



Selecting the Right Architect For Your Luxury Home

Designing Innovative Spaces to Suit
Your Vision and Lifestyle
Resulting in the Home of Your Dreams.

2e Architects PETER R. TWOHY

Choosing the right architect for your team can make the process of creating a new home exciting, enjoyable, and rewarding.

These tips are meant as a guide to help choose the best architect for your residential project. You will be working very closely with your architect on what may be one of the biggest investments of your life.

Not only are an architect's answers to your questions important, but how they are answered speaks volumes, too.

Do they take time to go over details to clear up any confusion?

Do they conduct business in a transparent manner?

Are they easy to communicate with?

Do you feel comfortable with them?

We hope these tips will help you with your next project.

Thank you for requesting this free resource from 2e Architects

© 2021, All Rights Reserved

Reprint with permission only, this document is intended for electronic distribution and has embedded videos.

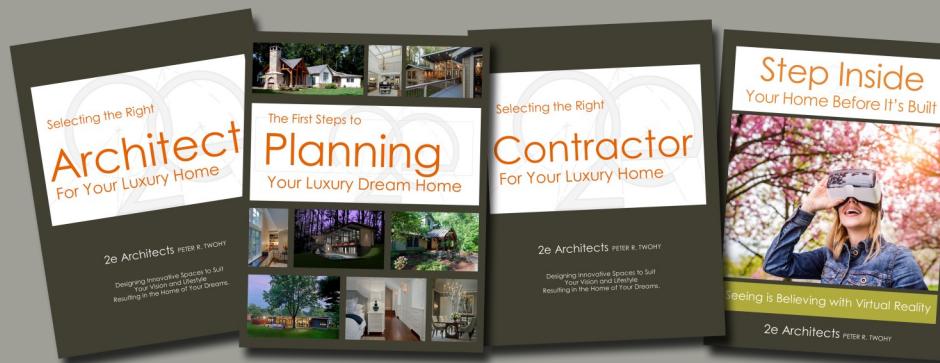


Nothing is more exciting than creating a new home and nothing will affect the success of the project more than selecting the right architect to ensure that the design of your home fits you, your family, and your life. The right architect makes it easy for you to make confident decisions from the beginning of the design process all the way through to the completion of the construction. The right architect helps protect and maximize your investment—both the financial and personal investment—that you make into the creation of your dream home.

The following eight point guide will help you to analyze the personality, design strategy, and communication skills of prospective architects when selecting the right one for your substantial monetary investment.



Peter R. Twohy AIA



MORE RESOURCES FROM 2e ARCHITECTS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE: 2e-architects.com



1.

one

Ask for referrals from friends, family, and professional associations.

Finding An Architect

Like many other fields, word of mouth is the best way to look for an architect. Ask family, friends, and professional colleagues for referrals. Is there a particular home you admire? A knock on the door can yield an introduction to your project's potential architect. Professional organizations such as your city or local architectural institutions are also great sources to find architects. General contractors, interior design studios, and other trade-related personnel would be able to furnish some referrals.

Be sure to visit the websites of your candidates. Look at their previous work. Get a feel for what their design style is. Is it about blending into the neighborhood? Is it about environmentally sound designs or is it about making a big statement? Is there a style that is easy to discern? Or, is the architect comfortable in many styles? If in the case of the former, that style needs to be close to your style. Either way, you should be able to see a distinct level of quality and detail. Then, start a conversation. Make an appointment for a consultation. Meeting face to face will help you decide if it is a good fit.

2.

two

Are they inquisitive?
Are they enthusiastic about your project?

Interviewing An Architect

One of the most important attributes of any architect is his or her curiosity. The architect has to be truly interested in what will transform any house into your dream home. For this reason, the word "why" is essential. If the architect understands what you want for your dream home, that is simply the first step. However, when the architect understands "why" you have that particular want or need, then the solutions become much better and far more personal. This inquisitiveness should be apparent during your first consultation.

Communication skills are next, especially your architect's ability to listen. When you speak, do you feel understood? Communication includes the drawings that your architect will use. Ask to see a recent presentation.

There is too much money and too much personal investment at stake to settle for just any architect—you want someone just as interested as you are in the project's success.



3. three

Start your own Ideabook to help you communicate your style

Determining Your Style Match

Who's got it and do you want it?

It is common for an architect to be known by a certain design style: Spanish colonial revival, ultra-modern, French country to name a few. Though most architects are able to adapt their signature style to what you want, think twice about hiring an architect with a neoclassical signature style to rehab your California craftsman style home.

