



Helping Your Client Understand an Architect's Role

By the California Architects Board



Increasingly, real estate agents are assisting clients with construction projects and other services that can help when either buying or selling property. Because such construction may involve working with an architect, it's important that real estate agents understand the legal parameters and scope of an architect's license.

California law defines the practice of architecture as the planning of sites and the design, in the whole or in part, of buildings or groups of buildings and structures. This can include projects such as adding a second story to a house or increasing a house's footprint. Anyone who uses the title "architect" (or any term confusingly similar), or advertises to provide architectural services in California, must be licensed by the California Architects Board (CAB). A license can be easily checked on the [CAB website](#).

When considering hiring an architect, please be aware that some structures do not require the services of a licensed architect. Non-architects can design single-family dwellings of woodframe construction not more than two stories and basement in height. CAB has a helpful [Design Limitations Chart](#) of various project types and the relevant design limitations for architects, civil engineers, and structural engineers. The charts also includes information about the types of buildings that unlicensed individuals can design, unless the local building department deems that doing so would involve an undue risk to health, safety, and welfare.

CAB has publications and videos with tips about hiring an architect that may be helpful for you and your clients.

- [Consumers Guide to Hiring an Architect](#)
- [10 Tips for Hiring an Architect \(English\)](#)
- [10 Tips for Hiring an Architect \(Spanish\)](#)

Additionally, CAB has a [video](#) that provides important information for those interested in building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on their property.

If you have any questions related to architects and their scope of practice, please contact CAB at 916-574-7220 or cab@dca.ca.gov. ■

LIVING IN A COMMON INTEREST DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

What should a property owner do if he or she decided to sell the home?

The property owner may wish to contact a real estate professional, the board of directors, the professional management company (if the CID has one), and/or an escrow company for assistance with the many details involved with selling a home. There are a number of documents that an individual owner is legally required to provide to a prospective purchaser of a unit in a CID.

The property owner will want to make sure that the buyer is aware of the rules and regulations of the association as well as the assessment obligation so there is not a problem or misunderstanding that could jeopardize the sale of the home. Until the sales transaction is completed and title

is transferred, the owner of record is responsible for all assessments and fines unless otherwise stated in the sales and purchase agreement. This includes new assessments approved during the sale and purchase that become due while the sale is pending.

Conclusion

A successful and viable CID is generally one in which homeowners assume an active role, not only by attending association meetings, voting and paying dues on time, but also by running for elected offices, serving on committees and participating in group activities. While governing documents help establish a foundation, involved owners build the CID and make it a community. ■