

Rebuilding Together:
**How to Engage with a Design
Professional**


LA County Recovers

AGENDA

- Introductions
- About the AIA
- Options for Your Design Team
- How to Hire a Design Professional
- How to Work with a Design Professional
- Alternative Options
- Where to Start: Resources

About the AIA

WHO WE ARE: American Institute of Architects

AIA National

- Founded over 160 years ago
- Non-profit 501(c)6

AIA Pasadena & Foothill

- Founded over 75 years ago
- Non-profit 501(c)3 Jean Roth Driskel Foundation
- Member-based organization representing more than 450 architects/firms



-  **California**
-  **Los Angeles**
-  **Long Beach/South Bay**
-  **Pasadena & Foothill**
-  **San Fernando Valley**

Options for Your Design Team

OPTIONS FOR YOUR DESIGN TEAM

LICENSED ARCHITECT

- Licensed by the State of California to attest to experience and qualifications
- Should hold Professional Liability Insurance
- Required to demonstrate understanding of current codes & building standards
- Minimum 5 years of education and 8 years of experience.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

- Licensed by the State of California
- Should hold General Liability Insurance
- No minimum education or experience.

BUILDING DESIGNER

- Unlicensed but can be Certified
- Should hold Professional Liability Insurance
- Must follow prescriptive building codes with no leeway for interpretation
- No minimum education or experience.

OPTIONS FOR YOUR DESIGN TEAM

TYPICAL ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

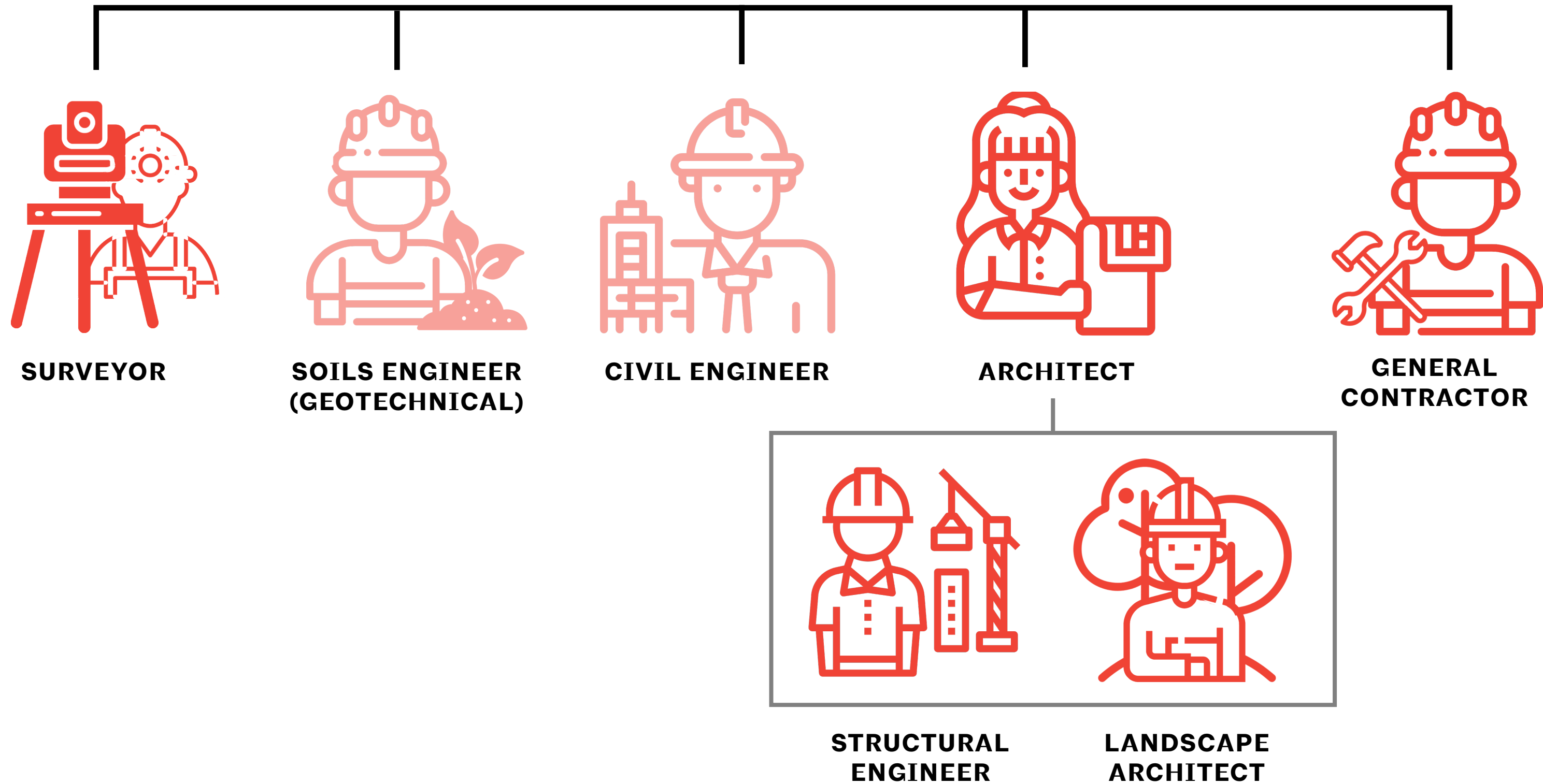
- Site & Building Planning
- Conceptual Design & Visualization
- Detailed Design & Documentation
- Permitting & Approvals
- Construction Administration
- Coordination with other Disciplines & General Contractor

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- Programming
- Furniture and/or equipment selection
- Development of multiple design options beyond concept

