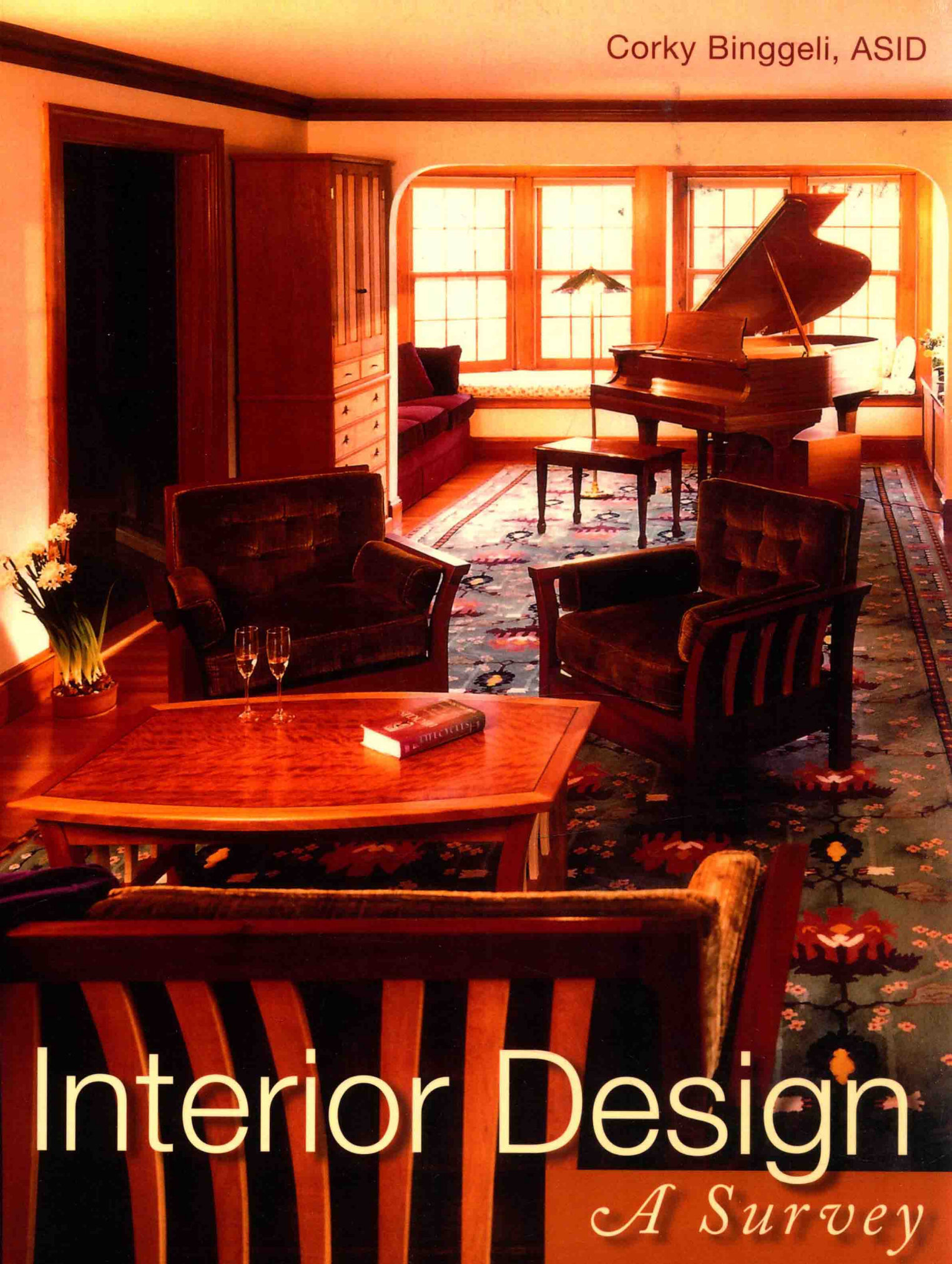
Corky Binggeli, ASID



Interior Design

A Survey

Interior Design: A Survey

Corky Binggeli, ASID

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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Dedication

To my husband Keith Kirkpatrick, whose support made it possible for me to take the time to write this book, and whose patient understanding and sense of humor helped me keep going.

