



Definition of Interior Design

Abbreviated Definition of Interior Design

Interior design encompasses the analysis, planning, design, documentation, and management of interior non-structural/non-seismic construction and alteration projects in compliance with applicable building design and construction, fire, life-safety, and energy codes, standards, regulations, and guidelines for the purpose of obtaining a building permit, as allowed by law. Qualified by means of education, experience, and examination, interior designers have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect consumers and occupants through the design of code-compliant, accessible, and inclusive interior environments that address well-being, while considering the complex physical, mental, and emotional needs of people.

Full Definition of Interior Design

Interior design is a distinct profession with specialized knowledge applied to the planning and design of interior environments that promote health, safety, and welfare while supporting and enhancing the human experience. Founded upon design and human behavior theories and research, interior designers apply evidence-based methodologies to identify, analyze, and synthesize information in generating holistic, technical, creative, and contextually-appropriate design solutions.

Interior design encompasses human-centered strategies that may address cultural, demographic, and political influences on society. Interior designers provide resilient, sustainable, adaptive design and construction solutions focusing on the evolution of technology and innovation within the interior environment. Qualified by means of education, experience, and examination, interior designers have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect consumers and occupants through the design of code-compliant, accessible, and inclusive interior environments that address well-being, while considering the complex physical, mental, and emotional needs of people.

Interior designers contribute to the interior environment with knowledge and skills about space planning; interior building materials and finishes; casework, furniture, furnishings, and equipment; lighting; acoustics; wayfinding; ergonomics and anthropometrics; and human environmental behavior. Interior designers analyze, plan, design, document, and manage interior non-structural/non-seismic construction and alteration projects in compliance with applicable building design and construction, fire, life-safety, and energy codes, standards, regulations, and guidelines for the purpose of obtaining a building permit, as allowed by law.

Interior design includes a scope of services which may include any or all of the following tasks:

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- **Project Management:** Management of project budget, contracts, schedule, consultants, staffing, resources, and general business practices. Establish contractually independent relationships to coordinate with, and/or hire allied design professionals and consultants.
- **Project Goals.** Understand, document, and confirm the client's and stakeholders' goals and objectives, including design outcomes, space needs, project budget, and needs for specific or measurable outcomes.
- **Data Collection:** Collect data from client and stakeholders by engaging in programming, surveys, focus groups, charrette exercises, and benchmarking to maximize design outcomes and occupant satisfaction.
- **Existing Conditions:** Evaluate, assess, and document existing conditions of interior environments.
- **Conceptualization:** Application of creative and innovative thinking that interprets collected project data and translates a unique image or abstract idea as a design concept, the foundation of a design solution. The concept is then described using visualization and communication strategies.
- **Selections and Materiality:** Selection of interior building products, materials, and finishes; furniture, furnishings, equipment, and casework; signage; window treatments, and other non-structural/non-seismic interior elements, components, and assemblies. Selections shall be made based on client and occupant needs, project budget, maintenance and cleaning requirements, lifecycle performance, sustainable attributes, environmental impact, installation methods, and code-compliance.
- **Documentation:** Develop contract documents for the purposes of communicating design intent and obtaining a building permit, as allowed by law. Documentation by phases may include schematic, design development, and construction drawings and specifications. Drawings may consist of floor plans, partition plans, reflected ceiling plans, and finish plans; furniture, furnishings, and equipment plans; wayfinding and signage plans; code plans; coordination plans; and elevations, sections, schedules, and details illustrating the design of non-load-bearing / non-seismic interior construction and/or alterations.
- **Coordination:** Overseeing non-structural/non-seismic interior design scope in concert with the scope of allied design professionals and consultants, including, but not limited to, the work of architects, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire-protection engineers and designers, and acoustical, audio-visual, low-voltage, food service, sustainability, security, technology, and other specialty consultants. Coordination can include, but is not limited to:
 - Placement, style and finish of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire-protection devices, fixtures, and appurtenances (i.e., accessories) with the design of the interior environment.
 - Ceiling materials and heights; interior partition locations.
 - Acoustical appropriateness of spatial arrangements, construction, and finish materials.
 - Working closely with contractors to respect budgetary constraints and contribute to value engineering efforts.
- **Contract Administration:** Administration of the contract as the owner's agent, including the distribution and analysis of construction bids, construction administration, review of contractor

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payment applications, review of shop drawings and submittals, field observation, punch list reports, and project closeout.

