

Design Process for Expanding Your Small Business

An introduction to professional design services for small business owners wishing to build or expand their facilities

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Design Process

The series of steps & Procedures, involving the various players, to help you accomplish your business design goals.

Introduction

You have worked hard to start a business. You have worked hard to grow your business. Whether you are building a new building, moving into a new tenant space or expanding your space, it is imperative that your space meet your needs and help you achieve your goals. Construction is expensive. Yet, there are two dilemmas that can cost your business. The first is a poorly designed space. The second is paying more for construction than necessary.

How can these be avoided? Through proper planning and thorough design documentation.

As a small firm architect, I take great pride in helping small businesses achieve their goals. Many of my clients have never been through the design and construction process for a commercial project. This guide will explain the various steps, and the players who are essential to a successful project. Building out a new space is exciting. It is my hope that your design & construction process will go smoothly; your expectations will be met; and your project will come in on time and within budget.

Design Professionals

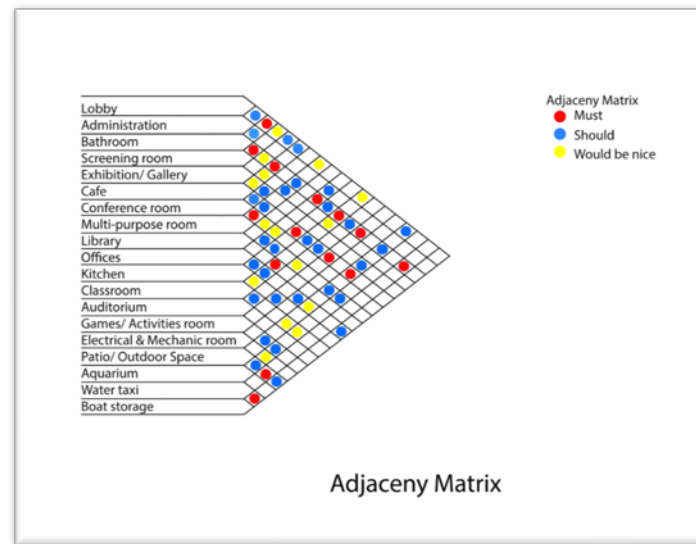
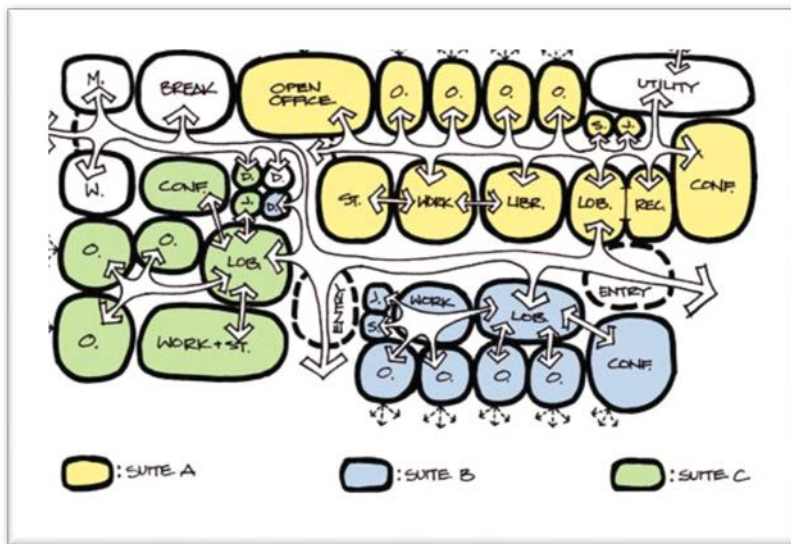
Selecting the right design professional will help ensure your process goes smoothly.

Architects are licensed by the state to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Architects typically carry professional liability insurance to insure peace of mind if there are errors or omissions to a project. While Architects are licensed as “General Practitioners” there are a variety of architectural practices, with different levels of expertise. It is important that care be given to selecting the Architect who is the “right fit” for your project.

Here are some considerations for selecting the right Architect for your project.