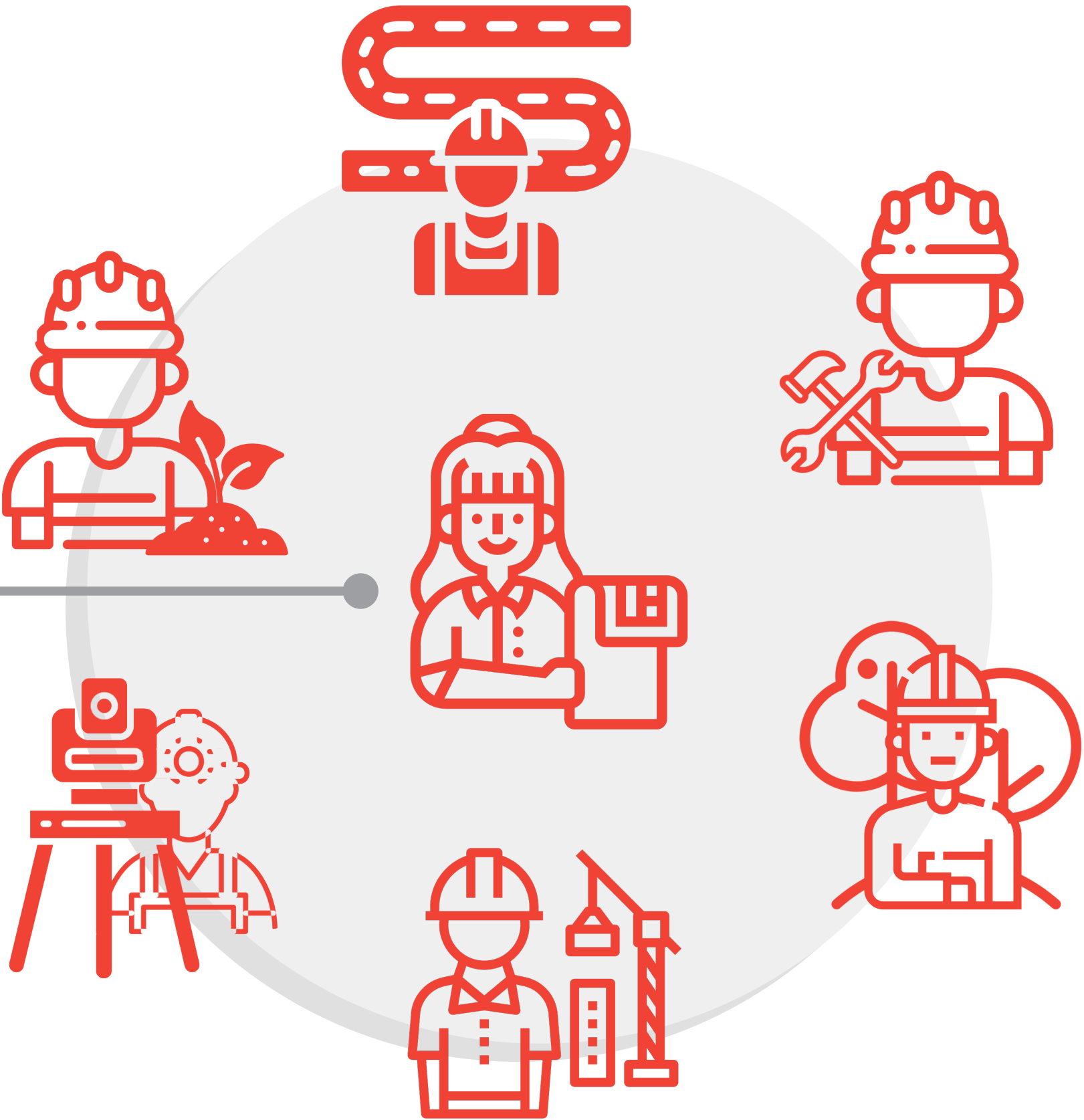
YOUR DESIGN TEAM

OWNER

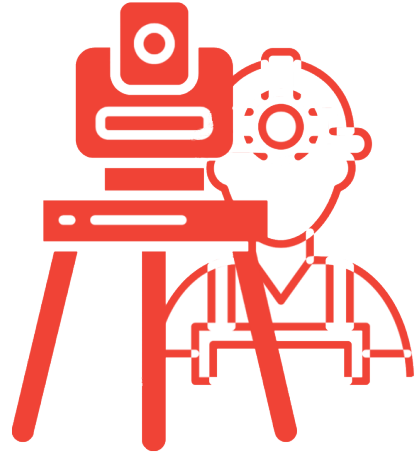


YOUR DESIGN TEAM

OWNER

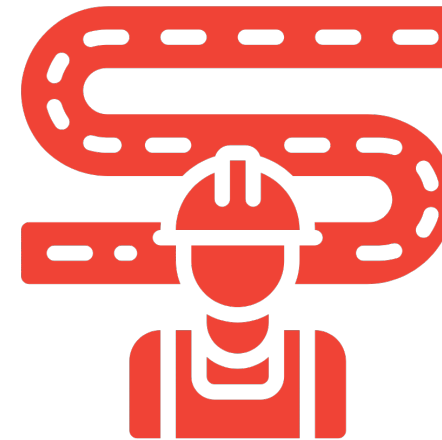


YOUR DESIGN TEAM: Understanding Your Site



LAND SURVEYOR

- Likely required to validate the extents of your property with legal description.
- You can consider sharing a surveyor with neighbors to do all or part of a block or another larger area.



CIVIL ENGINEER

- May not be required, but if there are concerns about site drainage, retaining/sloped conditions, or adding new structures, you may want to engage.
- If you are moving structures or adding new structures, they can help to facilitate new utility connections.



SOILS/GEOTECH ENGINEER

- May not be required, but if there are specialty foundations or new structures, you may want to engage. Your structural engineer can help advise.



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

- Not required, but very helpful to help plan and design your landscape including exterior patios, decks, pools or water features, as well as guide plant and tree selections.
- They can provide recommendations for preserving existing plants or trees.

YOUR DESIGN TEAM: Understanding Your Building



STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

- Will be required to provide stamped plans for foundations and structural elements to ensure a safe building. They will be responsible for code compliance and for designing for earthquake resistance.
- They can coordinate with soils and civil engineers for foundation design.



GENERAL CONTRACTOR

- Will be responsible for taking the design that you have developed and coordinating all of the trades that will be involved in building, including concrete foundation systems, framing and drywall, electrical, plumbing and heating/cooling systems, built-in casework, finishes and painting, etc.

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH AN ARCHITECT

- **Prioritize Goals**
- **Conflict/Issue Resolution**
- **Check Building and Design Alignment**
- **Check Payment Requests**
- **Team Coordination**

The biggest benefit an architect can offer is peace of mind. They will know how to guide you through the process of rebuilding while looking out for your interests.

