



## TEST BEFORE YOU INVEST'S FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### UNDERSTANDING ARCHITECTURAL FEES

At Test Before You Invest, we are often asked, "What do you charge for architectural services?" This is a complex question, as architectural fees depend on numerous factors, including:

- The type of project (new build vs renovation)
- Site complexity and level of project ambition
- Total project cost vs construction cost
- Professional fees, council fees, and insurances
- Level of finish and detailing (low spec, medium spec or high spec)
- Regulatory requirements (DA, CDC, Construction Certificate, etc.)

Given these variables, we cannot provide a one-size-fits-all fee. However, we can offer some general guidance.

#### Industry Standards for Architectural Fees

Architects typically charge between 10-15% of the construction cost for full services, which includes the following stages:

	Stage	Percentage of Total Fee	Percentage of Construction Cost
1)	Sketch Design (SK)	20%	2 - 3%
2)	Approval (DA or CDC)	20%	2 - 3%
3)	Construction Certificate (CC)	5%	0.5 - 0.75%
4)	Construction Documentation & Tender (CD)	30%	3 - 4.5%
5)	Contract Admin or Construction Advice (CA)	25%	2.5 - 3.75%
	Total Architectural Service	100%	10 - 15%

For example, on a **\$1 million construction budget**, an Architect's total fee may range from **\$100,000 - \$150,000**, distributed as follows:

	Stage	Typical Fee Range
1)	Sketch Design (SK)	\$20,000 - \$30,000
2)	Approval (DA or CDC)	\$20,000 - \$30,000
3)	Construction Certificate (CC)	\$5,000 - \$7,500
4)	Construction Documentation & Tender (CD)	\$30,000 - \$45,000
5)	Contract Admin or Construction Advice (CA)	\$25,000 - \$37,500



## Our Approach to Fee Structuring

We typically prefer to prepare lump sum fees based on a clearly defined scope of works. This approach provides transparency and certainty for our clients, ensuring they know their costs upfront rather than working with a percentage-based structure that may fluctuate from stage to stage. By defining a fixed fee, we help our clients manage their budgets effectively while ensuring our services are tailored to the specific needs of their project.

## Fee Calculation Breakdown

Enter your construction budget below and calculate your architectural fees based on the provided percentages. Fill in the boxes in yellow below:

	Stage	Percentage of Budget	Estimated Fee	Client's Budget
1)	Sketch Design (SK)	2 - 3%		
2)	Approval (DA or CDC)	2 - 3%		
3)	Construction Certificate (CC)	0.5 - 0.75%		
4)	Construction Documentation & Tender (CD)	3 - 4.5%		
5)	Contract Admin or Construction Advice (CA)	2.5 - 3.75%		

### How to calculate the fees:

For each stage, multiply your budget by the percentage listed in the table to estimate the fee for that particular stage.

Example Calculation:

- If your construction budget is \$1,000,000 and you are calculating the Concept Design Fee at 2%, the fee would be:  
 $\$1,000,000 \times 2\% = \$20,000$  (estimated fee for Concept Design).

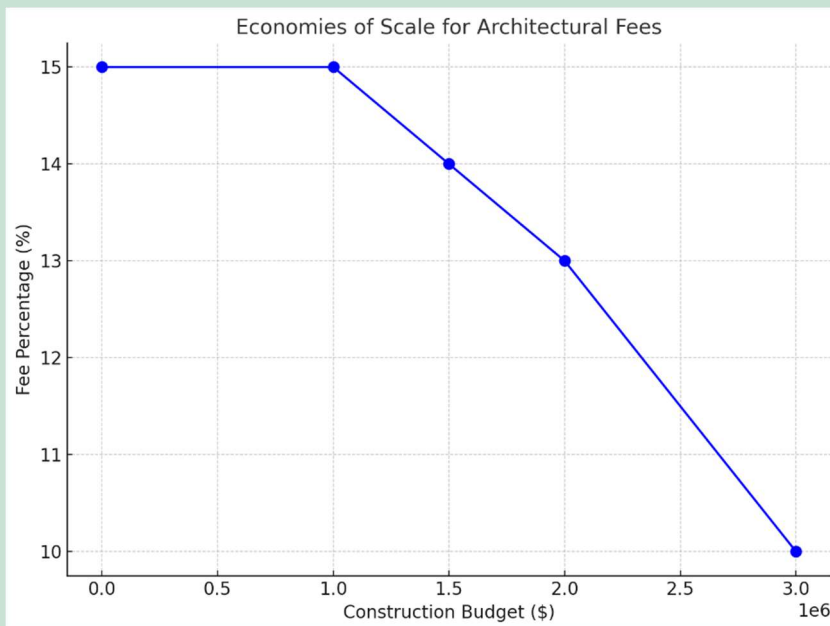
## Where We Sit in the Market

At [Studio Coco](#), our design-focused arm of **Test Before You Invest**, we offer a high-quality, end-to-end Architectural service. This level of detail helps streamline the construction process, reducing unforeseen costs and ensuring a smoother build. Our fees are competitive among medium to top-tier firms, reflecting the value of well-considered architecture and the long-term benefits it provides.

## Economies of Scale

Architectural fees are proportionally higher for smaller projects due to the fixed effort required to establish a design framework and prepare the required documentation. As project budgets increase, the percentage fee typically reduces. Below is how we typically scale our full fees, based on an estimated cost of construction:

- Up to \$1 million ~ 15%
- \$1.5 million ~ 14%
- \$2 million ~ 13%
- \$3 million ~ 10%



### Flexibility in Engagement

Clients can engage us for specific stages rather than the full service. However, the minimum stages required to progress a project are:

- 1. Concept Design:** This is where we work closely with you to understand your needs and develop an initial design that reflects your vision. It allows us to evaluate the feasibility of your project, identify any potential challenges, and provide you with realistic expectations. Without this stage, we can't ensure that the design will meet your brief, regulatory requirements, or budget.
- 2. Approval Process (DA or CDC):** Before any work can begin, we must secure the necessary approvals from the relevant authorities. This stage ensures that your project complies with local planning regulations, zoning laws, and building codes. Without the required approvals, your project cannot move forward legally, and any work done could result in costly compliance issues.
- 3. Construction Certificate (CC):** The construction certificate is a formal approval that ensures your project meets all necessary safety, structural, and legal standards before construction begins. Skipping this stage would leave your project vulnerable to compliance issues and may delay or halt construction altogether.



### **Additional Resources**

For further guidance on understanding architectural fees and evaluating proposals, we recommend reviewing our related documents:

- **Reviewing Architect Fee Proposals** – A guide to assessing the value of different proposals and what to look for.
- **Difference Between Design Professionals** – A comparison of architects, building designers, and draftspersons to help determine the right professional for your project.

### **Need Personalised Advice? We're Here to Help!**

*If you require further advice or tailored guidance for your specific situation, feel free to book a consultation with one of our experienced professionals. Our team can provide you with expert insights and practical solutions to ensure you're making the most informed decisions. **Contact us today at [www.testbeforeyouinvest.com.au](http://www.testbeforeyouinvest.com.au) to schedule a consultation.***

### **Disclaimer**

*Please note, the information provided in this document is general in nature and intended for informational purposes only. It should not be relied upon as legal, financial, or professional advice. Every situation is unique, and regulations may vary depending on the specific circumstances, council jurisdiction, and changes in legislation. We strongly recommend seeking personalised advice from qualified professionals before making any decisions or taking action. Test Before You Invest Pty Ltd and its subsidiaries accept no liability for any loss, damages, or expenses that may arise from relying on the information provided in this document.*