

WOLFWORKS DESIGN EXPECTATIONS GUIDE

We've been working with people to make their good homes better for over thirty years. Over that time we've developed a reliable process to guide that effort. We know our way down this road. And around the next corner. We think it's useful to describe the journey so that you'll know what to expect along the way. We expect this knowledge to help make the trip comfortable and you confident.

PREPARATION

Successful projects share some familiar traits. Sufficient preparation is the first. This includes your list of project goals and priorities. These aren't necessarily shared priorities. That's OK. But they should be inclusive. They may also extend beyond the boundary of a central project, the better to establish present needs in the context of longer term expectations. Our goal is no missed opportunities.

We all benefit from materials that aid in expressing your vision. These often include clippings from magazines, select pages from books, and may include web links. Even a single special detail from an otherwise inappropriate setting informs our understanding. Stories are great too; about places you like – or don't, and as much about what you don't like as do. Some offer sketches or plans. Others assemble outlines and lists. Our first meeting builds from this foundation to construct a complete and compelling description of the project and its possibilities. These will guide our work together.

RESOURCES

Nothing is possible without sufficient resources to execute what we plan. While it is common not to have a firmly established budget, it is important to know the boundaries you expect to operate within. These include an understanding of your personal finances, real estate market values and current equity, rates and comfort level with borrowing, and your household operating budget including annual utility and maintenance expenses.

It takes more than money. Are you prepared to take the time and give this project the attention it will require? Successful projects are the result of your commitment to both qualities: time and attention. Some of that time and attention will be given to us. At others it will be your willingness to digest and respond to plans and reports, visit showrooms and make decisions, and above all communicate earnestly with us and each other. It's not unlike committing to a semester of study. There will be homework!

MILESTONES

Its helpful to be able to picture a project's essential milestones. So here they are. The first is to produce a successful "schematic design". This is usually a floor plan, and sometimes a rendering, that demonstrates a potential design solution that satisfies established goals as completely as possible.

Given an OK on that plan, we next produce a "reality check" budget. This budget is informed by the real requirements of realizing our potential plan within budget ranges for discrete phases for the project and broken down in a dozen or more broad categories. This is digested and refined until we have determined exactly what is worth planning to build.

Within an established budget framework, we complete the design in detail. We continue to revise as we clearly identify specific products and their placement and document all technical requirements. When complete we will have produced a set of construction documents and a detailed fixed cost contract to fulfill them.

EVALUATION

There are several criteria that we apply and evaluate about our project as it develops. As described, we begin by carefully establishing broad project goals, producing desirable solutions, and determining costs. A sequence of documents are produced to allow us to evaluate each of these conditions. In addition we are conducting our own technical and structural evaluation of project elements, as well as scrutinizing the environmental attributes and implications of our choices. Financial reports are produced to help guide decision making and to frame the cost implications of our design choices. When necessary we consult with regulatory agencies about project features that are their concern. On occasion we require and include the expertise of specialists.

Evaluation produces information. Every piece of information guides us forward. This process repeats until we have produced a compelling project.

DECISION MAKING

Perhaps more than anything else, Design is decision making. That's why good, well informed information that allows thoughtful evaluation is one of our most important products. It helps us make decisions. There are many qualities that define a successful design process. Deliberate and timely decision making may be one of the most important.

Its important for the design process to maintain a certain momentum. We each share responsibility for this. Sometimes the ball is in our court, other times in yours. We value deliberation, but not at the expense of momentum. We do our best to provide valuable information. We rely on you to make timely decisions. Be wary of analysis paralysis.

COST

We consider it essential that you understand, value, and trust the budget and cost information we provide. Our reports are intended to provide you with that insight and understanding. The costs we evaluate are presented at the cost we pay, with our administrative and management service expense identified separately.

Expect us to identify and manage competent and reliable people, products, and services. Understand that experience has shown that these are not always the least expensive. Be assured that we consider ourselves stewards of your resources and seek value accordingly.

Design and Construction are paid for as discrete activities. The budget for the construction of your project is distinct from the cost for its design, so keep that in mind. It is important to us that you understand and value the breadth of design effort and attention applied to you and your endeavor. Design expense is usually a function of project complexity and ranges between 8-10% of construction cost.

RESULTS

I like to think of the service we provide as similar to an on-ramp. We provide you with a direct route to a distant destination without the burden of navigating side streets, detours, traffic lights, or local traffic. We do our best to provide GPS like navigation that you can trust to follow, allowing you to relax and enjoy the ride, confident that you will get where you are going.