PREFACE

Interior Design: A Survey is a comprehensive review of the practice and profession of interior design. This book is intended as an overview for individuals who are considering a career in interior design. Perhaps even more importantly, *Interior Design: A Survey* is a response to the need my academic colleagues and I have repeatedly observed for a preparatory text and resource for interior design students.

The profession of interior design has grown from the province of elite residential decorators to an established career with high professional standards, educational accreditation, a nationally administered professional exam, and recognition and regulation by many states and provinces in the United States and Canada. The curriculum in an accredited interior design program is wide reaching and demanding. Many new students have little background in the field, and struggle to understand the new vocabulary, communication and presentation techniques, and body of knowledge required.

For example, *Interior Design: A Survey* introduces students to acoustics. Although I know that they will study acoustic design in more depth later in their educations, they need a rudimentary grasp of basic principles and vocabulary early on to progress with their study of materials such as ceiling tiles, and to explore form and materials in their design studio.

This sort of quandary about what to teach when would ideally be addressed in an introductory course. Some schools do offer such a course, and for them, *Interior Design: A Survey* is an ideal text. However, many design programs struggle to cover the required subject matter within the duration of their program and are unable to devote an entire course to a preliminary review. This book attempts to give students a single source for that information.

Interior Design: A Survey presents basic information written in clear language and with a wealth of illustrations. Sometimes a subject comes up in a first- or second-year class that will not be dealt with in-depth until later in the curriculum; the student now has a resource with which to fill in the missing information. When a student is groping for information for a studio project, *Interior Design: A Survey* serves as a quick reference to refresh and reinforce recently learned material.

In writing *Interior Design: A Survey*, I have been attentive to the needs of the teacher as well as those of the student. The instructor is able to teach the subject at hand with the confidence that students are armed with a comprehensive—and comprehensible—reference that spans the entire curriculum. Knowing that students have a common resource, the instructor can direct students to *Interior Design: A Survey* to follow up on emerging skills. Sidebars provide additional examples as a guide to the selection of topics for further study and student projects. Illustrations have been selected to provide the instructor with ready examples of both historic and recent interior design for reference during lectures and in assignments.

Of course, no one book can cover every aspect of the topic in depth. *Interior Design: A Survey* addresses this by listing additional sources for study. New vocabulary is defined where introduced in the text and found again in the glossary. Each chapter is written to stand on its own, yet the chapters are tied together in a manner that builds on the students' growing knowledge.

I have had a great time researching and writing this book. *Interior Design: A Survey* has given me an opportunity to reach a goal from my own early education. When I was in high school, I remember the excitement of trying to discover all there was to learn in the world, and my eagerness to explore vast, unknown territories. This broad topic has brought back that excitement, and I am eager to share it with the current generation of students of interior design as well as with their teachers.

Corky Binggeli, ASID
Arlington, Massachusetts, 2006

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Interior Design: A Survey takes on the task of reviewing all the diverse aspects of this continually developing field. The subject is vast, and I am deeply indebted to the many people who have shared their specialized expertise with me.

A number of professional colleagues reviewed the manuscript before submission and offered extremely helpful comments on content and clarity. Their professional perspectives and teaching experience provided valuable insights, and their enthusiasm and encouragement kept me going on what seemed an endless task.

I would also like to thank the staff at John Wiley & Sons, whose professionalism, enthusiasm, and good advice guided my efforts. I would never have started on the road to writing this text without the encouragement of my editor at Wiley, Paul Drougas. Assistant Developmental Editor Lauren LaFrance worked closely with me to guide the text and illustrations through the complexities of the publishing world.

The thousand illustrations in *Interior Design: A Survey* are enriched by images from the business and personal collections of many friends, including Rachel Pike, ASID; John Gambell, ASID; Felice Silverman, IIDA; Christina Oliver, ASID; Susan Brisk, ASID, CKD; Shelby Hicks, ASID, Kathleen Powers IFDA, ASID Industry Partner; Patti D'Angelo, Allied Member ASID; and Cathy Kert, Allied Member ASID. This work also contains images of student work, including many from the collection of the Wentworth Institute of Technology, whose faculty and staff provided support and encouragement as well.

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PART I

THE PRACTICE OF INTERIOR DESIGN

INTERIOR DESIGN AS A CAREER 1

Interior designers use their knowledge and skills to design aesthetically appealing interior spaces that function well. They study the way people relate to interior environments and examine how architectural interiors have been designed in other times and places, as well as how they are constructed today. Interior designers practice the principles of design and continually educate themselves about interior materials and furnishings in order to design environments that solve problems and delight their occupants.

