

Designing Your Home

It takes flexibility, communication and realistic expectations to work successfully with an architect. Here are some tips from architects and homeowners.

Pay attention to personality. Most people hire an architect only once in their lives. Searching for one is akin to finding a financial planner, architects say. Look for an architect who has designed projects that are similar in style and scope to yours. "There's no substitute for experience," says Todd Strickland, a partner with Historical Concepts, an Atlanta architectural firm. Because designing a home is such a personal project, it's important that you feel able to communicate with your architect.

Liza Nugent, 41 years old, and her husband needed an architect to combine their apartment on Manhattan's Upper East Side with a neighboring unit; they got referrals from friends. The first person they called made a snippy remark about how "unsophisticated" co-op boards in buildings on side streets such as theirs make renovations difficult. "I thought, with that kind of attitude, we definitely wouldn't get along," Mrs. Nugent says. After calling two more architects and interviewing three others, the Nugents picked a longtime acquaintance who had creative design solutions for their project.

Enlist an architect early. Most architects will do their best to design a structure to work with whatever plot of land you have to build on. But they also can help scout prospective land purchases. With a general vision of your house and a budget in mind, the architect can evaluate the pros and cons of a location that a client might overlook, such as whether a site is big enough to accommodate the dwelling or whether a neighbor's right-to-a-view will preclude building the 12-foot ceilings you want.

Is the site free of utility constraints? What about topographical features that could increase the cost of building? Paying for four or five hours of evaluation is likely to save money in the long run.

Bring visuals. Pictures help an architect understand your vision, whether it's a rough sketch you've made, magazine photos of homes you like, or a coffee-table book featuring interiors by your favorite designer. Snapshots of specific lighting fixtures or cabinet styles are helpful, but so are pictures that convey intangibles: the sense of place created by sunlight streaming through a skylight, or a library room with a "warm" feeling.

Dallas architect Marc McCollom, who designs modern houses, says clients also should bring pictures of things they don't like. Architects will regard the client's visual portfolio as a cue for whether they'll make a good team. "If they show me pictures with crown molding and decorative wallpaper, I shouldn't take that job," Mr. McCollom says matter-of-factly. "I'm not going to be happy, and we shouldn't work together."

Find a listener. A relationship with a designer is like a marriage: Go with someone who listens, cut your losses with someone who doesn't -- or risk getting a house you don't want to live in. When Jim Jenkins began a \$1.5 million renovation of his Alamo, Calif., home, he hired a local who'd designed other houses in the neighborhood. But 18 months into the process, the architect still hadn't produced a design that the Jenkinses liked or that could get past the local homeowners' association.

"He wouldn't design what we were looking for," Mr. Jenkins says. "My wife's looking for something Caribbean and he kept thinking California Ranch."

Mr. Jenkins pulled the plug on that designer and hired a Berkeley-based architect, Robert Nebolon. "He read the codes, had some creative ideas and within six months I got what I was looking for," Mr. Jenkins says.

Clients need to listen, too. Telephones, faxes and email aren't the best ways to communicate about home design. Avoiding in-person meetings will delay construction. A good architect won't act on any part of a project without clear approval.

Talk money upfront. A flat fee may be appropriate for projects whose scope is very defined. But construction projects often include unforeseen challenges, and for that reason most architects prefer to charge by the hour or by a percentage of building costs. Some architects charge by the hour in the concept stage and then charge fees ranging from 8% to 18% of construction costs after hiring. For projects costing \$1.5 million plus, expect fees to range from 12% to 18%, says James P. Cramer, chairman of Greenway Group, a design-industry consulting firm.

Some architects ask clients for a wish list of features, fixtures and qualities along with an estimated budget. "Sometimes people's expectations aren't realistic given what their budgets are," says Manhattan architect Darby Curtis.

Consider full service. Architects will be as involved as you want them to be. They can simply do design conception and deliver drawings. Or they can visit sites, coordinate contractors and observe construction. Many architects advise clients to retain a designer through construction. "In the long run

you'll save yourself from headaches and extra construction," Ms. Curtis says.

Have a strong marriage. Architects offer this last bit of advice in all seriousness. Money tends to cause stress in a relationship, and building a home involves a lot of money. Building a house together, Mr. McCollom says, "is not going to save your marriage."

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EDITORIAL it

My famous saying is: Marriage will be extra emotion , in fact extramarital emotional Marriage is a patrilineal society support system. Chou dynasty concubine system is the vine in Juqie wife colleagues, is the concubine of spare his wife, the wife could not reproduce once, can be replaced concubine. As the wife-mother to the world, not as good entertainment husband s role is often coupled with the concubine

Feng parents, the Matchmaker Introduction to marry, although Mendanghudui, but may not meet the expectations of men.

In other words, the extra emotion is not only personal problems, it is the product of patriarchal culture, both East and West, so long as the money men, and powerful, the famous, and more likely to have his mistress, it is a more general social phenomenon. However, the existing institution of marriage is monogamous, breaking China has long been the concubine, the slavery system, a variety of social causes, extramarital emotional problems become worse.

Extramarital the causes of many feelings, nothing more than divided into two categories: First, the patriarchal social and cultural result, the higher proportion of male emotional affair. Second, personal dissatisfaction in marriage materialize by the (so-called Desire here refers not only emotional, sexual needs, including security, trust, and others in need).

Marriage in extramarital emotion, the family will have a tremendous mass destruction, and disaster extension of the next generation, because there is no more intimate relationship than the marriage relationship, and maintain intimate relationships is the power of the largest mutual trust, Confucius said: If a man does not legislate. If the marriage relationship of trust disappeared, and marriage does not collapse, several fortune.

However, extramarital affairs of emotion is really unforgivable sin? In fact Otherwise, if the victim does not extramarital emotion from personal look at the role of this, and from the social, cultural, family history and the parties to understand this growth process, one can reduce their injuries, more calmly to review this pile marriage. If we continue to love each other and the other side has the sincerity to solve the problem, the two sides can make joint efforts to revitalize marriage, once through this crisis, will be able to enter the vista realm. If the other side has to Italy Kennedy, the sincerity to solve the problem, will also hold Haojuhaosan the attitude of the end of this marriage.

Whether to retain or end of a university are asked, not by relying on subjective personal feelings, the theory needs to be reading, problem-solving skills to learn and practice. The Centre marriage and family therapy from the perspective of extra-marital counselling emotional problems and provide problem-solving skills, the extra emotion parties, the victim and a third party rather enlightening, in the love they experience in the triangular relationship of the people are equally useful.

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About the Author

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