

## 01: COMMISSIONING ARCHITECTURE

Advice and information for homeowners when working with architectural designers.

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## 02: THE VALUE OF THE DESIGNER

A designer's contribution to a building extends far beyond form and aesthetics. It can influence the perception, performance and add value to your property.

Brought in early and given the opportunity to understand your needs, a designer can design a building, a masterplan or interior that is tailored to your current and future needs, delivering architecture that is practical and functional but also a pleasure to live in and visit.

Consulting a designer at the earliest planning stages opens the door to cost savings, both in the construction and operation of the building, through innovative design solutions.

Using a designer to manage your project and coordinate the work of consultants and contractors can save you time and money in the long run.

Good advice has its price but the cost of skimping on design quality is far higher.

Design fees will usually constitute just a small fraction of the total construction expenditure and pale into insignificance when measured against the operating costs over the lifespan of a building. High quality design can reduce those operating costs by maximising the efficiency of the building.



A building that has received the input of design professionals right from the start of the project could well end up being cheaper to run and command a greater value in the long term. A sound working relationship between you and your designer right from inception will contribute significantly to the success of the project. Time spent in preliminary discussion about the requirements, the timetable, the budget, and the nature and cost of professional resources required and their cost, is time well spent.

### 03: DESIGNER FEES

There is no standard or recommended basis for calculating the fee and it is usually a matter for negotiation. The fee will reflect the scope of services and bespoke design that your project involves. Other factors will include the complexity of the project, practice's reputation, the scope of services provided, construction cost and project timescale.



#### Fee Options

The basic fee options for services where the designer is involved in the project between the concept stage and final inspections may be a percentage of the final build cost or an agreed lump sum. A designer who is retained for the entire project will typically invoice about one third of the fee during the design stage, the same at the tender stage, and the balance during and following the issue of completion certificates.

#### Expenses

These will generally be added to the fee and will be charged for items such as the costs of travel, copying drawings and documents, and for making planning or Building Regulations applications.

#### 04: DESIGN BRIEF

The quality of your finished building will reflect the quality of your brief. A well - considered design brief is fundamental to success. It should be clear and unambiguous, setting out key requirements, outlining the vision and communicating your aims and aspirations.

The brief should describe the main function of the finished project; outline motivation and expectations; design direction; establish a single point of contact and set a realistic timeframe and budget. A good brief acts as map to help the project delivery team reach their destination.

A designer is crucial in helping formulate the brief. The process will involve a number of discussions and help establish the dialogue between you that is essential for the project.

A good, thorough brief will form the basis of the instructions given to your designer and the fees charged.

You may still be uncertain about some of these issues, in which case your designer may be able to carry out some preliminary research or feasibility studies that will help you firm up your requirements.



## 05: LEGISLATION

It is important before you start your project that you are aware of the approvals that will be needed from the local authority for Planning and for Building Regulations approval, as well as legislation that affects your project, such as party wall regulations, Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM), Site Waste Management, Plans Regulations 2008 and Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.

A designer can guide you through matters as they develop the design. They will also be able to assist you in making the necessary submission for approvals and handle negotiations with the local planning office.

You may deal with any planning applications yourself but it is generally money well spent to allow your designer to deal with the planning department and work to obtain planning permission on your behalf. Remember, it is the planning department that has the final say as to whether planning permission is given.



### The Building Contract

A building contract is a vital document. It is a legally binding commitment between your builder and you as the client to deliver your project. Your designer can administer this contract on your behalf.

## 05: BEING A GOOD CLIENT

It is vital to find the right designer to work with. However, to be a success, your project will need the right kind of client too.

The project will need to be properly resourced, financed and managed at your end as well as by the designer.

Make sure that one person becomes the designated point of contact with the designer.

They should carry authority as your representative.



## 06: DEFINITIONS

The term “designer” refers to architects and technicians as individuals, companies, or any other organisation that provides architectural services. It is not exclusive to “architects”.

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