

WORKING WITH AN ARCHITECT

BY
PJP ARCHITECTS LLP.



www.pjparchitects.co.uk



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INTRODUCTION

This guide is aimed primarily towards assisting clients who may not have previously worked with an Architect on a building project. PJP Architects LLP has produced it for the benefit of anyone considering embarking on a building project.

For more information on the definition of an Architect and all the services an Architect can offer you may find it useful to refer to the RIAS publication 'Why use a Chartered Architect?' which is an excellent general guide to the whole process from project inception to completion. This publication can be found on the RIAS website at www.rias.org.uk/for-the-public/why-use-a-chartered-architect

APPOINTMENT OF AN ARCHITECT

>> Agree terms of appointment, services to be provided and fees.

The first thing your Architect will do is discuss your project with you to understand your requirements and what services you would like them to provide. Following this your Architect would set out the terms of appointment and explain the services they will provide within this. This will also include details of the fees which will be paid for their services including when you will pay and how much. Where applicable the Architect may also advise you of services you may require from others such as a Structural Engineer.

The Architect should also explain to you your responsibilities under the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 2015 which is the health and safety legislation which applies to building projects. Your Architect may also take on the role as Principal Designer under these regulations and will give you details of what this involves.

You can find more information on CDM 2015 on the Health & Safety Executives (HSE) website including a guide for client's at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.htm

THE PROJECT BRIEF

- >> The site
- >> Project vision
- >> Accommodation requirements
- >> Budget cost

It is essential at the start of any project to have thorough discussions about your proposed site, aspirations and ideas, accommodation requirements, budget cost, etc. Good communication with your Architect at this stage is key to ensuring they are aware of everything you want to include in the design. Getting a full and detailed brief together at the beginning of your project helps to ensure everything is included from the outset to avoid costly repercussions later, particularly if changes are made once work begins on site. It is therefore worth taking time at the beginning to fully consider what you want to achieve within a realistic budget.

THE SITE

- >> Relationship of site to the surrounding environment
- >> Access and orientation
- >> Views and solar gain
- >> Topography and ground conditions
- >> Wastewater and surface water drainage
- >> Design to suit the site!

The first step in the design process should always be to carry out a site appraisal. The Architect will consider access, orientation, views and opportunities to maximise sunlight as well as the site topography and ground conditions. It is also important to consider how the site relates to the surrounding environment and neighbouring buildings.

Site investigation works may be required at this stage, usually carried out by a qualified engineer. This may include tests to check suitability for drainage for surface water and septic tanks where necessary along with an assessment of ground conditions which will need to be considered as part of the structural design for the building.

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THE SITE

The building should be designed to sit comfortably within the site and take advantage of opportunities presented by the site, such as a good view, capturing the maximum amount of sunlight, etc. It cannot be stressed enough that the building design should evolve from the site, and not the other way round. It is a mistake to become fixated on a particular design before first appraising the site and considering how a building to meet your needs could be developed on it – you will inevitably find that some aspect of it cannot work or is less than satisfactory.

The building design should also be mindful of the surrounding environment, particularly any adjacent buildings and other notable features.

SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

- >> Rooms and spaces required
- >> Sizes or areas of rooms and spaces
- >> Specific requirements for individual rooms and spaces
- >> Relationships of rooms and spaces to each other

As previously mentioned it is important to establish your accommodation requirements at the outset, or as soon as possible during development of the brief. The more information you can provide regarding your preferences for sizes/ areas of rooms/ spaces, together with any particular requirements, features, etc. will help greatly when the Architect is preparing outline design proposals.

There are many things to consider and you will be asked numerous questions! Although looking at other designs is not encouraged in terms of designing to suit the site as noted previously, it can be useful to assist your thoughts regarding relationships between rooms/ spaces as well as sizes/ areas. You should carefully consider how you want rooms and spaces to relate to each other for practical reasons and to suit your lifestyle. Visiting other buildings can be very helpful towards gaining an appreciation of internal spaces, and if you can actually measure some of these this can be helpful in making decisions about how much space you require.

OUTLINE DESIGN

- >> Development of sketch design drawings
- >> Pre-application enquiries to the local authority

With the information gathered from the site appraisal and your brief for the project the Architect will prepare outline design proposals for you to consider. These initial designs will be developed along with you to ensure they meet your requirements before proceeding to more detailed design stages later.

It can be useful at this early stage pre-application enquiries to the local authority to establish whether there are any local planning issues, road access/ visibility problems, etc. which need to be addressed as they may influence the design. An Architect can make these enquiries and consult the local authority on your behalf.