How to Hire a Design Professional



PREPARATION: What you need before you call

Property Documentation:

- LA County Mapping Resources:
<https://pw.lacounty.gov/mpm/gis/response-resources/>
- Rebuild LA Architecture: Lists & Links
www.rebuildlaarchitecture.com
- AIAPF Owner Pre-Design Checklist:
<https://www.aiapf.org/FOR-HOMEOWNERS>

LA County Appointments:

- One-on-one and small group appointments
<https://recovery.lacounty.gov/rebuilding/one-stop-permit-centers/>


 **Eaton Fire Rebuild Report** 

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY DISTRICT OFFICE: 125 South Baldwin Avenue Arcadia, CA 91107
Telephone: (626) 574-0941, FAX: (626) 446-4425, Hours: M - Th 7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Fri 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

85 E PINE ST ALTADENA CA 91001

AIN: 5833027023
TOTAL UNITS: 1
INCIDENT NAME: EATON FIRE
DAMAGE: DESTROYED (>50%)
STRUCTURE CATEGORY: SINGLE RESIDENCE
COMMUNITY: ALTADENA, UNINCORPORATED
PARCEL SIZE: 7,467.46 SQUARE FEET


Historical LARIAC Ortho Imagery from 2017 (prior to Incident)

Information to Assist in the Permitting Process
THIS INFORMATION IS TO ASSIST YOU IN THE PERMITTING PROCESS. You will need to submit the pertinent plans, calculations, reports, etc., directly to the departments. To

***Sign up for
appointments
here!***

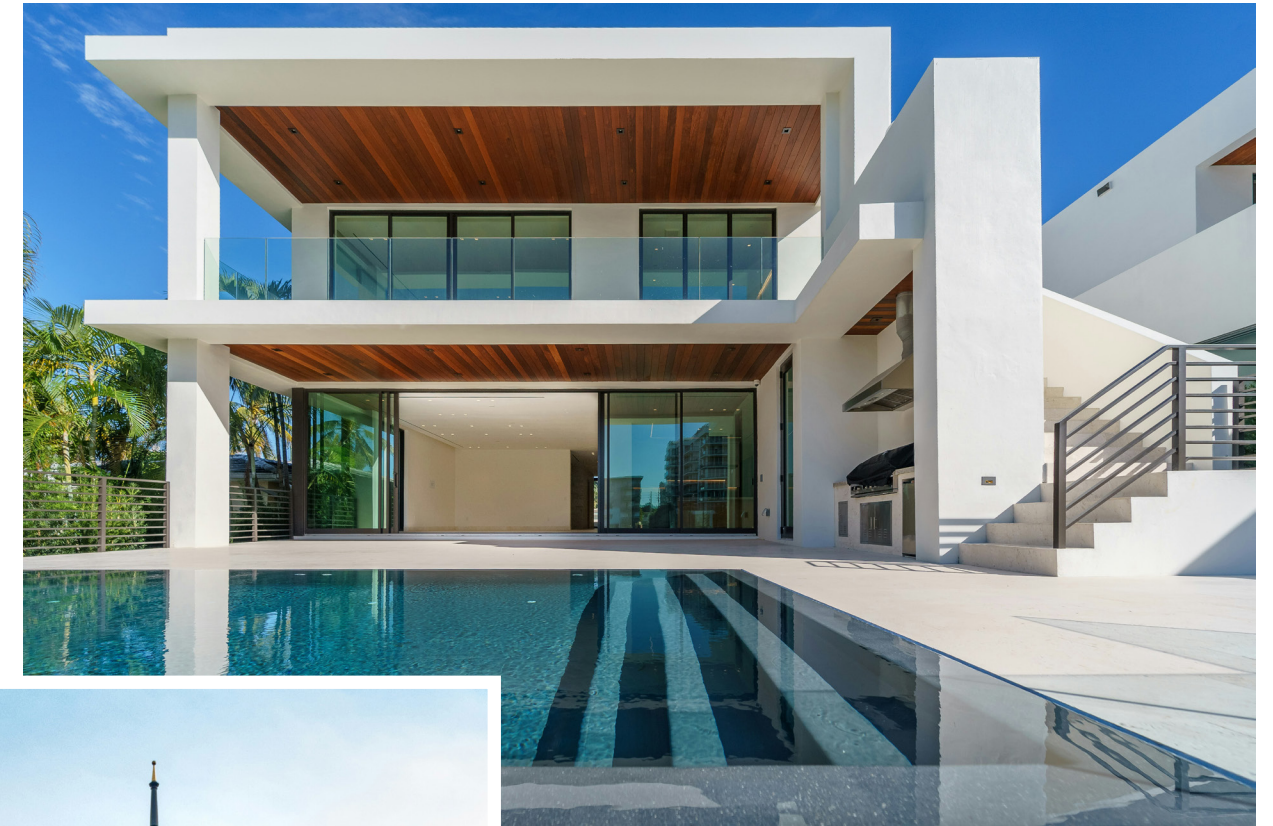


PREPARATION: What you need before you call

Goals & Expectations

- Program: Types and Sizes of spaces that you need
- Performance: Sustainability, resilience or maintenance goals
- Aesthetics: Specific style or “look and feel”
- Budget: What insurance covers, what you can pay for, and/or other financing

***Your Design Professional
can help you to refine
and align these once you
have them on board!***



SELECTING A PROFESSIONAL

Researching Professionals

- Ask for recommendations from friends
- Use professional organizations like AIA, CSLB and AIBD
- Look for professionals who have similar experience as your project type
- Local experience and understanding of codes & approvals

Useful Links:

- California Architects' Board License Lookup:
https://www.cab.ca.gov/cons/archs/lic_search.shtml
- Contractors State License Board Lookup:
<https://www2.cslb.ca.gov/OnlineServices/CheckLicenseII/checklicense.aspx>
- American Institute of Building Design Member Lookup:
<https://aibd.org/find-a-design-professional/>
- AIAPF Architect & Partner Directory:
<https://www.aiapf.org/AIAPF-Directory>
- AIALA Directory:
<https://www.aialosangeles.org/news/news-and-blogs/wildfire-recovery-resources-design-and-consulting-services/>
- City of LA BCA Directory:
<https://bca.lacity.gov/rebuildLA>

SELECTING A PROFESSIONAL

Soliciting Proposals

- Always solicit at least three (3) proposals so that you can compare.
- Interview each so you can see how comfortable you are with them.
- Provide a Scope of Services to each professional you are working with so that proposals are ‘apples to apples’.
- Set a deadline for response: a one week turnaround time is reasonable.
- Ask for References!

***20 Questions to
Ask an Architect:***



SELECTING A PROFESSIONAL

What is a Scope and what is it for?

