

adpractice ltd

Hello from us to you
An insight into us and our work

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Thank you for choosing us

The practice

Founded in 1992, A D Practice Ltd is a small, well-established and multidisciplinary architectural design practice located in The Mill, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire.

Our key strength is our ability to listen and learn from our clients and work together in order to create better spaces that both work for people and improve their quality of life. We design in BIM (Building Information Modelling) meaning that we can offer 3D visualisations of all our schemes, no matter how small, which can aid the understanding of the design for both clients and planners.

We offer a full range of design services including specialised planning advice and design development; initial feasibility studies; planning permission consents and appeals; building regulations; sustainable design; energy efficiency advice; site supervision and project management. We also offer Passivhaus design and are members of the Passivhaus Trust, the AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) and The Green Register.

Who we are



David Parry Director

Founder of the practice and Parish Councillor for Park Street, David has an extensive local knowledge and background in planning and the local built environment. Previously a St Albans District Councillor and Chair of the Planning Committee he is also a member of their Agents Forum Advisory Panel. He is actively involved in community Neighbourhood Plan preparations and voluntary work in the youth sector.



Heather McNeill BSc(Hons) Dip Arch

Associate Heather started working at A D Practice Ltd at the age of 16 as a CAD Assistant which prompted her to study her Part 1 Architecture at the University of Bath. After a period of time in practice in Suffolk, she went on to complete her Part 2 at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth, North Wales and returned to the practice in 2018. As our Certified Passivhaus Designer, she specialises in sustainable and energy efficient design and has broad experience in the residential and conservation sectors.



Nimmiya Mariam BArch(Hons) MArch

To support her passion for creating designs that are sustainable and environmentally friendly, Architectural Designer Nimmiya moved from India to London to pursue her Masters in Sustainable Environmental Design at the Architectural Association. After her studies, Nimmiya has worked for practices in Cambridgeshire and London furthering her learning and experience in retrofitting existing buildings to improve energy performance.



Julie Chadwick BArch(Hons)

Architectural Designer Julie completed her Part 1 at Kingston University having had a successful career in education and special needs for twenty years. She is an active member of the Hertfordshire Association of Architects (HAA) and has recently been re-elected as Treasurer for the second year running. She is particularly interested in the social benefits of architecture, especially accessibility, community and education.

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About us

What people say about us

We have several clients who are happy to act as references for us but here are a few comments from people we have worked with along the way!

Client: Extensions and Alterations, Wheathampstead

"A big thank you to David, Julie and the team for your work on our project. We are super pleased with the design and the end result."

Client and Contractor: James Fisher, Founder, Surreal Estate Ltd.

"I would like to recommend the team at A D Practice to you if you are thinking about engaging them on your project. Through my dealings with the team across several projects in Hertfordshire, I have always found them professional, knowledgeable, imaginative and forward-thinking. David, Heather and the team are constantly tracking the latest developments in construction, construction techniques and sustainability and are guaranteed to deliver the best balanced outcome to you as a client. But don't worry, your scheme won't be compromised in this process, it will be optimised through the planning process with their experience, to deliver the planning decision you need. Look no further than here."

Thermal Bridge Consultant: Guy Pitts-Crick, Director, Heatflux Ltd.

"It has been an absolute delight to work with Heather and A D Practice on their projects. Heather has a great technical knowledge of construction and understands the extra mile needed to see a Passivhaus build through. On multiple occasions, whenever we have needed additional information or to discuss possible changes to the design and she has surpassed all expectations. Look forward to working with both A D Practice and Heather on many projects in the future."

Client: Extensions and Alterations, Wheathampstead

"Thank you so much David, Heather and Julie for making this such a smooth build, we really appreciated all of your help and advice."

Client: Rear Extension, Harpenden

"Although our extension was small and pretty straight forward the level of detail David and Julie went into was exceptional. They managed the whole process for us from initial designs through to gaining planning consent and building control. They introduced us to the builder we then went with, who were excellent.

Throughout the project the response from David and Julie to any queries or questions was immediate, we were particularly impressed with their straightforward and down-to-earth approach. The end product is stunning and we couldn't be happier with the design and the quality of the build. I would not hesitate to recommend A D Practice Ltd."

Client: Extensions and Alterations, Harpenden

"It will come as no surprise that we are both absolutely delighted that the Planning Inspector has overruled the Council and provided his approval for the scheme. We are not only delighted for ourselves in that we can now move onto the next stage of the project, but we are also delighted for Julie and David as the decision shows appreciation for their design and their interpretation of the planning 'rules'."

Client: Barn Conversion, Wheathampstead

"We thought your proposals were excellent and resolve some of the tricky problems very neatly."

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How can we help you?

The full service

We offer the full architectural service from the initial meeting through to project handover which encompasses:

- Full measured survey (we may use a separate company for this) and production of existing drawings and 3D model in Revit
- Design ideas with plenty of client involvement
- Finalised design and planning/listed building applications
- Planning appeals (if required)
- Building regulation applications
- PHPP and energy modelling (if required)
- Production of full specifications
- Tender process and appointment of contractors
- Site involvement and contract administration

In addition to these services we also offer the following:

Stand alone advice

- Planning strategy advice
- Planning enforcement advice

Stand alone appraisals

What can be done with this property?

Most of our clients have never used an architect before and often want a few ideas to visualise before committing to employing an architect. We can visit you, discuss what your requirements might be and produce a couple of sketches (one plan and one 3D) to help you visualise what you want, provide you with professional feedback on your ideas and advise you on the right option for your requirements and budget

Should I move or extend?

We'll help you decide whether there is scope to extend/alter your current property before you commit to moving and all of the costs associated with it

How eco should I go?

You might have heard about certain energy efficiency standards but you're not sure what they mean or what you really need or can afford to do. We can help find the right option for you

Should I buy this plot?

You've seen a plot online but not sure if you can get permission for a new house? We can advise on whether you're likely to get permission or what the obstacles might be

Can I convert this building?

We've all driven past old farm buildings that we think could make amazing homes - we can help you decide whether that dream is achievable

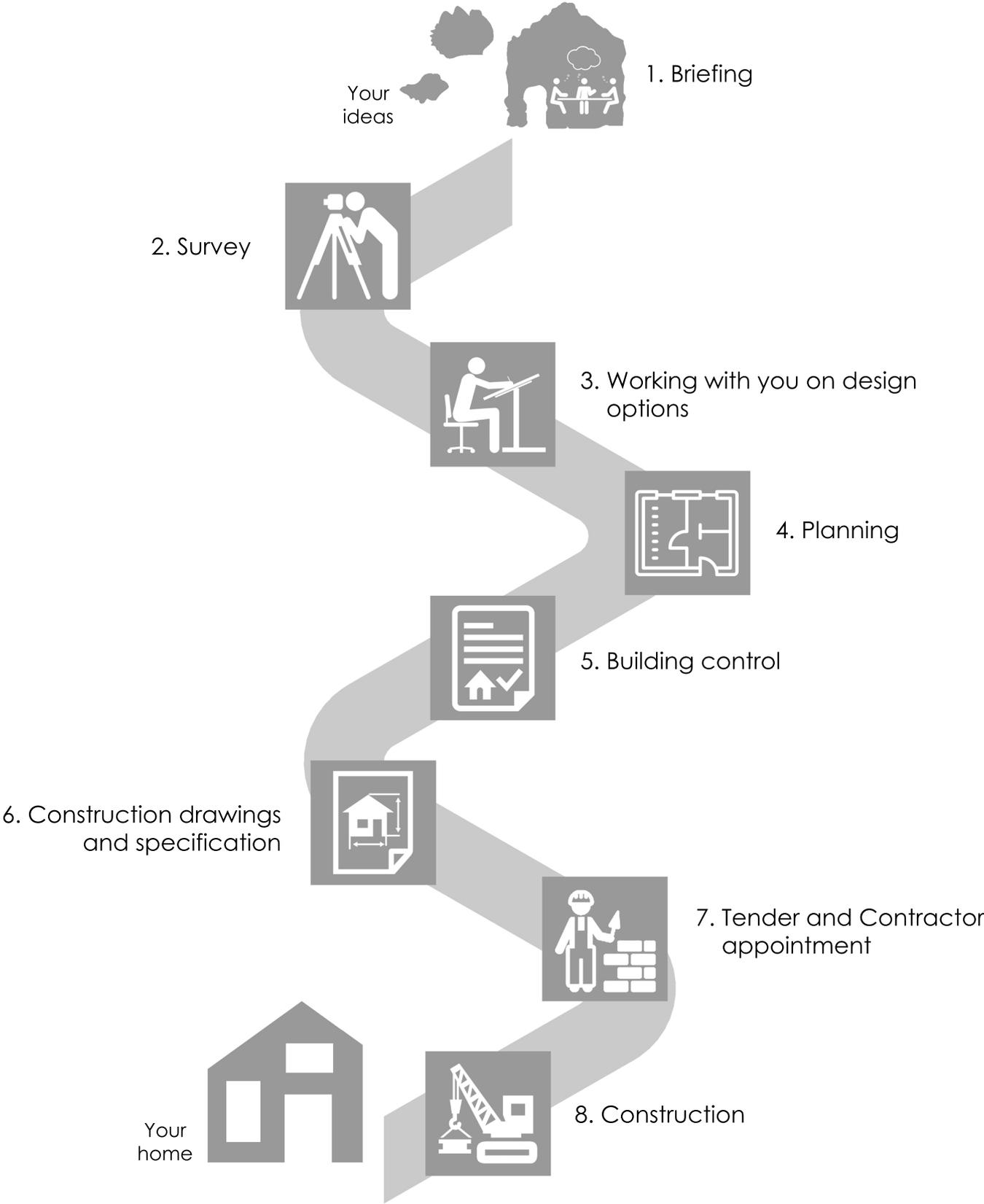
How can I reduce my energy bills and improve sustainability?

We can offer energy efficiency advice and carry out a comprehensive energy audit for your home and/or workplace

If you employ us to undertake one of these appraisals for you and it leads to a project, we will deduct the fee for the appraisal from the costs of further work.

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Our way of working



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Our way of working

We appreciate that many of our clients have never used an architect before or gone through the build process so we have outlined the process here.

1. Briefing [RIBA Stage 0]

You contact us to get the ball rolling. We'll arrange a time for a free initial consultation where we will come and meet you, visit the site and discuss your ideas and aspirations for the project, your likes and dislikes and your budget and offer our first impressions and suggestions. We'll then go away and prepare a fee package for you.

2. Survey [RIBA Stage 1]

Once the fee package is agreed and signed, we will arrange a fully measured up survey of your property to be carried out and produce drawings of the existing building which will be required by the planners. We use Revit, a 3D modelling programme, to produce all our drawings so we will have a virtual model of your property that we can use to work on design options.

3. Design options [RIBA Stage 2]

Once the existing drawings have been produced we will arrange a meeting with you to sketch ideas over these drawings and finalise your brief and provide you with hard copies of the existing drawings. We will then work the sketch ideas up into 3D sketch designs working with your brief and budget levels to create options to meet your criteria and any specified regulations. From this we work with you to create your ideal design.

4. Planning [RIBA Stage 3]

Having decided on your preferred scheme we will work up the drawings and relevant design statements and take the proposals through the complexity of the planning and/or listed building process. We will also monitor the application, lobby and liaise with the local authority to ensure any queries are answered.

5. Building control and possible energy standard certification [RIBA Stage 4]

Once planning permission is granted, your drawings will need to be approved by Building Control. This requires construction details being added to the drawings as well as u-value calculations (heat loss) and possibly input from a structural engineer. We will submit the application to Building Control and liaise with them to ensure all queries are answered in order to get Plans Approval. If you are looking to meet one of the certified standards such as Passivhaus or the AECB Building Standard, we will need to produce details and carry out energy modelling.

6. Construction drawings and specification [RIBA Stage 4]

Further detail and construction and setting out information (full dimensions to openings etc) is added to the drawings and a specification for all of the works is produced alongside. This will include information about materials, windows, doors and finishes as well as bathroom, kitchen, heating and lighting specifications etc and set out the standards which the Contractors are to adhere to for the project.

7. Tender and Contractor appointment [RIBA Stage 4]

We will help compile a list of 4-5 Contractors to invite to tender for the works and then send all of this information out to them. Once we have received all of the prices we will carry out a tender comparison and report back to you in order to help you choose the right builder for you.

