



Computer Rendering



BRINGING IT

HOME

Assembly of the Perfect Team

You have your heart set on a property – either new to you or a special cabin that has been in your family for generations, and now the original cabin is bursting at the seams – either figuratively or literally! A decision made to explore something “new” can easily become daunting and overwhelming. Where does a person even start when taking on a project so close to the heart as the design of a new family cabin? What will the county or local jurisdiction even allow? How much space do we really need? How will our growing family use the cabin in years to come? What do we love about our current family cabin? What materials are best fit for low maintenance and durability? What are the best windows? How much cabin can we afford? How can we integrate the indoor space with the oh-so-important outdoor spaces? How close to the lake can we be? What’s all this talk about septic systems? What do they mean by variance? All very important questions to ask.

Finished Result



Sketched Rendering



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An architect can lead owners to those answers. There are multiple paths to achieving success in a new home project. Complexity with the land and with the design goals, past project experience by the owners, or general time availability may drive owners to select one path over the other – here we will explore how an architect led team is one option to creating a successful residential project.

Assembling your project team will be a critical first step in determining the success of your project. The team that helps the owners develop a design and execute the construction will be instrumental in leading the owners through a wonderful opportunity to design and build their dream home. The sheer opportunity to design a new lake home is so exciting! The internet, with Pinterest and Houzz, is a wonderful resource to collect photos and images of ideas and design styles. Magazines such as this shed light on local design projects, tell stories of wonderful outcomes, and expose aspiring project owners to local craftsman and suppliers. But again, where to start?

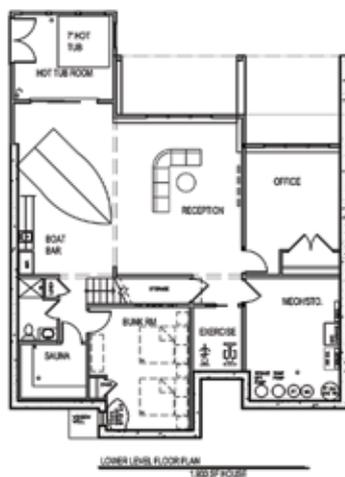
An architect is a licensed professional, specifically trained to navigate all the complexities that come with design. The architect will be visibly responsible for evaluating the site,

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working with the owners and creating drawings that convey the intent of the design on paper. Behind the scenes the architect is working with other professionals, including a surveyor or structural engineer to ensure the project is meeting all legal and safety requirements necessary to move the project forward on the right path. The architect works with the local governing body (the city, county or state) to comply with ordinances and building codes.

The architect is listening to the needs of the owners and creating the all-inclusive directions for the building action to come. The end goal is the custom construction drawing set specific to your individual project, or blueprints as they used to be called, detailed with as much information as possible to convey the instructions for what is to be built. Now, 3D models and “renderings” (computer images of what a space might look like) help convey the ideas in a more visual format. While the 3D images are very important to convey the overall design ideas, the “flat” drawings are typically more detailed and provide more instruction for actual building.

At the very beginning of the design process, the owners and the architect must have a candid conversation about goals for timeframe, budget and quality vs. quantity. An architect can try to draw whatever the clients ask for, but if the project can not be built structurally or within budget, then no one is happy. The design process is best started with a realistic evaluation of goals and frank conversations. Then the project is set up for success from the very beginning.



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The architect and their team create drawings that include a site plan (required for building permits), floor plans (the flat views with dimensions and sizes), exterior views (notes the overall materials, roofline and look of the project), electrical layout drawings (locating fixtures and receptacles) and cabinetry layouts. Additional details showing construction connections, wall materials, structural beams and posts, cabinetry layout and fireplace details are also typically included in the drawing sets. These complex drawing sets used to be large format printed and mailed out to all involved in the project. Now, emailing PDF copies is a normal way to minimize paper copies and still convey the necessary information until the actual building starts.

If we use the analogy of a song, the architect would be the composer. The architect, or composer, is gathering information from all different "instruments" or professionals and writing all that separate information into an inclusive, comprehensive, harmonious "song" or drawing set. Once the "song" is written, the drawing set can be handed over to the general contractor, or "conductor" in this example, to set the song in motion.

The general contractor is a very important team asset. The general contractor will become your best friend for the duration of your building project, so it is important to have just the right fit or connection. Even though their title is "general" contractor, most general contractors are project specific, as in they specialize in residential projects, commercial buildings or metal shop buildings. Even within the category of residential projects, there are some general contractors who do not take on remodel projects. General contractors may have a price range that they focus on building as well – some contractors build entry level spec homes while others specialize in million-dollar new home projects. It is very important to find out what the general contractor specializes in and make sure your goals (and budget!) are aligned.

The general contractor will be responsible for lining up their own team, or musicians in the song example, to carry out the specific building tasks. The general contractor



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is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the construction project, the management of subcontractors and materials, and communication during the construction phase. The general contractor will secure the right lumberyard to supply materials, order all materials, the concrete laborers, the stone masons, the electrician, the heating and cooling subcontractors, and even the well and septic installers. The general contractor typically has working relationships with these subcontractors and has worked with them on other projects before. The knowledge that a general contractor brings to the building phase of a project is invaluable.

Overall, lake home design and construction should be a pleasant experience. Licensed professionals can bring direction, clarity, organization, information, and a wealth of knowledge that comes with formal education and working experience. Don't be afraid to ask prospective team members what their qualifications are, where their education or training may come from, or what their title or licensure status means. **L&H**

Minnesota Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience and Interior Design (AELSLAGID) governs those professionals, and you can look up professional licensure here: www.mn.gov/aelslagid/roster.html

In the State of Minnesota, the requirements for using the title "Architect" include:

- >> Education: graduation from a 5 year Master's program in Architecture
- >> Experience: three years worth of internship hours performed under the direct supervision of a Licensed Architect (3,740 hours)
- >> Exams: completing and passing 6 license exams (used to be 9!)
- >> Granting of licensure per state, and then yearly continuing education requirements. The professional organization that affords the "AIA" title is American Institute of Architects. This is a voluntary organization, being a member is not a requirement to use the title Architect, although the AIA abbreviation is a widely recognized acronym. The term "designer" is a very broad reaching label and generically can be used for any work done with design. The use of the term designer is not regulated by any governing body.

MN Department of Labor and Industry governs Contractors and Remodelers License

- >> Education: Initial exam. May have a degree in construction management, or experience on the job.
- >> Thereafter, 14 hours annually. Must also provide certificate of insurance covering general liability and property damage www.DLI.mn.gov

All licensed professionals must follow and adhere to the MN State Building Code:

- >> 2020 MN State Building Code governs Building Code, Energy Code, Accessibility, Plumbing, Electrical, etc.
- >> Local jurisdictions such as the city or county also have ordinances to follow, specifically in relation to lakeshore projects.