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Architectural photography is a collaborative process between the photographer and your vision



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Architectural design is accomplished after careful planning and thoughtful discussion have produced a space which works not only on paper but for the end user. Photography of these spaces is accomplished in much the same way. Understanding the needs of a client and their idea for the project shape the way a photographer works. Architectural photography is a collaborative process between the photographer and your vision.

Walking the site with your photographer before the day of the project can save valuable time on the day of photography. The photographer can identify the best vantage points and take reference photographs. Walkthrough images are posted to a proof gallery for discussion with the client. Clients then review the images and select the most appropriate views to showcase their project. Seeing the site before the day of photography allows us to identify challenging areas. The photographer will test lighting, check landscaping, and ensure all visible punch list items are complete. If the photographer is unable to review the project before photography, a few client snapshots go a long way to help describe the visual language of the design.

The angle of the sun is critical to capturing unique images in the right light. Changing seasons and time of day have to be taken into account for certain projects. Surrounding buildings or trees might block the light from illuminating one or more faces of the exterior façade. You might decide to photograph at dusk to avoid dappled light or harsh shadows.

Additional considerations include personnel, security, site access and releases. A model appearing in any photographs should sign a release to protect your right to use the images. Property releases are also important to obtain as building owners can change. Site access should be cleared with the building owner and the occupants notified of the photographer's arrival. Anticipating project details before they turn into a deal breaker for either party is the most important part of planning your photography project.

Depending on the project, equipment needs change. Camera and lighting systems are selected based on how the final images will be used. Are you looking to create a large tradeshow graphic or wall décor prints for the office? A larger digital file would be required for large scale reproduction or high quality printing. Are you looking to match existing photographs in style or lighting? Review personal preferences with your photographer before arriving at the location to maximize your time on site.

At Damianos Photography, once our team has gone through the planning phase of the project and scheduled a date, what should you expect on the day of photography? We work with an assistant on architectural assignments. The assistant helps clean, style and prop the location so the photographer can remain behind the camera to make adjustments. Working with an assistant allows us to accomplish more in a shorter amount of time, saving our client money.

We are often asked "How long will the photography take?" Making the image is quick; the crafting of an environment takes time. Once an angle is selected, the site is checked for trash cans, loose wires, chairs out of place, extra furniture, etc. We add items and take away others as needed to find a balance between visual clutter and an empty room. Depending on the space we may add elements such as lab coats, plush chairs or plants to introduce visual interest and the human touch into the scene. Save time on location by scheduling a cleaning and landscape crew to prepare the views you will be photographing. We always bring a cleaning kit to shine stainless steel, glass and reflective surfaces, which show finger prints and dirt easily.

Identify your needs for your next photography project, and the details for planning will emerge. For more information download, "Commissioning Architectural Photography" a joint venture between the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and The American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP). The booklet is available from either the AIA.org or ASMP.org website. The booklet covers topics ranging from selecting a photographer to estimating and controlling the cost of your photography project to licensing photographs and a project checklist.

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