# ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY CHECKLIST

The most productive photography assignment is one with few surprises while on location. Delays, downtime and retakes are too often the cause of both unnecessary expense and hasty compromises that may lead to disappointing results. With this in mind, below is a checklist that covers many of the details involved when photographing architecture and interior design. Close collaboration and attention to details, will help everyone maximize efficiency and productivity on location.

**General Considerations**

- Scouting the site ahead of time should be the rule. This will provide vital information about the site condition / required remedies and allow the photographer to capture test angles for prior approval. Occasionally test shots become finals due to weather / site changes
- Provide project address, site contacts names and cell phone numbers (preferably more than one qualified contact)
- Provide site / floor plans with true North arrow, marked with specific areas / angles to be photographed along with renderings, construction photos and any description / instructions that may help define the scope of the project.
- Provide the total number of "hero" angles (interior / exterior) to be retouched (needed to estimate post production time / cost).
- Notify site security and obtain proper clearance prior to scouting and shooting session (are any certificates of insurance required?)
- Are hard hat / safety vest / harness / hard shoes required?

**INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY**

**General site condition, furniture and fixtures**

- Is the site in "camera ready" condition? Including but not limited to: painting, ceiling and floor treatments being completed, all modular walls, furniture, fixtures, artwork, office equipment and plants present and properly installed.
- Do any seasonal (or non seasonal) decorations or signage need to be removed?
- Are desks, offices, cubicles and common areas clean and organized? Can photographer rearrange with minimal permission?
- Will props or models (see "Personnel") be necessary? If so who will provide?

**Site access and security**

- Is the site available during business hours or only after hours / week-ends / at night (consider outside window views at night)?
- Will the photographer have total access or need keys / security access to specific areas or an escort?
- If needed, will the crew and equipment be able to get in or out after hours? Will all alarms be off?
- Will elevators be working (necessary if equipment cart is required)?
- What are the emergency phone numbers for assignments taking place during weekends or after hours?

**Illumination**

- Does the photographer need approval to adjust interior, exterior and ambient light?
- Is the lighting computer and/or motion sensor controlled?
- Can lights be manually turned on and off from a circuit breaker?
- Will the photographer have access to the circuit box?
- Is all lighting operational and are the bulbs consistent within areas (same age and color temperature)?

**Personnel**

- Are the owner and the occupants expecting the photographer and crew? Do they understand the nature and duration of the photography? Scouting (no styling) is typically 2-3 Hrs. and shoot (site in "camera ready" condition) is typically 10 Hrs.

- If appropriate, send a memo to employees or tenants regarding advance cleanup of workspace (objects sticking out of cubicles)
- Consider who should be present and make sure that everyone is fully briefed on the roles he or she will be playing.
- If models will be used, are they employees of the tenant or the commissioning client? Do they understand what they may be required to do and wear and how long they may be needed? Are they willing to sign a model release (legal guardian needs to be present for minors). For hired professional models, photographer will handle all these aspects during pre-production.
- Is there a cleaning crew in the space after hours? Can they and the photographer work around each other?

## EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY

### General site condition and considerations
- Has a client representative checked the site condition recently for: trailers, construction equipment, parked trucks, dumpsters, scaffolding, window stickers, fences, debris, graffiti or any other site issues?
- Are there window washers on the building? Is any facility maintenance scheduled that may interfere with the photography?
- Will the interior of the building be accessible to adjust window blinds and lights?
- Can customer or tenant parking be controlled?
- Will the photographer need a shooting permit? Some cities may require it if standing (or tripod is placed) on public property.

### Landscaping and surroundings
- Is the landscaping complete, mature and properly trimmed / maintained? Are outdoor furniture / umbrellas in place and operational?
- Is there any landscape maintenance scheduled that may interfere with the photography?
- Are there any fountains or pools? Are the underwater lights working and timed properly? Can the photographer access the controls?

- Are there any computer-operated sprinkler systems, and can the photographer control them? If not, ask management to turn off.
- Will the photographer have access to exterior lighting and signage? If not, make sure the lights are on for dusk / dawn angles.
- Are there any decorations, signs or banners that need to be removed? If any flags, are they in place and lighted at dusk/dawn?
- Are the lights controlled by timers or photo sensors? Can they be manually controlled?

**Conclusion**

This is not an exhaustive checklist but it should serve as a stimulus to your planning and a reminder of the range of issues that may need your attention in advance of the photography session. Every site is different; every building occupant is different, every season has its special concerns and to top it all off, budgets limitations sometime have an impact. However, with a little of forethought, you can help the photographer get the work accomplished efficiently and without disruption to other activities while also delivering the results and quality needed.

Notes: