier.
- If your architect is administering the building contract, remember that all queries should go through them. They in turn will deal with the builder.
- Keep notes of meetings with your architect, or ask for copies of their notes. Discuss any areas of confusion or disagreement immediately with them.
- Give any instructions to your architect in writing.
- Talk about timetables. Be aware that many factors that are beyond your architect's control can cause delays. These include Council approvals, supplying materials, the weather, and other delays in construction.
- Ask questions and be involved, but also allow your architect to do their job.
- Always talk to your architect first if you have a problem. Most issues can be easily resolved when you speak up early.
- If you can't resolve a problem, or if you have a complaint about the professional conduct of your architect, then you can contact the Board.
- Make yourself aware of your legal rights as a consumer of architectural services. Familiarise yourself with the NSW Architects Code of Professional Conduct. This should be provided to you by your architect when you sign the contract, but the Code can also be downloaded from the Board's website, at www.architects.nsw.gov.au.

To become registered, your architect will have completed five years of professional education, and have also passed the Architectural Practice Examination. They must always comply with the NSW Architects Code of Professional Conduct, which sets out the standards expected of an architect in professional practice. These include general ethical standards, methods of dealing with you, maintaining their professional insurance coverage, undertaking professional development to improve and maintain their skills, resolving disputes, and professional relationships with other architects. Architects must hold professional indemnity insurance appropriate to the services they provide and each year undertake professional development to maintain and improve their skills.

NSW Architects Registration Board

The NSW Architects Registration Board is responsible for registering architects, approving architectural education, investigating the conduct of architects, and promoting a better understanding of the architectural profession in the community.

More information:

You might also find these websites helpful:

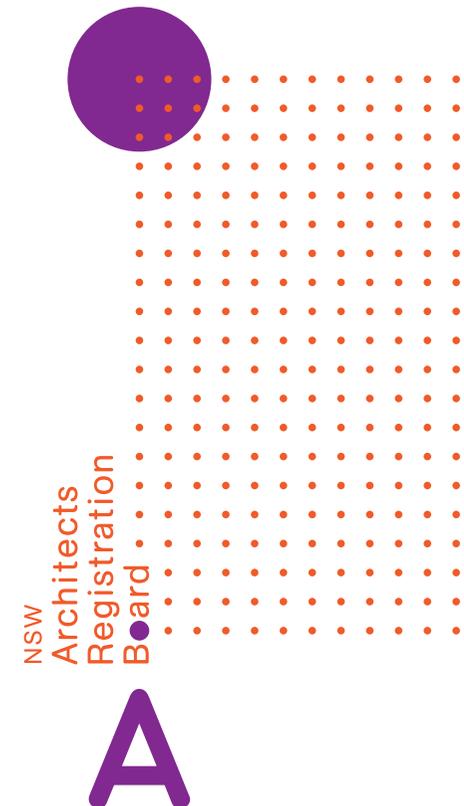
- Australian Institute of Architects:
www.architecture.com.au
- Building Professions Board:
www.bpb.nsw.gov.au
- Office of Fair Trading:
www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

NSW
Architects Registration Board

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www.architects.nsw.gov.au

Working with your Architect

Consumer
Guide



Completing a successful building project will happen partly because you had a good working relationship with your architect. This brochure describes what architects do for their clients, and gives you some advice about how to work best with your architect.

An architect's role and obligations

In NSW only persons registered with the NSW Architects Registration Board may practice architecture and use the title of architect. To check your architect's registration status, see the NSW Register of Architects on the Board's website:

www.architects.nsw.gov.au

Subject to your Client-Architect Agreement, your architect will:

- develop a design solution appropriate to your needs and budget;
- communicate with you to ensure you understand the important steps in the project and important decisions taken;
- provide written terms of engagement prior to commencement of work;
- provide a copy of the NSW Architects Code of Professional Conduct or refer you to the Board's website;
- provide information about their professional indemnity insurance cover;
- obtain your approval for design decisions made in order to progress stages of the project; and
- administer the building contract (if engaged to do so) and act as your advisor on contractual matters between you and the builder.

Consultants

Additional consultants are usually required in most projects, but note that their fees are not usually included with your architect's fee for service. Consultants that may be required include for example: structural engineer; surveyor; landscape architect; mechanical engineer; quantity surveyor; and geo-technical engineer. Your architect will advise which consultants you will need, depending on the type of project, its size and also its budget.

Typical architectural services

The services that an architect provides can be divided into three phases:

- **design;**
- **contract documentation; and**
- **contract administration.**

You may engage an architect for some or all of these. Whatever services you require should be written down in an agreement between you and your architect before work commences.

• The design phase

You and your architect will clarify your requirements in the design phase. Your architect will assess what Council Codes your building should comply with and any related planning requirements. They will also make sketches to give you some design alternatives, usually including some cost options. Most Client-Architect Agreements will list the number of options that will be provided in this phase of the project. Discuss with your architect about engaging a quantity surveyor from the early stages to ensure your budget is maintained.

Your architect will develop the design you have approved and produce a set of coordinated, detailed drawings. They will also advise you on selecting materials and their associated cost. A Development Application (DA) will be prepared for submission to Council. Your architect might recommend a meeting with the Council before submission, to ensure the design satisfies both your needs and also the relevant planning requirements.

• The contract documentation phase

You can engage your architect to continue onto the contract documentation phase after the Development Application has been approved by Council.

Your architect will produce technical drawings, specifications and schedules based on the approved design. These are used to obtain building approval, which is called a Construction Certificate or "CC". This will be used for both tendering and for the building construction.

The CC must be approved either by the Council or by a private certifier. The certifier will check that the works on site are built according to approved stamped drawings and regulations. When the building is finished the certifier will sign the Occupancy Certification which certifies the completion of the work.

• The contract administration phase

After CC approval, you can also engage your architect to administer the building contract. If you have, then they will advise you on a suitable form of contract for the project and a process of tender or negotiation to select a builder.

Your architect will show you the tenders and ask you for your final selection. Once you have selected a builder and signed a building contract, the builder will supervise the day-to-day building works.

In this phase your architect will:

- Assess the quality of the building work at key stages of the project;
- Ensure that the contract and its specifications are complied with;
- Inform you of progress;
- Approve in consultation with you any variations to the building contract;
- Certify progress payments to the builder; and
- Identify any defects with the building work and supervise their correction.

Choosing an Architect

- It is important that you choose the right architect for your particular project. To do this, write down what it is that you want. Then, take this list to several different architects and discuss it with them. Outline your project and the budget you have in mind. Ask about the services the architect can provide, and how the stages of the project will work. The architect will assist you to clarify your requirements and to articulate a design brief.
- Be wary about selecting an architect just because they have given you the cheapest quote. It is far more important that you have the right person for the job. Your relationship with your architect will need to remain productive over a long period, sometimes under stressful circumstances. Choose an architect who has experience in the type of project you are doing, who is a good communicator, and who has a track record of respecting his or her professional obligations.
- Talk to several architects about your project. You needn't feel embarrassed about consulting more than one architect. Ask whatever questions you need to in order to satisfy your curiosity or to clear up any confusion or doubt: there are no wrong or silly questions.
- Have a look at past projects which the architect has completed to see if you like their designs.
- Ask to see references from the architect's past clients. Are the clients pleased with the designs? Would those clients recommend this architect?
- It is also important to check the architect's qualifications and registration. The Board can tell you if they are registered as an architect.
- Finally, be aware that your architect will own the copyright of his or her work. Subject to the contract between you and your architect, their drawings and documentation will give you permission to build the design only once, and on a specified site.