- Design parameters
- What your Design Professional will provide: design & permitting, visualization
- Detail is good!
- Include schedule and budget/estimate of cost.
- Share with anyone you request a proposal from.
- Scope will be incorporated into your contract.

AIA

Pasadena & Foothill

HOMEOWNER'S
PREDESIGN WORKSHEET

This worksheet is designed to help you identify your priorities and preferences before you begin to work with an architect on plans for your new home.

▶

Property Owners:

▶

Property Address:

▶

Budget Range:

▶

I /we have collected the following documents (check all that apply) about the existing property:

☐ Grant deed / Title Report

☐ Photos of the existing house – exterior

☐ Survey (including footprint of existing building/ foundations if available, property boundaries, easements, and topography)

☐ Full certified copy of insurance policy

☐ Assessors records show: <https://assessor.lacounty.gov/>

☐ Record drawings (if available)

☐ Photos of the existing house – interior

☐ Soils report (Including properties of soil to support the new construction per code requirements. May not be required. Check with design professional.)

☐ Permit history

☐ Describe any unpermitted construction (if known):

Main structure square feet

Accessory structure square feet

Number of bedrooms

Number of bathrooms

Number of stories

▶

My/our top priorities are:

☐ Cost

☐ Sustainability (Energy)

☐ Recreating the previous home

☐ Maximizing allowable square footage

☐ Ability to add on in the future

☐ Other:

☐ Schedule

☐ Sustainability (Water)

☐ Adding to the home

☐ Fire resistance

☐ Quality

SELECTING A PROFESSIONAL

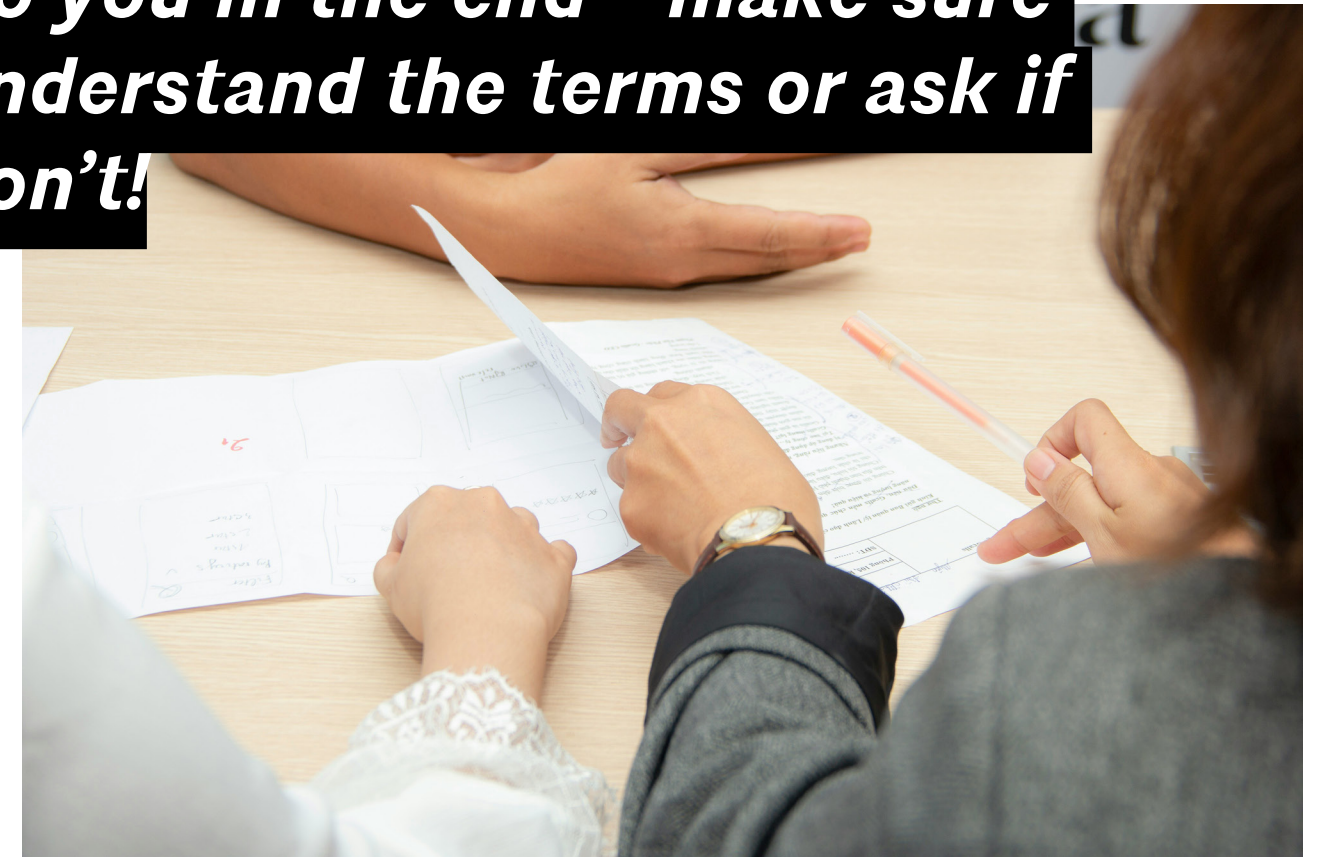
Reviewing Proposals: Fees

- Lump Sum based on Scope
- Percentage of Construction Cost
- Time & Materials
- Time & Materials - Not to Exceed

Reviewing Proposals: Insurance

- General Liability
- Professional Liability
- Ask for a Certificate of Insurance & Additional Insured

The lowest proposal cost doesn't necessarily mean it will be the lowest cost to you in the end - make sure you understand the terms or ask if you don't!



CONTRACTING A PROFESSIONAL

Selecting a Contract

- You have a say in what contract you use.
- Include your Scope of Services.
- Some professionals will prefer to use their own contracts.
- AIA provides contracts for a cost, but are widely accepted as fair for both owner and architect.
- Read all contracts carefully and understand your responsibilities.
- If at any time you are uncomfortable, ask for a review by a lawyer (AIAPF will also do this for free).

AIA Contract Docs:



CONTRACTING A PROFESSIONAL

Using Pro Bono Architectural Services

- ALWAYS have a contract, even if you are working with volunteers!
- Note that some professionals will limit their liability if they are offering free or discounted services.