The practice of interior design demands a high level of interpersonal skills. Interior designers strive to be good listeners, so as to better comprehend the spoken and unspoken needs of their clients. As good observers, they seek to understand how existing spaces work and how they might be improved. They interpret contemporary material culture and sensory environments while working to understand and respect other cultures.

Interior designers visualize spaces that do not yet exist and shepherd them into three dimensions. They find creative solutions to problems in interior environments. To communicate their design intent and to support their clients in finding design solutions, they use spoken and written language and create visual images.

Interior designers employ good business practices to keep projects on track, on time, and within budget. They protect the health and safety of the public by knowing and applying codes and standards. By understanding how buildings use energy and materials, they promote the wise use of resources.

The best interior designers are resilient, enthusiastic, and truly interested in the people, places, and things they work with. They love creating interior spaces that enrich the lives of others. Interior designers are passionate about color, texture, form, and detail. They are excited by their clients' personalities and sincerely interested in meeting their needs. They maintain high ethical and professional standards and develop relationships built on trust and respect. The creative process gives them energy, whether they are working alone or as part of a team.

Of course, there is more to the story than excitement and creativity. The interior designer's knowledge is based on serious study and a life of observation. Knowing how to get the job done professionally, even when every client or coworker is not easy to get along with, is a difficult skill to develop. Interior designers are entrusted with making decisions about how others spend their money, and the consequences of poor judgment can be serious. Some of the spaces they are asked to design may be less than thrilling, and routine tasks can become boring. Some days may feel endless and the demands insurmountable. Financial rewards for some are offset by career setbacks for others. Despite all this, the number of people considering interior design as a first or second career continues to grow.

INTERIOR SPACES

Interior designers are part of a team of design and construction professionals.

These professions share the design heritage of the past, with interior designers specializing in buildings' interior forms, treatments, and furnishings. Both interior designers and architects define a problem and find its solution by employing design elements and principles; but because of their education and experience, interior designers may explore interior color with more expertise than some architects. Like architects, they respond to the functional requirements of a building program. Interior designers often have exceptional visual communication skills for conveying design ideas to architects and clients. Interior designers are trained to protect the health and safety of the people who occupy a building, and to develop design concepts that respond creatively both to the architectural context and the users' needs.

Architects are trained to use form and space as means to solve problems of function,

Figure 1-1 *Boston Architectural College lobby. Photo by L. Barry Hetherington. The renovation of Boston Architectural College respects the stark modernist concrete architecture while adding color and warmth and improving function and accessibility. Design by Silverman Trykowski Associates.*