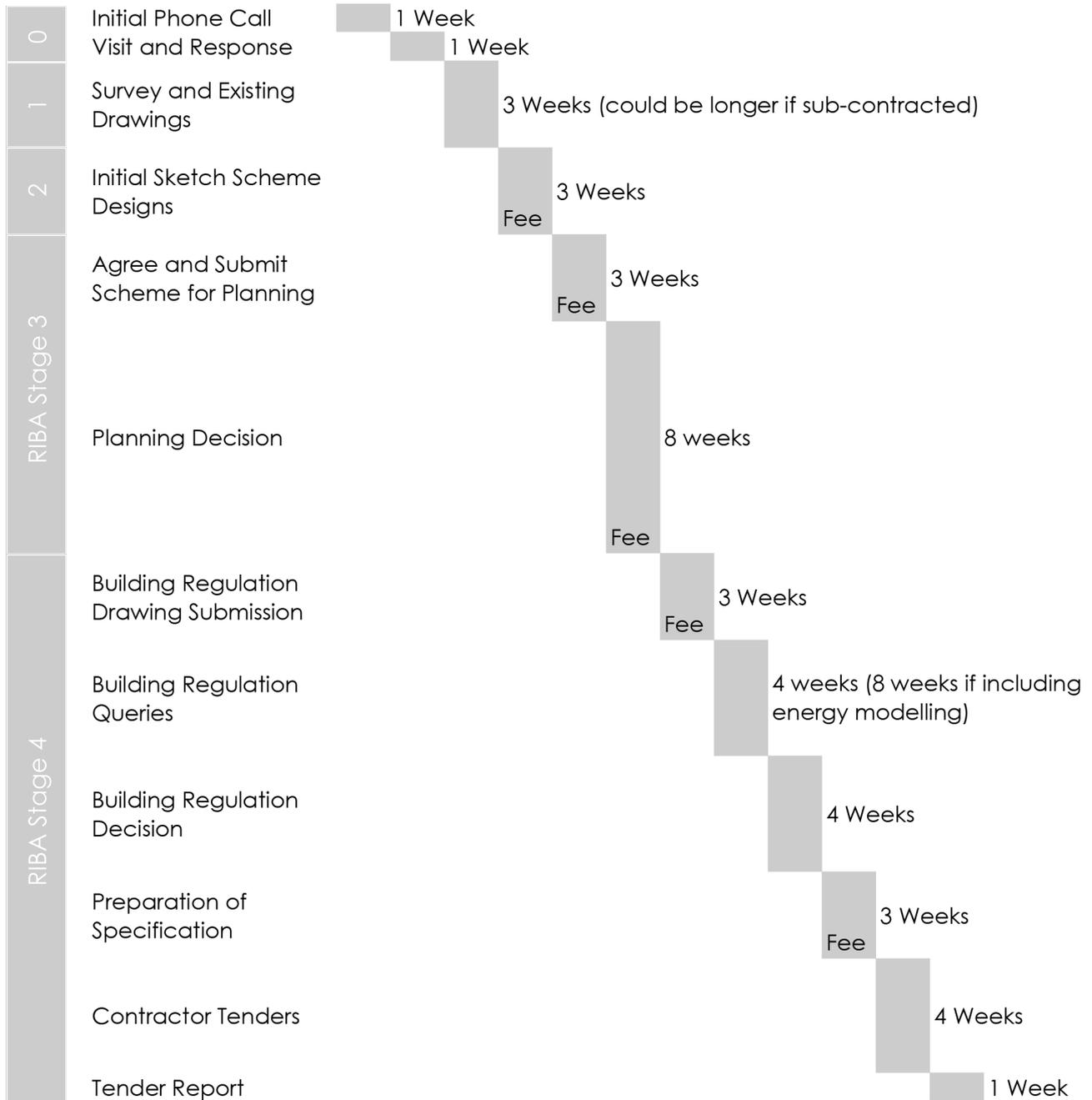
8. Construction [RIBA Stages 5 & 6]

Once you have appointed a Contractor we will oversee their work with regular site visits and valuations of work in progress and issue Certificates for payment to them. We can advise of any implications from making changes during construction and issue Contract Instructions for these to the Contractor. We will agree the final account for the project at the end of the build and ensure you are happy with the final result!

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Timelines of Work

Many clients have not engaged in building projects before and of underestimate the length of time the planning process can take. The timeline below indicates the quickest possible timeline up until the end of RIBA Work Stage 4 where the project is ready for site commencement. It is worth noting that in the St Albans area, planning often takes longer than 8 weeks.



From initial phone call to tender results: approximately **37 weeks**

Please note this is a general timeline and specific projects may differ, please ask if you are unsure

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Fees

Usual fee

Excluding the cost of a measured survey, for extension and alteration work, our usual fee is 7.5% of the net cost of the building works + VAT and is based on a full service. For new build dwellings, our usual fee is 7% of the net cost of the building works + VAT.

We will provide you with a fixed price for the measured survey in addition to these figures.

The net cost of the building works would be based on an initial estimate of construction costs and adjusted when quotations are finally received. For the purposes of calculating fees, we will not include in the net cost of works, elements of the Contractor's quotations relating to items with little or no design input, eg external kitchen or bathroom designs or external service engineer design.

Variations

There may be variations to these prices in certain situations including, small scale projects, Listed building work, larger new build schemes, Passivhaus and certification-based projects and commercial schemes which we are more than happy to run through.