AIA B106 Contract:

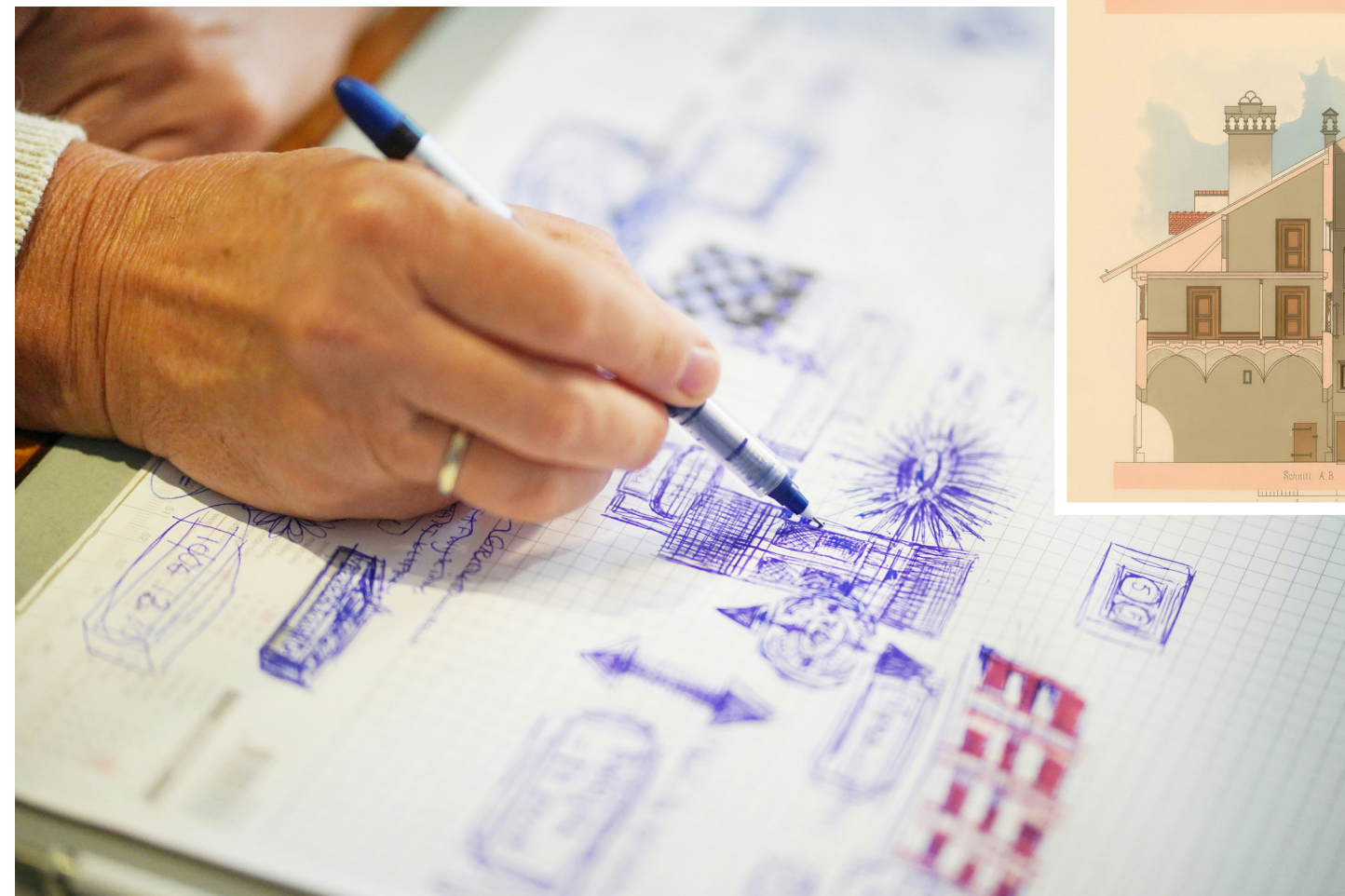


How to Work with a Design Professional

HOW TO WORK WITH A DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

Concept Collaboration & Tools

- Confirm communication plan
- Discuss what helps you make decisions
- Bring ideas to the table: Pinterest, Houzz



DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- **Wildfire Resistance**
- **Sustainability & Resilience**
- **Performance & Maintenance**
- **Flexibility & Adaptability**

Useful Links:

- USGBC CA Professional Directory:
<https://usgbc-ca.org/professionals/>
- Passive House Certified Designer:
https://passivehouse.com/03_certification/04_certified-designers/04_certified-designers.htm
- Wildfire Prepared Program:
<https://wildfireprepared.org/>



TYPICAL DESIGN SCHEDULE

1-3 WEEKS	4-6 WEEKS	4-6 WEEKS	6-10 WEEKS
PRE-DESIGN <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program• Concept Ideas• Siting	SCHEMATIC DESIGN <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Layouts• Exterior Design• Site Design• Systems Approaches	DESIGN DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm Layouts• Exterior Design Refined• Site Design Confirmed• Systems Integration• Finishes & Fixtures	CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details & Casework• Final Selections & Specifications• Documentation for Bid & Permit

