



# Your Step-By-Step Guide to a Well-Designed Project

What to Expect When You're Working with a Designer or Builder





## What Actually Happens When You Hire a Designer...

Thinking about building a new home, starting a renovation or working with an interior designer-but not quite sure what that looks like? You're in the right place.

This no-fluff guide walks you through what actually happens when you hire a designer (and maybe a contractor and architect, too). Whether you're building, furnishing, or just figuring out where to start, this will help you feel clear, calm, and ready to take the next step.

We created this short guide to demystify the process, explain the fees, and answer the questions you didn't even know to ask-without the jargon or overwhelm.



# Before You Start: A Few Things You Should Know

**MYTH 1: “Interior design just means picking out pretty things-I can do that myself.”**

THE TRUTH: Design is just one part of what we do. A full-service designer is part creative director, part project manager, part problem solver. We handle timelines, trades, budgets, ordering, quality control-and yes, we also make sure everything looks beautiful. You could do it yourself, but when we do it for you, it's done right the first time.

**MYTH 2: “If I’m already working with a contractor, I don’t need a designer.”**

THE TRUTH: Contractors are essential, but their job is to build-not to design, source, or style. Without a designer, critical aesthetic decisions often fall to whoever is on-site that day. We work alongside your contractor (or bring our own trusted team) to make sure nothing gets lost between your vision and the final result.

**MYTH 3: “I’ll save money by buying from my favorite furniture stores.”**

THE TRUTH: One of the most valuable parts of working with a designer is access. I've spent years building relationships with a curated group of makers & trusted partners who offer far more than what you'll find in stores. These sources allow us to customize pieces to fit your space, style and your lifestyle - with quality and pricing that often outperforms retail. This is where elevated design and smart investment come together.

**MYTH 4: “Designers are going to push me into things I don’t want or can’t afford.”**

THE TRUTH: A great designer doesn't just listen-they translate your vision into something better than you imagined. At KWI, our job isn't to push-it's to guide you toward decisions that feel aligned with your taste, your life, and your investment level. No pressure. No judgment. No surprise bills.

**MYTH 5: “This process is going to take over my life-and my house.”**

THE TRUTH: We get it: you have a life to live, and the idea of your home turning into a construction zone for months is a lot. That's why we bring structure and efficiency to every phase of the project. From pre-scheduling deliveries to coordinating trades behind the scenes, we minimize disruption and maximize flow-so you can keep living while your home is transforming.

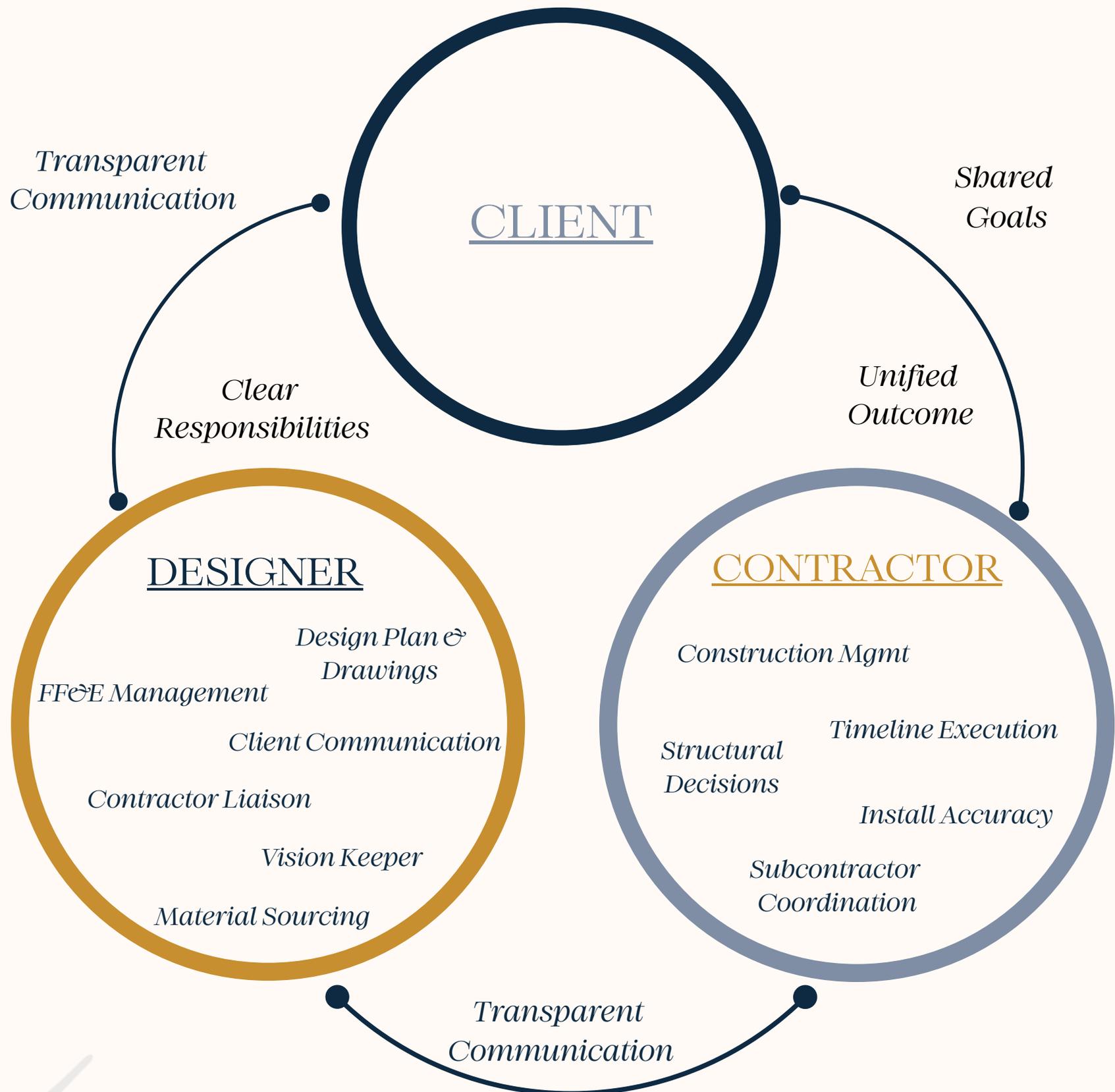
“Our best clients are thoughtful, design-loving people who want a beautiful result-but don't have time to manage the 10,000 details it takes to get there. That's where we come in.”

