

# I Need An Architect, But Who?

By: Darren China, R.A.

You have decided the time is right to tackle that construction project and realized you would benefit greatly with the right architect in your corner. But who? How do you find the correct person to help you create that project you've been envisioning? Here are five factors to consider when selecting a design professional for the job.

- 1) **Design Aesthetic:** What is the architect's style? What do his previous projects look like and do they match your own aesthetic interests? Do your due diligence by visiting his/her website to gain a better understanding of their design approach or ask to see their portfolio upon meeting with them to discuss your current design challenges.
- 2) **Personality:** You will be working together as partners in designing your project for a sustained period of time. Therefore you need to select an architect who shares your sensibilities, values, sense of humor, etc. You and your architect must feel comfortable discussing design alternatives. He/She should also possess the expertise and confidence to engage the contractor during the construction phase of the project
- 3) **Collaborative:** In any design and construction project there are a number of players involved, ie. contractors, code officials, vendors, engineers and consultants. An architect that can collaborate and coordinate all of these individuals effectively with the overall objective of the project in mind is of extreme importance. Obviously he/she needs to be collaborative with you. Stories of Frank Lloyd Wright dictating where every vase was to be placed may not depict the correct relationship for you.
- 4) **Resourceful:** Let's face it you are interested in finding an architect to help you solve a complex design problem. You need someone to provide solutions you may not have been aware were possible. A beautiful finished project comes from research of materials, codes, construction methods and dialog with manufacturers. Does the architect have the resourcefulness to find alternative solutions?
- 5) **Willingness to Absorb Your Problem:** Construction is never a lineal path. It tends to be a stutter step; two steps forward, one step to the side, one step back, three steps forward. Unforeseen conditions arise while designing as well as during the construction process. Part of your architect's job is to absorb and

solve these problems on your behalf. You have career and day to day responsibilities therefore you need an architect that can lead the project and solve issues as they arise using his/her expertise.

The desired end result of every design endeavor is to produce a functional yet beautifully designed and built environment. Through a collaborative partnership with an architect who matches your interests and possesses the expertise necessary, the desired outcome is sure to be a reality.

**Darren China, R.A.** is the principal of Studio China Architecture + Design.  
Contact him at [darren@studio-china.com](mailto:darren@studio-china.com) or 201-575-5180  
Visit Studio China Architecture + Design's website at: [www.studio-china.com](http://www.studio-china.com)

© Copyright 2009 Darren China. All rights reserved