

A ROUGH GUIDE TO ARCHITECTURAL SERVICE TIERS

You're considering a major home construction project, and interviewing architects, but not sure how to compare apples to apple pie. This might be the second biggest investment in your life, and you're not even clear on what it is you're paying an Architect for..

POSSIBLE DESIGN FEES ON A \$400,000 ADDITION/RENOVATION



DRAFTSPERSON / ENGINEER

- Bare minimum drawings for a building permit
- Draftsperson may have to hire an architect or engineer to stamp certain drawings
- Best if you know exactly what you want and how to build it
- Good choice if you are a dentist who flips houses on the side and already know everything about design and construction, you just need someone who can do the CAD stuff and get a permit. You probably won't follow the drawings anyway
- You might be interested in my [Plan Review](#) service

SELF-EMPLOYED ARCHITECT

- Complete, coordinated drawing set of your bespoke design
- You work directly with the architect/owner of the practice
- Contract typically runs from concept through receiving your building permit
- Multiple iterations of Schematic Design (aka Master Plan) so you get to see all the possibilities
- Architect's home office is in unfinished basement not suited for client visits, but they're about to start construction on their own dream home with an amazing home office they can't wait to have clients visit (generally speaking)
- Will design your kitchen layout and provide drawings and 3d views, but leave the actual selection of appliances, cabinets, pulls, counter material etc. to owner and/or cabinet rep
- Architect is available beyond permit receipt, but actual construction administration is usually hourly
- Drawings may generally describe finishes as "engineered hardwood" or "shiplap accent wall" etc. Owner will make most selections based on an allowance determined during contractor selection
- Fee likely does not include structural engineer or other consultants

FULL SERVICE ARCHITECTURE FIRM

- Complete drawing set and likely a specification book.
- You work with a Project Architect and possibly a few other team members
- Contract typically runs from concept through the end of construction, with Construction Administration being a required component of the fee
- Have a really nice office with a big conference room, probably
- Fee may already include structural engineering
- Drawing set may include detailed technical drawings of all casework, bathroom vanities, showers and more
- Drawings may indicate specific finishes, fixtures and installation quality standards before a builder is selected