



## **TALLEY & SMITH ARCHITECTURE, INC.**

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P.O. BOX 518 (28151) 409 E. MARION ST. (28150) SHELBY, NC 704-487-7082 FAX 704-482-5596 TALLEYSMITHARCH.COM

### **THE ARCHITECT'S ROLE**

The architect's job is to design an aesthetically attractive building appropriate for its intended use. Most people understand that an architect is a creative designer, but the common misconception is that an architect's job is limited to preparing drawings. Design shows like Extreme Makeover Home Edition and the HGTV Dream Home have popularized architectural design, but they rarely acknowledge the other services.

Like many industries, the construction industry has its own jargon and procedures. It is a complex system of consultants, engineers, building codes, governing agencies, contractors, and subcontractors. Along with building design, the architect's greater role is to serve as your guide and representative in the construction industry and throughout the construction process. Architects are licensed by the state and are responsible for protecting the public's health, safety and welfare as it relates to the built environment. This includes active safety features such as sprinklers and fire alarm systems, and passive features such as the corridor widths, fire walls, and exit doors.

Most projects follow a basic schedule. The earlier the architect is involved, the greater the benefit. Before starting drawings, a program is developed. The owner and architect work together to create a written description of spaces. The building owner or tenant doesn't have to know what size spaces, but should instead know the activities that will occur in those spaces. The architect will translate that information into an outline of building areas, the appropriate square footages, and an estimated construction cost.

Once the owner approves the program, the design drawings are developed. These are floor plans, elevations, and details that show the building's size and appearance. The architect may also create renderings or models to better present the building design. This phase is complete once the owner is satisfied with the project design and budget.

Design drawings communicate ideas with the owner. For construction, detailed drawings and specifications are developed to communicate with contractors, product suppliers, building inspectors, and fire marshals. These documents describe each major detail and component of the building. They include how it is built, the materials with which it is built, and the kind and quality of each item. This information ranges from the depth of the concrete footings to the brand of the windows to the R value of the insulation. The cost

and construction of the building are dependent on the accuracy, quality, and completeness of these documents.

During construction the architect continues to represent and advise the owner, answers questions for the contractor, responds to building code issues, and observes the work for compliance with the drawings. A good architect fosters a team environment with the owner, contractor, subcontractors, consultants, and building inspectors all focused on constructing a quality building.

A building project is a significant investment of time and resources. The decisions made during design and construction are critical to the use and maintenance of the building. If you are considering a building project, hire an architect that is experienced in your type of project and that understands your goals. To gain the greatest value from the architect, an open, professional dialog must be maintained throughout the design and construction process. Efficient design and construction is the key to getting the best value for your money, and clear communication is the key to a successful building project.

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Written by: Robert L. Smith III  
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*If you are considering a building project, please give us a call.*