

Frequently Asked Questions - Designing and Building a New Home

1. *What services are typically provided by Samsel Architects when designing a residence?*

Pre-design (Deciding What to Build)

- Identify both the opportunities and constraints of the site (or multiple sites)
- Listen to the Owners' ideas and expectations for their new home
- Prepare a "program" for the house/site that describes desired types and sizes of rooms as well as the preferred relationships between individual rooms and the outdoors
- Develop a preliminary project budget

Schematic Design (Developing the Concept)

- Prepare initial design "schemes" or concepts via drawings and/or models
- Refine the design until the Owners approve a design concept
- Update the budget

Design Development (Refining the Design)

- Refine the approved schematic design until a final design is approved
- Add detail to the approved design
- Update the budget

Construction Documents

- Prepare detailed Drawings and Specifications that describe the project and are referenced in the contract between the Owner and Contractor for the construction of the house.

Hiring the Contractor

- Assist the Owner in selecting the Contractor and negotiating a construction contract through either a bidding or negotiation process

Construction Contract Administration

- Oversee the construction work for conformance to Construction Documents
- Process the Contractor's shop drawings, product data, samples and pay requests
- Handle requests for changes during construction and administer project close-out

2. *Do all residences include all of the services noted above?*

Most do; however, we can adjust our services (and fees) to an Owner's particular requirements.

3. *What project characteristics produce the best home?*

- Attentive listening, clear communications and teamwork by all parties
- The Architect gets to know the Owner(s) and understands how they live
- Owner approval of each phase of work prior to proceeding
- "Living" with the home's design as it unfolds - taking time to process and understand the plans

4. *Who is on the "team" when designing and building a home with Samsel Architects?*

The Owners, the Architect and a Contractor. Affiliated design professionals such as an interior designer and a landscape architect are also often involved in creating a residence.

5. *How are your fees determined?*

Our fees are negotiated according to our role and level of service. We can structure our fee as a fixed amount, percentage of construction cost, or hourly rates, based on Owner's needs. The house's size, location, level of finish and other design factors affect our fees.