- 1. PROJECT EXPERTISE** *Does the Architect have experience with your project type?*
- 2. REPUTATION OF ARCHITECT** *Ask the Architect for client references. Discuss pros and cons of working with the Architect.*
- 3. SIZE OF PRACTICE** *Practices differ greatly in size. Larger practices tend to be a better fit for larger projects. Many large practice will take on small projects as “filler work”. Your Architect should be enthusiastic about doing your project!*
- 4. PORTFOLIO** *Your new project should inspire you. Ask to see previous examples of the architects work. Do they inspire you?*
- 5. CHEMISTRY** *You will need to work with your architect throughout the design and construction process. It is important that you work well together!*

Programming

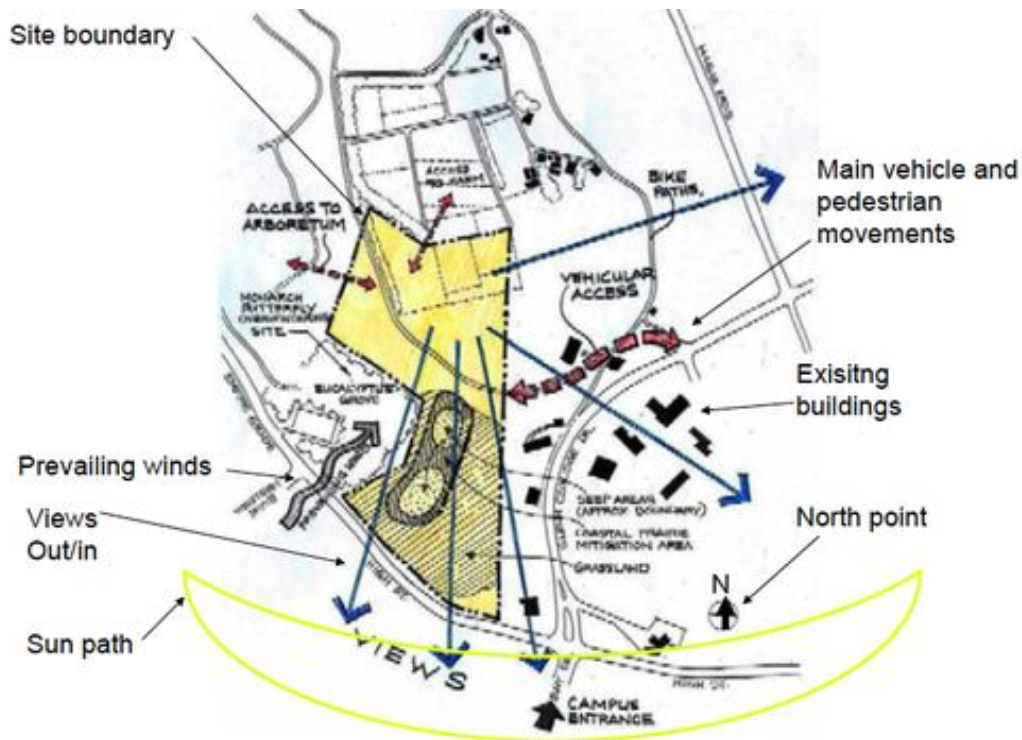


ONE MUST DEFINE A PROBLEM BEFORE THEY CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Programming is a term used to describe the information gathering process an Architect will go through with their client to determine the size, scope, and budget for a project.

- All activities must be identified with the appropriate square foot numbers allocated to each.
- Critical space adjacencies need to be determined and graphically articulated.
- Some building programs are complex, while others are simple. Regardless, this step should not be glossed over or skipped.

