



START STRONG: KEY QUESTIONS AND PREP FOR YOUR DESIGN CONSULTATION

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your journey of creating your dream home or project! At **Design Loft Inc.**, we specialize in turning your vision into reality through expert architectural design for new homes, remodels, additions, garages, barns, pool houses, ADUs, cabins, and small multi-family units. With experience across the nation, including along the Wasatch Front, we're here to bring your ideas to life, wherever you are.

Before you meet with an architectural designer, there are key things you should know and prepare to make the process smooth and exciting. This guide shares 10 essential steps to get ready, saving you time and helping us design your perfect project. Download this free guide and let's start building your dream together!

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR PROJECT TYPE AND GOALS

What to Know: Are you building a new home, remodeling, adding an ADU, or designing a garage or cabin? Each project has unique needs, so clarifying your project type helps your designer focus on your vision.

What to Prepare: Write down your main goal (e.g., “Build a 4-bedroom modern home” or “Add a pool house for guests”). Include must-haves, like open layouts or extra storage.

This could also include estimated size parameters. This main goal should just be an overview of your project in one or two sentences.

Why It Matters: A clear goal ensures we align our designs with your vision from day one.

2. KNOW YOUR BUDGET RANGE

What to Know: Architectural design is an investment, and having a budget in mind (even a rough range) helps your designer create a plan that fits your financial goals.

What to Prepare: Think about how much you're willing to spend on the entire project, including construction. Be ready to discuss if you're flexible with features to stay within budget.

Why It Matters: Budget clarity helps us design a project you can afford to build.

Your general contractor, along with you, will determine the final pricing for your project, but sharing your budget, even a rough budget, can help your designer guide you as you make decisions for your new home design.

3. GATHER PROPERTY INFORMATION

What to Know: Your designer needs details about your property to ensure the design fits the site and complies with local rules.

What to Prepare: Collect your property's address, lot size, and any surveys or plat maps. A topographic survey may be required, and if one has already been prepared, your designer should be able to use it to help start your design. These will typically note features like slopes, trees, or existing structures. If you were planning an addition to your existing home, photos and rough measurements can be very helpful. If you are fortunate to have access to the plans for the original construction, those can be very useful. Also, many building departments are now requiring geotechnical information. In newer developments, this work may have already been completed and can possibly be obtained through your realtor or developer of the property.

Why It Matters: This information ensures your design works with your land and meets regulations.

4. LEARN ABOUT LOCAL BUILDING CODES, ZONING, AND HOA REQUIREMENTS

What to Know: Cities and counties have building codes and zoning rules (e.g., height limits, setbacks, or ADU regulations), and many properties are also governed by Homeowners Association (HOA) rules or Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs). These dictate what you can build.

What to Prepare: Check with your local building department or ask us about zoning and code requirements. If your property is in an HOA, gather the CCRs or design guidelines (e.g., restrictions on materials, colors, or building types).

Why It Matters: Understanding these rules upfront prevents delays and ensures your project complies with all regulations.

5. UNDERSTAND YOUR DESIGN TIMELINE AND ROLE

What to Know: While construction schedules are managed by your builder, the design process also takes time and works best when clients stay engaged and responsive. Designing your project is a collaborative process with multiple phases—from early sketches to final construction documents.

What to Prepare: Consider how quickly you can make decisions, provide feedback, and gather required items (like surveys or HOA approvals). Think about upcoming life events or obligations that might affect your availability.

Why It Matters: The pace of design is influenced by how ready and responsive you are. When clients are prepared and involved, it helps us keep your project moving forward and meet design milestones efficiently.



6. PUT TOGETHER A VISUAL WISH LIST

What to Know: Pictures of homes, garages, or other structures you like help your designer understand your style preferences.

What to Prepare: Save photos from Pinterest, Houzz, or magazines that show designs you love (e.g., modern, rustic, or traditional). Note specific features, like “I love this vaulted ceiling” or “I like these windows” or “the layout for this laundry room is great.”

Why It Matters: Visuals give us a clear starting point to create a design you’ll love. With this type of information, these elements can be incorporated into your custom design.

7. LIST YOUR FUNCTIONAL NEEDS

What to Know: Your project needs to work for your lifestyle, like a spacious kitchen for entertaining, all bedrooms should have a private bath, or an ADU with a private entrance.

What to Prepare: Make a list of practical needs, like the number of bedrooms, bathrooms, or garage spaces. For remodels, note what's not working in your current space (e.g., "The entry is too cramped," "we need a larger kitchen and a walk-in pantry"). This list should be fairly comprehensive and an experienced designer will likely walk through this list item by item and even review things that you may not have even considered.

Why It Matters: This ensures your design is both beautiful and functional.

A faint, light-colored floor plan of a house is visible in the background, showing various rooms like bedrooms, bathrooms, and patios. The text is overlaid on this background.

8. CONSIDER FUTURE NEEDS

What to Know: Think about how your needs might change, like space for a growing family, aging parents, or a home office.

What to Prepare: Jot down future plans, like “I might want to add a guest suite later,” or “We may need to convert this room into an office someday,” or “can we plan for an outside entrance to change this area into an ADU in the future?”

Why It Matters: Planning ahead may save you from costly changes in the future.

9. UNDERSTAND THE DESIGN PROCESS

What to Know: Architectural design is a multi-step process. It involves many steps like rough floor plans, exterior design, detailed construction documents, coordination with structural engineers, surveyors, or civil engineers, builders, building departments and HOAs, and can also include interior designers and landscape designers. Architectural design is different from interior design, which focuses on decor.

What to Prepare: Be ready to share ideas and give feedback. Ask questions if terms like “site plan” or “elevations” are new to you.

Why It Matters: Knowing the process helps you feel confident and involved.

A faint architectural floor plan is visible in the background, showing various rooms such as bedrooms, bathrooms, and covered patios. The plan is rendered in a light gray color, providing a professional and design-oriented context for the text.

10. CHOOSE A DESIGNER YOU TRUST

What to Know: Your architectural designer is your partner in bringing your vision to life. Look for experience with projects like yours and a style you connect with.

What to Prepare: Research designers (like us at Design Loft Inc.!) and review their portfolios. Come with questions about their process, timeline, and experience with your project type.

Why It Matters: A strong designer-client relationship leads to a smoother project and better results.



BONUS TIP: KNOW YOUR PRIORITIES AND TRADE-OFFS

What to Know: No project can include every possible feature. Defining your priorities helps your designer make smart recommendations when compromises are necessary due to space, budget, or regulations.

What to Prepare: Create a simple list: must-haves, nice-to-haves, and features you could live without. Discuss these openly with everyone involved in decision-making.

Why It Matters: When everyone is on the same page about what matters most, we can guide the design process more efficiently and help you stay aligned with your overall goals.



Ready to start your dream project?
At **Design Loft Inc.**, we've designed projects across the nation, with a strong presence along the Wasatch Front, and we're here to guide you every step of the way. Whether it's a new home, a remodel, or a unique structure like a barn or ADU, we'll make your vision a reality. Download this guide, gather your ideas, and contact us today for a free consultation.

Visit www.designloft.net
or call **801-292-9716** to get started.

CHECKLIST

01 Understand Your Project Type and Goals

02 Know Your Budget Range

03 Gather Property Information

04 Learn About Local Building Codes, Zoning, and HOA Requirements

05 Understand Your Design Timeline and Role

06 Put together a visual wish list

07 List Your Functional Needs

08 Consider Future Needs

09 Understand the Design Process

10 Choose a Designer You Trust
