Atelier7

ARCHITECTS

A Definitive Guide To
Working With Atelier7

INTRODUCTION

Good design is the synthesis of many disparate ideas into a thoughtful whole.

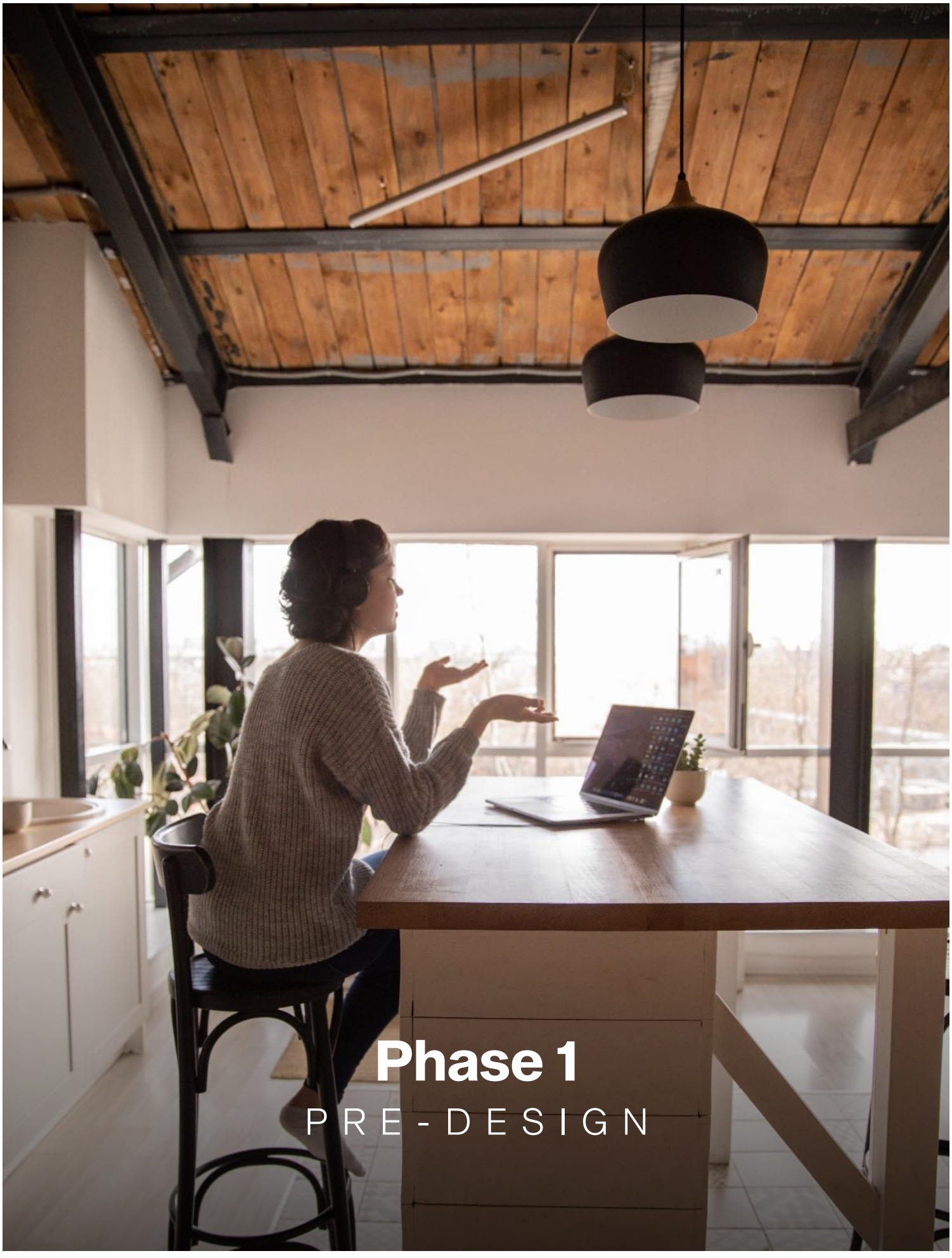
The way we arrive at the final design isn't always linear.It's an iterative process, which leads to a product; it's not a known product from the beginning. The product is the result of following the design process to its logical endpoint. This, we believe, is what makes custom design so exciting and memorable – we create it together based on your specific situation and needs. At the end of the process, you'll have a thoughtfully designed project and the the shared experience of designing it.

