

Quick Start

Short Form Questionnaire

Not all who begin the design process have a perfectly clear concept of what they want or wish for. Many a home design has commenced with a minimum program or client brief. If you would like to submit a quick wish list to an architect for preliminary discussion and proposal submittal, this short form has merit. The process and results may be completely unconventional. You may wish to describe to an architect a short hand listing or submit a simple outline alone. This may take the following shape:

“We would like a comfortable contemporary home for a family of five. Each bedroom should have a separate bath. There should be a library and an art studio. We only need one living area, perhaps a great room. A combination kitchen/ dining would work fine. We would like plenty of storage. A one-story plan is preferable. We would like to take advantage of the views and topography, maybe a slight multilevel would work since we are building on a sloping site. We are not sure about style.

We need no more than 4,500 SF of livable space. Our budget is about \$150/ SF. We like hardwood floors and marble tops, open flowing spaces, but no period detail.”

Or:

“I am thinking about 15,000 SF, 8 bedrooms each with bath, formal living/ dining, two studies. It should be grand with a single winding stair in the foyer, maybe double. Master suite should be up with a second remote guest. Outside detached guest house, 6 car garage, and an antique showroom. Kitchen should not be open to any formal rooms. An elevator would be nice. It’s a rather compact lot; can we have a three level scheme like the house in your brochure? A Renaissance French design is preferred to the Italianate. We would like all the formal rooms to have high-crown moldings. There should be period detail throughout.

The garden area should be arranged as parterres, we wish an enclosed swimming pool. No ramps. A billiard or gentleman’s retreat would be nice. Do separate children’s and guest suites from the Master.

Towers, turrets, and French limestone with detailing around all windows and doors similar to the grand Trianon. I guess that is a bit more neo-classical than renaissance, isn’t it?. Our budget can take in up to \$500/ SF. Could you work in some type of rotunda or grand vault in the ballroom?”

Another:

“We have this beautiful site on the North Carolina Blue Ridge Mountains. There are practically 360-degree views. There will be two of us; we only need one or two extra bedrooms. I am an attorney, my husband is a real estate appraiser. We like modern art, Rothko’s work appeals to us – we have a large art collection. We travel extensively. We both exercise outdoors, but will need an indoor area in the winter. We want something unique, not traditional. Our budget is flexible. Security is an issue. We are extremely environmentally conscious; aren’t there materials we can use inside that are non-toxic, etc.?”

If a short order description suits you, then write freely (space provided below) as little or as much as you wish. Often a client will approach a well-known designer or architect who has a ‘signature’ style. The client knows what to expect in this case, especially if the architect’s reputation is based on a singular approach to every project. Or, if you are completely open-minded and wish the ‘artist’ to create a home without precedent, do not bind the architect to anything but a minimal description of your needs. A work of art can be a result of various processes that need not have a linear path. To break out of convention think laterally.

If you wish to expand the program and are quite specific about your intended results, then turn to ‘Creating the Vision’, where you are guided from generality to rather specific arrangements of space, circulation, plan layout, etc. and concrete room sizes. Add as much information to the brief as needed.

There are several levels of detail to be addressed. This questionnaire attempts to elicit the first basic response, challenge preconceptions, question motives, etc. and mold the intention to the point of allowing estimates to be made, a budget established.

Good luck and have a wonderful time. This is the most enjoyable part of the design/ build process. If you do your homework right and are prepared for the construction part, then you will anticipate the grand finish eagerly and contribute positively with understanding at each step.

Short Form QUESTIONNAIRE

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John Henry Design International Inc.
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NAME: _____ PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

1. I/ we plan to build a custom home ___ for myself /ourselves, or ___ speculatively.
2. I plan to build on a flat ___, sloping ___, or irregular ___, site. (*check one*)
3. (*check one*) ___ I do not have a site purchased. Please design a Dream Home for me per the specifications outlined herein.
_____ I have purchased a lot. [Please include site survey, setbacks, height restrictions, and all applicable code or jurisdictional information.]
4. I will be building in a deed-restricted community. (yes/ no) [If yes, supply complete architectural design standards and covenants.]
5. I will/will not be using an interior designer.
6. The site vegetation and topography can be described as follows:

_____ [Send topographical map and tree survey if site purchased.]
7. The surrounding area and immediate lots to left and right and across the street are described as follows:

_____ [Supply photographs as deemed necessary.]
8. My approximate budget per square foot of conditioned space (measured to outside of bearing wall) is approximately \$___/ SF, or maximum budget of \$_____ for house construction alone.
NOTE: Architect cannot be held liable for cost of house exceeding Client budget. Client must check with Realtors or Builders in his or her area to arrive at projected costs per style of house, budget, and location.
9. The style of home I would like can best be described as:

_____ [Send copies of any study photos, drawings, plans, etc. on file or from scrapbook.]
10. I like/ do not like symmetry in my plans or elevations. (circle one and describe)

11. The total area of conditioned space I wish to achieve is between _____ SF and _____ SF.
12. The total number of bedrooms is _____. The total number of baths is _____. I wish to have the following rooms (circle Y for yes or N for no), with approximate sizes indicated in length and width and a short description of each.:
Y/N. Formal Living