We know that this process can be fun and exciting. That's why we come to work every day. We also understand that it can cause anxiety, produce disappointment, and introduce stress. If we confront those feelings, we'll take a breath together and work our way through. Having traveled these roads so many times, our eye is always confidently on the horizon. We know how to get you there.

WOLFWORKS CONSTRUCTION EXPECTATIONS GUIDE

DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION = VALUE

We have been managing construction projects for decades and have developed a methodical system of management and communication designed to realize all the value of the design/build process. To put it simply, design is aligned with construction to assure value. Here's how it works.

BUILDING THE TEAM

Projects are built by people, so first and foremost, we are talent scouts. We know what to look for in reliable trade partners and have established a methodical process to recruit, select, orient, train, communicate with, and evaluate everyone we choose to work with. We interview for competence and craft, business basics and management experience, reputation and communication skills, and the ability to perform quality work at fair and accurate costs. Our goal is to build a bench of top talent that we know we can rely on to perform both individually and as a team and provide them the resources to succeed. This is our foundation for good construction management.

DESIGN ALIGNED

Early in the design process, as soon as we discover what the project is likely to require to be built, we begin identifying our trade resources. In short order we will be asking for their input technically, functionally, and financially. We create a written scope of the proposed work and solicit their input thru a series of written forms that assure we are both seeing the project in the same way, and if not, to invite them to offer their insight and perspective.

The "scope of work" is a common document with layers of available detail to use, share, and present as needed by our client, the design team, and our trade partners. Each audience has different needs, at different stages in the process - from reality check budget to construction contract to ordering and scheduling. This single document keeps everyone and everything carefully and dependably aligned. As we achieve greater and greater clarity about the work and materials the project will require, we communicate this to our trade partners and they update and revise whatever effects their scope of the work. This process develops their familiarity with the project early on and that relationship is sustained as construction begins. In this way we assure that construction intelligence is always informing design intention, and vice-versa.

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Getting a project done is all about getting the right people "on stage" with the right materials at the right time. Years of experience allow us to guide this process, preparing for and managing the staging of our cast of characters and all the parts they are there to assemble. It's our job to know what they need and when they'll need it. We do this by establishing and communicating a schedule and their place in it, then maintaining constant updates as we progress. As conditions emerge that require adaptation or change, we shift gears and make necessary adjustments, all the while keeping everyone aligned and their effort coordinated. Once the curtain goes up, we're live!

ON TRACK

The fun part of a project is dreaming up what to build, then watching it get built. Behind the scenes of this exciting ride is a whole world of details that we adeptly manage to keep everything on track. Nearly every item in the scope of work involves people who will both need and provide information, and each piece needs a home. We track costs and payments, drawings and technical specifications, quantities and dimensions, permits and inspections, and make sure that what was supposed to get done, got done. We make sure everyone is properly insured, registered, and licensed. We manage all this so that your attention can stay focused on the important decisions that shape the project and you can enjoy the ride! All the while we are filling binders and file folders with this mundane but essential information and making sure it gets to the people who need it.

MANAGING FOR VALUE

Our collaborative process prepares everyone for action. Our integrated scope of work documents assure that by the time we are ready to start a project all our trade partners are aligned with the plan and ready to play their part. Too often project supervision requires the expense of someone onsite all the time to answer questions and provide direction that should have been made clear from the beginning. Our process aims to provide clear guidance from the start. By hiring carefully and communicating thoroughly our projects require less direct supervision and the associated expense. Our attention can be focused where it matters most, keeping people coordinated, assuring materials are available and on site when they are needed, and keeping clear channels of communication open between everyone involved.

THERE FOR YOU

Throughout the design and construction process we consider providing guidance to be our primary purpose. We guide you and the people we recruit to successfully build your project. During the course of construction we are in regular communication providing project updates, clarifying final finish choices, and meeting periodically to share what's going on with you. You will undoubtedly have questions, and sometimes concerns, and on occasion a desire to add or change a project feature. Like a waiter checking in to ask, "Is everything OK?" we take your pulse and respond accordingly.

WHAT'S MISSING?

After decades of guiding people thru the process of designing and constructing hundreds of projects, we can't imagine designing and building in any other way. In planning to design and build your project, which part of this process would you want to do without?