

GETTING IT DONE: DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS.

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Halfway there: The architect's home under construction ... Getting ready for fixtures and finishes.

Once house framing is done, then comes everything else. People often think that once a house is closed in that they are in the home stretch. Not so fast! Windows, roof, and exterior walls with siding are all very nice but they are only half the battle. Remember when you drive by a new house or house addition that the siding going on does not mean people will be moving in soon.

Next come electrical, plumbing and HVAC rough-ins. In order for the subcontractors to do this work they need a pretty specific road map. This is when decisions really have to get made and this is where your architect can be a great help.

Remember what happens if you are GC-ing your own house? You have to do a ton of organizing and up-front planning to do. You have to call the right people at the right time and get the right materials delivered on the right day, and sweep the floors at night. Basically, it is a ton of work.

Choosing and locating each and every electrical and plumbing fixture and duct or radiator location is a huge task. You have to be decisive and get it done. You have to think ahead. What kind of shower head do you want? Where will it go? Where is the shower door? How will the tile lay out? Oh first, what kind of tile are you buying? Where will the towel bars go? Which way will the door swing? What size vanity are you buying? It all keeps backing up and each decision becomes dependent on the next and someone has to write it all down, draw it with dimensions and order the products. It's exhausting just thinking about it.

Amazon Prime becomes your new best friend. You frantically order and get deliveries on a daily basis. And all of these things hinge on money. Building your dream house gets expensive. One thing I've learned after being an architect is that all humans want the best. We all have fabulous taste. It is extremely hard to reconcile what you really want with what you really can afford. We learned that lesson well as we picked everything for our house addition. One regret I have is not buying the bathroom tile that I loved first, before the addition even started. By the time we got to buying bathroom tile there was no way I was paying for that nice tile! We ended up at Home Depot. We got some lovely tile, but it's not the wow factor that I wanted.

Anyway this is what your architect is good for. (Besides making things beautiful and coordinating things like framing so that the building stands up.) Architects also have the

gift of making something out of nothing; a good architect can modify your plans so that you still get what you're after but the price will be what you can afford.

Everyone has a budget — even people who have millions have limits to what they spend on what things. You have to prioritize and you have to sacrifice. Going in with flexible expectations is probably the best thing you can do to have a happy successful project. Your project will probably come out very nicely; it just might not be the Taj Mahal that you had originally envisioned.

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