

HOW WE WORK WITH YOU

We provide the full range of architects' services, including:

- **Building design (all stages)**
- **Sustainable Design**
- **Site development Option Studies**
- **Feasibility Studies and early stage Consultation**
- **Masterplanning and Urban Design**
- **Integrated Landscape Design**

plus a range of additional services and processes that make us different. Our expertise in environmental design allows us to seamlessly incorporate sustainable and green design into our projects from the earliest stage rather than 'bolting on' solutions later. This allows you to maximise sunlight, daylighting, connections to the garden but minimise energy use and running costs from the outset.

Our design process- realising your ideas

Our job is to turn your ideas and aspirations into imaginative but workable solutions – it's what we love to do. We approach every job with the same passion, energy and design ethos, not just offering you a simplistic pre-determined solution. We apply modern design ideas to new and old buildings and whatever the size and scope of the project we constantly seek to maximise their potential. This also allows you to get the best value for your money.

We aim to work closely with you so that you are always in control of the process and the costs. Before commencing each stage of work, we clearly agree our fees and the scope of what we will do, and you can appoint us for all the stages of work or for whatever stages you wish.

When you contact us, the first thing is to establish if we are the right people to help you; there is no point in our wasting your time and we are quite happy to give you advice on alternatives if we feel these may be better for you. There are two key questions we need to consider, but don't worry if you don't know the full answers to these yet:

- What are you trying to achieve? Your ambitions and aspirations, not just numbers of rooms? Do you need extra space? Do you need to re-plan existing space?
- What is your overall budget? (remembering to include for construction costs, professional fees and VAT)?

We can run through a checklist with you on the phone to establish the approximate scope of your project and agree the next step.

Initial meeting - finding out what you want

If you like our approach, we arrange to meet on your site to discuss what you and any others involved (often your family) want to achieve. We'll walk around your building or plot, talk about your own ideas and often come up with some that you may not have thought of. This initial meeting is absolutely free and without obligation; we just want to make sure there is a project here we can help you with. After this meeting, if you wish to proceed, we will agree an appointment, fees and timescale for the project and we will start the design process as follows:

Opportunities and what might be possible

We think this is the most critical part of the design process, and yet it is often rushed through or completely ignored. We want to get an understanding of both all your aspirations for the project and all aspects of the existing building or site; in short identify all needs, options and opportunities. Clients who miss out this stage can run into problems later because they either can't get the design they really want, or they make costly changes later in the process when they realise what they do want, and the costs over-run.

We consider the site in detail; any existing buildings, gardens and the surroundings. We carry on discussing your aspirations for the project and investigate the following:

- What limitations are imposed by the site and any existing buildings?
- What are the constraints imposed by Planning policy? We are experienced working in Conservation Areas, National Parks and Greenbelt.
- What aspects of the garden, views, sun, natural light can be taken advantage of?
- What can we do to reduce energy use and save you money on utility bills?

We may have some initial ideas about how we could approach the design of the project however the objective is not to design the scheme at this stage, but to outline possible design approaches and investigate benefits and any issues. We'll give you our outline thoughts on planning, design, budget and timescale, although these can only be indicative at this stage. We can offer this early stage as a stand-alone report identifying needs and options for you to consider before committing to any further expenditure.

Concept Design

Once we have a thorough understanding of your requirements, we start developing sketch designs. We work in a mix of 2D and 3D drawings to show you the main design options and discuss how they meet your needs. We also assess the likely construction budget and compare that to your financial targets. With your input, we develop and refine the initial design concept so that by the time work begins on site you have a very clear idea of how the end result will look. This is a much more efficient (and cost-effective) way of working than finding out that you don't like something once work has started.

Having arrived at a preferred concept design, should you require Planning Consent, you may wish to discuss the proposal with the Planning Officer using the 'pre-application' process to establish as quickly as possible whether they will support the design approach you have chosen. At the end of this process it should be clear whether the whole project is feasible so that you can confidently instruct us to take the project design to the detailed design stage.

Developed Design

The aim of this stage is to finalise the detailed design and apply for Planning Consent (if required). We also resolve design issues and create presentation drawings, formulate a cost plan and project programme. Our Planning submission documents are carefully considered to suit local requirements. Generally, the Planning Application process should take around eight weeks, but it may take longer.

Technical Design

Once Planning Consent has been granted, we can start documenting the details; how the building is constructed, what fixtures and finishes are required, etc. At this point you will also need to make a Building Regulations Approval submission; this is a completely different and separate process to Planning Application and requires the submission of details and documentation to show compliance with the legally required standards for construction.

We can then prepare detailed construction drawings and a detailed specification listing all the work to be priced by the contractor to avoid extras on site. The more detail we can give the contractor, the more accurate their costs and construction timetable will be.

Construction Stage

We can help you find a contractor to build your project, which can include a tendering process between several contractors to get you the best possible price. We can advise on the building contract to be used, and can administer the contract on your behalf including regular site inspections, review of progress and certifying staged payments for the building work as it is done. We can help make sure that you get the building that you're paying for, and can help you keep control of costs. There is always demand for good builders and tenders can come back higher than estimated, but we can work closely with you to achieve the optimum solution so that you are always in control of the costs of your project.

Architect's Fees

The fees we charge reflect the extent of the work we do and the size and complexity of the project; each project will be different. Wherever possible we like to charge an all-inclusive lump sum fee for each stage of work so that you can see in advance exactly what our fees will be, and we will agree any change to the fees before any costs are incurred. We agree our fees with you in writing at the appointment stage and in advance of each stage of the work; this way the charges are completely transparent. You may only want a concept design, work taken up to a planning application or a full service including the construction stage.

Appointment of Other Consultants

Whilst we lead the design, other consultants and specialists often need to be appointed. We can advise on suitable consultants and help you agree their appointment terms. Typically these consultants might include:

- Measured Building or Land Surveyor
- Structural Engineer
- Depending on the project and its location, you may also require supporting reports and advice from other specialists as part of the Planning Application as a planning consultant, arboriculturalist, archaeologist, flood risk assessment and ecology survey.

Please contact us to discuss:

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