

Approach to Project Success

Jonathan Lucas, the principal of What on Earth Architecture, has developed and refined an approach to architectural services that provides delightful, efficient, and functional architectural design while keeping professional fees affordable. This approach focuses on key initial project activities to clearly define your project goals and plan how to achieve them, while using your project resources efficiently and effectively.

The four key initial project activities to prepare for project success:

Know your project goals

- Collaboratively discover, test, and document clear project goals, including high-performance, sustainable, and green targets
- Develop detailed qualitative project narrative or “story”
- Create detailed quantitative use and space “program”
- Establish quality and design benchmarks using existing guidelines and projects

Know your project opportunities and constraints

- Identify and key project questions and issues and plan how to answer or resolve them
- Conduct detailed project start-up research and analysis. See pdf checklist.

Plan for efficient and effective use of resources

- Identify staff, other resources and plan how to best use these resources
- Establish norms for a collaborative working process, including communication, roles, and coordination of key project activities
- Agree on a project budget, schedule and tracking system

Be creative: conceptual design

- Create and explore conceptual design options using 3D site and building modeling and rendering
- Test design concepts against goals and benchmarks
- Choose the most inspiring blend of form and function

Identifying and taking care of important practical issues, in the first three key activities, frees and focuses creativity in the conceptual design process. The conceptual design process will produce the most valuable results when your project goals, opportunities, and constraints are clearly understood.

These four activities form a method for discovering and addressing much of the complexity of a project, early in its conception, while change and adaptation of the design and project goals is not costly. The cost of change increases dramatically as the project developed. This approach, to initiating a project, greatly reduces the likelihood of costly changes during the development of construction documents and construction.