Site Selection & Analysis

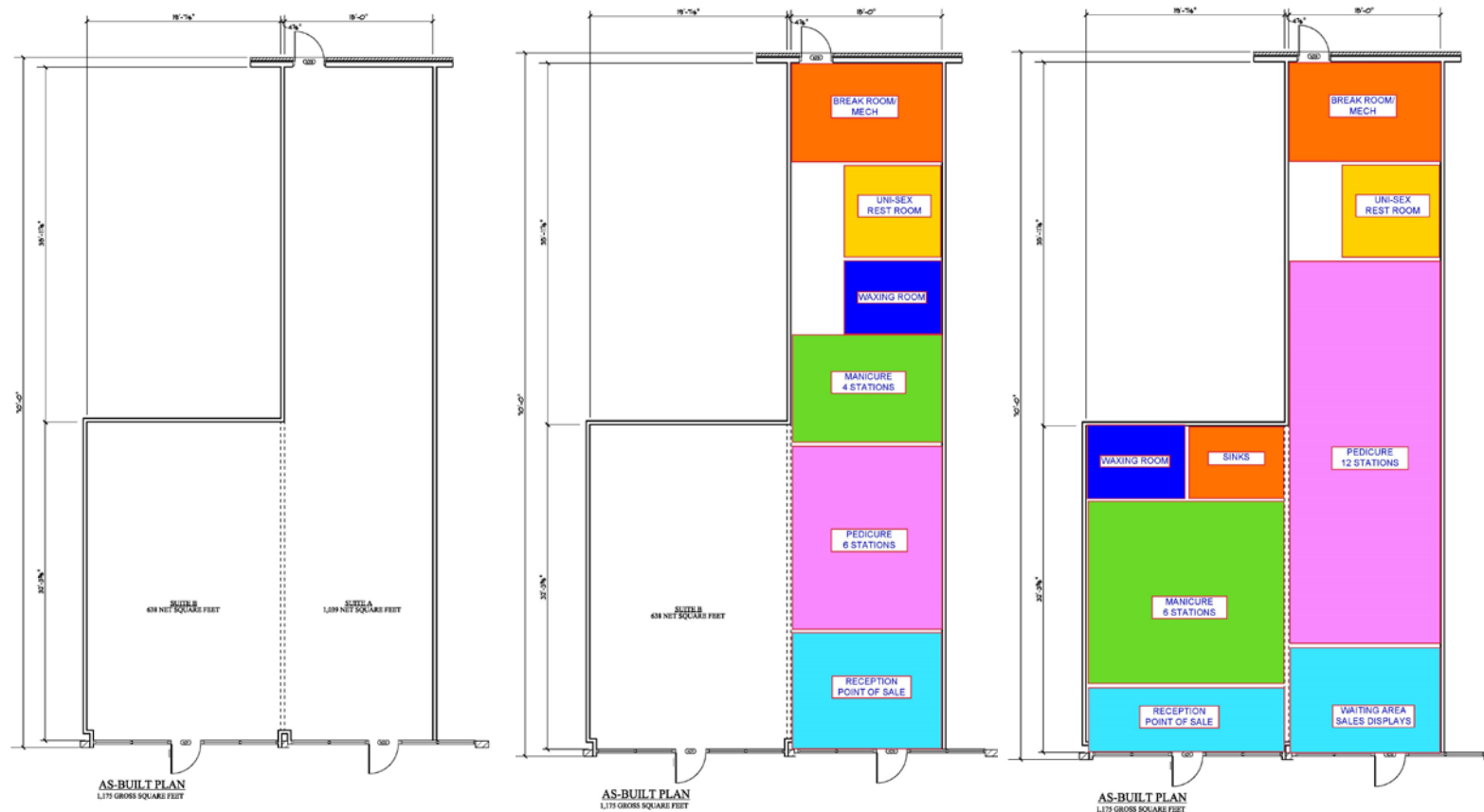


With programming data in hand, a proper site can be selected.

Prior to the selection of a site, there are critical items which must be considered. These include:

- *Municipal Zoning requirements*
- *Building code requirements*
- *Vehicular traffic patterns*
- *Physical context of building site*
- *Sun & wind paths, desired views*