Below is an outline of the steps we'll be taking together as we design your home. This process is meant to be fun, engaging, and collaborative. It will involve sketches, drawings, computer models, lots of ideas – both good + bad - materials, thorough analysis, and good humor. We think the best outcomes are the result of following each of the steps below to complete.

Architects, for the most part, all use a similar series of steps to arrive at a finished project. There are six general phases:

01. **Pre Design**	Site analysis, programming, existing conditions, budgeting, code review, pricing test.
02. **Schematic Design**	Final design concept generation, construction method approval.
03. **Design Development**	The refinement of the selected design concept from Phase 2.
04. **Construction Documents**	Detailed drawings, schedules, and specs, permit submittal, fabrication submittals.
05. **Contractor/Fabricator Selection**	Aid in contract award/negotiation with GC, fabricator, scope definition for GC, fabrication hand-off if required.
06. **Construction Observation**	Oversee construction + administration of the contract.

The phases are sequential and they build on the work completed and agreed to in each preceding phase. We start with the general and refine the design to the very specific. There's lot of decisions along the way and this gradation organizes those decisions into manageable portions.



Phase 1

PRE-DESIGN

This is essentially an information gathering and processing phase – what we do before we start to design.

We collect all of the information about the project to use in schematic design. This includes information about the site, any existing structure(s), codes, deed restrictions, septic information, site utilities, access, budget, and schedule.

1

Site Evaluation and Planning

The property, or site, is a strong generator of ideas and building forms for us, so we begin all new residential projects with an analysis of your site. We look at the local conditions - climate, wind patterns, solar angles, topography, and other significant features - particular to your property.

We overlay any local zoning restrictions (setbacks, etc.) on this plan and create a site diagram. This diagram usually begins to suggest candidate building sites and opportunities, which together, we'll begin exploring in the next step.

2

Programming + Budget Analysis

The program is an architect's way of saying, "list of rooms". What will we be programming into your facility? Chances are this has been percolating in your head for some time but we need to get it on paper and make it real. We'll ask you to make an exhaustive list of the spaces you'd like in your home to include. Treat it as a wish list of sorts (for now). For the major spaces, it's also useful to describe the character of those spaces (wood ceilings, cozy, formal, low light, etc.) If you have particular needs regarding sizes or adjacencies of spaces, i.e. "the Komodo dragon enclosure must be at least 30x40", it would be great to know that upfront. Otherwise, we'll develop and assign appropriately scaled spaces to your list of rooms as a starting point.

We'll apply square footage estimates to this list of spaces and assign estimated dollar values to the total project square footage. Together we'll compare the estimated cost of the home with your budget. If the two don't align we'll revisit the size + number of spaces for as long as it takes to reconcile the two. It's much easier to align your budget with the size of the home before beginning the design process. The schematic design will follow, fixing ideas and expectations into an image of a home. Once this happens it's much more difficult to give things up.

3

Client Questionnaire

We'll send you a detailed list of questions to help us find out more about you, your needs for the project, and as part of the search for an architectural idea to build the project on. This will get us all thinking about the specifics of design from the outset.

4

Existing Conditions Survey (As Necessary)

These drawings are required for all renovation + addition projects and vary with the size and complexity of the existing building.

Code Analysis

It's critical to understand the restrictions governing the subject property or structure before beginning schematic design. This review will tell us what's possible and what isn't. We'll review the zoning, by-laws, and covenants that impact the property, review environmental issues, flood zones, and assess the overall permitting process. We will seek preliminary Planning Board, State Fire Marshal, Building Department, and engineering review as required.