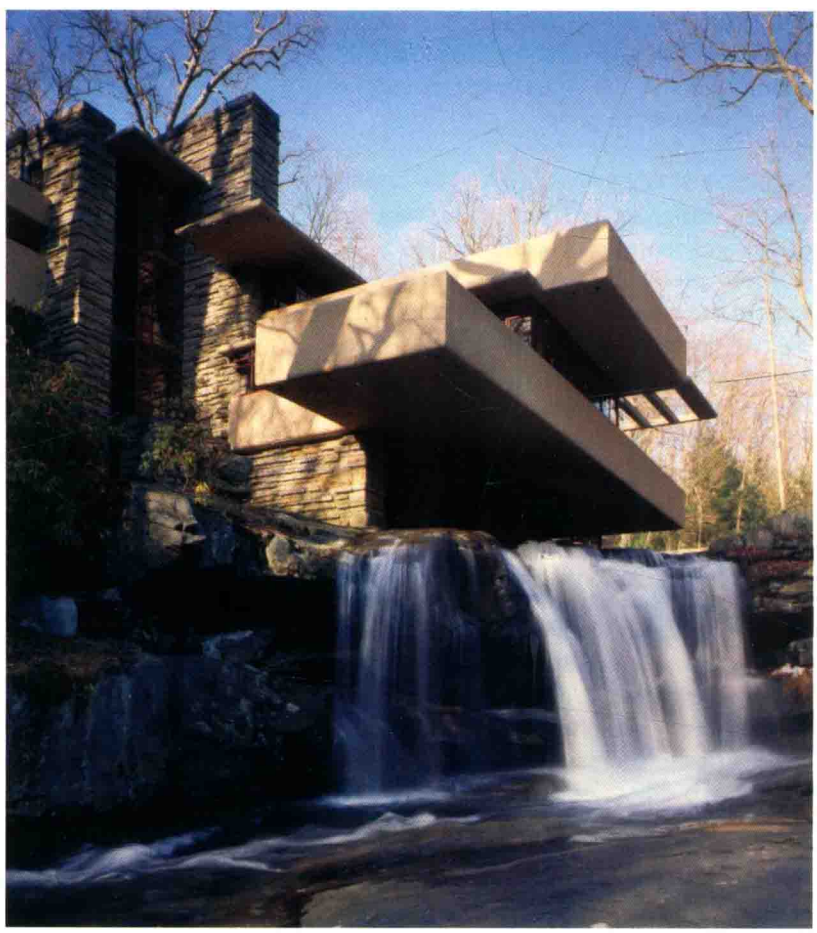

Figure 1-2 *Fallingwater exterior. Credit: Library of Congress. © 2006 Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater marries architectural form and materials with site. The concrete planes hover over the waterfall, and the local fieldstone echoes the rocks.*

purpose, and context. Like interior designers, they explore the experience of moving through a building as movement through space and time. They employ technology to satisfy the requirements of a building's program and use their understanding of the relationships among the elements of the building to find and express meaning. Architects conceive, develop, and communicate relationships between the building's exterior and its interior. These relationships relate the conditions of the building's site and environment, climate, geography, and exterior physical and cultural characteristics to its internal form, space, elements of enclosure, and structural and mechanical systems.

Interior designers work with a building's architecture to develop interior space and form. They integrate their work with the building's views, structure, circulation paths, and mechanical systems. Whether they are working directly with an architect to implement a cohesive design or alone within an existing building, interior designers seek to understand how the building's architecture contrasts with or supports the functions and aesthetic criteria of its interior space.

Interior spaces may be tightly tied into the architectural framework or treated as a less permanent package of contents within the box of the building. The work of interior designers often involves modifying existing spaces to suit new uses or to change the way an interior space looks or feels in order to solve problems of **aesthetics**, perception, or function. Their work may be seen and used by the public at large, by a select group of people related by business or culture, or solely by a private client's close family and friends.

Interior designers approach buildings as places that house people and things. When a designer moves through a real or imagined interior space, he or she experiences the progression of shapes and forms, the relationship of **scale** and **proportion**, the variety of color, texture, light, and dark, in relation to how others will perceive and use the space. The design elements and materials that support the characteristics and function of the space are the designer's tools.

As part of the nature of the industry, **trade-only sources** (businesses that do not deal directly with the public) depend on interior designers to function as liaisons with consumers. Customer suspicion of these relationships—and their complexity—can be reduced if the

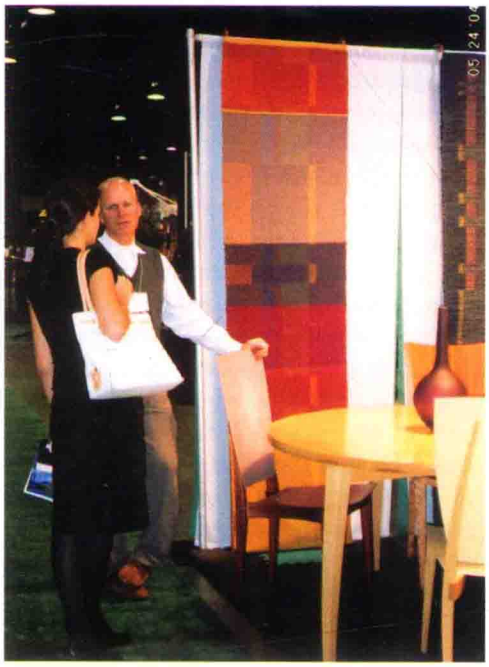

Figure 1-3 *Designer with trade source. Interior designers learn about sources by visiting trade shows and often work with artisans to design custom pieces. Furniture by Henry Fox, woven rugs by Claudia Mills.*

interior designer clarifies the conditions of any purchasing services, is open with the client about markups and actual costs, and bills the client for time spent on sourcing and purchasing. Many clients understand and respect the interior designer's expertise, and are quite willing to pay for services related to specifying and coordinating purchases.

