How Much?

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If any of you have followed the progress of public construction in the state, you know how widely total costs can expand from the original building site estimate, and how the initial and completion of a project double in cost between the time of arriving at the original list and the full realization of the architect progresses from the preliminary design to working drawings and specifications. It should be

How accurate are the owner's estimates of the building contract? You know the answer to this question is not a simple one.

The progress of the construction industry today makes the job of accurate cost estimating more difficult than ever before. Today's architect faces sizable changes in labor costs, material costs and land costs; unpredictable interest rates; and a multitude of construction variables.

In more stable times architects could arrive at accurate cost estimates by a per square foot method; they simply multiplied the area of the building by the average cost per square foot of a comparable building constructed under similar conditions.

Estimates Not Easy

Today's project is being bid on a basis of requirements into being with a realistic budget. If the client is conscientious, he will have worked out a detailed list of requirements and have submitted it to his architect.

List Requirements

The list may include central air conditioning and heating, plumbing, electrical specifications and finishes and all necessary building materials. The architect should trust this list and other requirements as the owner's reasons for wanting a new home in the first place.

But even more earnest than requirements is the owner's budget. More often than not the architect or estimator at this point will find that there is a sizable gap between the owner's estimate of the money they can afford and what he can afford. The architect must go to his client that his $30,000 budget is not realistic. That is the risk of displacing a client, the architect's primary interest, is the honest estimate of what the client can afford.

Now client and architect are faced with the sticky chore of balancing the list of necessary features and the client's pocketbook. To do this, the architect must have 30 years of experience in building materials, price quotations, and labor costs; unpredictable industry variables; and a multitude of construction variables.

Need Or Want

Economizing involves the making of choices; and to add to this process, the client must know what is essential and what is a luxury. In our competitive society, the architect is expected to be both an expert in the field of necessities and an expert in the field of desires.

It is important to impress these lists with careful thought and honesty, because that list of necessities is going to be the basis of the architect's first sketches. From these sketches, the architect will next work out tentative preliminary cost estimates. If there is any money left over, the owner may add the optional luxuries before the budget limit is reached. The architect, meanwhile, has kept a careful tally of the additions and knows when to say "enough."

Through following these procedures, the owner will now have his hands on the best possible budget program. No matter how high your budget (even if it is estimated!), this is still the best method to use.

Estimate 5 Per Cent Accurate

The estimate remains by the time the building is being bid depends on several factors and varies from job to job, but a safe degree of accuracy would be an average of 5 per cent.

To get this amount of accuracy, the architect should work with the owner at each stage of design and development. The architect will be working out more detailed and correct estimates as he

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