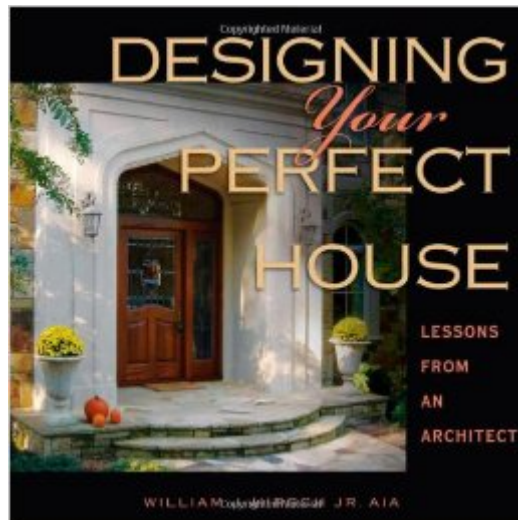


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# Designing Your Perfect House: Lessons From An Architect



## Synopsis

Designing Your Perfect House: Lessons from an Architect is the ideal guidebook for navigating the often mystifying process of house design and building. It's full of sage advice from a master architect about how to design the perfect house for you. Presented in twelve understandable lessons, this book moves from wonderful concepts to a finished dream home. Beginning with an exploration of the philosophy of design, the grammar of architecture, the creation of space, and discussions of how to make spaces be appropriate and gratifying for the people living in them, the lessons explore issues of scale, daylight, how to make a house feel like a home, unifying a design, flow, and proportions. This book answers questions like: How do I get started? How do I select a building site? What kind of house can I afford with my budget? How do I make my dream house just right for me? Other topics include: site analysis and selection, programming, schematic design, style, room relationships, budget, working with professionals, methods of contracting, and more. Numerous color photos and drawings illustrate the book's major points

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Read this book in one sitting. Mr. Hirsch makes many excellent points about house design, especially the feel and flow of a house, symmetry and asymmetry, capturing light, repeating certain motifs, etc. etc. If this is the only book you read prior to designing or remodelling a house, you will be ahead of the game. However, I do think many of the same points are made more effectively, with more extensive illustrations, and in a better organized fashion in two other books: Patterns of Home

(Jacobson et al.) and Home by Design (Sarah Susanka). To supplement learning about design principles, a great book to walk you through through nitty gritty details of functionality so that you avoid annoying mistakes like poor placement of light switches, inconvenient door locations, awkward placement of appliances and so forth, try Better House, Better Living, by Myron Ferguson.

The value of this book is found in its practicality, its convenience and its charm. "Designing Your Perfect House" is a really helpful tool for a current or soon-to-be homeowner who wants to build. When deciding on a book to read, I always want to read reviews that tell me some specifics about the book so I know if it relates. I hope to give you just that. I'm actually a custom homebuilding consultant. I advise people on picking their contractors, architects, designers, materials and more. It really bothers me when people don't do their homework before deciding to design a home or have one designed for them. After reading this book I feel confident in telling you to start right here! The author takes you through your emotional, thought, and preparation processes that are so necessary when designing your home. He pretty much just covers everything you need to know and it really jibes with my belief that preparation is paramount. He explains how important it is to pick a good architect (as well as HOW to do it) and that everything flows from good design, and that so many mistakes and heartaches can be avoided by taking the time at the early stages. William J. Hirsch knows his stuff. 30 years of experience allows him to lead you through the steps you need, to make the right decisions and design a home that is perfect for you. From style, to size, to interior spaces, to orientation on the lot, to home value, to priorities, to weather, and so many other important factors, the author has an answer and presents it in a down to earth, easy to understand fashion. If I were you, wouldn't hesitate to invest money in this book. It's worth every cent and I'm very glad I did. It is very well laid out, full of beautiful pictures, and even helps you choose a good builder. Even if ... well, especially if you're not quite ready to build, buy it now! You'll learn a lot and just as importantly, you'll really enjoy reading it more than once!

Sometimes the hardest part of any project is deciding where to start first. "Designing Your Perfect House" not only shows you how to find the beginning, but also gives you an advance preview of what the ending will look like. We have been building high-end custom homes for over thirty years and this is the first time we have seen the designing process so thoroughly explained and easily understood for prospective homeowners (as well as builders). Bill Hirsch's liberal use of illustrations, check lists and photographs aid in refining the reader's ideas and organizing the design process. But the author is careful not to over-simplify a complex task. He cautions the reader to take the time

to think things out, warning about: proper site planning, sizing spaces to create the best "people" effect and checking out prospective builders. But lest you think this is a dull "text" book, "Designing Your Perfect Home" includes plenty of good humor and outright fun. It starts with an optical illusion: A Rorschach test of a man playing a saxophone vs. a woman's face, to illustrate how we can achieve the "Aha" effect. Later we meet; "Just Say No to Avocado", "Why Did They Ever Call it a Living Room?" and my all time favorite; "Windows Are the Eyes and a Door is the Mouth of the building". When I got to the end of this very readable book I kept hoping that this would be the beginning of a series: "Designing your Perfect Home Remodeling Project....?"

As other reviewers have noted, this is a great book to help someone walk through designing their own home. I found myself in a position where I had to come up with potential floor plans for an awkwardly-shaped lot, and this book was the best resource I found. However, this book could also be titled "How to come up with and/or appreciate good floor plans." Hirsch presents a pretty simple process, but I hadn't seen it described anywhere this clearly, and it helps you evaluate any floor plan or design you encounter, not just new ones! He presents a good framework for how to come up with usable spaces, and make the most of your design/building dollars. And another note: this is also a good Kindle title. That is, the book reads well on a Kindle, even with some of the larger photos and floor plans.

I LOVED this book! It is smart, accessible, and just plain lovely. I am in the process of designing my dream home and was about to make a lot of decisions I would have regretted if I did not read this book before finalizing my floor plans. I am on a limited budget and was letting finances make a lot of my design decisions, such as cutting hallways to save on square footage and not considering how things flow together. I was just trying to get the most in the smallest space so I could spend money on some luxury items I want. I am somebody who can appreciate when a house "feels right," but really didn't understand why. After reading Designing Your Perfect House, I feel better able to understand what will contribute to making my dream house "feel right." Finances will still be a part of my decision making process, but so will the feel of the house. And I now know where a little money might go a long way - like in soundproofing and using another shade of wood in doorways to mark transitions in a classy way! Those luxury items I'm going to have would have made little difference if my house felt wrong. I feel like I now have the information I need to help me prioritize my decision making and create the home I imagine. In addition, when I finished reading this book, I was so excited and felt like I knew the author and liked him. I felt so comfortable, in fact, that I emailed him

with a question I had about where to put my laundry room. I've never emailed an author in my life. To my amazement and delight, he emailed me back that same day and answered my question. This book is the best investment I've made in my dream home so far!!!

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