CUBE

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

As a firm specializing in residential design, we are very aware how important a home is to its owners, what enormous emotional energy is lavished upon it, and how unnerving it is to be at the mercy of others in the shaping or reshaping of that home. Our services eliminate as much of that stress as possible. We understand the importance of communication in the process and hope this pamphlet will help you to identify the services that would give you the best value for your investment. We welcome the opportunity to give a free consultation to discuss how we might bring your dreams to reality. We look forward to working with you.

Your home may well be the most complex, interesting and expensive project you'll ever undertake. We are educated to help you define your needs, present options you may never have considered and help you get the most for your valuable investment. There is a certain magic that can be seen and felt in homes created through the close working relationship between owner and architect. We listen carefully to our clients and make every effort to integrate your needs and desires with your budget. With each of our clients, we strive to create a total home environment, both interior and exterior that is visually interesting and exciting as well as functional. Our services range from complete design for a new home to assistance with additions and remodelings. We take the opportunity to work with you on such an important aspect of your life very seriously. One of the most enjoyable aspects of our work is that we are hired to create wonderful places for daily living.

WHO WE ARE

CUBE design + research, LLC is a design practice centered on big ideas. We see the world through a wide-angle lens – everything is connected and everything is part of something larger. CUBE is cognizant of each client-driven project's ability to impact the pressing issues of our time. While balancing utility and comfort, we challenge convention and believe thoughtful design can enrich the experience of life and inspire the human spirit. We share a life history bound by mutual respect and our work is the embodiment of our interwoven thought process. From beginning to end, our rigorous collaboration offers multiple perspectives to a problem and elevates the work beyond that of a single designer.

THE PROCESS

The general process of designing a home or addition can be broken down into phases, each of which focuses on a different aspect of the project. Though these phases sometimes overlap or are combined, depending upon the nature of the project, an understanding of each is important in order to grasp the full scope of the architectural design process.

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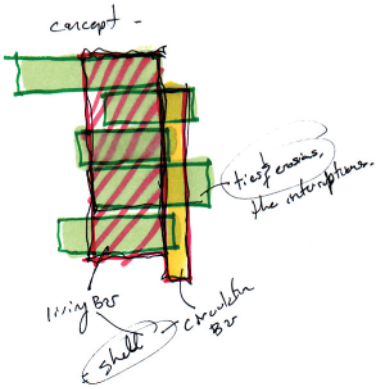
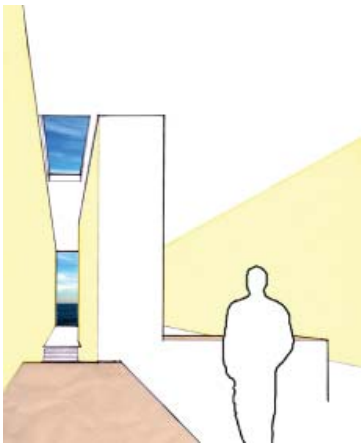