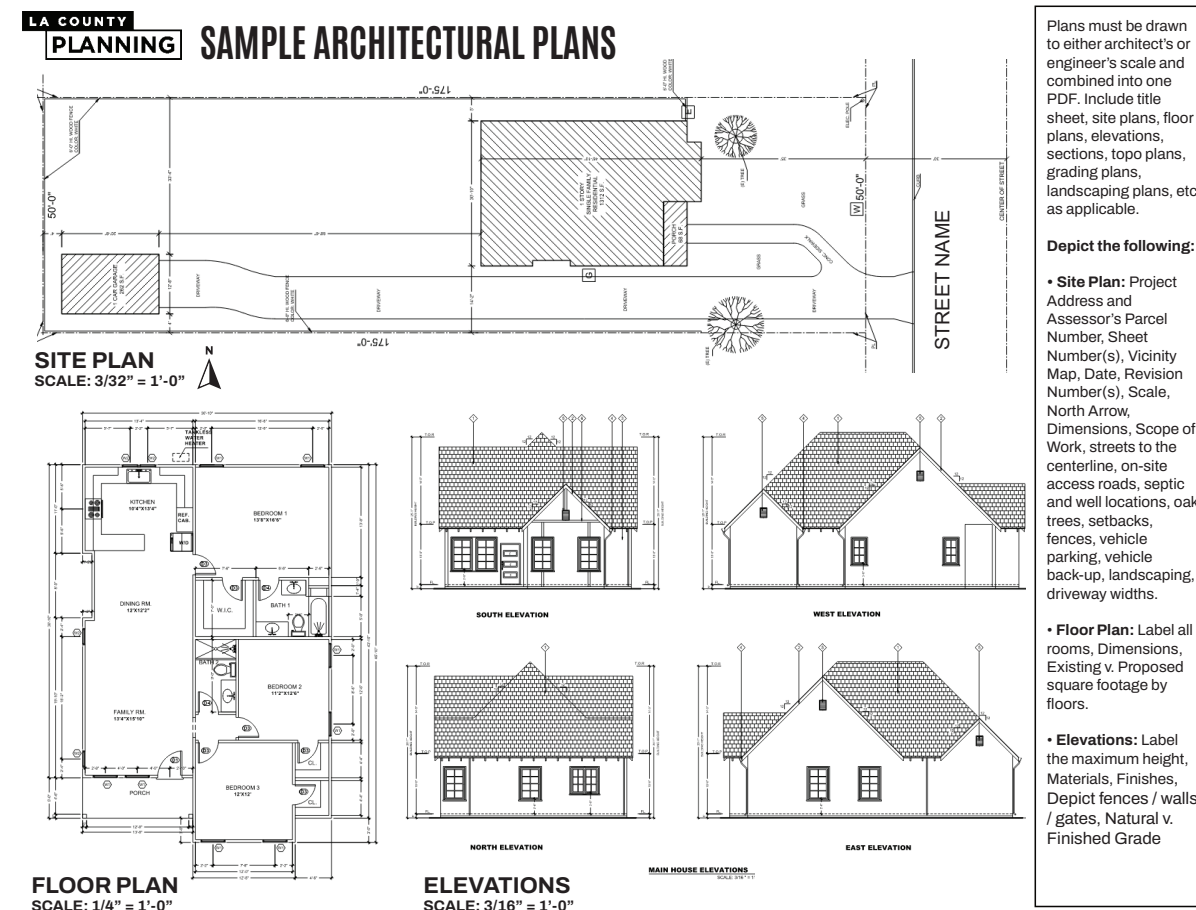
DESIGN DELIVERABLES

Schematic Design & Planning Review:

- Confirm all structures and siting
- Confirm area/footprint and height
- Confirm roadways and parking
- Confirm fences and exterior facades

Approvals:

- Submit Package to Regional Planning
- 4-6 weeks for Review & Approval



DESIGN DELIVERABLES

Design Development & Construction Documents:

- Finalize design direction
- Integrate & coordinate building systems
- Select finishes & fixtures
- Ensure code compliance
- Document for permit, bidding, and construction

Approvals:

- Submit full permit package
- 3-6 weeks for Building Department Review & Approval



BIDDING & BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Bidding:

- Construction/Permit Documents are used to obtain at least 3 bids
- Not all design professionals offer bidding & approvals support
- Architect supports the process and answers questions about the design intent
- Architect reviews bids with Owner
- Architect will revise design to align to budget if required, depending on contract

Schedule:

- 3-6 weeks
- Once onboard, construction schedule is finalized, typically between 12-24 months.

Budget alignment can happen before bidding: soliciting a rough order of magnitude estimate from a contractor based on early design drawings can help to align your design to budget.



MANAGING CHANGE

Types of Changes:

- Owner-Directed: You change your mind!
- Contractor-Driven: changes in pricing, availability, or installation.
- Approvals-Related: plan checker or inspector requires changes .
- Unforeseen Conditions: things you can't plan for.

How to Manage:

- Work with your Design Professional to understand when key decisions need to be made.
- Include a contingency in your budget to allow for these changes.
- Allow for some schedule buffer in case changes are required.

Change, especially late in design or in construction, often costs more and takes more time. The earlier you can make decisions, the better.

Alternative Pathways

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS: CONSIDERATIONS



Pre-Approved Standard Plans for Fire Rebuilds

Homeowners looking to rebuild due to the Eaton and Palisades wildfires may be able to use a pre-approved standard plan.

LA County is now accepting applications for standard plan fire rebuilds. Designs will be reviewed and pre-approved for compliance with current zoning and building code requirements. Pre-approved standard plans and streamlined permitting processes can help homeowners rebuild more efficiently, safely, and affordably. This initiative can offer a scalable model of resilience, sustainability, and support for homeowners looking to rebuild while supporting long-term resilience, insurability, and sustainability at the community level.

