March 3, 2018

NALU ARCHITECTURE

THE DESIGN PROCESS EXPLAINED

The design process is divided into the primary activities as outlined below.

1. PRE-DESIGN

The first portion of a project involves collecting the applicable data, measurements & site specific information to allow for us to have all the applicable information required to make sound judgment in the following phases. We will begin to determine what specialized consultants will be required for the project. We will take this time to talk with local planning and building authorities to familiarize themselves with the project, and also find any underlying issues or concerns that may potentially impact the project. A few examples of existing survey types are listed below:

   a. Existing Surveys:
      i. Existing building blueprints – scanned and digitized
      ii. Digital measurements of the building/ space to be renovated.
      iii. Point cloud surveys
      iv. Land boundary & topographic surveys by licensed civil engineer
      v. Geotechnical reports for soil bearing capacities and foundation recommendations
      vi. Percolation tests for sites where septic drain fields are to be implemented.

2. SCHEMATIC DESIGN

Before starting the actual design work, we work with our clients to get a clear understanding of their needs and desires for the new space, beginning with reviewing their answers to our Pre-Design Questionnaire. We then work with the client to determine program, project finish quality budgetary goals. We begin to develop a few exhibits to convey basic design intent. These typically include: site plans, floor plans, elevations, and a simple wall section and preliminary 3D perspective views to give a sense of scale. The 3D model of the project allows us to look at the design from just about any angle desired, we can also start to analyze how the sun will interact with our modeled design elements. We have found 3D models convey the design concept better than sketching for many clients. This phase, like all of the design process, is a two-way collaborative effort. We will generate a design concept & meet with our client and receive feedback, and then refine the design concept, or even produce an entirely new concept, based on feedback from our meetings. We will begin preliminary specifications for materials and assemblies to be used in the work toward the end of this phase. Before receiving authorization to proceed to the Construction Documents phase, we recommend having a few contractors or a 3rd party cost estimator develop preliminary "ball-park" estimates based on the schematic design sketches, to be sure we are within projected costs. If necessary, we can adjust the program and quality of the work to meet the owner's budget goals. (See our "Build Cost Handout" for more information on hard costs.)

3. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The start of Design Development is based on the approval of the cost estimates and design direction given in the schematic design phase, next we continue to "develop" the design. We begin to prepare additional technical drawings which communicate all aspects of the design, in added detail, we also refine the preliminary specifications for materials and techniques planned to be used on the project. We consolidate our suggestions for materials, finishes and equipment components to be used in for the building. As we progress in this phase, we will refine adjust and rationalize dimensions to fit specific elements chosen by our clients. Ideally, by the conclusion of this phase, our clients have made many of their choices of materials, fixtures, appliances etc.

4. PERMIT DRAWINGS

Depending on the local jurisdictions and what type of project we are submitting, it's important to consider plan check processing times as they are typically long (weeks), so we often submit the application for permit on a limited detail set of drawings to get the ball rolling, We concurrently continue into the Construction Documents phase of design during plan check. The Permit Set requirements are specific per jurisdiction, however they typically include a site plan, site cut & fill estimates, floor plans, elevations, building sections, wall sections, along with the Structural Drawings, Structural calculations, Title 24 report indicating new and/or existing heating, air conditioning and lighting systems of the project.

5. CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

During permit plan check review(s), we continue to prepare drawings and specifications in greater detail covering the vast requirements and design intentions for the construction of the project. These Construction Documents include highly detailed drawings, interior materials locations, finishes, and technical specifications. The specifications describe the materials and techniques to be used on the project. Deductive alternates and alternate bids can be defined in this phase to have the contractor break out cost for certain elements or scope.

6. BIDDING & CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION

If a contractor has not been selected beforehand, we can assist our client in obtaining bids or negotiated proposals from contractors. We can also assist in awarding a contract for construction. This includes preparing bid documents, answering pre bid questions, generating and publishing addenda, reviewing plans with contractors, analyzing and comparing bids and alternates, etc.

7. CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION

The final phase of design is realized on the construction site in collaboration with the owner and contractor. Almost every newly constructed building is a prototype that consists of hundreds of products from many different sources, installed by perhaps thirty to eighty different people employed by a dozen different businesses. If we were to try to draw and account for every conceivable condition for said components in the Construction Documents, our fees would be astronomical. On site however, if an issue is raised about varying connections and transitions, they can be worked out fairly easily in a site meeting. We recommend weekly site visits with owner, architect and contractor (OAC meetings). Our work in this phase also includes answering project related calls & e-correspondence, review of product substitutions, submittal shop drawings, and assisting the owner in reviewing contractor payment applications. Our involvement in the construction phase is company policy, otherwise we would have no way to verify if construction complies with our design intent for the health safety and welfare of the public (required by state law).

CONTACT INFORMATION

We encourage all of our clients or people interested in possibly starting a project to take our Pre-Design Questionnaire
Feel free to contact us to discuss your project in more detail to get a better understanding: info@naluarchitecture.com
Our office phone: (858) 381-0141 we also receive text messages through our phone system.