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# Who's Who in Your Dream Team

It takes a trusted team to turn a vision into reality-and here's how we work together to bring yours to life.



“When the right team is in place, the process feels easy-and the results are anything but ordinary.”



# A Signature Process: Simple, Structured, Supportive

This is how your project is brought to life with clarity and calm—from the first hello to the final reveal. One well-oiled machine.

## *Your Design Journey: What To Expect*

### **DESIGN DISCOVERY**

#### 01. Let's Talk

We start with a Zoom consultation to get to know your goals and timeline. From there, we'll send over a detailed proposal and agreement to officially kick things off.

#### 02. Let's Get Started

We'll meet on site with your builder or contractor to walk through the plans, take measurements, discuss investment ranges, and outline our next steps for the build and furnishings.

#### 03. Let's Envision

You'll share any inspiration or ideas you have. We'll use this to create a vision board and layout concepts so we're on the same page with your style and how your home should function.

#### 04. Design Creation— Hard Finishes

We'll make all the essential design decisions for your project—like flooring, tile, cabinetry, countertops, paint colors, plumbing fixtures, and more. You'll receive samples and a clear, organized plan to give your builder everything they need.

#### 05. Design Creation— Furnishings Plan

Next, we shift to the furnishings. We'll design every room down to the last detail—including furniture, lighting, rugs, artwork, and accessories—and present a complete design with pricing and samples to touch and feel.

#### 06. Revisions—If Needed

Want to tweak a fabric or swap a light fixture? No problem. We'll make updates based on your feedback so the design feels perfect for your family. We offer revisions after your hard finishes presentation and your furnishings plan presentation.

#### 07. Product Purchasing/ Order Mgmt

Once everything is presented and approved, we handle all the ordering of your hard finishes and your furnishings, managing shipments and tracking deliveries to our receiving warehouse, and resolving any issues that arise behind the scenes.

#### 08. Design Implementation/ Construction

We stay involved throughout your project by providing our drawings and selections package to your contractor. We attend scheduled site visits, answer any questions, and ensure everything is being designed and installed as we planned.

#### 09. Installation & Big Reveal

When your home is ready, we schedule all the furnishings to be delivered and installed. We style each space so it feels beautifully complete. Then we welcome you home to the big reveal—every detail in place and ready to enjoy.

**DESIGN CREATION**

**PURCHASING**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

# Working with Contractors: Why Having a Designer Matters

When construction is involved, your designer becomes the bridge between your vision and the trades bringing it to life.

## We Keep the Big Picture (and Small Details) Aligned

Your builder focuses on timelines and structure. We ensure that every finish, fitting, and detail aligns with the overall design plan. From tile layout to lighting placement, we make sure the design intention is carried through-nothing overlooked.

## We Speak Both “Builder” and “Client”

Designers are fluent in both technical construction language and creative vision. We bridge the gap between your goals and your contractor’s work, so no one is left interpreting instructions or making assumptions.

## We Translate Design into Actionable Plans

Contractors need precision. We provide detailed drawings, elevations, and specifications that eliminate guesswork-so the team on site knows *exactly* what to install, where, and how.

