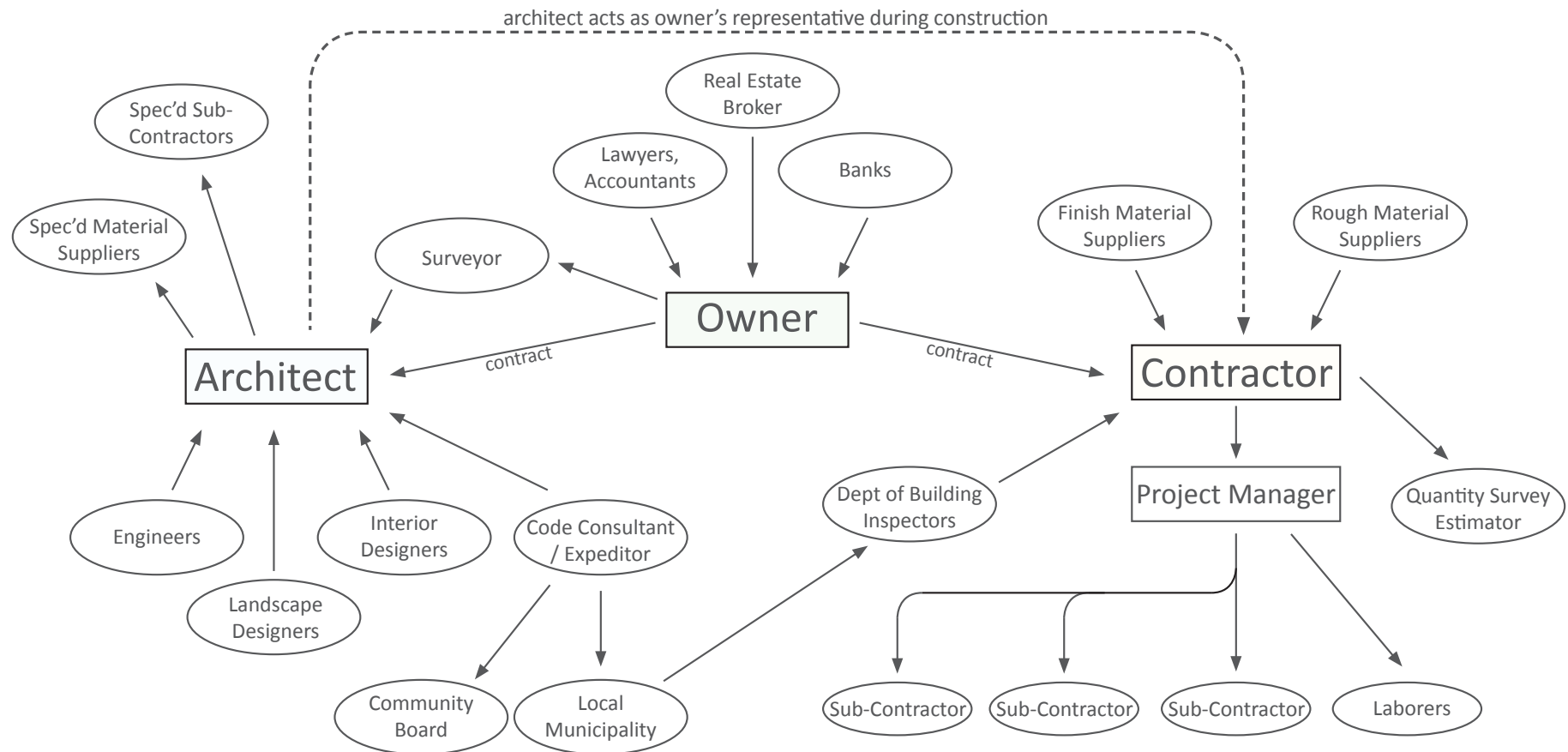# Project Preparation Package

Part 2 - Finding Your Architect

Who's Involved
Design and building is a collaboration

The process of designing and building your project is a team effort. The notion of the all knowing "master architect" is simply false. Your architect must be able to communicate, appreciate criticism, and incorporate expertise from many different disciples into the overall success of your project. Many architects choose not to recognize this important fact, and it quickly can lead to the detriment of your project, budget, and schedule. This is one of the key reasons why we at JBA added the "collective" onto our name. We value this simple fact at the forefront of how we operate as architects, and a team. Lastly, one key aspect to remember is the most important team member is you! It may seem overwhelming at first, but it is not complicated once you learn who will be needed to complete your project.

architect acts as owner's representative during construction

Spec'd Sub-Contractors

Real Estate Broker

Spec'd Material Suppliers

Lawyers, Accountants

Banks

Finish Material Suppliers

Rough Material Suppliers

Surveyor

Owner

Architect ← contract

contract → **Contractor**

Engineers

Interior Designers

Code Consultant / Expeditor

Dept of Building Inspectors

Project Manager

Quantity Survey Estimator

Landscape Designers

Community Board

Local Municipality

Sub-Contractor

Sub-Contractor

Sub-Contractor

Laborers

It's important to note that your project my not require every party listed above. Some projects will require more, and some will require less. Your design and construction team will depend on the site, size, and needs of your project. In our "*Project Preparation Report,*" JBA will outline which parties we anticipate being required. Not to be worried, one of the key responsibilities of your architect is to act as your representative throughout the duration of your project. Continuity and positive communication is paramount.

