



STEVE MILLER

Senior Project Manager

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What Your Residential Architect Wishes You Knew: Tips From Steve Miller

Steve Miller came to Keiser Design Group with 32 years of experience in [residential architecture](#). With a background in classical architecture, Miller is a master of the trade. From porches and decks to a residence on a private island on Belize, Miller’s architectural fingerprint is wide ranging and worldwide. He fuses the masterful proportions of Robert A. M. Stern, the bold, unconventional forms of Frank Gehry, and the nature-inspired designs of Louis Sullivan, in his one-of-a-kind approach to residential architecture.

After completing his degree at the [University of Dayton Engineering and Tech School](#), Miller worked at two architectural firms in Columbus working on luxury and estate homes before he began his private practice in 2005, where he designed for many high net-worth and high-profile individuals. Despite the prestige of past projects, Miller delights in the equalizing, basic elements of a home.

“At the end of the day, everyone needs a bedroom, a bathroom, a dining room, a kitchen,” said Miller. “Whatever their home looks like, it is uniquely theirs.”

Now a senior project manager at KDG, Miller’s experience in the field reveals three crucial tips for people seeking services from a residential architecture firm.

Choose a residential architecture firm carefully

According to Miller, we spend upwards of 90% of our day in the built environment — from our homes, to our cars, to office buildings. “Of all of these spaces, there is nothing more personal and uniquely yours than where you sleep,” said Miller.

Therefore, it’s imperative that you choose a residential architecture firm wisely.

This was equally true for Miller as he transitioned from working at his own firm. He knew he had to find a company with the right “fit” — a company that aligned with his values. Miller found this to be true of KDG.

“Dan’s approach to project management and the core values that he built his practice around — they are the same core values he built his life around,” said Miller. “There is no difference between personal and professional with Dan Keiser. He’s big on developing relationships. He values integrity, and he values people and their input. The people he hired are just like him; they value the same core elements.”

Miller came to the conclusion KDG was a good match by asking Keiser a lot of questions — and those seeking residential architecture services should do the same. Be sure the firm you select values your input, aligns with your vision for the project, and is highly regarded by those who have done business there.

Be communicative with your residential architect

Residential architects love the details. Miller is no exception to this. His love for working with homeowners and caring about their specific dreams has led him to advise homeowners to be transparent about their hopes for the project.

"This is real life, and this is your home," said Miller. "The best residential architects will listen to what you like and don't like, and through thoughtful and analytical design, they will integrate all of the little details into your dream home."

And if you don't like something the architect sketches up — Miller says to be honest and clear about what you don't appreciate about it.

"We always know that our designs are ideas, and ideas are subjective. We have thick skin," he assures.

In some instances, communication is more crucial than others.

Miller recalls the residence he was hired to design on the island in Belize. With the project transpiring in Central America, Miller had to adjust to the different methods of construction and the unique building materials used. This required careful communication with the local trades people in Belize, who, for instance, poured concrete with a bucket brigade rather than the pump trucks used in the U.S.

"Adapting my drawings and notations to meet their needs and methods was vital to the project," said Miller. "Their constructive feedback allowed me to offer the drawings in a way that accommodated their needs and ultimately led to a successful final product."

Trust your residential architect

Once you have practiced steps one and two by carefully selecting a residential architect and clearly communicating your expectations, it's time to exercise trust.

This can be scary — especially those who prefer not to give up control — but it's important to remember you've hired seasoned experts to design your home. In Miller's case, he's accrued three decades of experience which inform and guide his every decision.

"There is so much more that we as architects think about and see that we don't necessarily know how to explain to the homeowner," said Miller. "But I also understand that when people decide to build a home, it is often the single-largest expenditure they have made at that point. I love helping them navigate the unknowns, and letting them know I have it covered for them."

Miller will never forget the cottage house project he worked on in Oakwood, Ohio. The cottage house was an existing home. While the owners liked the location of the lot, they were not fans of the house itself; they planned to tear it down and build a new one.

"I saw the potential the existing home had, so I asked them what they didn't like about it," said Miller. "After hearing their concerns, I convinced them to give me a couple of weeks to show them what I could come up with to fix the issues they had."

Miller proceeded to flip the architectural cottage from an American cottage to a craftsman style in his designs, and when he came back to the homeowner with his sketches — she cried tears of joy.

"It was a confidence booster for me, because not only did I pull off the design, but it also saved the family \$200,000," said Miller. "It reminded me why I like working with a family so much. It's their daily life. It's their home. Through thoughtful, analytical design, and listening to what they liked and didn't like, I was able to make the cottage into a home they were telling everybody about. Soon after I was doing projects all around the neighborhood."

When it comes to your home, it's essential to find a residential architecture firm you can trust.

[Learn more about residential architecture at KDG.](#)