

**NEVADA INSTITUTE OF RESIDENTIAL DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE**

Larry Tindall, Residential Designer / Chair

August 13, 2024

The Honorable Joe Lombardo  
Governor of Nevada  
State Capitol Building  
101 N Carson St  
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Governor Lombardo,

I hope this letter finds you well. I have been practicing Residential Design and involved in all types of commercial architecture in Las Vegas for several decades, dedicated to the craft of designing residential and commercial spaces that reflect both innovation and community needs. I am writing to you today to address a matter that is close to my heart and on the minds of the Residential Design community that I represent through the Nevada Institute of Residential Design and Architecture (NVIRDA). I believe this to be of great importance to the people of Nevada.

Our proposal seeks to address long-standing challenges within the residential construction industry in our state, with a focus on ensuring affordability, accessibility, and fairness for all Nevadans.

Nevada has a rich history rooted in the pioneering spirit of its builders. From the first settlers to the modern-day, the drive to create and innovate has always been a cornerstone of our community. Residential construction is not only a testament to this legacy, but also a critical driver of our economy, contributing between 5% and 6% to our GDP and leading the way in the recovery of six postmodern era recessions.

However; residential design and architecture in Nevada has become increasingly complex and costly, particularly for those seeking affordable housing solutions. The rising costs of labor, materials, and fees have placed the dream of homeownership and in some cases; home remodeling, out of reach for many. It is within this context that Residential Designers play a crucial role, providing cost-effective and expert services that are essential for creating affordable housing and remodeling options.

## **CHALLENGES FACING RESIDENTIAL DESIGNERS IN NEVADA**

The current regulatory environment places Residential Designers (RD) at a significant disadvantage. There are regulations that limit RD's in services that could be provided by them, see NRS 623.025 (b) and/or exceptions that allow others to provide drawings for residential architecture.

Residential Designers are currently limited to working on single-family dwellings and multifamily structures with no more than four units and two stories. This limitation is based on codes from the 1970s, which no longer reflect the needs or realities of modern residential construction.

There are exceptions that allow others to provide drawings for residential architecture, there is a Homeowner exception, a Contractor exception, and an Engineer exception to name a few.

Furthermore, the title "Residential Designer" is often misunderstood by the public, leading to confusion, mislabeling, being overlooked, and the under valuation of this nearly 50 year old Nevada profession.

As the demand for affordable housing and remodeling grows, the need for cost effective professional residential architecture grows as well. Many homeowners and others hire unlicensed drafting people and/or contractors to draw and submit plans for permits or do not get permits at all.

This costs the State of Nevada millions in lost revenue and Nevadan's time and money.

## **PROPOSED CHANGES FOR THE BETTERMENT OF NEVADANS**

To address these challenges and better serve the public, we propose the following changes:

1. **Change the Designation from "Residential Designer" to "Residential Architect":** This change would more accurately reflect the expertise and professional capabilities of those who design residential structures. It would also align with public perception and reduce confusion.
2. **Add a second seat to the current "Nevada State Board":** The current Board has one Residential (Architect) Designer and two Interior Designers with one Interior Designer Seat currently vacant, possibly alternating the second seat each 3 years.
3. **Expand the Scope of Residential Architects:** We propose that Residential Architects be allowed to work on all residential or multifamily projects under the IBC "Type V" (wood) construction, regardless of the number of units or stories. This expansion would enable Residential Architects to contribute more significantly to the creation of affordable housing.
4. **Protect the Practice of Residential Architects:** We suggest eliminating discriminatory practices within common interest communities that unfairly restrict the work of Residential Architects (Designers). By doing so, we can create a more inclusive design community that serves all Nevadans.
5. **Consolidating the Professional Boards:** Cost saving to Nevada. This could increase diversification, simplify professional regulations and increase public exposure to each Profession.

**THE GREATER GOOD FOR NEVADANS**

Governor Lombardo, these proposed changes are not merely about adjusting professional titles or regulatory boundaries. They are about ensuring that all Nevadans have access to affordable, high-quality housing, room additions, and remodeling.

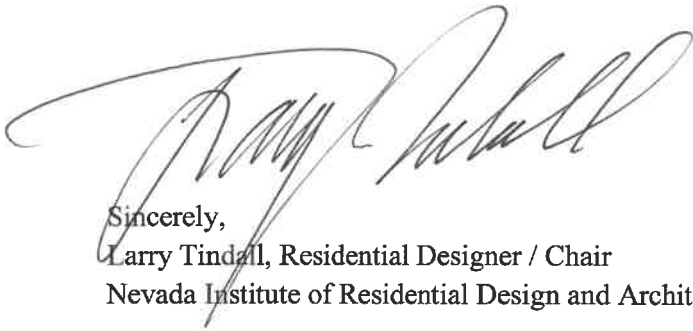
By introducing “Residential Architects”, we can help reduce the overall cost of residential construction, making it more accessible to those with limited financial means.

