UNDERSTANDING THE DESIGN PROCESS
The 6 Design Stages

1 - Site Selection

Architects can offer you valuable advice in the selection of the site for your future home. They experience and accumulated knowledge gives them insight as to the merits of a building site’s challenges and opportunities, some of which may benefit your lifestyle and others impact your budget. These could include physical attributes impacting the quality of life, such as the orientation for the cocktail terrace for the setting sun, or potential construction challenges such as having the driveway access above or below the site potentially tough delivery of materials or ground conditions potentially requiring expensive foundation conditions.

2 - Schematic Design

Sketch drawings will explore the conceptual design of the project, seeking to interpret the brief and to explore possible solutions. This is an iterative process, with both parties contributing, with open honest discussions and criticism. The investment in time and effort in this process is critical to set the path for the project. Your agreed set of outline drawings, sometimes called final sketch plans, will be set the direction for the project.

3 - Detailed Design

The detailed design is developed to show the appearance of a building, how fixtures and fittings are incorporated and how important details of construction are intended to work. Your architect will advise whether the design proposals are within the agreed budget and in harmony with your stated objectives as regards quality, long term maintenance and performance. Your architect will provide the information for design and layout to accompany your application to the local authority planning department. Your approval of the design drawings marks the completion of the primary design stages.
4 - Construction Documents (20%)

The application to the local authority for a building permits (the formal process varies slightly for each Caribbean island) requires the architect (and consulting engineer) to submit drawings which show how proposals comply with the current local Building Regulations. Construction is not normally permitted to commence without statutory approval. Once the technical drawings are complete, the way is clear to prepare tender documents. They usually comprise the contract drawings, the specification of materials and components, the Bill of Quantities and the Conditions of Contract. The latter two are normally in a standard format and define the obligations of the parties to the contract, namely yourself as the ‘employer’ and the contractor.

5 - The Bid Process

At the end of the design process, a number of contractors usually receive a set of drawings (and possibly a Bill of Quantities) with which to produce a cost for the project. The Bill lists all the components and activities required to build the project as shown on the drawings. Each contractor puts his price against each item on the Bill, which is based upon an estimate of how long it will take to carry out each item and the cost of materials required, together with added sums for overheads and a percentage for profit. The level of profit will be influenced by how each contractor expects their competitors to price and thus there is no ‘proper price’ for a building, only what a given contractor decides at one particular time.

6 - Building Contract

The contractor consents to organize and direct the building work in accordance with his contractual obligations, and to supervise the work so as to achieve satisfactory completion on time and within the agreed budget.

In traditional procurement, the architect’s role as contract administrator is to make periodic site visits to inspect the progress of the work, to issue instructions to the contractor and, if necessary, to reject unsatisfactory work. If you wish closer inspection of the contractor’s work you can employ a project manager, or come to an agreement whereby the chartered architect makes more frequent visits to the site. Your chartered architect will report to you on matters of progress, on any unforeseen circumstances on site, any variations in budget or program, and will issue periodic certificates for stage payments due to the contractor.
BUDGET PLANNING AND OPTIONS
Construction cost and overall budget for the project are not the same. The overall budget will include all professional and legal fees and expenses, the statutory charges for applications for planning consent and building approvals, a contingent sum for unforeseen events and other costs such as furniture, equipment, land acquisition, finance charges and any associated taxes, in addition to the construction costs.

Budget for the Project

This basis is best used where the scope of work cannot be reasonably foreseen or where services cannot be related to the amount of construction. It may be wise to set an upper limit on fees to be incurred, perhaps on a staged basis. Records of time spent on services will be made available to clients on reasonable request.

Fee options available

Architects’ fees can be calculated in three ways: a percentage basis; a lump-sum basis; or time charged by agreement. Expenses may be included within the agreed fee or charged separately.

Time-charged basis

This basis is best used where the scope of work cannot be reasonably foreseen or where services cannot be related to the amount of construction. It may be wise to set an upper limit on fees to be incurred, perhaps on a staged basis. Records of time spent on services will be made available to clients on reasonable request.

Percentage basis

In this method, an architect’s fees are expressed as a percentage of the total construction cost, i.e., the cost as certified by the architect of the works, including site works, executed under a building contract. Before fees can be estimated, client and architect need to establish the services to be provided, the approximate construction budget and the nature of the work.

Competitive Tendering

The Incorporation strongly recommends clients to select on quality issues such as demonstrable design skills, management expertise and track record. If fee cost is an important factor, this must be weighed carefully against these qualitative aspects to ensure that best value overall will not be sacrificed.

Need help establishing your budget?

Our experienced staff can offer advice. When you’re ready we’re here to help info@obmi.com.
OBMI is a global master planning, architecture and design firm with an experienced team of professionals who are passionate about creating timeless spaces that transform the dreams of our clients into reality. We design luxury resorts and hotels, high-end private residences, and engaging urban areas that reflect the utmost respect for the land, people, and cultures they will impact. Architectural planning and design is in our DNA, but we are more than our day job. We are travelers, sculptors, photographers and mountain climbers, and our work inside the office reflects our adventurous, creative approach to life outside of it. For more than 80 years, clients have embraced OBMI as trusted advisors for our tireless dedication to them and our commitment to exceptional, beautiful design.

www.obmi.com
305-537-7100