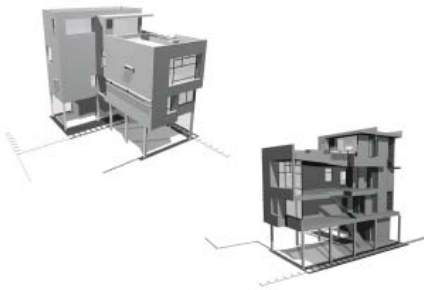
PROGRAMMING: DECIDING WHAT TO BUILD

The first phase, known as Programming, is a time for information gathering. It is our time to listen, question and explore possibilities. We want to understand your tastes and dislikes. This is your opportunity to indulge in a little creative daydreaming. The goal isn't simply to list elements or features that are appealing but to understand the reasons behind those choices. We prefer you to write about the activities you do in your home or prepare wish lists and reality lists. You might find it an interesting exercise to walk through your existing home noting your likes and dislikes, which areas you use frequently and which you hardly ever use. The point is to utilize whatever works best for you, realizing that the more you can tell us about what you like and need, the closer we can come to fulfilling your architectural dreams. Thorough programming doesn't take a tremendous amount of time, but it certainly requires more effort than simply listing the rooms and features you want. It will give you clear criteria by which to evaluate our work and make it much more likely that your project will exceed your expectations. You will be asked for input throughout the entire process, telescoping gradually from larger, more general concerns to smaller, more specific ones. Other tasks also need to be accomplished before the start of design. You will need to provide us with a site survey so that factors affecting the building can be analyzed. If you are remodeling or building an addition, it is necessary for us to document your existing house. Documentation includes taking photographs, measuring and preparing scale drawings. Even if you have original blueprints, some verification of existing conditions will be necessary. Houses are not always built exactly according to plan.



SCHEMATIC DESIGN: SKETCHES AND IDEAS

Once you have decided what to build, the actual design begins with a series of sketches known as schematic design. It is vital that the schematic designs capture the essence of what your project will be. These sketches show the general arrangement of rooms and the placement of the building on the site. Ideas are explored and evaluated with you through the use of drawings and cardboard and/or 3-D computer models until a direction for the design is set. These schematic design sketches of ideas convey the overall design by illustrating the mass, shape and form, the scale and quality of spaces and approximate location of walls, windows, doors and cabinets. These drawings are adequate for gathering preliminary cost figures based on area, but do not contain the resolution or detail required for construction. There are still many more details to be established about your project and cost feedback at this point is very general. It is difficult to predict market conditions, the availability of materials, and other unforeseen circumstances at this time in the design process. Actual bid prices can be obtained in later phases of the process. It is imperative that you are in agreement about the design direction. It is much easier to make changes at this stage when your project is in sketch form than later when a great many hours have been spent working on construction documents or even later when foundations have been poured and walls erected.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT: REFINING THE DESIGN

This step, called Design Development, is when we prepare more detailed floor plans, elevations and cross sections to illustrate other aspects of the design. Many major decisions, that are to be documented in the working drawings, need to be made in this phase. These

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include decisions about interior and exterior materials and finishes, lighting, windows and cabinets. Other technical matters such as the type and placement of insulation, the structural system and moisture protection must also be determined. Many of these decisions impact other decisions. For instance, the depth of a structural member can affect the ceiling height in a room, the light fixtures and the amount of insulation in a ceiling. These in turn can affect compliance with either building or energy codes. Whenever a change is made, a ripple effect is created, requiring adjustments elsewhere. When looking at these drawings, try to visualize yourself actually using the spaces. Do the traffic patterns flow well? Does each space serve its intended purpose? Do you like the way it looks and the materials that have been selected?

CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS: PREPARING THE WORKING DRAWINGS

The next phase sets down on paper all the decisions made to this point so that they will be incorporated into the built project. These working drawings, which can also be called construction documents or blueprints, consist of both drawings and specifications. The drawings are detailed and illustrate the quantities and relationships of all work required to build the project. The specifications are written documentation outlining the levels of quality to be met in materials and workmanship. The contractor will use these documents to establish the actual construction cost and to build the project. These construction documents become a part of your contract with the general contractor or builder and establish his/her contractual obligations. As a result, anything not contained in the documents is left to the contractor's discretion and may potentially lead to additional charges for you. Complete documentation means that there will be fewer problems and delays during construction, since most decisions have been made before construction begins. The more detailed and complete the construction documents, the more accurate the bid price can be.

BIDDING: HIRING THE CONTRACTOR

There are a number of ways to select a contractor. When the time comes to hire a contractor, we can provide assistance in evaluating their qualifications and bids as well as in negotiating a contract. The first and most traditional approach is to ask two or three general contractors to bid the project using completed construction documents. As the designers of your project, we are in the best position to coordinate the bidding process by answering bidders' questions, evaluating requests for substitutions, providing updated information to all bidders, establishing a bidding format and analyzing the bids, which can often be confusing. Another approach to selecting a contractor is to pre-select the general contractor early in the design process and work together to obtain input during the design process. This is our preferred approach because as the construction documents reach certain levels of completeness, your contractor can often obtain competitive bids from sub-contractors. This approach is used quite commonly, particularly when contractors are especially busy. You get their early input, get them lined up on your schedule and still have competitive prices for the majority of the project. While we may suggest potential contractors and assist in the selection process, the final choice is up to you.

CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION

CUBE's involvement normally does not stop with the preparation of construction documents. We highly recommend we act as your representative by monitoring the contractor's work

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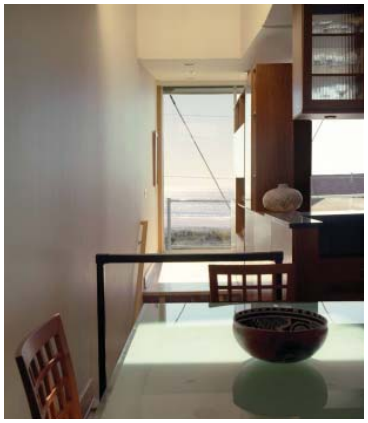

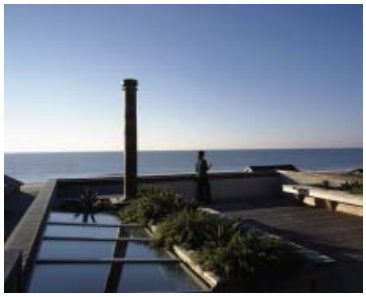

for conformance with the working drawings and contract. Even the best two-dimensional documents cannot fully convey all aspects of a three-dimensional building without being open to interpretation. Knowing the intent of the drawings is crucial to proper interpretation. This assistance to the contractor usually consists of answering questions by phone, making regular site visits to observe the work, providing supplemental drawings as requested by the contractor, reviewing shop drawings, materials and product samples, and reviewing requests for design changes. Our involvement in this phase can make a smooth transition from construction documents to a completed project. In addition, other services that look out for your interests are also available. These include reviewing and approving the contractor's applications for payment and keeping you apprised of the project's progress. The contractor has sole responsibility for construction methods, techniques, schedules and procedures. We are trained and experienced in this complex process and represent you. Our involvement helps you avoid wrong turns and can also direct you to solutions you never considered. The result is a unique building project created to meet your needs, express your individuality and to provide enjoyment to everyone who uses it.

LEVELS OF SERVICE

When you hire CUBE you're hiring good listeners and collaborators, skilled in thinking three-dimensionally, inventive problem solvers with highly trained imaginations to envision the best possible solution to your needs. You're paying for professional expertise in defining your requirements, creating construction documents to address them, coordinating with the contractor and making sure that the residence is built as specified by the plans. We are your advocate in the fascinating and complex process of turning dreams into reality. Several factors will impact the decision regarding the appropriate level of services for your project: its size and complexity, the location, and the budget as well as your own experience and involvement. We realize each project is unique and the fee is dependent upon the level of service.

FEE

We would first offer a free consultation to determine how we may help you. For the entirety of your project, there are a number of ways to determine the fee. One common method is to pay a percentage of the construction costs, usually 10-20%. The percent charged is determined by the scope of the project and the level of our involvement in the various phases. The fees per phase are broken down as such: PR/SD – 15%, DD – 20%, CD – 40%, Bid – 5%, CA – 20%. Another common method is hourly compensation for actual time spent on the project by the principal manager and others who are involved. This method is most commonly used when it is a small project, a simple consultation, or in a particularly complicated project where the full scope may not be known in advance, for example, the remodeling of an old home. It is also possible to create a combination of approaches to the fee, such as hourly charges through design development followed by a percentage of the construction cost for the remainder of the project. Because of the relative complexity of small projects, fees for smaller projects can sometimes be proportionally higher than for projects with larger budgets. Travel necessary for meetings or construction observation can also impact fees. We can discuss various possible approaches and determine what will be most satisfactory for your project. We generally utilize a standard contract form tailored for your specific project. Responsibilities of both CUBE and the owner are clearly defined as well as the scope of services, fees and schedule. The contract also provides a good reference for you as you proceed through the project.

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