

I Always Knew I Wanted to be an Architect

What is the name of the company you work for?

Michael Grab Architect

What does this company do?

We are a full-service architectural firm, providing designs and permitting for commercial, educational, institutional, and residential buildings.

What is the size of this company?

We are a small firm with Michael Grab as the owner/architect, and two supporting architectural designers, including myself (Kelly Richter) and Danielle Rhodes.

How long have you been with this company?

I started working for Mike as a summer intern while I was attending Miami University in Architecture School, and worked for him for 3 summers and one full year before graduate school. I have been with Mike as a full-time employee for 2-1/2 years after moving back to Erie.

What is your job title?

My title is Architectural Designer.

What is the nature of your position at your organization?

Since our firm is so small, we work and manage many different projects through all stages of design. I have been focusing on residential design, helping home-owners design and build their home.

Describe your day-to-day job/work related tasks and activities.

My day-to-day tasks include anything from writing proposals for new projects, client meetings to review designs, site meetings to go over projects under construction or tour new projects for renovation and or additions,

designing new homes or additions in a 3D modeling software called Revit, and completing construction documents for the owners to obtain a building permit to begin building their project.

What are the best things about your career?

The best part of my career is two-fold: I am fortunate to have a career that is extremely creative, while simultaneously helping my clients build their dream home.

What are the challenges faced in your career?

Time management – Architecture is an interesting profession that balances passion with service. Architects are perfectionists by nature, and often find ourselves working more than we get paid for. So, I often find myself in a constant struggle between getting work done economically and quickly, while still providing a good design that I am proud of for my clients.

What is your educational background?

Villa Maria Highschool, Miami University (Bachelor of Architecture), University of Washington (Master of Architecture)

Is this the career you chose initially, or have there been changes in your career choices?

I somehow knew that I wanted to go into architecture at a very young age. I was always interested in art and drawing, and found myself drawing old homes around Erie. I was lucky enough to travel at a young age, which made me choose to go into architecture around middle-school.

What led to those changes?

I have had doubts through the years (mainly due to the amount of schooling and exams that you have to complete) but have never changed my course.

What has led you to your current career?

There are many different paths in architecture, but I always found myself enjoying smaller projects that allowed me to work one-on-one with clients and design the whole projects (rather than a floor on a skyscraper). Residential design leads itself to a lot of client interaction and creativity, which I find the most rewarding.

What qualities are important for you to hold the position you have?

The quality of your designs, ability to work with clients, contractors, city officials, etc., and accountability.

How do you prepare for an interview for this position?

Interviews typically include a resume of your experience, as well as a portfolio highlighting your school-work or past projects that show your ability in design.

What would people be surprised to know about your career?

Architecture doesn't involve as much math as people think!



Kelly M. Richter

MICHAEL GRAB ARCHITECT

Architecture is a technical profession, so being able to perform simple math is essential – but, you do not have to be a math genius to go into our field. We rely heavily on engineers to size and calculate all of the structure, while we use rule-of-thumb dimensions to design our projects.



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