If you would like more information, schedule a free 30 minute phone consultation to discuss your project in more detail by emailing us at info@jbacollective.com.

Professional Services
How to hire your architect

Nothing is more exciting than creating a new home and nothing will affect the success of your project more than selecting the right architect. Your architect not only will work with you to determine the design and function of a home, but will be the organizing and guiding force throughout the design and construction process. Finding your perfect match in an architect is not impossible and the following eight points can guide you along the way. Use these to help analyze the personality, design strategy and communication skills of your candidates. Your goal is to find the right architect for your home design, for your budget and for you.

1. Finding an Architect

Like many other fields, word of mouth is a great way to look for an architect. Ask family, friends and professional colleagues for referrals. Is there a particular home you admire? A knock on the door can yield an introduction to your project's potential architect. Professional organizations such as your city's local architectural institutions are also great sources to find architects. General contractors, interior design studios, and other trade-related personnel would also be able to furnish some referrals. Be sure to visit websites of your candidates. Look at their previous work. Get a feel for what is their design style and architectural language. Then start a conversation. Make an appointment for a consultation. Meeting face to face will help you decide if it is a fit. You will spend a lot of time with your architect, share specific (and sometimes private) needs and requests, and often inevitably become friends.

2. An architect's biggest success and largest obstacle

How will the architect approach your project? Let them know the most important aspects of your project to you and ask how they will be incorporated into a process. If you are doing a home remodel or an addition, start with what aspects of your home you currently like and ask how they can be improved? If you're looking to build a new project, what are the larger goals you want to achieve? Even though the architect might have an attractive portfolio and good references, you will still want to make sure their design process, personality and approach is right for you and your project.

3. Signature Style: Who's got it and do you want it?

It is common for an architect to be known by a certain design style. There is nothing wrong with this in theory. Most architects are able to adapt their signature style to what you want, though think twice about hiring an architect just for their aesthetic. Don't be too locked into preconceived ideas of what your project should look like. Part of your architect's job is to work through your needs and translate them into a design that most suits your requirements and goals. Be critical of any architect whose projects all look similar. It is telling of their ability to work with your on your unique goals, or simply fitting your project into a predetermined design or style.

4. Meet your Project Architect

Signing a contract with an architect representing an architectural firm does not necessarily mean that person will be your project architect. Actually, outside of single-architect owned operations, this is common procedure. Be sure to meet the project architect before making any final decisions. Being able to communicate freely and openly with your project architect is vital to the success of your project. You should share a clear understanding of the project with your project architect and feel completely comfortable.

Professional Services
How to hire your architect

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collective

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5. The full-service architectural firm

Conceptual renderings and blueprints are not the only services architectural and planning firms provide. Ask about other services your candidate's firm offers. Ask about benefits of specific services to you and their corresponding costs. Ask your architect if there are any additional services offered and how they could be useful to you for your particular project. If a firm doesn't offer a requested service, they should be able to refer a firm that does.

Below is a glimpse into some additional services a typical architectural firm provides:

- Project Feasibility Studies
- Programming
- Master Planning
- Entitlements
- Evaluation Of Potential Building
- Architectural Design
- Traditional And Computer Renderings
- 3 Dimensional, Fly Through, Computer Visualization
- Comprehensive Construction Documents
- Leed ® Coordination And Certification Assistance
- Detailed Cost Estimates
- Furniture, Furnishings & Equipment Specifications
- Construction Administration

6. Figuring out the fees

Typically, an architect's fee is calculated as a percentage of the project's construction cost (minus the architect's fee of course). Depending on the services provided by the architect, the rate could range from 5 to 20 percent. However, when you first start the design process for your project, it is difficult, if not impossible to accurately determine the final project cost. During this initial time period (before a good estimate of the final project cost is possible) the architect may charge an hourly fee or a retainer. The retainer or hourly fee will be credited towards the total architectural fee once it has been determined. Billing monthly or by project phase is the industry standard. Keep in mind that the architect's fee is part of your overall project cost. Your overall project budget is not just the "hard costs" of construction, but could include consultant fees, expeditor fees, municipality filing costs, contractor "soft costs" (overhead and profit), engineering fees, legal fees, etc. Architectural fees may seem like an added cost in the scope of your project, but keep in mind that a good architect will in fact save you time, money and headache in the long run. The most important thing about fees is complete transparency. Insist upon it.

7. Hiring your Contractor

An experienced architect should have a list of contractors they like to work with. Your architect should be able to help you choose the best contractor for your project. Always get multiple bids on the construction of your project, even if you already have a contractor. This is an industry standard and gives you better leverage at the bargaining table. Note the final construction contract will be between the owner and the contractor, not the architect. However, your architect will be the key person negotiating the contractor's bid, will help you minimize costs whenever possible, and will oversee the contractor's work and schedule.