

## **BRIEFING AN ARCHITECT (NEW HOME)**

### **ONCE YOU HAVE HIRED THE ARCHITECT:**

Typically you start by talking about why you want to build a new home: the family's growing, you're moving from another city and you can't find the right house, you're ready to build the home you've always wanted or dreamed of, it's a vacation home to get away and relax, etc. You may be going over information you reviewed during your interview, but this information bears repeating.

Now, is the time to tell the architect about what it is you want in your new home: generalities, specifics, feelings, conveniences, you name it. This is the "programming" phase and it sets the stage for you and the architect on what will be designed. This is the information you will use to analyze the architect's design and how well he understood and addressed all of the criteria you gave him.

Important things to think about and to convey to the architect include:

- Family makeup: who will use the home on a daily basis? Are there some that come and go from time to time, are there others (grandparents) that you want to provide for? Is there live-in house hold help?
- How will you use the home? Entertaining, formal gatherings, charity events, private extended family visits, out of town guests, work out of the home, hold business meetings?
- How long do you anticipate living in the home?
- Have a list (see JCA'S room description form): rooms that you want or need. Give the architect any and all information about the specifications of those rooms. Spend some serious time thinking about each room, i.e.; child's bedroom: name, sex, age, how do you expect the child to use the room. Are you going to give your child the opportunity to give input on the design of their room? A "feeling" for the room? If you have specifics for any room, list them. Any pictures of interiors that help support your room vision are "priceless".
- Feelings you want to experience in different rooms, i.e.; library: cozy, warm. Great room: exciting, invigorating. Foyer: warm and inviting or palatial.
- What you envision the exterior of the home to be. Since words seem to escape people when asked to describe a look or style of home they envision, pictures of what you like are quite valuable. French country can be interchanged with English Tudor depending on whom you are speaking to. Pictures of an overall look or even details that you are drawn to are very helpful in communicating your "design style".
- Materials you want to incorporate into the home. Exterior finishes such as stone walls, European windows, slate roofing. Interior finishes such as hand scraped walnut flooring, reclaimed stone flooring, millwork detailing, custom bookcases, hand hewn timber ceilings. Specific products you want: Traulsen refrigerators, Lancanhe ovens, custom range hood, Toto toilets, Herbeau faucets, etc.
- Quality
  - Products: name brands, specific products, specific sources.
  - Assemblage: this is the quality of how well materials are put together. The contactors and craftsman with more experience are likely to do a better job but will cost more than the lesser experienced. The German woodworker is presumably doing a better job than the Finish carpenter just out of trade school. This is the category where a contractor gets his reputation (any contractor can order a quality product).

- Project budget, money and time
  - By using the Budget worksheet provided in this section, you should have a realistic idea of the budget for your project, but remember, as things change so does the price and therefore the budget. So try to cover as much as possible in the budget phase. Your architect and/or contractor will be able to a time table for your project, including when certain payments will be due.
  
- Pictures
  - A picture can translate more than words can and do it more quickly, so the more pictures you can supply to support your vision, the better. The pictures do not just have to be of things you like; it can be equally helpful to have pictures of things you do not like as well. All of them are extremely helpful in conveying your desires.
  
- Lot information
  - If you have already purchased, provide any detail you have about the property and schedule a time to walk the property with the architect. If you have yet to purchase, let the architect know if you would like his help analyzing potential choices
  
  - Survey
    - Should be prepared by a land surveyor
    - Should have all dimensions
    - Should clearly show all utility locations
    - Should show detail of topography
    - All road access should be clearly shown
    - Existing structures Should be clearly shown
    - Trees over 6" in diameter trunk should be clearly shown
    - Should show any wetland areas (as classified by the Army Corp of Engineers)
    - Any standing water/pond/lake/shoreline should be clearly shown
    - Provide any soil report
      - General report
      - Specific testing locations done later
  
- Jurisdiction/permitting authority
  - Town, city, village
  - Phone number of the municipal building department
  - Homeowners Association Information (HOA)
    - Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CCR'S)
      - Is there a management company that administers the HOA?
      - Management company name, phone and contact person
      - If there is no management company you can find out if the property is subject to CCR's from title company
      - Many properties have CCR's that can be quite restrictive in many ways.