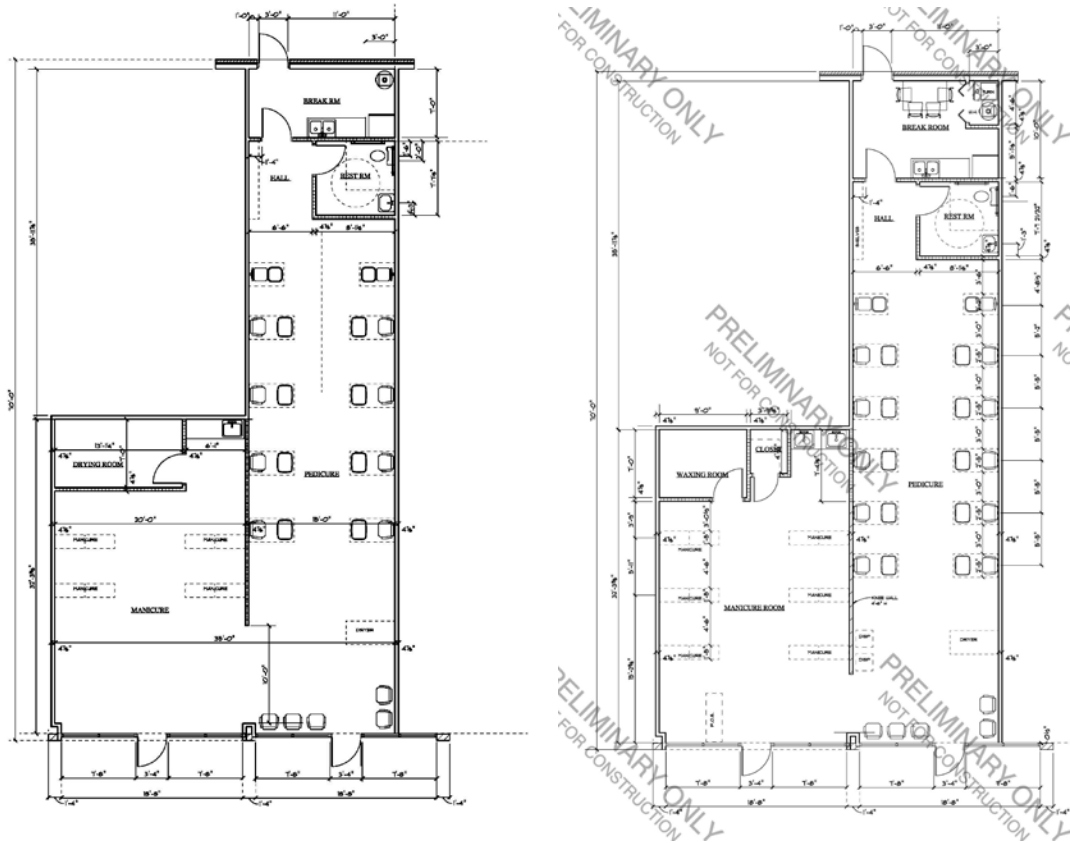
Schematic Design



The goal in SCMETAIC DESIGN (SD) is to search for (and determine) the appropriate SCHEME

“Loose” drawings are often used. Sometimes these are freehand sketches or block diagrams. Constructing your project will entail a big investment. It is only prudent to make sure you have explored two or three alternatives and have arrived at the right scheme.

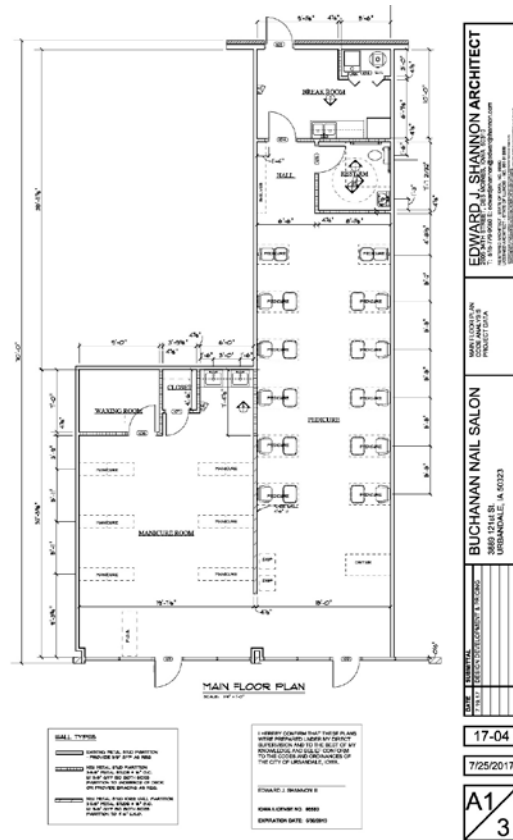
Design Development



Design development (DD) is the refinement of a chosen scheme prior to the Construction Drawings.

Hardline plans and elevations are completed showing control dimensions. An “Outline spec” is provided identifying chosen materials and components. This is the best opportunity to get preliminary pricing. At this point the various consultants will be solicited. These include: Structural Engineer, Civil Engineer, Mechanical Engineer, Food Service Consultant among others.

