

# LISTED BUILDINGS & CONSERVATION AREAS



## Listed buildings:

You will need to apply for listed building consent if either of the following cases apply:

- You want to demolish a listed building.
- You want to alter or extend a listed building in a manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

You may also need listed building consent for any works to separate buildings within the grounds of a listed building. Check the position carefully with the council - it is a criminal offence to carry out work which needs listed building consent without obtaining it beforehand.

If your application for listed building consent is refused, granted with conditions or not determined within 8 weeks of it being validated by the council then you have the right to appeal to the First Secretary of State.

## Conservation areas:

Your architect can check with your local planning authority to see if your proposed work is in a conservation area.

If you live in a conservation area, you will need conservation area consent to do the following:

- Demolish a building with a volume of more than 115 cubic metres. There are a few exceptions - you can get further information from your council.
- To demolish a gate, fence, wall or railing over 1 metre high next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or public open space; or over 2 metres high elsewhere.

Even if your proposals do not include the work mentioned above you should still check if an application for conservation area consent is required.

If your application for conservation area consent is refused, granted with conditions or not determined within 8 weeks of it being validated by the council then you have the right to appeal to the First Secretary of State.

## Fences, walls and gates:

You will not need to apply for planning permission to take down a fence, wall or gate, or to alter or improve an existing fence, wall or gate (no matter how high) if you don't increase its height. In a conservation area, however, you might need conservation area consent to take down a fence, wall or gate.

# Why use an architect?

**Why use an architect?** If you are planning to embark on a building project - whatever it's size - then it makes sense to consult a professional. An architect will guide you through the building process, will share your concerns and will help you translate your vision into reality. To any building project, no matter how small, he or she will bring three essential qualities: **imagination, value for money** and **freedom from worry**.

**Removing the mystery.** There is a misplaced sense of mystique about what architects do - a fear, even, that they will impose their own tastes at the expense of your own. Nothing could be further from the truth. Step by step, by consultation and agreement, your architect will lead you through the entire process from the first germ of an idea to the finished building.

**How much does it cost?** You can select all or part of an architect's service. If you want only an hour's general advice then that is all you will pay for. If you need just the detailed drawings or want the scheme to be guided to the planning permission stage and no further, then that is fine too. The RIBA has standard appointment documents from which you can select the precise services you need.

**Imagination.** Whether you are looking for tradition or innovation, boldness or understatement, an architect can lift your project out of the ordinary. Anyone can alter a building. It takes a professional to do it with flair, imagination, style and *value for money*. An architect will find the extra light and space you didn't know you had, suggest materials you hadn't thought of, make sure you find the right builder at the right price.

**Freedom from worry.** Architects are not only 'designers'; they are trouble-shooters. They will guide you through the complex procedures of planning permission and building regulations. They will attend to detail and monitor the builder's programme of works through to completion. Throughout your project, you will have protection under your architects' indemnity insurance, which effectively guarantees the integrity of the design.

**The initial meeting.** Architects' professional training and experience means that they can interpret and respond to any realistic brief they are given. At your initial meeting you will discuss your intentions and ideas. Your architect will listen carefully to what you have to say, and will take and develop a brief which covers design aesthetics as well as the function of the building, running costs budget and timing. Only after you have seen and approved initial sketches will the ideas be translated into detailed designs. At an early stage your architect can also help you define a range of budget costs for your project.

**The planning process.** An important part of an architect's service is to smooth the path with the local authority. For instance, your architect will, more than likely, discuss the plans with council officials before applying for planning permission and building regulation clearance, and greatly reduce the risk of planning refusal. He or she will understand, and know how to apply, a complex web of building regulations and other rules which govern such things as structural integrity, ventilation, ceiling height, sanitation, insulation and fire safety, party wall agreements, rights of light and listed building consents. Clearly-presented, professionally-drawn plans can save you a great deal of time *and* significantly improve your chance of success.

**Builders and other professionals.** Your architect will help you find and brief any other consultants you may need - a structural engineer or a quantity surveyor, for example. With planning approval in place your architect will prepare working drawings with technical specifications for builders to tender, and will ask a number of firms to estimate costs and timings. When you have chosen a builder, your architect can recommend a form of contract that will set out the terms, the timetable and what will happen if the builder overruns on costs or time. Your architect will monitor the building work, organise site meetings and reduce your stress to a minimum.

**Can an architect save you money?** Yes, definitely! Not only will architects provide better value for money, in many instances they will save their clients at least the equivalent of their fees. Professional attention to detail will save money both immediately, through the most efficient use of space and the careful selection of materials and finishes, and in the long term through environmental sensitivity, energy efficiency, low running and maintenance costs.

