

Working With An Interior Designer Or Architect: 4 Things You Need To Know For Your Residential Project

Looking to renovate or update your interior? Are you embarking on a single or multiple room redesign? Kitchen, bath, or bedroom remodeling project? Building a new home? Gut-rehabilitation of a space? Not sure if you need a decorator, interior designer, interior architect or architect for your project?

Our guide will help you decipher which type and level of design services is best for your residential project.

1. Defining Your Project

First off, let's start with a "foundation" question: Does your project fall in the new construction or existing building category? Translation: Are you building a new home or is this project for your existing residence?

Secondly, what's the scale of your project? Is it a custom-designed brand new home? A gut-rehabilitation? A kitchen or bath remodel? A "knock-down a few walls to open things up" project? A living room or bedroom re-do, i.e. new flooring, drapery, millwork, moulding, paint, furniture? A project where you need new furniture for your residence, someone to make selections, pull it all together and help with furniture layout? Do you need someone to help you select paint for your walls and to add some color to your existing space? You get the idea. As you can imagine, larger-scale projects call for more highly-trained and experienced Architectural and Design (A&D) professionals.

2. Selecting the Right Type of Professional For Your Project

Now that you have determined the scale of your project, which professional has the skill set to get it done? Here's a guide to help. It's important to remember it's a sliding scale and there tends to be overlap in skills so for example, an architect is able to do parts of an interior architects job and an interior designers job, just as an interior architect is able to do parts of an architects job and an interior designers job, etc. Many trained A&D professionals have a range of capabilities; it's important to ask and review these when selecting a professional.

[See graph on page 2 for details]

3. Defining Your Project Goals and Objectives

You should clearly understand the goals of your residential design project and define your objectives. This is not a complicated exercise, but by communicating your goals and objectives to your designer or architect, you give them better direction which will result in a better outcome.

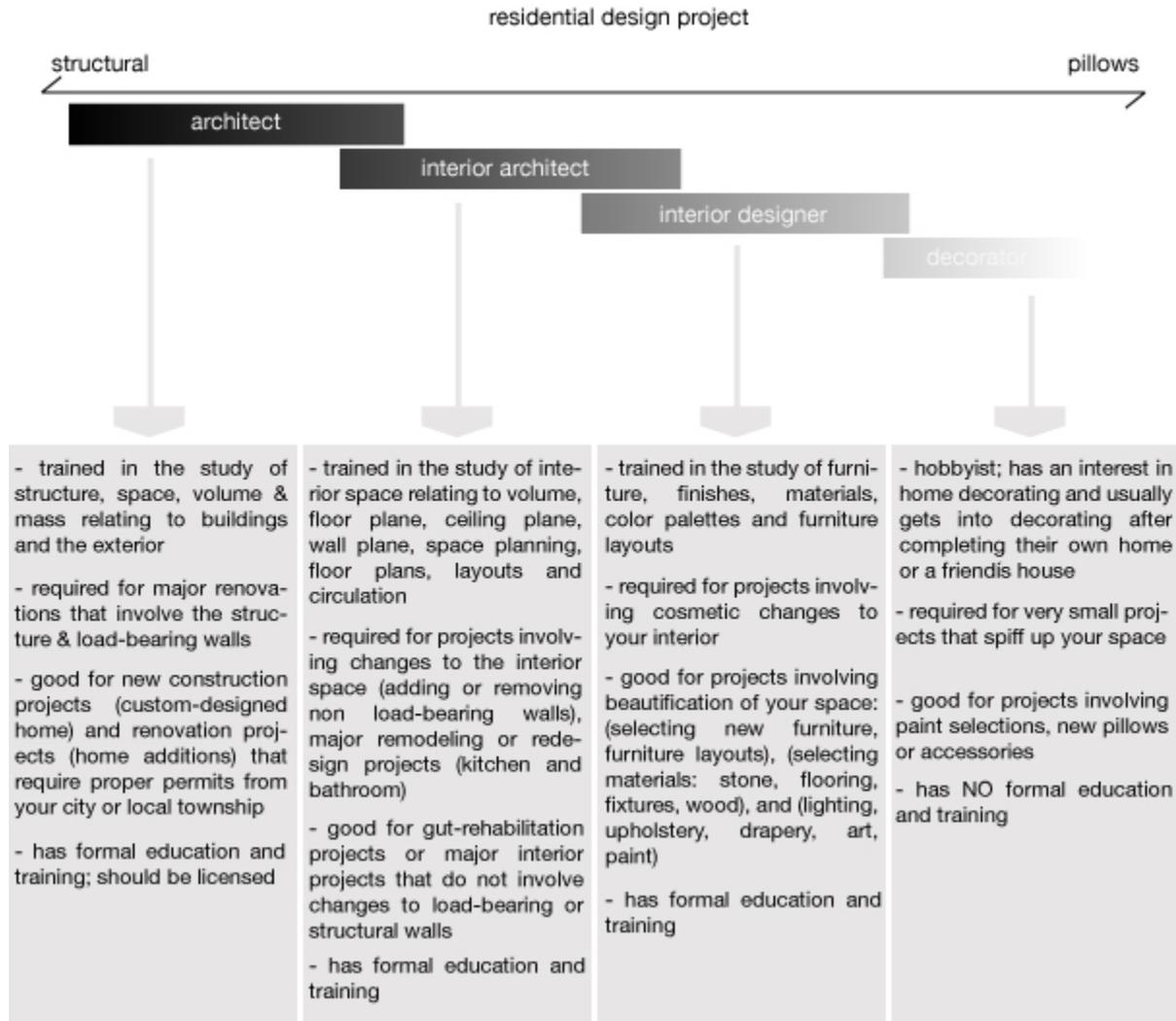
An example of a project goal may look like this: I want a new kitchen with more countertop space and an island.

Objectives: I want a better working flow to the kitchen and a more open and airy feel to the space.

Or...Goal: I want to redesign my living room and need a better furniture layout.

Objective: I want to be able to entertain and have seating for 8 people.

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When thinking about your project's goals and objectives, consider your absolute requirements, how you live and function in the space on a day-to-day basis and what problems or issues you have with your current space you want resolved. Creating an itemized list of exactly what you want accomplished is not required but also helpful such as: replace base moulding, new furniture for living room, new drapery, custom-built bookshelves, addition of new built-in wet bar. It serves as a reminder of everything you want especially when you may forget something

in your first meeting and it outlines for both you and the professional what items need to be accomplished.

4. Determining Your Style

Your Architect or Designer will work with you to understand your style but it may save you time and money if you do a little homework prior to your first meeting. It's a visual world we work in and the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" is most applicable. For example, a client used the word "modern" to describe her style but

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“modern” has many meanings and interpretations. Prior to your project, if you are flipping through a magazine and see something you like...rip it out. It doesn't have to be an entire space that inspires you; it could be a detail like the type of flooring or the bathroom fixtures used. Also, it doesn't have to be an interior that inspires you...perhaps the colors from a sunset found in a nature magazine resonate with you or maybe you find the velvety, rich texture of an evening gown beautiful as you flip through a fashion magazine. Remember, your residence should reflect your tastes and preferences, so the more inputs your A&D professional gets regarding your personal style, the better they will be able to design a personalized space for your residence.

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