ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMMING

Prelude to Design
What is architectural programming?
Architectural programming is the process of uncovering and prioritizing the underlying goals of a design problem. It is an activity related to, but distinct from, architectural design. When done well, the process will deeply engage the client and stakeholder groups to define the project from a variety of vantage points. These definitions will reflect the values and goals of the client for the project and will create the structure to best achieve the desired outcome for the building design. It is important to not only define the quantitative attributes of a project but also the qualitative aspects that reinforce the client’s vision. A quantitative attribute might include the floor area required to perform a specific task or the performance criteria to achieve sound isolation between spaces. Qualitative attributes evoke emotions or can excite the intellect, for example contemplative spaces. The conclusion of the programming process is a clear road map for the design team to follow as the project design is developed. This will include the tangible and intangible elements that define the overarching goal for the project.

Why is programming important?
A well-documented and detailed architectural program is imperative to project success. As buildings and building systems become increasingly complex, clients have become much more sophisticated and thus more interested in understanding and managing their physical resources. Managing the myriad of interests is crucial in creating consensus among user groups and communicating critical decisions and project priorities. Without the clarity presented in a complete and robust program, confusion and mistakes can arise during the design phase that are both costly and time consuming to remedy. In many cases the financial goals of the project will require compromise and creativity among the participants. When projects are carefully programmed, subsequent design phases can proceed more efficiently, saving time and money for the client. Architectural programming establishes a clear understanding of project constraints, as well as the quality of the desired solution.

What happens during the process?
In order to achieve a successful outcome, it is important to follow a rigorous process that hinges on actively listening to the client. Early on in the process, krM will facilitate a goal-setting or visioning event. These events can be for a small, core-group of stakeholders or for a very large group, depending on the desires of the client. They have been very successful at gathering many ideas in a short amount of time. Using stakeholder interviews, krM will build a deeper understanding of the organization which can inform the resulting program. Some details of the programming process are highlighted in orange at the bottom of each page.

The Five Step Process of Programming:
1. Establish Goals - What does the client want to achieve and why?
2. Collect and Analyze Facts - What do we know? What is given?
3. Uncover and Test Concepts - How does the client want to achieve the goals?
4. Determine Needs - How much money and space? What level of quality?
5. State the Problem - What are the significant conditions affecting the design of the building? What are the general directions the design should take?
Who should be involved?
Participants in the architectural programming process should include representatives from all primary stakeholder groups, as well as various user groups. The programming team should be led by two responsible group leaders, one to represent the client and the other to represent the design team. They must work together toward a successful project, though the client will make most decisions during programming. Establishing an inclusive group of participants creates the best chances to ensure that the resulting outcome will meet current, as well as future facility and organizational needs.

When is the best time to begin?
The amount of time required to complete architectural programming varies greatly depending on the complexity of the project and the level of stakeholder engagement. For example, a rural community library project staffed by three librarians might be completed in a thirty day time period while a multi-department, 250 person staffed business office could take ninety days or longer. These time frames will depend heavily on level of input from individual staff and the method of fact gathering that is established by the client leadership. The best answer to the question of when to start the process is when you have identified a question about your organization that you believe requires an architectural solution. Architectural programming can save you time, frustration and money as it helps to identify the specific project goals and constraints before the design process begins.

How can our experience help you?
Since 1978, krM Architecture has been partnering with public and private organizations, both large and small, to help them achieve their project goals. We have developed architectural programming processes that will ask the right questions at the right time to help you make the best decisions related to your facility before the design process has begun. We have a multi-generational staff that leverages the power of collaboration on each of our projects and combines the knowledge of experienced architects with the fresh ideas of a new generation. Our clients and collaborators say that we listen to their needs, we work hard to develop the best course of action, and we have integrity to stand by our word. Our team will work tirelessly to help your project achieve its potential. We are compelled to believe that each project could be our most meaningful. This is why we put every effort into doing our best work, on every project.

The Problem Statement should address the following issues:
Function - What’s going to happen to our building?
- People
- Activities
- Relationships
Form - What is there now? What will be there?
- Site
- Environment
- Quality
Economy - How much will it cost, now and over time? What is the quality?
- Initial budget
- Operating costs
- Life cycle costs
Time - What are the influences of history? How will we deal with change?
- Past
- Present
- Future
krM Architecture+ was founded in 1978 by Kenneth and Shirley Montgomery and is recognized for the design of public buildings.

Educational spaces, places of healing, adaptive and creative reuse, preservation, and places where people come together have formed the core of our work.

Our goal is to develop designs that are meaningful and expressive for our clients. This focus challenges us to listen closely to our client’s goals and work diligently on their behalf. Our collaborative and open work environment allows us to come together for investigative discussions and creative brainstorming that is rigorous and beneficial to our designs.

Our practice and project management is organized to allow the creativity of design to be managed in a predictable and enjoyable process. krM has developed an excellent reputation for schedule and budget control as well as producing thorough construction documents. We continue to integrate and participate in the quality control of the project with the skilled contractors constructing our built environments. Energy efficient architecture and sustainable design practices are at the core of everything we do. For every project, we believe that our work can contribute to our client’s success and become a better place for us all.