- **Pre-Design and/or Post-Design Services:** Tasks intended to measure success of the design solution by implementing various means of data collection, which may include occupant surveys, focus groups, walkthroughs, or stakeholder meetings. Collection and reporting findings can range from casually to scientifically gathered, depending on the project's scope and goals.

Glossary of Terms

Allied design professionals or consultants: persons within related design disciplines (e.g., architects, engineers, landscape architects, and graphic designers) as well as experts from supporting disciplines (e.g., acoustics, communications, technology, security, ergonomics, branding, and food service) who may be part of a multi-disciplinary design team or hired for specific tasks.

Benchmarking: examination of possible design strategies or proposed design solutions relative to best practices and industry standards.

Code-compliant: the planning and design of an interior environment that abides by all applicable codes as they have been adopted by the local jurisdiction. Compliance often also involves meeting requirements from other state/provincial or national/federal entities as interpreted by the local code official or plan review office. This term is broadly applied as referring to meeting standards, regulations, and guidelines, in addition to codes.

Contextually-appropriate design solutions: an approach to design decision-making that involves consideration of environmental, social, cultural, economic, ecological, and political conditions that may influence and be influenced by the design solution.

Contract documents: in addition to documentation of the design scope (refer to Documentation tasks, above), contract documents define administration of bids or contracts as the agent of a client. They identify project scope, timeline, schedule, process, and key parties (i.e., owner, agent, design team, etc.).

Design and human behavior theories and research: theories and/or models that have been established through research and are used as the framework or grounding for design concepts and design decision-making. Design theories (e.g., Color Theory and Gestalt Theory), the elements and principles of design, and human behavior theories (e.g., Meaning of Place Theory, Environmental Preference Theory, and Human Ecosystem Model) are examples. Research includes both qualitative and quantitative evidence

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and data obtained and analyzed from observations, surveys, focus groups, case or precedent studies, and peer-reviewed literature either developed by the interior designer or from a secondary source.

Human experience: influence of the moment-to-moment physical and sensory elements found within the intimate details of interior space that impact an occupant's emotions, health, and overall feeling.

Human-centered strategies: design solutions that result from understanding occupants' needs and behaviors that influence their performance, satisfaction, and well-being, among other personal and social outcomes. Evidence from design and human behavior theories and research, and first-hand information gathered from the occupants and other stakeholders are considered and applied.

Non-structural/non-seismic construction and alteration: interior elements or components that are not load-bearing or do not assist in the seismic design and do not require design computations for a building's structure. It excludes the structural frame supporting a building. Common non-structural elements or components include, but are not limited to, ceiling and partition systems. These elements employ normal and typical bracing conventions and are not part of the structural integrity of the building but may support loads attached to it such as cabinetry, shelving, or grab bars. This relates to a newly constructed interior environment or to the planning and design of an existing interior environment that is to be renovated or remodeled.

Pre-design and/or post-occupancy evaluation/review: identify what is needed prior to design and/or evaluation of the outcomes of the design solution to determine if it will meet/met the client's goals and occupants' needs, etc. It could involve interviews, focus groups, or surveys among other means.

Resilient: integrate design strategies to an environment that are able to withstand and recover quickly when faced with a natural, manufactured, cyber, or physical disaster.

Sustainable: design that seeks to minimize the negative environmental impact of the interior environment through efficiency and moderation in the use of materials, energy, and reuse of space.

Visualization and communication strategies: the visual communication of concepts, ideas, and solution utilizing 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional drawings, graphic imagery, verbal, and written communication. Communication can be executed digitally or by hand and presented virtually or as hard copies.

Wayfinding: the design strategy used to influence building occupants to navigate in unfamiliar surroundings and may include signage (i.e., wall or ceiling mounted plaques or banners that include directional instructions and names/numbers that identify a space or direction), landmarks (e.g., a fountain, staircase), or use of interior elements (i.e., space, light, and color) to guide them.