

How to Work with an Architect

Getting Started

The best way to begin a new project is for you – the owner – to reflect on what you bring to it: knowledge, experience, needs, desires, aspirations, and personal opinions. You don't need firm or complete answers at this point, but a general understanding of where you are will help you select the best team for the project. Ask yourself these questions:



1. What activities do you expect to house in the project? Do you have specific ideas on how to translate these activities into specific spaces and square footage areas?
2. Has a site been established, or will this decision also be a subject of discussion with the architect and others?
3. Have you and those with whom you are talking fixed a construction schedule and budget?
4. What are your design aspirations? What thought have you given to the design message and amenities you are seeking in this project?
5. What are your overall expectations for the project? What are your motivations, both basic and high-minded, and what role does this project play in achieving your overall goals?
6. How do you make decisions? Will a single person sign off on decisions? Do you have a building committee? How much information do you need to make decisions?
7. Where will the resources come from to create and operate this project? How much experience do you have in design and construction? Have you done this before? If so, where have you been most successful, and where were you disappointed?

Selection Is a Mutual Process

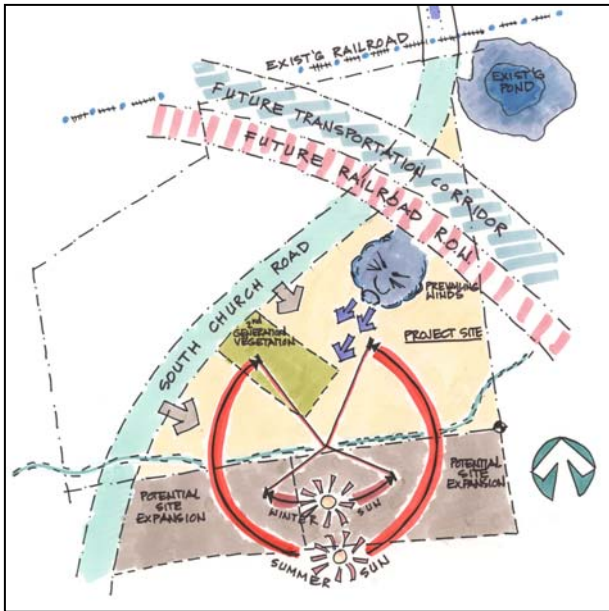
The most thoughtful architects are as careful in selecting their clients as owners are in selecting architects, are as interested in a successful project as you are, and they know good architecture results from productive design collaboration. The experiences of others may be instructive, but every project is unique. Your architect is prepared to advise and assist you in tailoring the array of professional services available to meet your needs and expectations. Use the two steps presented below to identify any items that may be needed for a formal agreement.



1. **Establish project requirements.** Write them down as a short statement or a detailed compilation. Describe project tasks and assign responsibility for each one: Owner and architect should identify the tasks that must be done, identify the services required, and who is responsible for each.
2. **Identify schedule requirements.** Place tasks on a time line and estimate duration of each. Identify critical tasks that could delay completion of the project, like financing or zoning approvals. Allow enough time for decision making, and use these requirements a basis for compensation.



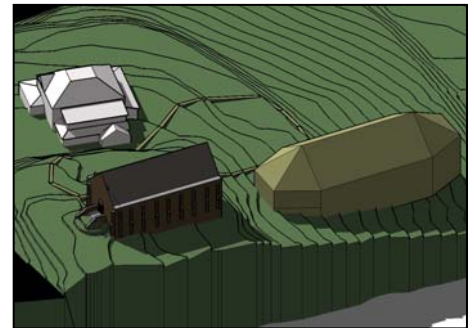
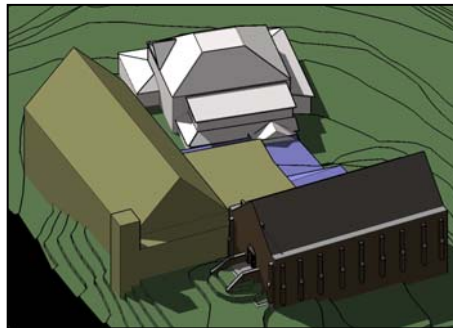
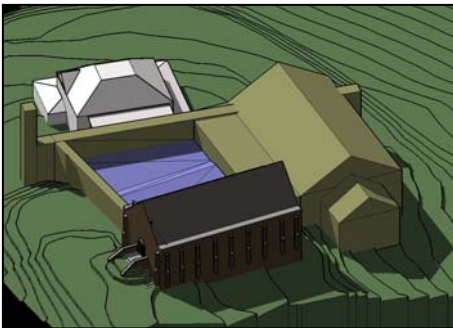
Project scope, quality, and cost are inextricably related. Any two of these variables can be fixed and controlled in design; the marketplace takes care of the third. You will need to establish priorities among them and set acceptable ranges for each one. The analysis may also reveal latent problems or opportunities.



What about Verdi?

Verdi is a group of creative problem solvers and building innovators. In the most basic terms, we deliver a product to our clients and to the general marketplace to meet a project's functional and budget requirements. But it all begins with a focus on good design, a process which itself typically begins with the following three steps:

- **Information Gathering** – we analyze the site through written & graphic data (as shown to the upper left); the needs and wants of the client; and the building code, zoning, and any other regulatory information.
- **Programming** – we then try to ask all the questions (and look for the answers) to define the functional and space needs for a project... and then turn those into simple diagrams.
- **Visualization** – once we begin to get an idea (or several ideas) about what a project could and should look like, we expand these ideas into sketches or models as needed. This series of 3D studies for a church was quickly generated to illustrate and test the pros and cons of each conceptual layout.



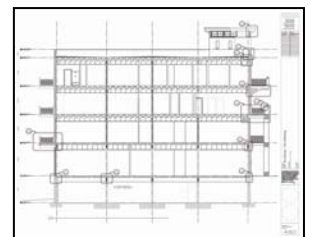
Construction Documents and Observation

From a time and effort – and Quality Control – standpoint, this is the bulk of our work: we take the final design concept and refine it through a series of more and more detailed drawings and drawing coordination with the builder, with engineers and approval authorities, and of course with the client. The final result is a set of documents that conform to building code standards, but even more importantly that guide the construction effort to produce the desired building results in terms of cost, aesthetics, function, safety, and sustainability.



Cost

Every client has a budget, and that includes a budget for Verdi's services. So we can typically tailor those services – and the associated scope of our work – to produce design and drawing packages from a very basic "permit set" to very detailed and comprehensive architectural work as appropriate for each project.



Verdi Architecture

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