Have plenty of examples of the look you want—these can be found in catalogs, magazines, and the Internet. If you are interested in environmentally friendly, sustainable green designs and construction, this can be applied to any style. Discuss the importance of these elements with your architect from the outset.

Determining Your Style Match

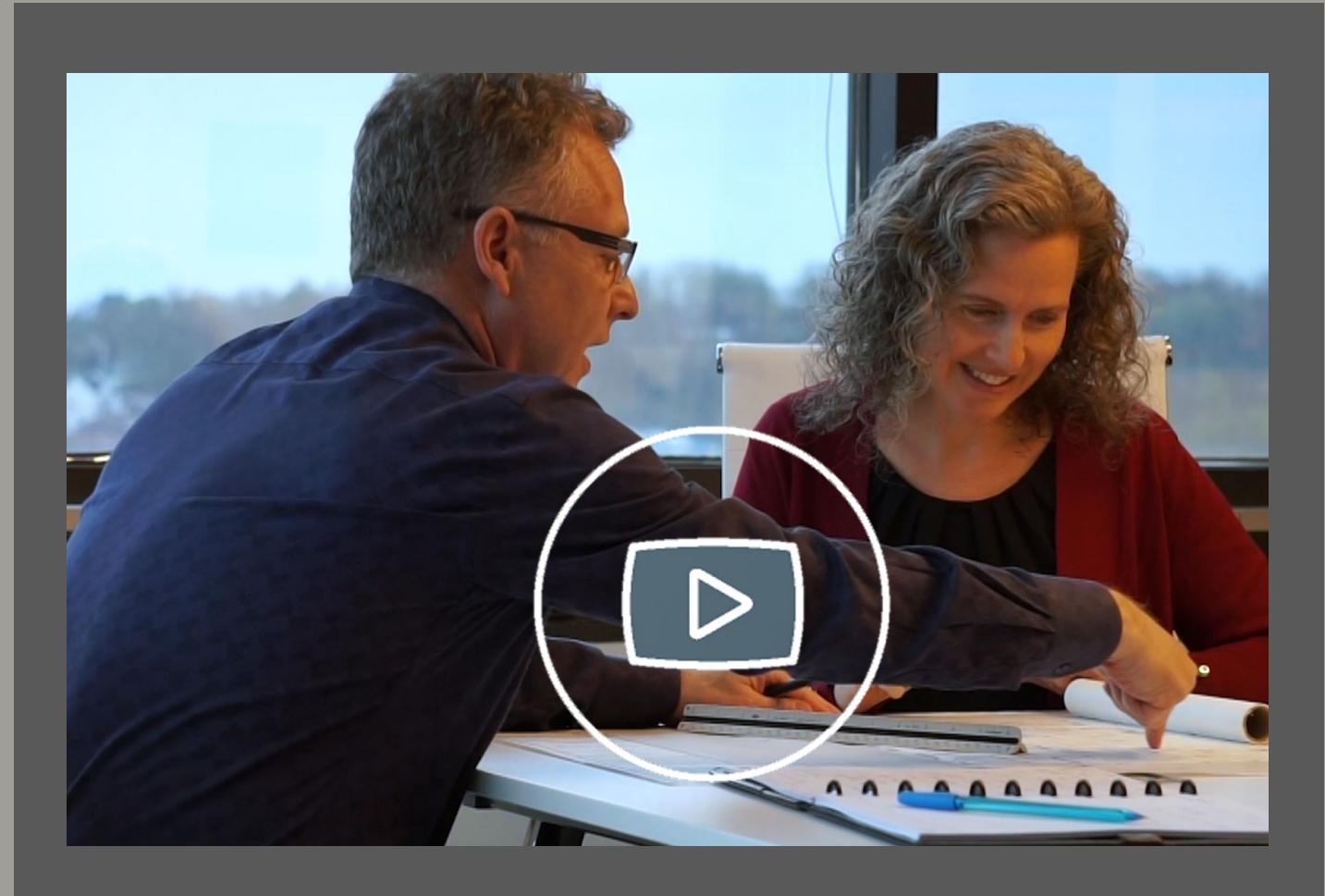
Who's got it and do you want it?

It is common for an architect to be known by a certain design style: Spanish colonial revival, ultra-modern, French country to name a few. Though most architects are able to adapt their signature style to what you want, think twice about hiring an architect with a neoclassical signature style to rehab your California craftsman style home.

