

Mystery Revealed - The Pre-Design Process



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Making Architecture Personal

here seems to be a mystery around the process of a project and what to expect from you architect. **We will reveal the mystery . . .**

Most companies engage in a renovation or major construction project once every 15 years. There may not be a person who has been through the design/construction process in your company. In this document we have tried to **de-mystify the process** and what to expect when working with **Ireland Architects**.

The First Meeting

The first meeting is primarily intended to see if you, your project, and the potential architect are a good fit. **At Ireland Architects we do not charge for this initial meeting.** “The first thing we do is meet with the potential client and talk about their goals for the project”, says Stephanie D. Ireland, CEO of Ireland Architects. During this meeting, it’s best to communicate your ideas clearly and ask a lot of questions. Find out the architect’s approach, and deliverables (what they will physically provide, i.e. drawings, renderings, etc.).



First impressions are important here, as you are evaluating whether you and your potential architect have a good rapport and can work together on your project. **This is probably the most intangible — and important — part of the entire process; assess whether the architect listens to your needs and confirms they understand them.**

At the end of the initial meeting, you should be asked if the potential architect has clearly communicated the understanding of your project. If you feel we have, then we’ll ask if you’d like to schedule a time to discuss your project in more depth, possibly with additional people from your company – in other words, **move to the Pre-Design phase of your project.**



Needs and Options Report & Programming

Pre-Design is a general term for what we do before we start the design of a project, it is the research needed to understand how your project should move forward. The consequence of inadequate, upfront research of your needs and options available, is like building on a bad foundation. The foundation is the most important part of the whole building because everything is built on top. It is very expensive to change the foundation once you have started to build on top of it, but very easy to change upfront during Pre-design, when the foundation is only a drawing.



We spend more time on research than most other firms who rush their clients into the design phase. **Other firms may want to rush you through the Pre-design phase, so they can make more money in changes along the way**, this also causes “cost over runs” in your construction budget. Ireland Architects does not do business that way. **We believe in doing the work up front with the client, because we find it helps keep the project in budget** – which makes our clients happy. Happy clients tell other clients about us. We have been here for 20 years for a reason!

Ireland Architects will only work with clients who are prepared to do the Needs and Options Review – we will not skip this step. There is usually a set fee for this work that will be discussed.



Needs and Options Report:

The Needs and Options Report includes preliminary research on the property. This report can help to determine if you should purchase a piece of property. We perform a **zoning analysis** in Needs and Options Report to determine what is allowed to be built on the property. We recommend a client to have a Land Survey completed by a licensed surveyor. If you don't know of a land surveyor, we can recommend one. If you would like, we can even contact them on your behalf and tell them what is needed, so you are sure to get the right kind of survey for your project.



Here is what a couple of our clients have said about the **Needs and Options Report:**

This is what Harold had to say about our Needs and Options Report:



I didn't contact Stephanie until AFTER I had purchased a building. When I called Stephanie about an addition onto the building, she suggested doing a Needs and Options Report. The Report told me that the property wasn't zoned for the type of business I was planning!! I was SO GLAD Ireland Architects told me this BEFORE I spent money on a renovation and lost money!!!! Next time, I will hire Ireland Architects BEFORE purchasing property!!! Harold Dishman, Owner of Trinity Stainless Process Piping and Fabrication

See what Josh had to say about our Needs and Options Report:

"I contacted Ireland Architects because I was looking at buying a building and doing a renovation to it. Stephanie suggested a Needs and Options Report and it helped determine how large of an addition I could do before needing to add fire sprinklers to the project. Finding this out BEFORE starting on the floor plan saved me tens of thousands of dollars!!! Josh Manning, Vice President of EPI Construction



Few items covered in the Needs and Options Report are:

Site Analysis

- Survey by the Owner, which includes any easements, set-backs, restrictions on the property. If you don't know a surveyor, we can recommend one.
- If you are dealing with an existing building: we can help engage a company to perform asbestos testing, lead testing, or other hazardous materials investigation.

Zoning Analysis / Code Analysis

- Establish what you can build on the site as per local zoning ordinances

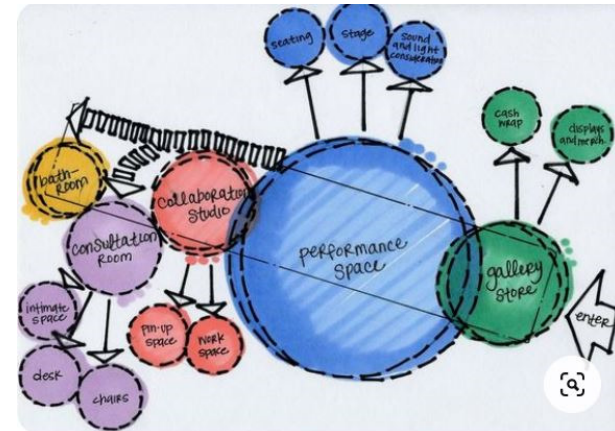
- Identify specific Ordinance and Code Issues that may affect the cost of the project, such as
- Appropriate zoning
- Fire sprinklers
- Fire walls
- Parking required
- Site restrictions
- Stormwater requirements
- Size limitations
- Classifying the Use of the building per Building Code



Programming:

If everything worked out in the Needs and Options Report, the next step is Programming. **The main goal during this phase is to figure out how much space you need now, how much you're likely to need in the future, and how that space should be used, organized, and arranged – the “program of requirements.”** This work is normally completed with a set fee that will be discussed.

Programming is probably the most valuable time you will spend with your architect. As you can imagine, it's vitally important to get this phase right – nobody wants to make a big investment in a building only to outgrow it far too soon or end up with a lot of wasted, unused space because it's too big. Your architect will work closely with you to determine your space needs, as well as how they can be arranged and used most efficiently. Additionally, your architect will start to look at applicable building code, fire code and other regulatory requirements to ensure your building is safe and meets ADA requirements.



Do not come in with solutions already decided upon. Be prepared to explore new and creative ideas. “Because we have always done it that way” is not a good answer. It means your process of working hasn't been evaluated lately and probably needs to be. Be very frank about how you want the end result to feel and work. The architect will ask you lots of questions to get a better sense of your goals and needs, and to determine if your expectations match your budget. **The architect may suggest changes based upon knowledge, experience, and your budget.** After thoroughly discussing your functional requirements, the architect will prepare a Program which might consist of an Excel Sheet that includes space information and a Bubble Diagram to show the space's relationships.

Now is the time to sign a contract with Ireland Architects to actually start designing your project!!

Call Stephanie Ireland at 417-881-3409 to get a contract prepared.

See [The Five Phases of a Project](#) to understand the next steps.