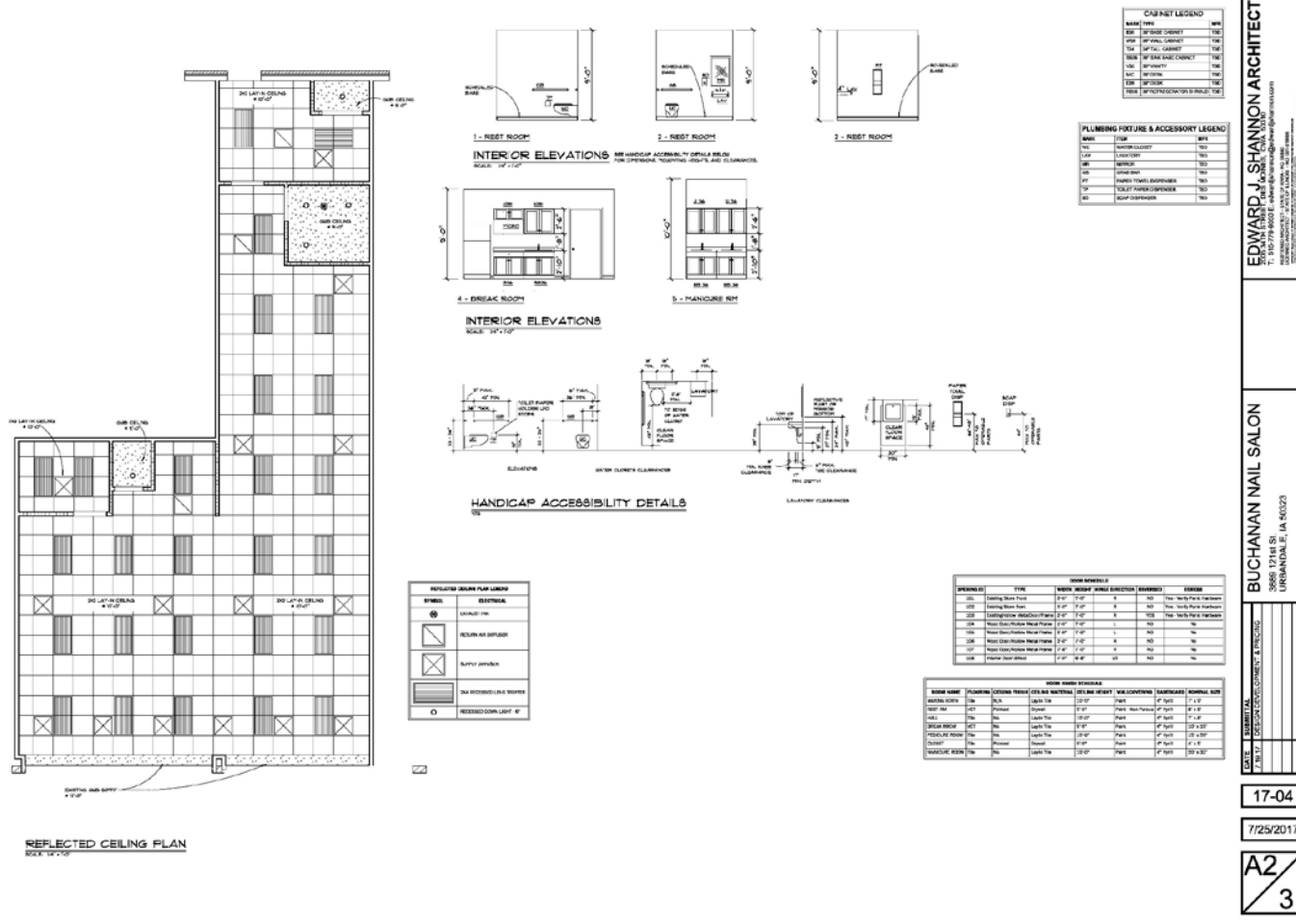
Construction Drawings



Construction Drawings (AKA CD's or Blueprints) typically comprise of half of the Architect's services. The CD's are used for **Permitting, Bidding, and Construction**.

At this point the Floor Plans, Elevations, and Sections are dimensioned and notated. Additional drawings may include large scale Details, Ceiling and Roof Plans. Door & Room Finish Schedules are also developed. Detailed specifications may also be required.

Construction Drawings



The sheet above shows some of the additional drawings required for CD's to the left is a Reflected Ceiling Plan with legend, Interior elevations of the rest room and other areas that have casework. Schedules are also shown.

Bidding & Permitting

A Building Permit is simply asking for permission to build!

The CD's will be submitted to the proper authorities, along with a Building Code Analysis. At the same time competitive bids can now be solicited. A comprehensive bid will compare pricing from three or more contractors with a detailed breakdown of materials and trades. If a contractor has been pre-selected, pricing can now be negotiated. Clients should allocate three to five weeks for these procedures.

Construction

Once a building Permit is granted and a Contractor is selected, construction can begin.

At this point the Architect will be involved for periodic site visits and clarifications. The Architect may also be asked to approve progress payments for a draw on a construction loan. Most projects, in particular renovations, have unforeseen issues that come up. Typically, the Architect is available on an "as needed" basis.

Conclusion

For more information on working with an Architect for your business project, please contact The American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter.

<http://www.aiaiowa.org/?Resources#client>