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ADDENDUM TO PROPOSAL

Why choose an Architect?

The value of the Architect is in their ability to generate ideas through a synthesis of information. As such, Architects are trained to recognise problems and opportunities which are not plain to see. They are able to find responsive solutions which deal with multiple issues at once. This is part of the craft that is our Architecture: finding a strategy which deals with many problems, while considering resources and energy. Architects are trained in multiple disciplines (history, theory, anthropology, sociology, construction techniques and others) and as such are able to draw on knowledge and experience which other professionals such as draftspersons or engineers don't have the benefit of. When an Architect thinks and designs, they do so in a holistic manner which incorporates the past (history), the present (your brief and requirements, geographic, climatic and other physical constraints), and the future (good buildings outlast their owners and may change in function). We see buildings and spaces as living entities, capable of adaptation and change, all the while gracefully aging through time. Buildings are more than simple "machines for living in": They are extensions of our humanity and manifestations of our aspirations.

What is the role of the Architect today?

Architects do a lot more than design and draw plans. The Architect, also known as the Principal Agent (PA) on a project, is responsible for coordinating the design, documentation, overseeing the construction process, as well as administering the building contract. In other words, the Architect's job entails consistent administration, co-ordination and quality control throughout the duration of the Client-Architect contract. The Architect is responsible for keeping the client well-informed.

"When can we build?"

The creation of buildings is a rigorous process. A concept design, as beautifully resolved as it may appear on paper or screen, can't turn into a physical building in a single step, without extreme legal and financial risk. As the project process unfolds, specific bureaucratic and technical obstacles arise which must be dealt with in order. We are bound by law to follow certain procedures and processes, which take time to complete. We do not have control over the processes in Municipalities and Councils, thus it is often difficult to predict how long approval of plans may take. We will endeavour to guide you through the shortest possible route to building, however the speed with which plans get approved is dependent on the resolution of the design (which involves decision making on your part), the level of detail of the application (which we are responsible for), and the efficiency of the Municipality.

What makes a project successful?

Apart from good design, a successful project hinges on good communication between Architect, Client and Contractor(s). Our aim is to simultaneously create good Architecture while meeting the Client's brief and minimising ecological impact. Collaboration with other professionals (landscape architects and permaculture specialists, mechanical and structural engineers etc.) and specialists (steel fabricators, carpenters, roofing specialists etc.) is common. A successful project is a reflection of good teamwork. Clients should foster the same respect for the advice and input of Architects as they do for lawyers and doctors, because the level of professionalism is the same.

A note on the use of Gazetted Fees

Many prospective clients are put off by the seemingly high fees that Architects charge. The Gazetted fees are essentially Government-recommended rates to ensure fairness and set a benchmark in the industry (rather

like medical aid rates in the medical field). In practice, the Gazetted rates are in fact not the most expensive option for clients. Many Architects charge a flat percentage of project cost, which can be way over the Gazetted rates. The amount of work that designing and building entails is typically underestimated by clients, as they only see the 'products' of our labour, and not the process. We ask that you trust your Architect as you would any other professional.

Company Profile

Lead Architects is a small firm headed by Amanda Lead who has over 20 years' experience in the industry. Amanda and her team are involved in heritage and conservation work, master planning, institutional projects (religious and educational), community work, houses and additions & alterations to existing buildings. Lead Architects is a dynamic, decentralized company which values the individual within the team. The team consists of full time and part time employees, who collaborate on a project to project basis. We mostly cater for the greater eThekweni area, but we also have projects as far as Hibiscus coast (south), the Natal Midlands (inland), and the North coast.

Our Philosophy

As much as we can, we design for people. The challenge is in designing something that meets the brief for the present moment, yet will also be useful for future generations and be sustained on a minimal ecological footprint. Our core philosophies include user participation, making decisions holistically, and good and consistent communication. We believe that everyone has the right to access good design, even those who have significant financial constraints.

Products and Services

Lead Architects offer standard, partial and additional Architectural services as per the Government Board Notice (attached). Our fees are calculated using the latest Government Gazette (attached). We are also able to tailor a custom partial service to meet your specific needs.

Drawings and Office Systems

Our company uses a combination of hand drawing, ArchiCAD, AutoCAD and Sketchup Pro, as well as physical models, to communicate our designs to clients and effectively interface with allied professionals and contractors.

Cost Control

Although we are not quantity surveyors (Q.S), we have a fair idea of what building costs are. These are usually worked out on a square metre rate multiplied by building area. The square metre rates are based on our experience of similar, recent projects. We are confident that if the design adheres to the area constraint, the building cost will not be more than 20% over-budget. Should you require a more accurate costing, we require a Q.S to be appointed from Stage 2 for the duration of the project.

'Landmines' in Project Process

This is a list of scenarios which have resulted in problems with past projects. As such, we wish to avoid such scenarios.

- Clients not taking on Architect's advice, even when the advice is in the best interest of the client.
- Clients believing that somehow, their square metre rate will be less than the market rate.
- Clients failing to acknowledge any additional services the Architect may have provided, even when the Architect has warned that a particular action is an additional service over and above the professional fees.
- Clients communicating with contractors (eg. issuing their own instructions on site), and not following the process set out in the contract (ie. all communication via the Principal Agent).
- Clients not settling invoices timeously – this slows down the project process.