The interior designer begins a project by looking and listening, by exploring what already exists and learning about what is desired. Clients may have strong, well-articulated ideas about how a space should look and function, or have trouble expressing exactly what they would like. The interior designer considers the existing conditions and the client's expressed goals and begins to shape ideas in response. This book is about how the interior designer uses his or her knowledge of the history, construction, and function of interior space to carry out the client's desires.

WHO IS AN INTERIOR DESIGNER?

An interior designer is a person with the education and experience necessary to improve the function and aesthetic quality of interior space. Professional interior designers demonstrate their qualifications by meeting educational, work experience, and examination standards. They may also be required to meet standards set by the governmental jurisdiction in which they work.

Figure 1-4 *Designers at work.*

DEFINITION OF INTERIOR DESIGN

The professional interior designer is qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces for the purpose of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

The professional interior designer:

- Analyzes clients' needs, goals, and life safety requirements
- Integrates findings with knowledge of interior design
- Formulates preliminary design concepts that are aesthetic, appropriate, and functional, and in accordance with codes and standards
- Develops and presents final design recommendations through appropriate presentation media
- Prepares working drawings and specifications for non-load-bearing interior construction, reflected ceiling plans, lighting, interior detailing, materials, finishes, space planning, furnishings, fixtures, and equipment in compliance with universal accessibility guidelines and all applicable codes
- Collaborates with professional services of other licensed practitioners in the technical areas of mechanical, electrical, and load-bearing design as required for regulatory approval
- Prepares and administers bids and contract documents as the client's agent
- Reviews and evaluates design solutions during implementation and upon completion

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation, National Council for Interior Design Qualification, and major interior design associations of North America endorse this definition.

Figure 1-5 *Designer using library.*

Figure 1-6 Designer and architect. Interior designers work closely with architects to review plans.

Interior designers often work as part of a team that includes architects, engineers, construction professionals, artisans, and suppliers.

While interior designers may address design solutions for load-bearing walls, their work does not include the structural design of building interiors or exteriors.

THE SCOPE OF AN INTERIOR DESIGNER'S WORK

The interior designer turns the functional and aesthetic requirements of the client into physical reality. The responsibilities of the interior designer include observing building and life safety codes, supporting environmental sustainability, and promoting access for all. The interior designer collects information about a space and a client's needs and then develops design solutions that enhance the client's quality of life, health, and safety. Designers communicate design concepts to others through scaled drawings and three-dimensional representations of the space.

The interior designer's work may include the arrangement of **partition** walls to divide and shape an interior space. Interior design includes the layout of rooms and furniture and the selection of colors, materials, and products to be used while coordinating the aesthetic embellishment of the interior. When acting as a project manager, the designer coordinates the design and construction team, oversees the budget for construction and furnishings, and manages time spent so that the project will be profitable for the design firm.

Professional interior designers are trained to understand the basics of building construction and mechanical systems so they can integrate their work with a building's design and function.

In addition to the aesthetic enhancement of interiors with colors, textures, and finishes, the interior designer's work affects the safety and productivity of the workplace.

Interior designers also look carefully at the characteristics and needs of the people who will use the spaces they design; they strive for designs that will allow people to use the spaces safely and access them—no matter their age, size, ability, or cultural background—without discrimination.

Figure 1-7 Students at construction site. Cafco's superintendent of construction gives Wentworth Institute of Technology's Facilities and Design students a tour of a jobsite.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERIOR DESIGN AS A PROFESSION

Throughout history, there have always been people—whether users or designers—who were especially concerned with the quality of interior spaces. At various times, architects, artists, craftspeople, and merchants have designed and furnished interiors. Trade routes and markets have developed over centuries to supply homes and public buildings with carpets, **textiles**, and other furnishings. Craft guilds evolved to outfit **glass**, **ceramics**, metal, and woodwork for both wealthy and middle-class customers. The advent of the Industrial Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century meant that consumer goods could be mass-marketed by manufacturers, retailers, and advertisers.

Traditionally, an architect developed the structure of a building and often designed the interior, hiring artisans and craftspeople to make the interior furnishings. Through the nineteenth century, advice on interior arrangements was the province of upholsterers, cabinetmakers, or retailers, who dispensed opinions and advice while they displayed and sold antiques and reproductions. The focus of interior design was on styles of the past and the purchase and display of antique furnishings.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, department stores promoted mass-produced furnishings and accessories to the average consumer. This new cornucopia of manufactured goods set off a frenzy of design trends, and consumers started looking for help in the

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