

There are myriad problems with building and renovating, but help is at hand.

**IF YOU** you are looking to build a new home or renovate your present one, an architect should be involved in the project from the earliest possible stage.

If you want to be a registered architect, you have to spend a minimum of five years at university, follow it up with an internship of at least two years, then face a rigorous registration examination and finally undergo ongoing professional development training.

Building and renovating tasks are complex and difficult, and an architect is the most qualified professional to guide you through the design and construction processes.

Architects are also the only professionals in the construction industry legally and ethically bound to represent you, the home owner.

They can help you define your needs and thoughts and they can present options you might never have considered and help you get the most for your money. They don't just design four walls and a roof; they create total environments that are functional and exciting to live in. Architect-designed houses are more sought after by an increasingly design-savvy market prepared to pay for the benefits and pleasure of living with good design.

Using an architect's services is a wise investment for the money, not an added cost to your project.

(FUSE / THINKSTOCK)

# Why you need an ARCHITECT

Architects avoid oversized rooms and wasted space and can help you select materials within your budget and at a fair price. They can reduce building costs, decrease your home's energy needs and increase its future resale value through good design.

**FINDING AN ARCHITECT** \ There are several ways to find the right architect. Here are some websites where you can search for specialists in your building type:

- [www.architeam.net.au](http://www.architeam.net.au) – The ArchiTeam Co-operative represents more than 300 architects in Victoria, most of whom specialise in residential projects.
- [www.architecture.com.au](http://www.architecture.com.au) – Australian Institute of Architects.
- [www.archicentre.com.au](http://www.archicentre.com.au) – Archicentre.

*“They can help you define your needs.”*

Most architects have their own websites, so looking at the type and style of projects they have done in the past is a good way to select a shortlist of potential candidates.

Probably the most common way of choosing, however, is either through recommendation by others, or by contacting the architect of a project that you have seen and liked.

Interview more than one architect. Check for education, training, experience and references.

Most important, however, is a shared vision of what you want to achieve and “chemistry”.

You may be working closely with your architect for many months, so it is important that you choose someone you can communicate with and someone that you will be comfortable working with.

An architect should be able to take the needs of the client and, working with the limitations of the site and existing structures, council planning and building-code requirements, as well as budget, create a living environment that is beyond the client's expectations. \

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