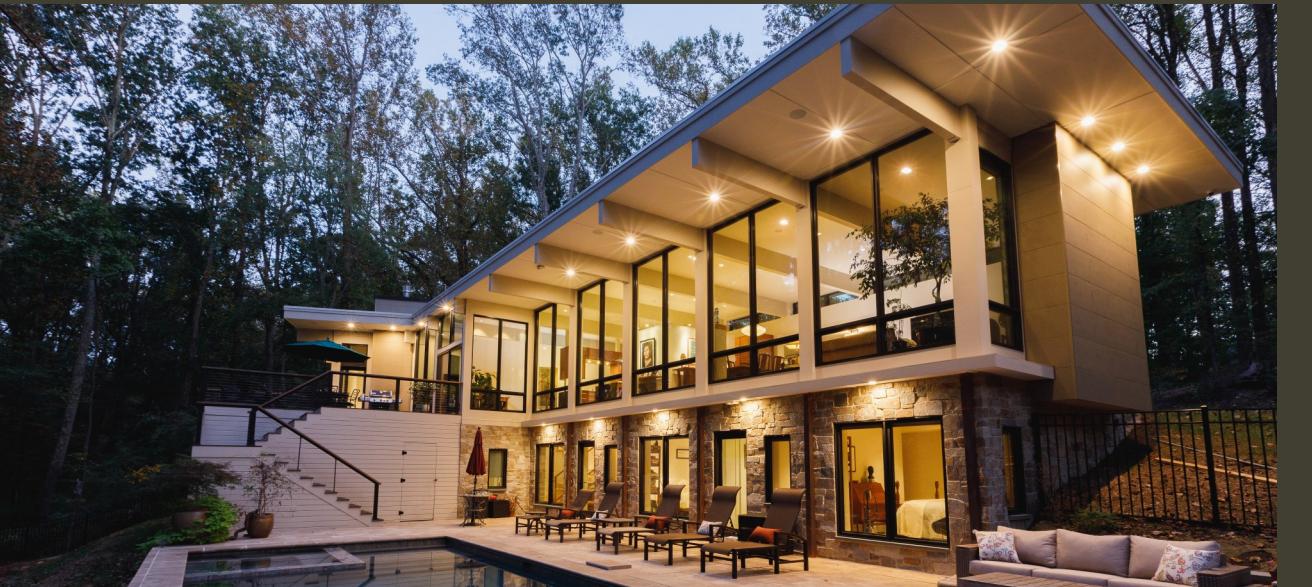
Have plenty of examples of the look you want—these can be found in catalogs, magazines, and the Internet. If you are interested in environmentally friendly, sustainable green designs and construction, this can be applied to any style. Discuss the importance of these elements with your architect from the outset.

What's Your Style?

The Process Should Illuminate and Refine Your Style.
(And your budget.)



We have developed a home design process with at its center is you. Your home design should be perfectly tailored to you. With an eye toward the details, we'll discuss your habits, your daily routine, and your interests. Together we'll explore how you entertain, how your family lives, and what style best expresses you. The key phases of the design process include: Design Preparation, Concept Design, Design Development, Permit Drawings, and Construction, culminating in Happily Even After. Visit our website to learn about the process: 2e-architects.com/Process





4.

four

Insisting on Virtual Reality

Virtual Reality allows the client and architect to immerse themselves directly into the space to see how all of the components come together in vivid, living color. As opposed to having to imagine it all when using flat, 2D floor plans and elevations that make it difficult to get the feel for a space.

Virtual Reality is simple for clients to use. We create short videos that run on any device and also a full 3D model of your home that you can explore via a tablet or, our preferred method of, using Virtual Reality goggles. Watching clients put them on and being able to walk through their home before a single hammer has been wielded is a game changer. Clients can explore every

