

## Introduction

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire in as much detail as possible. While this information provides valuable insight to your designer, it can also help you to articulate your vision for your future home. Please complete with all adult family members present. Have fun!

## Property and project information

Have you purchased a property? \_\_\_\_\_

Where will your home be located? (Address, Municipality, Region)

\_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your property (Physical features, neighbourhood context, views)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you completed a topographic survey? \_\_\_\_\_

How is the property serviced?

Water \_\_\_\_\_ Hydro \_\_\_\_\_ Gas \_\_\_\_\_ Sewer \_\_\_\_\_

What is your time frame?

Start date \_\_\_\_\_ Construction time \_\_\_\_\_ move-in date \_\_\_\_\_

Have you selected a contractor? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you need assistance with this? \_\_\_\_\_

What experience do you have building your own house or working with a designer?

\_\_\_\_\_

What, if any, work will you undertake yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your budget? \_\_\_\_\_

For how long do you expect to own your home? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you plan to age in place? \_\_\_\_\_

What level of home maintenance are you comfortable with? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What types of spaces do you expect your home to have?

Kitchen \_\_\_\_\_ Bedrooms \_\_\_\_\_ Baths \_\_\_\_\_ W/C s \_\_\_\_\_

Living Spaces (living, dining, library, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Recreation Spaces (games, media, pool) \_\_\_\_\_

Utility Spaces (mechanical, workshop, garage, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Occupant and Program Information**

*Who will live in the house? (kids ages, family size, extended family, secondary suite, pets)*

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*How do you use your house? (Do you entertain? Work from home? Garden? Is your home a sanctuary? Is it a weekend or part-time home?)*

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*What are your hobbies? (Horses, gardening, outdoor activities, indoor activities, tools, gear?)*

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*What things will you bring with you to your new home? (Furniture, art, AV equipment)*

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*What do you like about your current home?*

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*What bugs you about it?*

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**Experiential Information**

*How do you imagine using your home?*

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*What comes to mind when you think of 'home'? (smells, tactile, views, experiences)*

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*When you think of your ideal home, what comes to mind?*

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*Describe a perfect day in your new home.*

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## The Design Process

*Design is a dialog between the designer and the client. It is an cyclical process of inquiry and reflection that moves gradually toward refinement. The client's honest and critical feedback is welcome and necessary throughout the design process. A typical project flows as follows:*

**Free 1 hour consultation:** *This informal conversation is used to assess fit, to learn about your aspirations and to provide an overview of services and fees and tips about how to get the most from your designer. There is no obligation.*

**Proposal & contract:** *A written proposal will be provided that clearly outlines the service, scope of work, base fee and optional services.*

**Site visit:** *A visit to the property is required to assess the opportunities and constraints of your site.*

**Homework assignment: Week 1:** *You will be provided with a detailed needs assessment and a number of web-based resources to undertake a visioning exercise. The purpose of the exercise is to help us understand your dreams and aspirations for your new home. You are welcome to add your own content - anything that speaks to your vision.*

**Concept design: Week 2-3:** *Preliminary design work will be undertaken based on your needs assessment and visioning and presented in a concept design report. Concept design is intended both to assess the feasibility of the house with respect to zoning regulations and site constraints and to initiate a dialog. Concept designs will include sketch plans, elevations (facade drawings), a physical or computerized model and identification of key design elements as they relate specifically to your visioning exercise. It is expected that the design will continue to evolve and can change radically at this preliminary stage.*

**Schematic design: Week 4-6:** *Client feedback is assimilated into the plan and options ruthlessly assessed to determine the best possible design. Our clients are invited into the design process to ensure that their ideas are being heard and their needs are being met. Preliminary specifications are developed for assemblies and exterior finishes. Energy performance, budget and building code compliance are assessed.*

**Design development: Week 7-10:** *Following acceptance of the schematic design, detailed drawings are created for building permit and construction. We recommend engaging a contractor as early as possible to assist with sourcing materials, budget analysis and to ensure that the contractor understands and respects your aspirations for your home. This phase includes the selection of fixtures, finishes and furnishings.*

**Building permit and regulatory approvals:** *MAA are skilled at negotiating the complex and challenging regulatory requirements for both urban and rural properties. We advocate for your project and maintain communication with zoning and building officials to answer questions and to ensure that your house remains a priority.*

**Construction:** *MAA acts on your behalf to assess the quality of construction and to assist the contractor with questions, changes and unexpected site conditions. Our role is to help the contractor to make the best possible house by providing clear, professional plans and specifications and by providing guidance where needed.*

## Some frequently asked questions

### Who is Mark Ashby Architecture?

MAA is a boutique design office located in Nanaimo led by Mark Ashby, a registered architect with over 15 years of experience. We enjoy our work and the excitement of visualizing great homes for great clients. As a small office, collaboration is critical to our success. We play well with others and our sandbox includes landscape designers, engineers, graphic designers, artists as well as our clients.

### How much does design service cost?

A well crafted custom home takes time and care to design. Architectural design fees for single-family homes are based on 10% of market construction value for the home with the expectation that the design work will increase with size and complexity. We encourage clients to consider the budget for their new home as a whole. Investing in the service of a skilled designer at the beginning of the project can result in a home that exceeds your expectations without blowing your budget.

### What does an architect do?

Your architect is skilled at creating coherence from a myriad of complex, and often contradictory, constraints. Architects listen to you and co-create a design that is unique to you and your property. Architects guide you through the design, permit and construction process, provide recommendations on the best strategic use of your budget and assist the contractor to build your home right. Architects work with clients with varying degrees of experience and can tailor services to suit your needs.

### What do you mean by coherence?

We are expert at creating spaces for your specific needs that take full advantage of the daylight, views and topography of your specific property. By visualizing your complete home in the context of your property, we create homes for you and your family that are both beautiful and beautifully integrated with the landscape. Coherence exists where complex challenges meet elegant solutions.

### Who are your clients?

Mark deliberately maintains a small practice, choosing to serve a small number of select clients. We turn down more work than we take. This is because we care deeply about the quality of our work. We believe in architecture's ability to improve lives and we take our responsibility to the environment very seriously. We only work with clients who share our values. Select clients include private residential clients in Nanaimo, Vancouver and the Gulf Islands, the Old Massett Village in Haida Gwaii, the Cities of Nanaimo and Richmond.

### How big are your houses?

As small as possible. 'More' seldom translates into "better". Space, cars, ice cream, bathrooms; simply having more does not make a richer experience. Quality matters. We encourage our clients to think of their future home like an espresso shot; a selection of high-quality, intense, invigorating experiences in a small package.

### Do you 'do' Victorian style houses?

No; we are not stylists. Period architecture is the legacy of the past and a gift to the present. We love that these old buildings exist and that many of them continue to function in our modern world; we do not aspire to recreate them. As contemporary designers we create architecture that reflects the culture, craft and technology of our time with the hope that our buildings will become our legacy to the future.

### Do you design gardens?

Absolutely! Conscientious garden design is one of our favourite tricks for making small homes feel bigger on a budget. In our temperate climate outdoor spaces can be made habitable for much of the year by considering micro-climates created by the architecture and the topography. We collaborate with skilled and qualified landscape designers to craft houses and outdoor spaces that function together as a whole. Careful selection of plants and materials create "outdoor rooms" that are both elegant and practical to maintain.