

How to find the right architect

Selecting the right architect for your construction project goes beyond reviewing a firm's experience, charges and reputation. It involves digging deeper and asking the right questions. Here are key considerations.

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Constructing or remodeling your house structure can be exciting especially when you have to see your old house changing to fit your newest tastes. However, it is important to know that whatever your efforts are, choosing the right architect will make your project very effective.

The excitement of transforming your house idea into a real home may disappear especially when you do not know which architect to consult. Below are some of the ways you can know a good and genuine architect.

References

Fred Waiswa, an architect at Arch Design Ltd, says you should consult family and friends about which architect they have used and this way you will get a list of only those who have done a good job.

"Like many other professionals, architects get much of their business from referrals. It is, therefore, important to ask family members, friends and professional colleagues for referrals. If there is a particular house you admire, do not hesitate to ask the owner who their architect was," he says.

Browse professional listings to find general contractors in your area and check out their reviews on internet. Discuss with previous clients in private about their experiences working with the contractor. If it a pleasant working relationship, if the contractor communicates well, if he or she was fair and honest and many other questions you may have.

View recent work

After looking at a contractor's portfolio, request to visit a few projects similar in size and style to yours. Check out one that was recently completed, one that's under construction and one completed about five or ten years ago.

Waiswa says: "By looking at these structures, some of your questions will be answered. These include whether the architect will be able to design a building that will stand the test of time."

See their qualifications

Make sure your candidate architect is licensed and in good standing with Architects Registration Bureau according to Sylvia Nakanjako Mutete, an architect at Asuta Design Consultants Ltd. Ask to see the contractor's registration no on their license and the annual practicing certificate.

Architects must undertake professional education which is appropriate to the services they deliver. This increases their professional competence.

Hiring a licensed contractor will also protect you from quack architects. Then you are certain that the person has attained the necessary qualifications, completed specific practical experience and has passed the Board's examination before registration.

"The architect should also be a member of the Uganda Society of Architects which membership is only allowed after graduation. No one qualifies to practice as an architect if they are not members of these two organisations because they are legal and the only bodies known by the government of Uganda," she says.

Agreement

When you have decided on a particular architect and wish to hire him or her, discuss the different kinds of con-