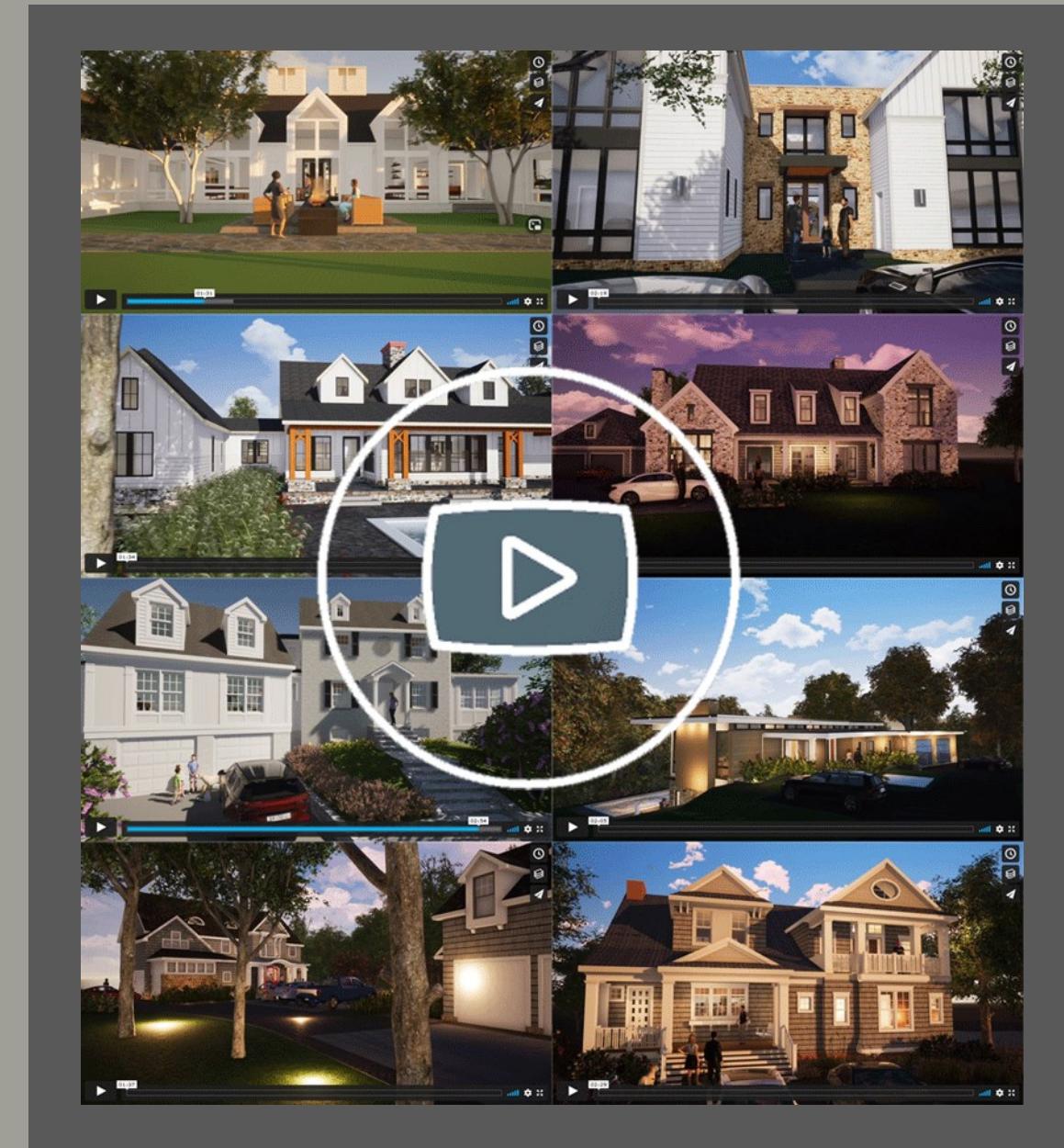
detail from ceiling height and window placement to the flow from room to room and the views outside of every windows. You can even have a seat on your couch or at the kitchen table.

Informed clients make better decisions; that's the entire reason for Virtual Reality. Well, it's also cool and fun! Too many examples exist of dissatisfied clients who didn't fully understand the design before construction began. One that comes to mind is a homeowner who had approved the 2D version of their plans. Yet, when the home was built, they were horrified to find that the roof resembled a fast food restaurant. This is a costly mistake to fix and even worse, one to have to live with. Using Virtual Reality would have prevented this.

Another example from one of my projects was a tower element designed with windows on all 4 sides. My client was concerned that the tower was too tall. I told them to wait for the 3D model to be completed before making any changes. At the next meeting we looked at the Virtual Reality model of the home and the tower from all angles: the street, the driveway, the backyard, side yards, everywhere. In the end the decision was clear, we made the tower a touch taller!

Virtual Reality

When selecting an architect, ask what technology the firm uses.



At 2e Architects we have been using virtual reality since 2017—long before any other firms in the mid-Atlantic region. Never content with settling for the status quo, we've continued to innovate with the process adding even more value and benefit for our clients. Our virtual reality is better and more detailed than ever, giving you a full, 3 dimensional model of your home that you can step right into. Visit our website to view our current collection: 2e-architects.com/VR

5. five

If the services aren't offered, the firm should be able to give you referrals.

