



Optimizing New Construction

What value should exhibitors place on their architects? JKR Partners' **Paul Georges & Robert McCall** outline the vitally-integral part theater architects play in optimizing any new cinema construction, from start-to-finish.

With each "ground-up" new construction project, exhibitors have an opportunity to develop the optimum venue to satisfy their operational needs and to provide the desired environment. To assist the process, they will benefit by working with an architect, particularly one with extensive theater design experience. The knowledge offered by an experienced architect will assist in all phases of a new construction project.

SITE SELECTION, PROGRAMMING & DESIGN

The process begins with the site selection. Architects will evaluate a potential site by identifying its physical boundaries as well as the zoning requirements which may limit development. Working within these constraints, an appropriate location and orientation of the building is determined to achieve maximum public exposure. Preliminary parking layouts are also developed to maximize space-count and maintain safe vehicle-flow within the site, and architects coordinate these studies with the site engineer as they develop their civil drawings for the project's development.


With the site determined, architects help develop the building program to include the appropriate number and mix of auditoriums. Concurrently, other theater amenities can be investigated, such as expanded food service, premium seating and provisions for alternative activities. The goal is to develop a program tailored to exhibitors' needs with respect to market, demographics and site constraints.

With a program in place, architects begin creating the vision for the exhibitor. Plans are developed by organizing the spaces that will best serve operational needs and satisfy building code requirements. Creating the appropriate atmosphere and character of the theater is also addressed at this time. Spaces are defined, details introduced and materials selected. To facilitate the design vision, computer-modeling helps create realistic images of the design intent both for the building's exterior and its interior public spaces. This important stage enables operators to fully visualize the look and feel of their new theater.

CONSTRUCTION DOCS & ADMIN

Appropriate design and construction details will affect the new theater's long-term success, particularly when addressing the acoustics and building maintenance. Developing a complete and accurate set of construction documents alleviates the problems occurring during construction as well as after the theater becomes operational. Architects facilitate the necessary services and coordination for the building's structural, mechanical and electrical engineering.

During construction, architects provide the all-important "second pair of eyes" for the operator, ensuring design expectations are realized. The critical construction details are also observed to verify the quality of the work, thus ensuring long-term building performance.

With the depth of knowledge and services offered, experienced theater architects play a vital role in the development of a new theater project. By helping exhibitors realize their visions, their value is recognized. And, with each new successful project, exhibitors begin viewing their architects as trusted advisers, integral to all phases of the process. 



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IN THE PICTURE — Creating realistic images during the design process, using computer-modeling, helps exhibitors to fully-visualize the theater's look and feel