This is particularly crucial as our state faces growing housing demands and economic challenges.

This, in turn, would contribute to the economic vitality of our state by supporting a broader range of residential home projects, from patio covers to larger multifamily developments.

In closing, we urge you to consider the positive impact these changes could have on the everyday lives of Nevadans. By embracing these proposals, we can uphold the pioneering spirit that has always defined our state and ensure that the dream of homeownership remains within reach for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be honored to discuss this matter further and provide any additional information you may require.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Tindall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "T".

Sincerely,

Larry Tindall, Residential Designer / Chair

Nevada Institute of Residential Design and Architecture (NVIRDA)

## **A brief history of Licensed Residential Designers in Nevada**

1973; Nevada added to NRS 623.025, the Practice of Residential Design.

It loosely followed California's designation of a "Building Designer" (which was eliminated in 1992). The "Practice of residential design" defined. The "practice of residential design" consists of rendering services embracing the scientific, esthetic or orderly coordination of processes which enter into:

1. The production of a completed:
  - (a) Single-family dwelling unit; or
  - (b) Multifamily dwelling structure that does not exceed two stories in height and is composed of not more than four units in that structure: and
2. The use of space within and surrounding the unit or structure, performed through the medium of plans, specifications, administration of construction, preliminary studies, consultations, evaluations, investigations, contract documents, and advice and direction.

## **Some additional about Residential housing in Nevada;**

### **Circa 1973**

Median house size was 1,525 sf

Basis of design 1973 UBC, prescriptive method. A typical set of plans for a Single Family Residential (SFR) home, comprised only of Architectural drafting work, no additional consultants were required. Most houses are stick framed and in addition pre-manufactured roof trusses were growing in popularity.

### **Circa 1985**

New custom home developments throughout Nevada inspire larger homes and CC&R's restrict unlicensed people from submitting plans. Single Family Residential (SFR) average home sizes increase to 3,500 square feet.

### **1993**

Adoption of the 1993 Uniform Building Code (UBC) reduced the prescriptive method of design resulting in the retaining of Engineers to produce structural drawings

### **2000**

The larger Single Family Residential custom home increases in a size of 6,000 square feet. Introduction of the International Residential Code (IRC), expands the role of Engineers, the use of residential sprinklers are required within most projects

### **2018**

Nevada Building Officials (NOBO) adopt the following in an administrative code:

- All new residence, any two story addition and any addition over 600 sf requires a soils report
- All soils reports required a site and drainage plan
- Site and drainage plans require either a filed subdivision map or survey
- Complete Architectural Plans
- Structural Plans with Calcs
- Mechanical Plans
- Plumbing Plans
- Electrical plans with calcs, 400amp+ requires line drawings
- IECC Report
- Deferred (Jurisdiction depending)
  - Truss Calculations
  - Fire Sprinkler

**Additional comments from colleagues and other professionals;**

The Health, Safety, and Welfare of the public is not being served properly with the current Residential Designer statute as written and defined.

The Nevada public does not understand or cannot relate to the built environment or Architectural terms. When terms or titles are confusing, the public says "no".

The public believes Residential Designers design kitchen remodels or bathrooms or design home interiors. They are confused with Interior Designers and remodelers.

Residential Designers provide Residential Architecture pure and simple; they should be named that. No one is confused about the services of a Landscape Architect.

Landscape Architect as a name is approved by the State Board although Landscape Architects have their own State Board. This shows the word "architect" can be used for residential.

There are restricted uses of the word "Architect" in Nevada, especially for business names. Any use of the word "Architect" must be approved by the State Board of Architecture or the State Legislature.

Many computer code writers use the term "Software Architect" or "Data Architect" as job titles.

The American Institute of Architects stance is that it's ..... "usually impossible for a professional society to assert an enforceable proprietary interest" Matthew Tinder.

The second definition of the word "architect" in the Webster Dictionary ... "a person who designs and guides a plan or undertaking (e.g. the architect of American foreign policy)."

NCARB recently issued a position statement recommending non-licensed architectural employees use the term "architectural associate" or "design professional". NCARB views the enforcement of the word "architect" "as impossible".

There will be no confusion when the public needs to hire someone to design their new home, remodel their existing home, room addition, or new covered patio.

The public feels that their project doesn't warrant the services of a commercial Architect. The Residential Architect knows what is needed to help the public get a cost-effective professional design that will result in obtaining a building permit.

Residential Architects are typically small one or two person firms. They operate on small overheads, giving the public professional services at a fraction of traditional architectural fees.

This name change in no way affects the current Architects ability to provide residential architectural services. Many Architects design homes and will continue to do so.

Residential Designers serve a vital role to the public by providing a focused practice on the preparation of technical documents as well as the expertise of residential planning. While the additional layers of costly engineering requirements are put forth, the Residential Designer now adds value to the project at a lower fee than those associated with an Architect.