Schedule

It's important to develop a basic schedule to make sure we're meeting everyone's expectations. The project schedule will be impacted by the following:

- ✓ Owner's Schedule
- ✓ Architect's Schedule
- ✓ Consultants' Schedules
- ✓ Permitting Schedule
- ✓ Contractor's Schedule + Availability
- ✓ Fabricator's Schedule + Availability

ⓘ The schedule will change along the way we'll use it to identify any constraints early on.

Information Required

PRE-DESIGN

Site Survey (digital)

Showing property boundaries, roads, test pit sites, utilities, topography, known significant site features, and any existing structures

Existing Structure Floor plans (digital) as applicable.

If you don't have these, we will conduct an existing conditions survey for you.

Soils test/septic design (assuming no public sewer access).

We can suggest local designers that will work with us to find a suitable site (for both the building and the septic).

Client Questionnaire

This is a document I'll provide for you to fill out. It's a detailed list of questions designed to tell me more about you, your project and to define the project goals in a very granular way.

- ✓ List of any known restrictions (wetlands, permitting constraints, easements, etc.)
- ✓ Copy of your deed

ⓘ This phase is complete when you've agreed to the program and budget we've developed together. Then we can proceed to the next phase.

Phase 2

SCHEMATIC DESIGN

This is where the rough shape of the building and the ideas are formed.

We'll generate a couple of different design options for you to consider - two at a minimum (sometimes more) - using all of the information gathered in the previous step. We begin by drafting a narrative for the project, called a 'parti', which we'll reference throughout the project. This seed idea is used to help us make decisions as the project becomes more detailed and better defined. It's a rulebook of sorts.

We generally present the schematic ideas in loose sketch form on tracing paper as site and plan diagrams or models, physical or digital. These are not final ideas or fixed plans, they're meant to be conceptually evocative and to incite new ideas and feedback from you.

We'll meet and discuss the designs to narrow the field to one preferred design concept; something we can move forward with. Often this design will borrow features from other schemes and become a hybridized solution. The phase concludes with your selection of a scheme to further develop.

This is the critical point when we bring in the fabricator. The schematic design is presented to a select group of general contractors and simultaneously provided to our fabricator selected to partner with us. Conceptual estimates and duration timelines are developed by each group.

The point behind this is to allow you to accurately define how you want to home to be constructed. It is very easy to be misinformed by numbers, especially cost for pre-fabrication, without honestly consider the implication of time on the overall project. That time to build has a cost to and we will help you analyze the best course of action to achieve the house.

At the end of this phase we'll usually have the following:

- ✓ Schematic Site Plan
- ✓ Schematic Floor Plans
- ✓ Sketch Elevations / 3D Model
- ✓ Preliminary Cost Estimate for Contractor
- ✓ Preliminary Cost Estimate for Factory Fabrication
- ✓ Conceptual Timeline

Phase 3

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Before proceeding with Design Development, we will agree upon the method of construction for the house.

This is critical since certain communications will be critical to the fabricator if we are to proceed in that direction. Taking the schematic plan developed in the previous phase, we begin to create the drawings digitally. We locate it precisely on your site and think about how it will relate to the existing contour and consider how that will shape the building.

We make the building real by drawing the floor plan - the walls, windows, + doors, and stairs. We define the exact sizes and relationships of the rooms, the overall volume of the building and generate the initial set of exterior elevations. We also begin thinking about materials, inside and out.

Eventually, we'll know what every finish in every room is, but here we'll conceptualize the framework for the material palette. The building systems will be developed in this phase as well – structural, mechanical, heating, lighting, and specialty controls.

ⓘ We'll usually meet to discuss the evolution of the design several times, each time refining the level of detail and decision.

Consultants

This phase initiates our coordination with the various consultants that will bring their expertise to bear on the project. Because the work we do is very specific and it demands the highest quality we almost always use structural engineers. They ensure that our homes perform to our joint high level of expectation. Much of our work is directly exposed to high loading from lateral wind force and involving a structural engineer is a must.

Other consultants such as landscape, lighting, or mechanical professionals can be brought in as necessary at this time. Our design work extends to all parts of the interior from material selection, fixture selection, hardware, to all of the finishes and appliances. We find this produces the most cohesive design overall.

