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ability to perform the work required. Take time to follow up on references, and try to visit one or more of the contractor's recently completed projects. Seeing a completed project may be very telling about the contractor's workmanship and ability to complete a project.

All references are not the same; there are various types of references to be considered in evaluating contractors. In requesting references, pay close attention to long-term relationships with clients. References can refer to:

1. Jobs in progress
2. Projects completed over the past year
3. Projects completed four or more years ago.

Also verify through local authorities whether a contractor has been named in any lawsuits or illegal activities.

LIST OF QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHECKING CONTRACTOR REFERENCES

- Would you use the same contractor again on future projects?
- Did the project meet your scheduling requirements?
- Were you presented with change orders? If so, how were they justified?
- Were you pleased with the level of workmanship and quality?
- Did the project go over budget?
- How were the subcontractors on the job? Were they knowledgeable and reliable?
- Was the project site kept clean and safe throughout the construction process?
- Was the contractor principally involved on the project site? If so, how regularly? If not, who was involved on behalf of the contractor?

SELECTION BASED ON PRICE

Clients and design professionals always approach a project with cost in mind. However, it is extremely important that the design professional and owner not engage a contractor by price alone. Although the lowest price may be particularly accommodating, other issues should be factored into the decision-making process. The designer and owner should consider the ability of the contractor to perform the required work within the client's schedule, as well as his track record, workmanship, and references. In addition, the design pro-