Skyline Design

The Interior Design Process

<u>Design Process:</u> a method that interior designers use for organizing their work, guiding their actions and finalizing their decisions when working with their design team and clients.

Professional interior design encompasses programming, space planning, construction, detailing, and finish selection as well as considerations of interior decor. As in building design, the process of interior design defines client and user requirements, develops conceptual approaches, and creates and documents solutions.

The generic steps in a work plan for interior design projects are described below, grouped according to the design phase. (Depending on the size, complexity, and scope of a project, service increments for research, programming, construction documents, construction procurement, construction contract administration, and post completion activities may be contracted for separately.)

<u>1. Start-up and research (pre-design)</u> The parameters of a project must be established first. This usually takes place as part of the sales and negotiation process between the firm and client, but when a designer is brought into an ongoing project it is useful to review the following points:
• What is clients problem/request and the scope and expected outcome of the project?
• What is the schedule and budget for project completion?
• Is there a need for specialized consultants?
• What is the contractual relationship between the design firm and the client?

After project parameters have been determined, research is performed on the client or client's business, the project type, and sometimes on the architectural style, particularly if a project is highly specialized.

<u>2. Programming.</u> During programming for the interiors, the client's interior design needs and objectives for the building interior are defined.

● What specific functions take place in the space?

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- What are the space allocation needs? Which areas have been assigned to which functions?
- What equipment and furniture must be accommodated in the space?
- What are the problem areas?

Steps involved in programming often include a space survey; interviews with clients and users; and other data collection, such as work flow information and an inventory of equipment, followed by development of a preliminary program and adjacency charts, review of the preliminary program with the client, preparation of a final program, and program approval by the client. An interior programming study report that includes preliminary diagrams is usually the first deliverable in an interior design project.

Preliminary diagramming/space planning. Once programming for the interior spaces is complete, diagrams of space allocations and adjacencies are developed. Area assignment involves estimating the approximate square footage needed for each function and/or room. Block diagrams visually depict relationships among the sizes of the areas. Adjacency studies result in charts and diagrams that show the desired levels of closeness among the spaces. In a multi-floor project, stacking plans show which functions are placed on which floor.

3. Schematic design. In schematic or preliminary design, sketches for floor plans, sections, elevations, and perspectives are developed. The first sketches are often bubble diagrams prepared during space planning to arrange space blocks in adjacency relationships. Circulation patterns within and between the spaces are also considered. The process is iterative and continues until a plan emerges that resolves all or as many of the design parameters as possible. Preliminary finishes and furniture ideas are also developed during this phase. The preliminary design is then presented to the client for review, possible revision, and final approval.

4. Design development. During design development, the designer develops plans, elevations, sections, and other related details to a high level of finish; refines colors and finishes; selects any purchased furniture, fixtures, and equipment; and prepares a cost estimate and budget for

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construction and FF&E (furniture, fixtures and equipment) items. The resulting design is presented to the client for review, revision, and final approval.

5. Construction documents and construction procurement. The first step in this phase includes the preparation of construction documents (including floor plans, elevations, sections, and construction details), the FF&E package, and the architectural specifications package. In most states, drawings must be signed by a registered architect or engineer to obtain a building permit. In the next step of construction procurement, bids are obtained, contractors selected, and contracts or purchase orders are issued. Concurrently the designer prepares furniture plans and specifications, which are then bid with furniture dealers. Finally a furniture contract is awarded.

6. Construction contract administration. During construction the role of a designer responsible for interiors is to advise whether the work conforms with the construction drawings and specifications. This may be achieved by visiting the site on a regular basis. Often the designer will want to be on site during FF&E installation and completion to check for any defects and errors and to ensure they are corrected. The construction process is complete when the designer has completed a punch list for the project and the items on the list have been corrected.

7. Post occupancy Services. Post occupancy evaluation is a way to identify potential problem areas and determine user satisfaction. Members of the project team responsible for completion of both the building core and shell and the interior design can participate in this separate service.