At phase completion you'll have a set of drawings for what looks like a house, but not quite enough to build from:

- ✓ Site / Grading Plan
- ✓ Floor Plans ¼"
- ✓ Exterior Elevations ¼"
- ✓ Sections
- ✓ Interior Elevations
- ✓ Outline Specification
- ✓ Structural Concept
- ✓ Lighting Concept
- ✓ Lighting Concept

Phase 4

CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

This phase fixes all of the information about the house into a detailed set of drawings and specifications that will be used by the Contractor and/or Fabricator for pricing and construction.

Think of it as an instruction manual. Before beginning, we'll discuss whether you'd like to pursue a bid price contract or a negotiated contract, field or factory fabrication and we'll craft the drawings and level of detail in those drawings based on those decisions. For a typical project, we generate the following drawings:

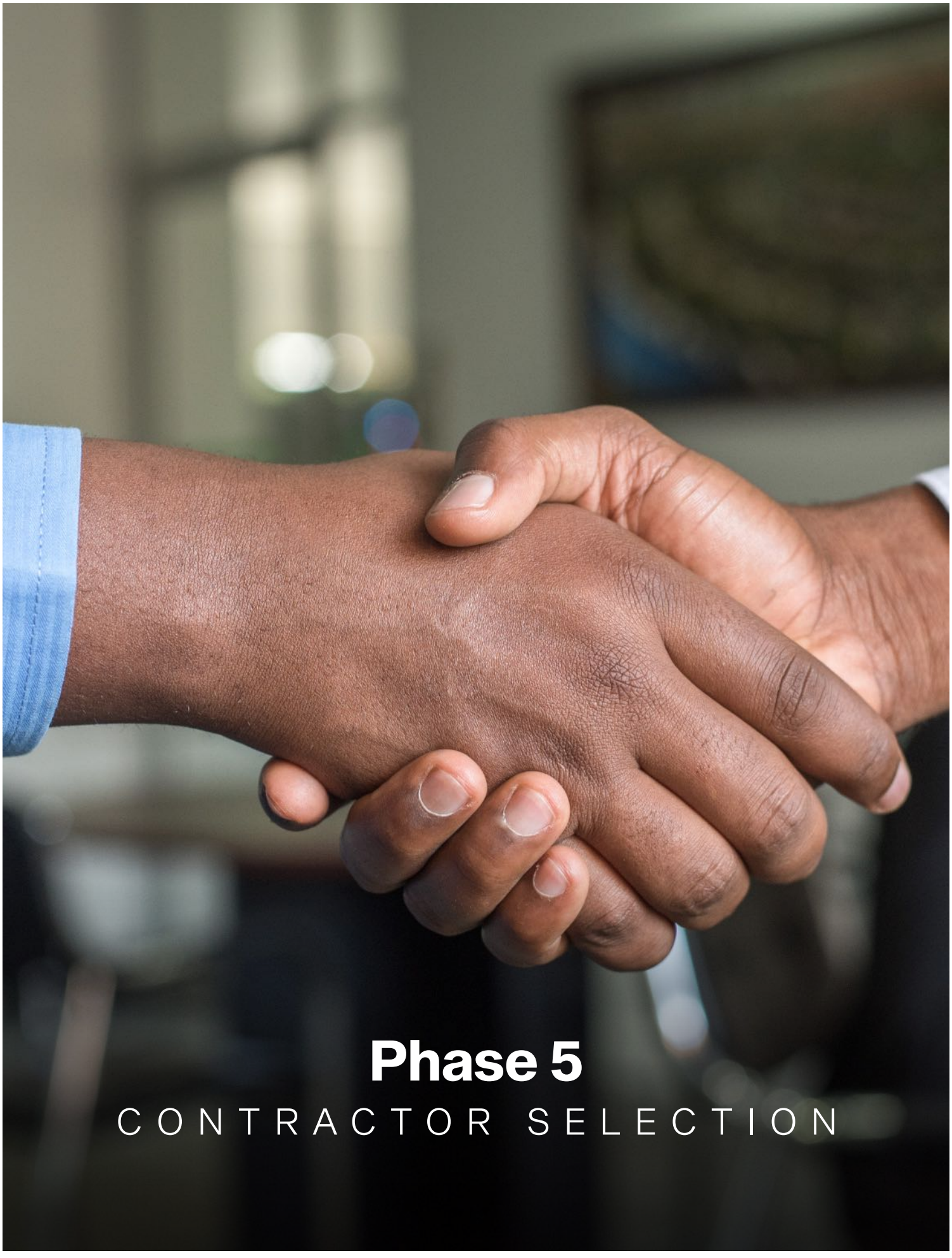
For a typical project, we generate the following drawings:

