How a commission works.

I take on a limited number of projects a year. I design each one myself, from the first sketch to the last site visit, for a fixed fee per phase. Never a percentage: my fee doesn't go up when your house does.

How a commission starts

Every commission starts with Groundwork. I don't quote a building I haven't studied.

01 **Tell me about the project.**
What you're building, where, and where you are now.

02 **I answer within one business day,**
with whether it's work I should do and whether I have room for it this year.

03 **Groundwork, from $5,000, two weeks.**
I study the site, the program and the approvals, and price every design phase. It includes the feasibility study for the lot, and is priced by the site and the size of the house: from **$5,000** for a simple site under **4,000** sf, to from **$15,000** for a complex site over **8,000** sf. The Groundwork fee is never credited against a design fee.

04 **The commission,**
priced from Groundwork and signed as its own agreement.

Consultants

Engineers. Structural and MEP engineers are my choice, and I bring them. Landscape and lighting design are regulated by the Town of Jackson and Teton County; on most projects here you'll need them.

Who holds the contract. You can hold an engineer's contract yourself, or I hold it and pay them for you. That carries a **15%** fee, covering fronting the money and handling the paperwork, not the coordination itself. Coordinating every consultant is already in my fee either way.

The six phases

Each phase carries its own fixed fee, agreed before it begins.

01 **Predesign.**
Groundwork set the program and the fee. Predesign finishes the study: siting and massing options, existing conditions, and the surveyor and geotechnical engineer brought in.

02 **Schematic Design.**
The big moves: siting, massing, plan and how the house sits on the land.

03 **Design Development.**
The house resolved in detail: structure, systems, materials and interiors.

04 **Construction Documents.**
The drawings and specifications the builder prices, permits and builds from.

05 **Bidding or Negotiated Pricing.**
I help you price the work and choose or negotiate with a builder.

06 **Construction Observation.**
I'm on site through construction, answering questions and checking the work against the drawings.

What my fee covers, and what you'll need

Owners who learn this split in month four resent it. Owners who read it first don't.

IN MY FEE	REQUIRED, PRICED INDIVIDUALLY	REQUIRED DEPENDING ON SCOPE AND COMPLEXITY	YOU PROVIDE, I COORDINATE
Architectural design, all phases	Structural	Landscape architecture	Survey
The documentation set	Mechanical	Lighting design	Geotechnical
Interior architecture	Electrical	Civil engineering	Pool and water features
Coordination of every consultant	Plumbing	Low voltage and AV	Specialty code and wildfire consultants
		Acoustics	Interior design and furnishings

Interior architecture is the built interior: layouts, stairs, ceilings, fireplaces, millwork and built-ins, fixed finishes and fixtures. It is not furniture, fabrics or art.

How the fee is set, and the rules I keep

The fee follows the work, not the construction cost: the size of the building, the complexity of the site and its approvals, how custom it is, how many consultants it needs, and how long construction runs. Groundwork prices all of it before any design phase.

1. I never propose myself.
2. A Plan Review never becomes a job for me.
3. Your advisory fee is never credited against a design fee.
4. A limited number of projects a year, and I hold to it.

John C. Stennis, Architect. Licensed in Idaho, Utah, Montana and Wyoming. Every commission is done under my supervision, from the first sketch to the last site visit. Forge Advisors LLC · john@forge-wy.com · forge-wy.com