Benefits of Using Pre-Approved Plans



Shortened review
timeframe



Predictable review
process



Reduced design
cost

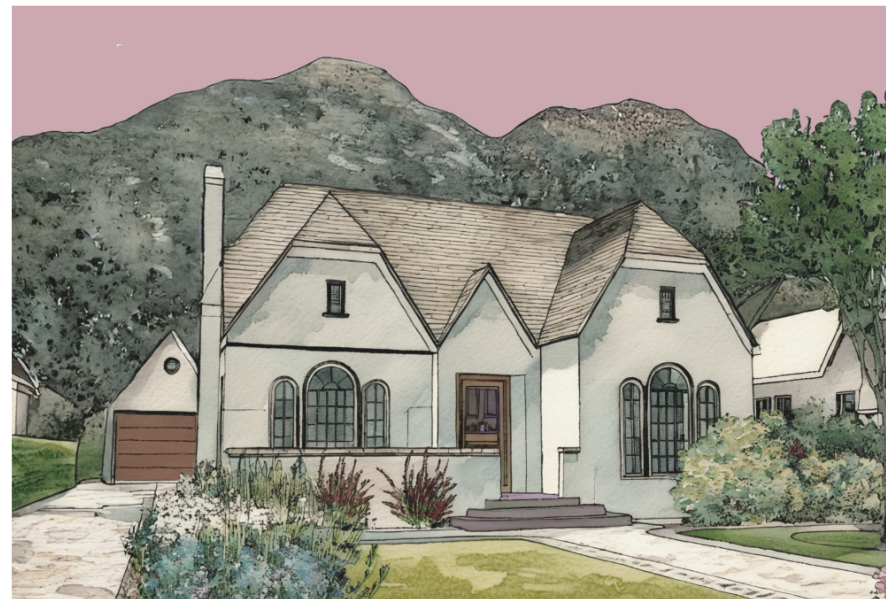
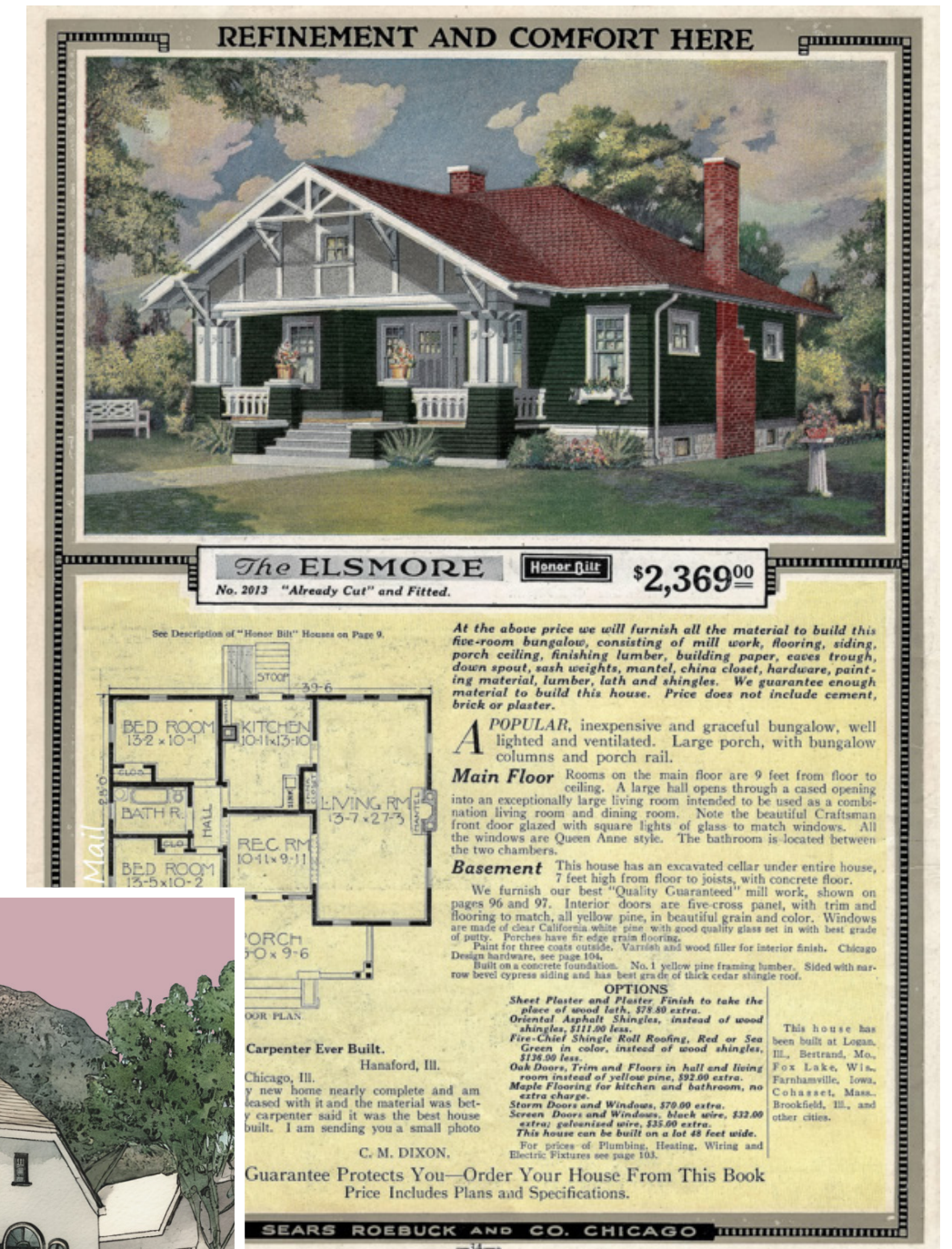
ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS: STANDARD PLANS

Standard & Pre-Approved Plans:

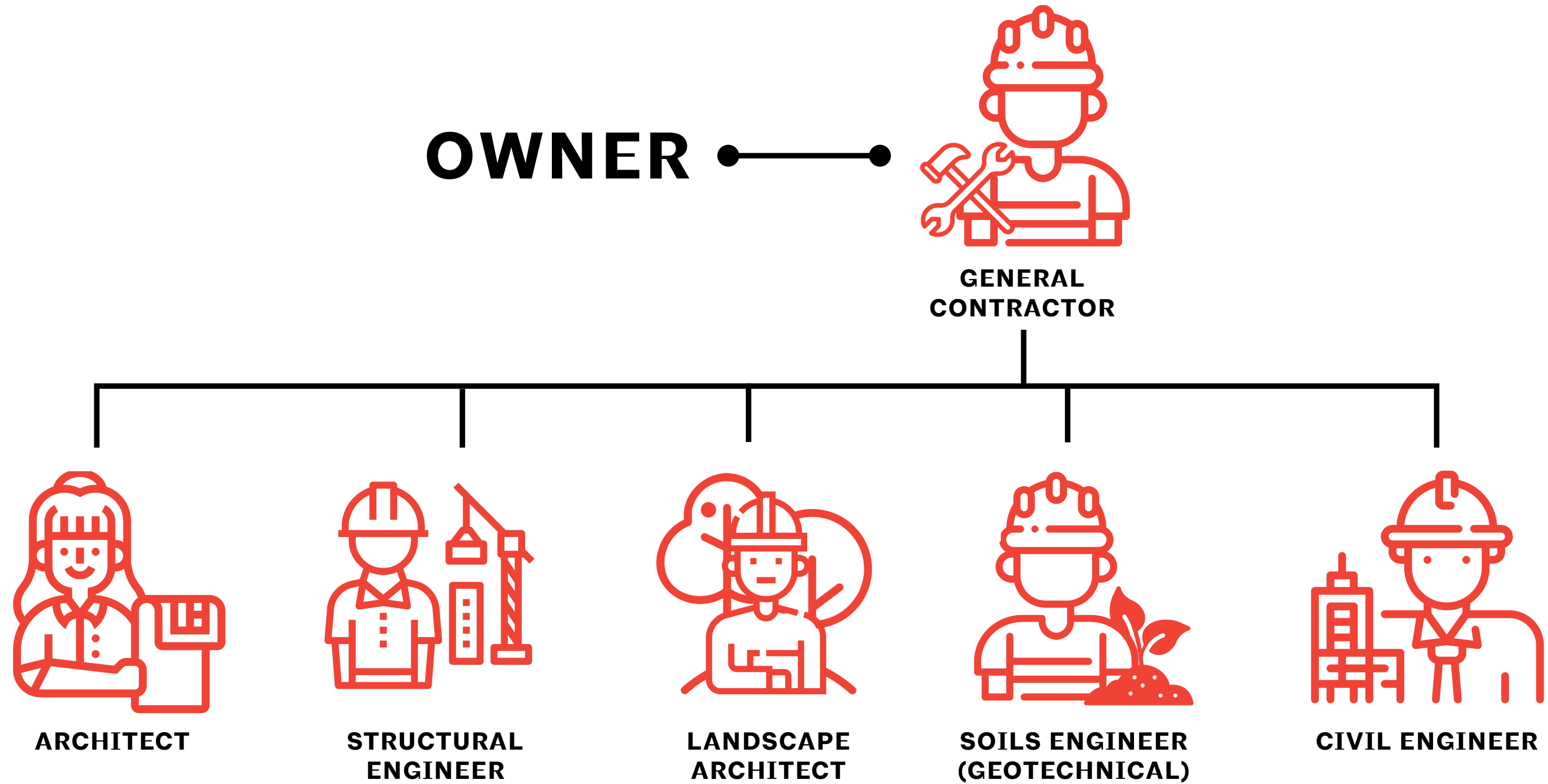
- One entity provides license/use for generic architectural plans.
- Catalog Model of the early 20th Century.
- Pre-Approval by LA County will allow for even faster approvals.