6. six

Know who you will be directly working with on your project.

Identifying The Project Architect

Evaluating A Full-Service Architectural Firm

Conceptual renderings and blueprints are not the only services architectural and planning firms provide. Ask about other services your candidate's firm offers. Ask about the benefits of specific services to you and their corresponding costs. Ask your architect if there are any additional services offered and how they could be useful to you for your particular project. If a firm doesn't offer a requested service, they should be able to refer a firm that does.

A typical architectural firm provides:

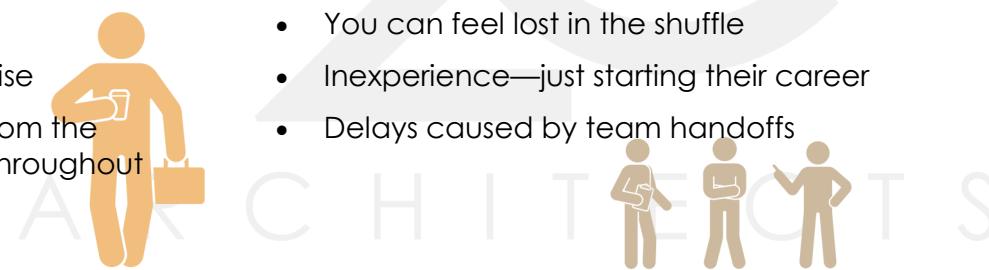
- Project Feasibility Studies
- Programming
- Master Planning
- Evaluation of Potential Building Site
- Architectural Design
- Traditional and Computer Renderings
- 3 Dimensional, Fly Through, Computer Visualization using Virtual Reality
- Comprehensive Construction Documents
- LEED ® Coordination and Certification Assistance
- Detailed Cost Estimates
- Furniture, Furnishings & Equipment Specifications
- Construction Administration

In large firms you will often be working with a more junior architect after signing the contract or after the initial rounds of designs. This person is known as a Project Architect. Often, they are not a part of the initial interviewing process, so ask to meet with them before making any final choices about the firm you'd like to work with. Also share with them your goals so that you feel completely comfortable that they understand.

In a firm where the architect is the principal, you will work directly with them throughout the project—not someone else. There is a tremendous amount of communication that goes one between architect and client in the development of a custom home. It's important that you work well with the person you will be interacting with most frequently.

Principal-based Firms versus Large Firms with Project Architects

- Personal attention
- Direct benefit from expertise
- Relationship developed from the beginning that deepens throughout the process
- You can feel lost in the shuffle
- Inexperience—just starting their career
- Delays caused by team handoffs



7.

seven

Typical Fee Structures:

- ◆ Percentage of Costs
- ◆ Hourly
- ◆ Fixed
- ◆ Cost per Square Foot

Billing monthly is the industry standard. Ask when payment is expected (due upon receipt, net 30) and the preferred method of payment, i.e. check, credit card, etc.

Figuring Out the Fees

2e Architects charges a percentage fee based on construction costs. Your total budget is set at the onset of the project. However, we will work quickly, but through a thorough process created over decades, to confirm or reassess if this budget will provide the home you want. It is important to know early on if your budget is just right, too little, or it has happened, more than what's needed. We engage trusted contractors very early on in the process to refine the costs and to provide a level of certainty to our clients.

Charging a percentage is the most typical cost structure. Depending on the services provided by the architect, the rate could range from 8 to 15 percent. Keep in mind that the architect's fee applies to all the costs of your project. Examples include the construction budget, consultant fees such as environmental impact studies, and structural engineering fees.

At the start of the design process, some architects may charge an hourly fee or a retainer. The retainer or hourly fee is then credited towards the total architectural fee once those have been determined.

8.

eight

Finding a Contractor

An experienced architect should have a list of contractors that they like to work with. Your architect should be able to help you choose the best contractor for your project. Even if you already have a contractor, always get multiple bids on the construction of your project—this is an industry standard and gives you better leverage at the bargaining table.

Get multiple bids and identify a contractor during the concept design phase

Select your contractor at the beginning of the project while you're designing with your architect. Having a contractor during the design process ensures you will not be building more than you can afford.

More tips for hiring a contractor are available in our "Selecting the Right Contractor for Your Luxury Home" guide—available for free on our website.



9515 Deereco Road, Suite 907,
Timonium, Maryland 21093
410-583-2112

CUSTOM
RESIDENTIAL
ARCHITECTURE