- ✓ Site Plan
- ✓ Floor Plan(s)
- ✓ Foundation Plan
- ✓ Exterior Elevations
- ✓ Building Sections/Wall Sections
- ✓ Door + Window Details
- ✓ Interior Elevations
- ✓ Details (interior/exterior)
- ✓ Electrical / Lighting plans
- ✓ Structural Plans
- ✓ Civil Plans
- ✓ Mechanical Plans
- ✓ Plumbing Plans
- ✓ Building Specifications
- ✓ Schedules (Door/Window/ Hardware/Plumbing/Lighting/ Finish/Appliance, etc.)
- ✓ Project Specifications

The construction documents phase will require less input from you as most of the decisions will have already been made.

If there are outstanding finish selections or cabinetry design decisions we'll meet to confirm those. If the project is to be site built, we will issue the necessary packages and documents to begin this process with the local building authority. Special conditions will be noted in the drawings to determine if your containers will be site modified or factory modified.

If the project is factory built, the permit procedures are slightly modified. The permitting jurisdiction will only review the site work and foundations. The drawings are simultaneously provided to the fabricator to initiate a building contract with the fabrication company and to start the review and approval process by the State.



Phase 5

CONTRACTOR SELECTION

This is a separate phase but it typically occurs alongside other phases of the work, especially if the contractor you're seeking is in high demand.

There are typically two means of selecting a contractor – by competitive bidding or by negotiated contract.

1

Bid Contract

We agree on two (or more) contractors to competitively price the construction documents. This results in a fixed bid price for construction based on the drawings and specifications, what we refer to as the contract documents. The bidders must be of equal quality because high-end custom builders and production builders will naturally arrive at different numbers and make the process less useful.

Bidding requires a tight set of drawings with no room for confusion or interpretation. Any undefined scope of work is an opportunity for a bidder to make an assumption (which is always based on cost) and that's an opportunity for a change order during construction. As you might imagine, these detailed coordinated drawings take more time to develop and will increase the design fee. With a tight set of drawings, the materials are known quantities (windows, doors, finishes) and the only real differences between bids should be the individual builder's varying overhead and profit percentages. This number is typically a negotiated percentage.

The bidders will submit their prices and list of subcontractors to you and together we'll evaluate the bids and award the contract to the contractor of your choice. This does not have to be the low bidder.

PROS

- ✓ Validates the cost of construction among a pool of builders

CONS

- ✕ Adversarial build process – more change orders, finger-pointing
- ✕ Subcontract quality is subject to the quality of the low bidder (GC's choice)
- ✕ Low bidders may feel pressure to compromise quality
- ✕ Upfront drawing/design fees are higher to ensure drawings are complete
- ✕ Some local contractors won't participate in the bid process at all
- ✕ More time to conduct the bid process and award the contract

2

Negotiated Contract

Also known as a T&M (time & materials) or Cost-Plus contract, this arrangement bills for the actual cost of the work plus an agreed-upon (negotiated) fee. It's a collaborative process that involves the Contractor in the design process helping to develop and refine pricing along the way. It guarantees them the contract at the end of the construction documents phase and builds trust between all parties.

The contract can be structured either with or without a guaranteed maximum price and incentivized in different ways.

