

Selecting Your Golf Course Architect

Questions & Answers



A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS



Golf course architecture embodies numerous moving parts. From the essential first step of selecting a site to the on-site consultation while the finished course is being grown-in, your golf course architect functions much like a symphony conductor — blending various disciplines to create a work of beauty, playability and strategic interest.

The design of golf courses is so highly specialized that there are just over 170 members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA). These men and women are headquartered throughout the United States and Canada, serving clients and projects worldwide.

WHEN SHOULD YOU HIRE A GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT?

Selecting your golf course architect is likely the most important step in the overall project. And, in order to derive the maximum value from their services, the golf course architect should be consulted in the initial stages of the project. His or her advice on site selection, cost estimating, and overall coordination may save time and money later on.

Members of ASGCA are prepared to consult with owners and developers on a wide variety of projects. Minor remodeling, for example, is an essential part of golf course architecture, as is the small practice facility or alternative facility design.

As a key player in the game of golf, the ASGCA member is dedicated to serving every type of golf facility need. Contact ASGCA at 262-786-5960 or info@asgca.org for a list of members in your area.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HIRING A PROFESSIONAL GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT?

The process of designing and constructing a new golf course or remodeling an existing layout is complex. Market analysis, site selection, cost estimation, permitting, master planning, detailed design, construction and grow-in must all be understood and coordinated.

Your golf course architect has specialized experience and skills that encompass the many challenges of taking golf course projects from concept to reality. A professional golf course architect's capabilities include:

- A thorough knowledge of the game of golf, its history, players and design strategy
- Expertise with financing and permitting
- Familiarity with heavy construction, agronomy, hydraulic engineering, soil science, geology and civil engineering
- An understanding of landscape architecture to help create a golf course plan that highlights and preserves the natural environment
- Training and experience in the creation of both a master plan and the routing plan
- Specifications covering all of the phases needed to build a golf course

With this skill set comes a unique perspective. A golf course architect, retained early in the development process, will help guide the process in an efficient manner from start to finish.



“Every golf course should maintain a relationship with an ASGCA member. A golf course is a living and breathing entity...its design needs constant input from a professional.”

— JIM ROBISON, GCSAA

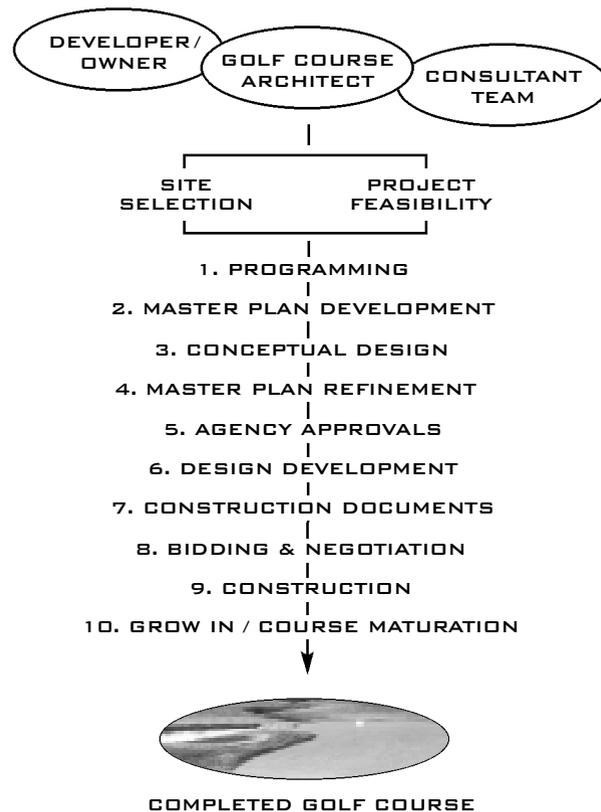
IN WHICH AREAS WILL THE GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT HELP PROVIDE GUIDANCE?