Helpful Links:

- The Foothill Catalog Foundation:
<https://www.foothillcatalog.org/>
- Altadena Collective:
<https://altadenacollective.com/>
- Sunset Mesa Collective:
<https://www.sunsetmesacollective.com/>



ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS: DESIGN-BUILD



ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS: DESIGN-BUILD

Benefits for Owners:

- Single Contract with Contractor
- One entity to pay and coordinate with
- Less up-front work to vet your team
- You can have contractor input on budget/pricing early in the process

Design-Build can help to streamline the building process, but you will ultimately have less control. If you want turnkey delivery with less involvement, this could be a great option for you!

Considerations:

- You can still work with a licensed architect within a Design-Build team
- You will have less control over who is on your team and over their performance
- Make sure you're comfortable with BOTH the Contractor and the Design Professional
- You will be responsible for managing change and resolving conflicts with the Contractor.
- There will be no other third party to oversee the Contractor's work.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS: PREFAB & MODULAR

Prefabrication:

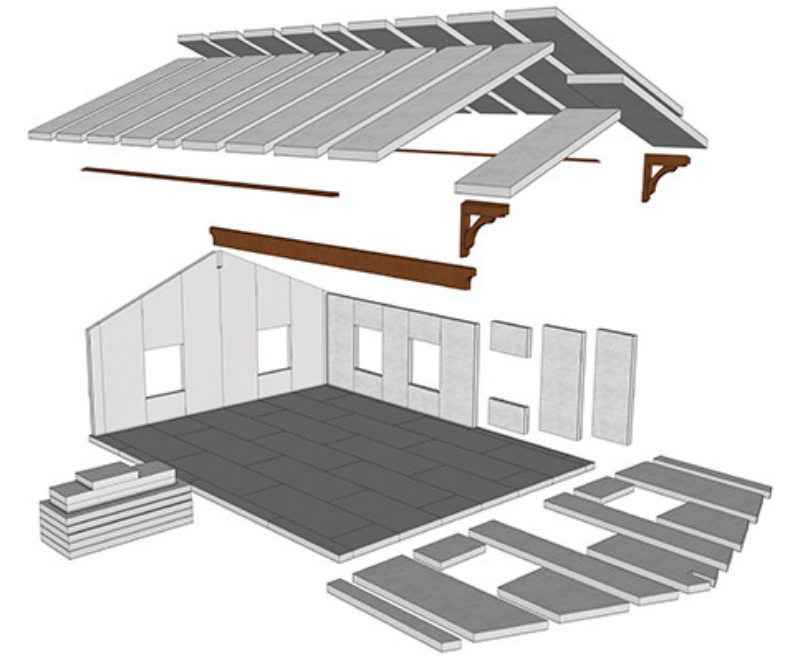
- Components are made in factory settings and delivered to site for installation.
- Facade components, structural components, casework, bathrooms.
- Example (NOT vetted by AIAPF):

<https://sweeney.com/simplus-systems>

Modular:

- Entire homes or portions of homes are made in factory settings and installed on site.
- Lots of options for ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) or tiny homes.
- Example: (NOT vetted by AIAPF):

<https://hello.samara.com>



ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS: PREFAB & MODULAR

Benefits for Owners:

- Quick delivery
- Ease of site preparation
- Contract with manufacturer
- Can enable ADU first for living
- Can consider for other structures other than primary residence

Make sure to vet any home manufacturer that you work with, as some are still new and untested. If customization isn't a high priority, this could be a great option for you!

Considerations:

- You may be required to pay a large deposit up front for these options.
- You will have much fewer opportunities for customization.
- There are a lot of new companies—make sure they have completed projects, and ask for references.
- Foundations and key structural/utility work will still likely need to be completed to install these.
- Delays can still occur based on production—confirm delivery.
- You still have to permit, and rebuilding restrictions still apply.

Where to Start: Resources & Next Steps

WHERE TO START: RESOURCES

Getting Advice & Guidance:

- AIA Ask an Architect Program
- AIAPF Wildfire Resources:
<https://www.aiapf.org/FOR-HOMEOWNERS>

Additional Resources:

- California Architects Board Consumer Guide: https://www.cab.ca.gov/docs/publications/consumers_guide.pdf

***AIA Ask an
Architect Signup:***



UPCOMING EVENTS

Preapproved Plans: A Headstart for Homeowners

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

Saturday, May 3, 2025
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Via Zoom



Register Today!



lacounty.pw/rebuilding-homeowners-workshop

Join representatives from LA County, the Foothill Catalog and Sunset Mesa Collective for a community workshop on innovative rebuilding solutions for wildfire-impacted neighborhoods.

Learn how LA County's preapproved plans and streamlined permitting processes can help homeowners rebuild more efficiently, safely and affordably—while preserving the historic character of our neighborhoods and meeting modern codes.

For reasonable ADA and Title VI accommodations, interpreting services, and materials in other languages, please contact Public Works at (626) 940-7998. This service is free.



FEEDBACK: SURVEY

Please let us know your thoughts!

- https://dpwlacounty.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0I2IHqh2bgYmdqC