Schedule of payments

Our fee invoices generally split into three parts: 40% for measuring up, scheme design and planning; 30% for technical design and tender and 30% for site involvement and sign off.

| General description | RIBA work stage | Usual fees |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Pre-project advice Appraisals | 0 | 0% if project proceeds Or £250-500 + VAT |
| Survey and production of existing drawings Full measured survey and generation of 3D model | 1 | 10% (usually charged with stage 2) |
| Agreement of brief and conceptual designs Client discussions and production of sketch designs | 2 | 10% |
| Pre-app and Planning/Listed building applications | 3 | 10% |
| Application monitoring and clearance of conditions | 3 | 10% |
| Technical design and Building Regulations application | 4 | 20% |
| Technical queries, preparation of specification and tender | 4 | 10% |
| Contract administration and site involvement | 5 | 25% (in 4 weekly increments) |
| Handover | 6 | 5% |

Additional charges

- Fees payable to the Local Authority
- Build Over Agreement fees for drainage authorities for building over/near sewers
- Application fees to connect to highways
- Consultants (if required)

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FAQs

What do you mean by 'Variations' to fees?

Clearly no two projects are the same so fees will vary. Our experience shows that fees may be lower or higher on several types of projects outlined below:

1. Small scale projects - on projects of less than £50,000 construction costs that still require Planning and Building Regulation Approval, we may charge a greater percentage fee
2. Listed building work - due to the complexity and detailing required, again we may have to charge a greater percentage fee, particularly on smaller projects
3. Larger new build schemes - schemes with repetitive elements or multiple properties of the same style are likely to attract a discount
4. Passivhaus and Certification-based projects- these are likely to attract extra costs in respect of certification costs and extra detailing, calculations and site involvement
5. Commercial projects - most commercial projects, particularly those over £250,000 are likely to attract a lower rate

Will you quote us an hourly rate for work?

Occasionally, when projects do not conform to the normal pattern of work, we may quote an hourly rate for work carried out. These are:

- Standard rate: £85 per hour + VAT
- Background research: £70 per hour + VAT
- Advocacy: £100 per hour + VAT

Do you ever quote fixed fees?

Where there is a high degree of certainty regarding the work involved in a project we will consider quoting a fixed fee.

Can I pause the process at any time?

We understand that situations change and though we often quote for providing the full service, when signing our fee agreement you are not obliged to continue with us through to completion on site. We will only ever charge you for work carried out to date and never up front and will not proceed to the next work stage without written instruction from you.

How long does planning permission last for?

Planning permission is valid for three years from the decision date. However, if you make a meaningful start, such as digging a section of foundation or slab, you are deemed to have implemented the permission and therefore secured it indefinitely. This is something worth bearing in mind if you may want to do a phased scheme - once the first phase is completed, you have secured the permission for phase 2!

Do we need to maintain your services throughout construction?

As above, you are not obliged to retain our services when the project is under construction. However, unless you have experience managing a build project (and the time to dedicate to it) we would strongly suggest that you do. By acting as Contract Administrators, we can ensure that both you and the Contractor are treated fairly, issue valuations of works and ensure that everyone is on the same page, as well as addressing any onsite queries the Contractor has, and that the build is completed as per the drawings (yes we have had projects built differently by builders when we were not involved! This can result in having to go back through the planning process all over again!). We have had a number of clients opt not to employ us to oversee works on site, who then contact us to address queries that arise on site which, when charged at an hourly rate, can cost more than employing us throughout - so this is definitely something worth considering.

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CDM

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

A Client's responsibility under Health and Safety Regulation

We are obliged to provide this information but rest assured there is nothing to worry about! If you employ us to take the project onto site and through to completion, all of this will be included within our workload.

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 apply to all projects and are the template for compliance with most health and safety legislation. As Client, you do have some responsibilities even when only doing domestic extensions and alterations although they do not need formal notification to the Health and Safety Executive.

Your main responsibility is to appoint a Principal Designer and Principal Contractor. Your Principal Designer will be responsible for co-ordinating matters relating to health and safety during the design phase and we can confirm that this is something we take on as part of our work.

Similarly the Principal Contractor will co-ordinate the health and safety matters during the construction phase. It is sensible to ensure that these positions are clear, particularly if, from a design point of view, we were not involved in the supervision of the building works or indeed you are using more than one Contractor for the works. In this latter circumstance there is a danger that you become effectively the Principal Contractor unless you have specifically appointed one Contractor for the health and safety co-ordination.

Beyond this, your responsibilities are only to allow sufficient time for the Principal Designer and the Principal Contractor to prepare any necessary health and safety documentation and to notify them of any specific risks of which you are aware eg possible presence of asbestos.

As we are involved in the supervision of the project, we will, as part of our service check that the Principal Contractor is complying with their obligations under the CDM regulations as well of course making sure that they are aware of issues we have identified at the design stage.