## We Make Decisions Easier (and Faster)

Construction involves constant decision-making. Instead of burdening you with every question, we field issues, anticipate roadblocks, and offer smart, efficient solutions-often before you even know there was a problem.

## We Keep You Informed—Without Overwhelming You

You’ll never be left in the dark, but you also won’t have to manage daily site issues. We act as your advocate and your filter, giving you clear updates, timely decisions, and peace of mind throughout the project.

*Even if you've already hired a builder, a designer ensures the finished result looks as good as it functions. The best results come from collaboration—and that's what we do best.*

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# Behind the Words: What Designers & Builders Are Really Saying

A few key terms you'll hear during your project-so you can communicate confidently with your Designer and Builder.

**FULL SERVICE:** A comprehensive, start-to-finish approach where your designer manages every detail—from concept to installation—for a cohesive, stress-free result.

**SCOPE OF WORK:** A clear outline of exactly what's included in your project- from demolition and construction to furnishings and styling. It keeps everyone aligned from the start.

**CHANGE ORDER:** A formal request to modify after the contract is signed- usually during construction or to change the scope of work. Can affect timeline and budget. We review and advise before you approve anything.

**PROCUREMENT:** The behind-the-scenes work of ordering, tracking, receiving, inspecting, and storing all your furnishings and materials. It's how we keep things running smoothly.

**MARKUP:** A service fee that covers time spent managing your orders, resolving issues that may arise, and overseeing quality. It ensures every detail is handled professionally and efficiently.

**PUNCH LIST:** A final checklist of small fixes or finishes to complete at the end of a project. We walk through everything to ensure the space is truly ready before we call it done. You should expect that you will have a punch list.

**FF & E (Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment):** The items that bring your interiors to life- furniture, lighting, window treatments, accessories and all of your hard surface selections. We curate and manage it all so it arrives at the same time ensuring the Builder's schedule stays in tact.

**SPECIFICATION:** A document or detail sheet that tells the contractor exactly what's being installed- from tile patterns to plumbing finishes. It eliminates guesswork.

**LEAD TIME:** The time it takes for products or materials to be manufactured and delivered. We factor this into the project timeline from day one to avoid delays.

**ELEVATION DRAWING:** A 2D drawing that shows what a wall or surface will look like from the front. It helps visualize tile layouts, cabinetry, and built-ins before anything is built.

**RENDERINGS:** Realistic digital images or drawings that show the finished design. These help clients visualize the space before construction begins and confirm furniture & fabric selections.

**RECEIVER:** A third-party location where furniture is shipped, inspected, stored and consolidated before installation day- protecting your home from piecemeal deliveries.

**CONCEPT BOARD:** A curated collage of finishes, materials, furnishings, and colors used to communicate the overall design direction.

**MILLWORK:** Custom woodwork like cabinetry, trim, crown molding, and paneling. Millwork adds depth, detail, and architectural character to a space.

*You don't need to memorize these—but having a designer who can guide you through each one (and advocate on your behalf) makes the process a lot less stressful.*

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# Understanding the Costs of Thoughtful Design

A clear, honest look at how design, furnishings, and construction are priced- so you know exactly what to expect.

Design, new construction and renovation projects include a few different types of costs. We're upfront about each one so you can make informed choices.

 **Design Fees:** Flat fee -this covers our time, planning, and creative direction. We'll discuss the best structure for your project at the start.

 **Product Costs:** The actual furnishings, lighting, materials, and accessories we source for you. You'll review and approve everything before orders are placed.

 **Procurement Fees:** Billed hourly and covers the behind-the-scenes work: ordering, tracking, resolving issues, site visits, meetings with contractors, and coordinating deliveries.

 **Construction Fees:** Billed separately by contractors and builders. We'll help you gather bids from our preferred and vetted contractors ensuring pricing aligns with the scope of work.

*You'll receive a full estimate and budget breakdown before we begin—because no one likes surprises when it comes to money.*

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## AND... We're Still Here— Even After the Big Reveal!

We follow through until the final refinements, ensuring your home is not only finished—but truly complete.

**After installation day, we walk through your space together to ensure everything is exactly as expected—and tackle any punch list items with urgency and care. We're also happy to offer support for future layers, like adding seasonal pieces, art, or future rooms.**

*“Excellence is defined by how a project is completed.”*

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www.kwilsoninteriors.com



## Let's Chat About Your Project

This guide is just the beginning. If you're ready to get clear on what your design or renovation project could look like with Kalissa Wilson Interiors, we'd love to talk.

Our Discovery Video Call is a friendly, no-pressure conversation where we'll talk through your space, your goals, and see how we can help. Whether you're ready to begin or just want to explore what's possible, this is the best first step.

[Complete Our Inquiry Form Here](#)



*We'll help you connect the dots—with clarity, ease, and no pressure.*

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