

## How to Select an Architect, Engineer or Interior Designer for Your Next Project

Selecting an architect or designer can be stressful. How can you be sure the professional is qualified to complete your project? In using this guide, we hope to alleviate some of that stress by educating you on what to look for when hiring an architect or designer for your next project.

1. In the District of Columbia, design professionals must have a valid license through the appropriate accreditation board. Check the licensing board for license verification here:
  - a. [http://www.pearsonvue.com/dc/arch\\_intdes](http://www.pearsonvue.com/dc/arch_intdes)
  - b. <http://www.pearsonvue.com/dc/engineers>

Find out if the designer has any complaints or litigation filed against them? Send inquiries to [Avis.Pearson@dc.gov](mailto:Avis.Pearson@dc.gov)

2. When you qualify your architects for larger projects (multi-level additions, roof decks, 2-Family Flat conversions, and underpinning), request a list of recently permitted projects of similar scope listed by address. You can contact DCRA for the permit review history of the project submission. If every project has an extensive comment list and extended review time, this is a way you can compare designers. Some designers have a better understanding of DC building codes and requirements.

Contact DCRA (Yukia Richardson) for inquiries:  
202.442.8558  
[Yukia.Richardson@dc.gov](mailto:Yukia.Richardson@dc.gov)

3. Take a look at a set of the drawings, is the architect's stamp on the drawings or is someone else? The unlicensed designer may work under the supervision of the designer with the license. They should be under direct employment of that licensee, not a contractor.

4. Does the designer, PLC have a business license?
5. Contractor offering design services and drawings in addition to construction. Does someone at the firm have a design license, do they use unlicensed designers or do they contract with someone else?
6. Architect requesting fees for an initial consultation. Designers will meet with a client to determine the scope of work. Don't expect them to come the initial meeting with plans. You have to pay for that.
7. Does the Architect understand how the Zoning Regulations impact the project design? Does s/he understand the Zoning Processes?
8. Verify that the building as depicted on the architectural drawings is consistent with the footprint of the building depicted on the DC Surveyor's plat. The DC Surveyor's plat should depict all existing and proposed construction and be to scale.
9. Verify that the application scope of work on the building permit application includes the proposed work shown on the plans.
10. Take advantage of the opportunity to schedule a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with a Zoning Technician to verify that your project is in compliance with the Zoning Regulations. This meeting is helpful when a plain reading of the zoning regulations does not fully address your zoning questions. There is a fee for this meeting. To schedule a zoning PDRM, contact Ms. Evon Epps, Program Support Specialist in the Office of the Zoning Administrator, at 202.442.4576 or by email [Evon.Epps@dc.gov](mailto:Evon.Epps@dc.gov).