PROS

- ✓ Collaborative build process
- ✓ A bigger pool of qualified contractors available to choose from (this is the locally preferred means of construction)
- ✓ Lower design fees, things can be worked out in the field without change orders.
- ✓ Develop a working relationship and trust through the design process
- ✓ Saves the time of the bid process
- ✓ Flexibility – changes reflect real costs, not low bidder making up for his low number

CONS

- ✗ The schedule is everything with this structure, without a fixed price ceiling delays can quickly increase the overall cost to build

We prefer the negotiated contract because it’s more collaborative and seeks to quantify a competitive cost throughout the process with an engaged builder.

Most local contracts are negotiated contracts - some have not-to-exceed maximums and some don’t. With either structure, we’ll assist in negotiating and fine-tuning the costs involved and facilitate the signature of the appropriate AIA contract agreement.

Having a good builder on board will help to price your project fairly and make the construction process much less stressful – even enjoyable. Building consensus, mutual respect, and an investment in the project mean we’re all working toward the same goal, which inevitably results in a better home for you.

Phase 6

CONSTRUCTION OBSERVATION

After the contract is awarded and construction begins, we act as your agent on-site, monitor progress, review applications for payment, and ensure conformance with the contract documents.

> ⓘ We don't tell the contractor how to do his work; We just make sure he's doing the things he's contractually promised to do.

This is a crucial part of the process and we strongly advocate (YOU MAY REQUIRE INVOLVEMENT) being involved during construction. Not only does it ensure that all of the hard work we put in designing your vision is executed properly and according to the drawings we crafted, but we also find that it holds the Contractor to a higher standard of quality.

Invariably, there are things that we're just not able to draw or anticipate during the Construction Documents phase. Involving us in the Construction Observation phase allows the project design vision to be integrated into the details of the home seamlessly. Architects and Contractors think very differently – which is good – but not every Contractor's decision balances function and aesthetics

1 Weekly Meetings

We visit the site weekly to meet with the Contractor + Subcontractors to answer any questions and review progress + conformance with the Contract Documents. We create a private project website for you where we post progress photos and send a weekly field report.

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2 Payment Applications, Change Orders, Supplemental Information

We review and certify the Contractor's payment requisitions and review any change order requests. For work that requires clarification or alteration, we'll issue 'sketches' to facilitate the Contractor's work.

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2 Project Close-Out

At 'Substantial Completion' we work with the Contractor to generate a punch list and oversee its execution. And, at the end of the project, we'll issue a 'Certificate of Final Completion' and authorize the release of the final payment.

ⓘ This phase ends with the completed project, ready to move in.

Atelier 7

FEES

1

Fees

All design fees are charged on a lump sum basis. The cost of construction of a project doesn't determine the architectural fees, but it's a useful guideline in projecting how much design time may be needed to consider the project and produce the drawings.

A full scope of architectural services, as described below, often falls within the range of 10% to 20% of the actual cost of construction. Note that this is the actual cost of construction, not the initial budget - often these are two very different numbers.

> ⓘ Fees will be in the higher end of that range for projects that consider a master plan, focus primarily on the kitchen and/or bathrooms, and/or have a construction budget below $200K.

The nature of the decision-making process, the Owner's directives, and the level of design input requested, all affect the overall fees.

Therefore, fees can only be estimated at the start of a project-based upon the potential size and complexity of the project and intended work.

Your budget for your home must align with both the square footage desired and the estimated cost per square foot to build. For custom residential construction in Georgia, we use the range of $150 -350/SF. This is a big spread, some of which is dependent on the builder, some of which is based on the complexity o the container design and layout, and some of which is based on the level of finish required.

We'll work with you early on to fine-tune the list of desired spaces and their sizes and develop an initial estimated building cost. This will focus your decision-making process and help to align the budget with the size of the building.

By doing this you'll have a more accurate picture of what my design fees will be. We like to involve a Contractor early in the process to provide local construction cost feedback that together we can rely on. We do not warranty, guarantee or certify the construction cost for the project or any part of the project, We only collaborate with Contractors who have an intimate knowledge of the (ever-changing) actual cost of construction.