Only through a thorough knowledge of the game of golf can the golf course architect develop a true understanding of strategy, shot value, limitations of players and equipment, and realistic design possibilities. Today's golf course architect also has the training and experience to coordinate work in many other areas, such as:

- *Site Selection & Feasibility* – An ASGCA member has the experience and knowledge necessary to help owners and developers evaluate and select an appropriate site. In addition, the essential work of preparing initial cost estimates, schematic routing plans and options for development and renovation are key services that your golf course architect provides.
- *Landscape Architecture* – Golf course architects design courses that are compatible with the existing terrain and that feature, preserve and enhance the natural landscape and habitat.
- *Civil Engineering* – An understanding for surveying, new technology in mapping and planning, aerial photography and topographic data help plan and route a golf course. A finished golf course is not only comprised of beauty and strategy, but also the infrastructure beneath the ground – that which promotes good conditions and yet is never seen from the surface.
- *Hydraulic Engineering* – ASGCA members work with technical experts to design complex and efficient irrigation systems. This requires a knowledge of hydraulics, pumps, piping systems, and reservoirs. Many sites involve the creation of ponds, lagoons, and waterways which must be integrated to be strategic, playable, safe, efficient and aesthetically pleasing.
- *Agronomy* – Work experience in soils, turf culture and care is critical when specifying and preparing turf areas.
- *Heavy Construction* – The considerable earth moving often necessary to build a golf course requires an understanding of heavy equipment, including its capabilities, limitations and costs.
- *Plans & Specifications* – Detailed plans and specifications covering all phases of construction must be prepared and coordinated.
- *Cost Estimating* – The preparation of plans and specifications makes it possible to present realistic budgets to ensure that adequate financing can be arranged – and that project objectives are achieved throughout the construction process.

IS THERE A STANDARD DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT PROCESS?

Although each golf course project is unique, your golf course architect typically employs the following common steps throughout the design development process, helping to ensure the course will be enjoyed for many years.



WHAT OTHER SERVICES DO GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS PROVIDE?

- Assistance with the evaluation of potential sites and overall project and construction feasibility
- Master planning and coordination of the design team
- Development of schematic designs to explore alternate land uses and project options
- Preparation of cost estimates throughout the initial planning and detailed design process
- Agronomic consultation
- Observation of construction progress and compliance with specifications and plans
- Consulting with course superintendents, green committees, and management staff
- Renovation Planning
- Restoration Planning

WHAT DOES IT COST TO ENGAGE A PROFESSIONAL GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT?

As with any design professional, rates and contracts will vary depending upon the specific professional and the scope of the work to be performed. There simply is no standard fee.

Compensation may be computed on a per diem basis for smaller projects or as a flat fee or a percentage of the total cost of construction on larger projects.

IS IT BETTER TO INTERVIEW SEVERAL GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS, OR JUST ONE OR TWO?

Every owner and developer has different circumstances. Members of ASGCA encourage competition based on professional competence and experience and not solely on the basis of fees.

The best advice is to consider golf course architects based on their expertise, past work and references. Once a shortlist is developed, conducting interviews can be an excellent way to make a final selection.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ASGCA MEMBERSHIP?

Membership in the American Society of Golf Course Architects signifies that an architect is primarily dedicated to the profession of golf course design, has acquired sound technical training, has completed not less than eight years of practical experience in golf course architecture and designed five 18-hole golf courses, and is recognized by the other members as a competent professional. In addition, ASGCA members abide by standards of professional practice and a stringent code of ethics. These standards set forth the golf course architect's role in contract negotiations and his or her responsibilities to the client. Many public agencies and entities have recognized that the ASGCA membership constitutes the highest professional standards in golf course design.

Allied Associations of Golf

For more information about working with professionals associated with the many facets of golf course development, construction and maintenance, contact the following:

Golf Course Superintendents
Association of America (GCSAA)
www.gcsaa.org

Golf Course Builders Association
of America (GCBAAs)
www.gcbaa.org

Club Managers Association
of America (CMAA)
www.cmaa.org

National Golf Course Owners
Association (NGCOA)
www.ngcoa.org

National Golf Foundation (NGF)
www.ngf.org

Professional Golfers Association
of America (PGA of America)
www.pga.com

United States Golf Association (USGA)
www.usga.org

A Checklist for Selecting Your Golf Course Architect

- Positive references from past clients and projects
- Experience with similar projects and work scopes
- Has served as the project architect for at least five completed 18-hole golf courses
- Maintains the skills and resources necessary to monitor the project from inception through grow-in of the course
- Has in-field experience working with builders and shapers to carry out the design intent of the plans and vision
- Is a member of ASGCA (or, outside North America, another professional organization devoted to the unique profession of golf course architecture)

Free ASGCA Publications:

- Golf Course Component Life Cycle Chart
- The Golf Course Remodeling Process: Q & A
- The Golf Course Development Process: Q & A
- The Master Planning Process: Q & A
- ASGCA Membership List
- Request for Proposal for Golf Course Architectural Services



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