SCHEME DESIGN

- >> Finalisation of design drawings
- >> Planning application

Once the outline design proposals are to your satisfaction the design will be developed to include further information such as drainage details, external finishes, landscaping, etc. to demonstrate the proposals in sufficient detail to accompany a Planning Application. At this stage it will be necessary to decide the materials and colours of external finishes to roofs, walls, etc. You may also need to give consideration to your preferred heating system at this stage to ensure any elements such as external heat pumps can be included in your application.

In most cases the Architect will act as your Agent for a Planning Application which means they will prepare and submit the application on your behalf and deal with any correspondence from the local authority during the assessment of your application.

In some circumstances Planning Permission is not required for extensions or alterations as these works may be classed as 'Permitted Development' under Planning legislation. Your Architect should be able to give you advice on whether this is likely to apply to your project.

DETAILED DESIGN

- >> Construction specification
- >> Structural certification
- >> Energy assessment
- >> Building warrant application

Following the grant of planning permission, or at a point when it may be gauged that it is likely to be granted, the design will be developed in more detail looking at all aspects of construction. Detailed drawings and specification will be prepared confirming materials, components, finishes, construction technology, etc. to the standard required for a building warrant application. In most cases this will also require the input of a Structural Engineer who may prepare a structural report with calculations or issue a Structural Certificate for the design. An Architect can explain what will be required for your particular project and arrange these services on your behalf.

At this stage it will be necessary to make decisions regarding the final choice of heating system, insulation, windows, external doors, etc. An Architect can advise and assist you towards these decisions with the benefit of technical knowledge and previous experience.

DETAILED DESIGN

For the vast majority of applications there will be a statutory requirement to provide energy calculations and certification to show that the required level of energy efficiency can be achieved. An Architect may be accredited to undertake this work, but if not will be able to arrange for it to be carried out by a Certifier of Design who will be an approved energy consultant.

Where a Structural or Energy Certificate is provided with your application for a Building Warrant this will entitle you to a reduction in the fee for your application.

As with a Planning Application your Architect can assist you with Building Warrant application and act as your agent if required.

FOLLOWING STATUTORY APPLICATIONS

Following the grant of planning permission and building warrant, many clients choose to manage their projects from that point onwards by dealing directly with chosen suppliers and preferred contractors.

If you decide to manage the construction phase of your project yourself you should be aware of the various post-approval notices and procedures which must be dealt with at the appropriate times. Information about these notices and procedures will be included in the documents which accompany your Planning Permission and Building Warrant and will be explained to you by your Architect. It is very important to ensure you submit the necessary information and notices at the required stage in the project as failure to do so can result in enforcement action by the local authority and even the invalidation of your Planning Permission.

If you are funding your project with a mortgage or other loan it is a good idea to check with your lender at this stage whether they require will certificates from an Architect or other professional at key stages during the works. Your Architect can provide these by carrying out inspections of the works at the relevant stages.

* Statutory Applications Guidance Notes:
www.pjparchitects.co.uk/statutory-applications-guidance-notes

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TENDERING

- >> Tender documents
- >> Finding a contractor

If you require assistance with finding a suitable contractor through a process of obtaining quotations or tenders an Architect can prepare and issue tender documents on your behalf. These usually include the detailed drawings and specification, conditions of contract and any additional information deemed necessary to obtain accurate costs. Prior to issuing tender documents an Architect can make enquiries to contractors and help you to finalise a shortlist of interested contractors capable of undertaking your project. Following the return of tenders an Architect can advise and assist you with the appointment of a contractor.

BUILDING CONTRACT

- >> Contractor's responsibility
- >> Architect's role

It is the contractor's responsibility to organise and carry out all construction work on site in accordance with the contract drawings and specification to an acceptable standard of workmanship within an agreed timescale.

It is important to understand that the two parties to the contract are the client, known as the 'employer', and the contractor.

During the contract the Architect's role as contract administrator involves periodic site visits to monitor progress and inspect the works, issuing instructions to the contractor and certificates for payments due to the contractor. In addition to these tasks an Architect will report regularly to you on contractual matters as well as the quality of the work.

An Architect can also provide advice regarding the future maintenance of the building following completion and handover, if required.

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ABOUT US

PJP Architects LLP (formerly Peter Johnson Partnership) was established in 1985 and since then has undertaken a wide range of public and private sector projects. This large body of completed work includes numerous private houses, extensions and alterations as well as civic, community, commercial, industrial and retail projects of varying size.

We believe in listening closely to our clients, carefully assessing their requirements and maintaining a dialogue with them throughout the life of a project. We are committed to improving standards of energy efficiency and sustainable design. Our overall aim is to produce high quality cost-effective buildings which meet our clients' aspirations.



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NEXT STEPS

If you require the services of an Architect please consider PJP Architects LLP as you will benefit from the expertise, knowledge and experience of a locally based well-established practice.

For an initial discussion about your project please contact us by telephoning 01595 694880 or e-mailing admin@pjparchitects.co.uk

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