2

What's Included?

While we love designing things, the design is only one part of what we do on a project. There's a lot of communication that happens behind the scenes. We refer to this as project administration and its duties are spread across all of the phases of work. This is included in the basic services fee.

We believe for a project to run smoothly open communication between everyone – Owner, Fabricator, Contractor, Architect, Consultants, Other Agencies - is extremely important. We pride ourselves on being open communicators and always responsive to your questions. These administrative processes are in place to make sure your project runs efficiently, on budget, and on schedule.

Some examples of this project administration are:

- ✓ Phone, text, e-mail correspondence
- ✓ Owner meetings and presentations
- ✓ Meeting agendas + minutes
- ✓ Coordination of Consultant's work

3

Consultants

Since the complexity of each home is different, we do not provide the complete architectural and engineering fees until after the schematic design is completed. At this stage, we can clearly define the magnitude of work, the types of consultants that will be required, and provide a fair fee to the owner as well as a clear scope of work to our consultants.

Some examples of consultants we may involve in your project:

- ✓ Structural engineer
- ✓ Civil engineer
- ✓ Surveyor
- ✓ Soil Testing Services
- ✓ Landscape Architect
- ✓ Energy modeler
- ✓ Lighting consultant
- ✓ Interiors and Furniture Designer

ⓘ As the need for these specialized consultants arises, we'll work together to select the right person for the job and define the added costs upfront

4

How to Control Costs

We recognize that designing a house can be an expensive endeavor and we're happy to work with you to manage these costs.

A couple of things to prioritize when thinking about how to effectively control design fees:

1. Exploring more options, while a really enjoyable exercise for us, can get expensive quickly.

2. Be upfront with your goals, likes, and dislikes. Architects thrive on critical dialogue so don't be afraid to be direct and candid. Without an honest, open dialogue the process can take longer to arrive at something you're happy with.

3. Match the size of your desired house with your budget. This keeps all parties working toward a singular goal. It's much easier to work early on to define a realistic house size that meets your budget than to try and remove money from an oversized house during the pricing phase. We advocate designing smaller, more energy-efficient + affordable floor plans as a starting point.

5

Fee by Design Phase

The phases of architectural services are listed below. Each category notes a percentage of time that we typically spend in that phase. These services along with reimbursable expenses are in addition to the estimated fee of 8% to 20% of the construction costs.

PHASE	FEES
Phase 1: Pre-Design	See Below
Phase 2: Schematic Design	20%
Phase 3: Design Development	20%
Phase 4: Construction Documents	35%
Phase 5: Bidding & Negotiation	5%
Phase 6: Construction Observation	20%
Total A/E Fee	100%

HOURLY RATE	$175/hr
REIMBURSABLE	COST + 10%
TRAVEL	$0.60/mile

ⓘ Predesign services are typically handled with the Design Brief Strategy Report and are executed under a separate contract.

In our experience, we have learned to deliberately break our services into smaller packages to make sure the client clearly understands the processes and the cost associated with those decisions

Starting with a blank precept of an idea, it's easy to make basic cost assumptions hope that the project and cost follow along with these initial assumptions. We provide a small fee for pre-design before getting the rest of the consulting team involved to shake out these decisions early.

This provides the client with a fee that accurately matches the scope of work. No hidden cost for the owner, no sudden scope changes for the architect and consultants. Upon approval of the predesign and preliminary estimates, a complete comprehensive agreement is developed to complete the project

6

How Long Will it Take?

Design

The time it takes to complete the design portion of the work can vary from as little as a few weeks to up to several months (or more). It depends on the complexity of the scope of work, how quick you are to make decisions, how quickly we can come to a design solution that meets your needs, and any special permitting or regulatory hurdles we face.

Construction

Again, this depends on project size and complexity as well as the Contractor's and Fabricator's schedule and workload. We will evaluate the timeline based upon the fabrication choices we make during design.

Need help building with shipping containers?

If there's something you're still wondering about, you can always schedule a consultation call with us

Schedule a consultation call →

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