

Working with an architect for your home



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Since your home is likely to be your most valuable asset, the process of designing and building or extending it may feel a little daunting.

Hiring an architect will give you peace of mind. They are the key to creating your dream home, tailored to your own personal tastes, needs and desires.

Architects can also help you to achieve your ambitions for an environmentally-friendly, long-lived and healthy home, even on a limited budget and RIBA-accredited practices regard it as their duty to do so. It's not just good for the planet; it pays back in saved energy bills, flexibility of use, healthy-living, and market value.

Whatever your brief, architects will bring something more to the table. Their extensive formal education and practical experience means that you can be sure of design quality. And of course they are professionals, working to strict codes of conduct and high standards of service so you are in safe hands.



First things first

Before contacting an architect, you will need to draw up a project brief. This is your wish-list for the project. Focus on what you want to achieve, note down all your requirements, and highlight any specific problems that need solving.

In particular, think in terms of how you will use the space now and in the future. Consider your ambitions for energy efficiency, reducing your long-term carbon footprint, and features that will promote your health and wellbeing. You are likely to want your home to age gracefully and remain resilient, adaptable and comfortable in the event of changes in your circumstances or the climate.

Establish your overall budget. This will help you discuss costs upfront with the architect and avoid disappointment later on.







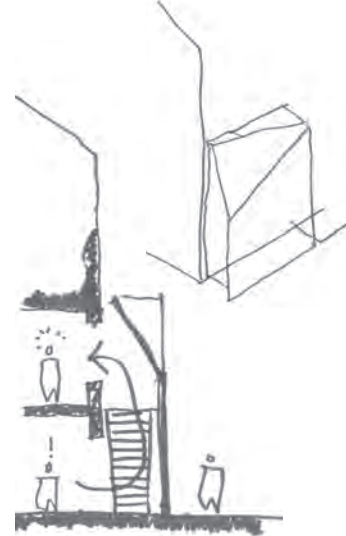
Getting the most from your project

Unless your project is very simple, it makes sense to at least talk to an architect for advice before you get going. They will highlight many important considerations, not least the ways that the design of your home can help to cut your energy bills and tackle climate change.

Generally architects begin to offer a full service for projects with a budget of £50,000 or more, but for a smaller fee an architect can help you get the best out of your project in the early stages, regardless of size and whether their services are needed later in the process.

Most architects offer one-off consultations and these can be incredibly useful. They will give you guidance on all aspects of your project, from design and cost through to planning and construction. In a short space of time you can gain valuable insight to help you realise your project.

If you need planning permission it is likely that you will need an architect. They will manage the planning application on your behalf.



Live/Work



Flexibility



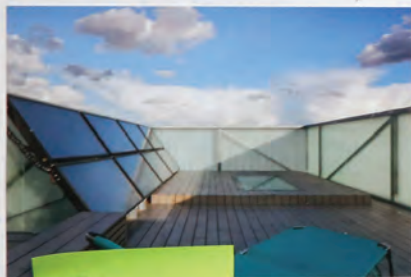
Sympathetic



More Space



Energy Efficiency



Light



Refresh



What does an architect do?

Chartered architects work to a strict code of conduct set down by the RIBA, and those who work for RIBA-accredited Chartered Practices meet the ultimate quality standard in the UK.

A good architect will propose solutions and develop your brief into a design that reflects your aspirations.

If you've plenty of room to expand, they'll help you maximise the potential. If the space available is more constrained, they can conjure extra space seemingly from nowhere, imagining clever solutions or reconfiguring existing layouts to realise your lifestyle plans.

They will also help you to reduce your home's energy bills and carbon footprint, and future-proof it against climate change.

Your architect will guide you through the regulatory process, helping to secure all necessary planning and listed building consents, and respecting building control. They can also help you select your builder and supervise the build through to completion, assuring the quality of workmanship and ensuring your money is well spent.




Space Saving



Family

Sustainability





‘Our ordinary little house deserved to become extraordinary. Our architect was the key.’

Polly, Cambridge

Finding an architect

Choosing an RIBA-accredited Chartered Practice will give you peace of mind. They comply with strict criteria covering insurance, health and safety and quality management systems.

Look for a practice with experience of your type of project or one that shares your aspirations. Check how many similar projects they have built, their contacts with the local planning department, and their track record of approvals. Follow up their references to find out about how successful their previous work was, how well they communicated, how responsive they were to changes, and how effective they were at managing the budget.

Set up an initial consultation to satisfy yourself that you can work with them.



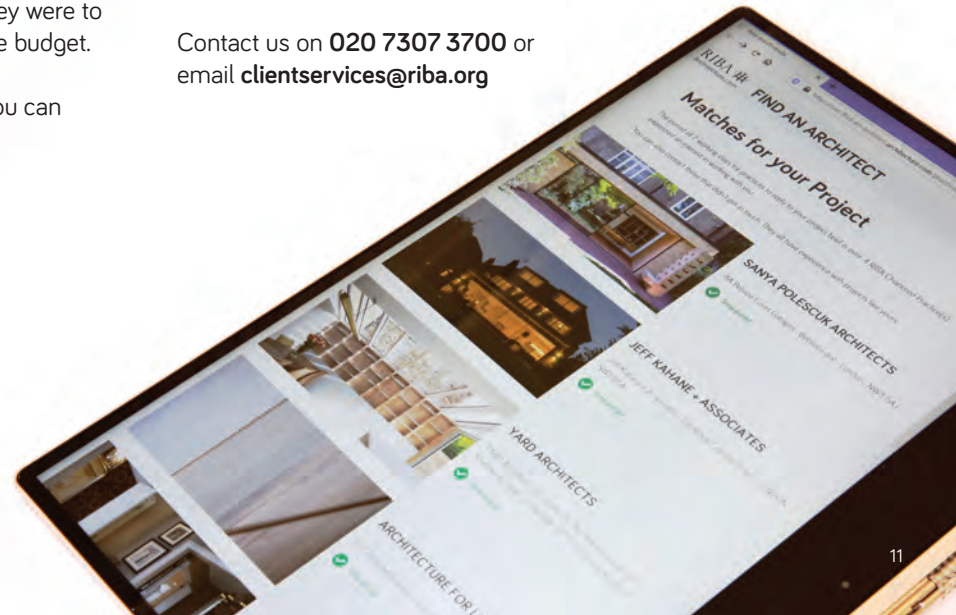
Use our Find an Architect service to create a shortlist from over 3,850 RIBA Chartered Practices and 42,000 projects.



www.architecture.com/find-an-architect

Alternatively, we can create a tailored shortlist of practices with the appropriate skills and experience on your behalf. The service is provided free of charge.

Contact us on **020 7307 3700** or email clientservices@riba.org



Appointing an architect

A good working relationship between architect and client is crucial to the success of any project. You and your architect should discuss and agree the scope and cost of the services they will provide before the project begins and ensure that this agreement is in writing.

For a more detailed explanation about the appointment process and how to get the most from your architect read 'A Domestic Client's Guide to Engaging an Architect'.



www.architecture.com/riba-books/books/practice-and-business-management/product/9781859467657-a-domestic-clients-guide-to-engaging-an-architect.html

Fees

Fees will vary depending on the location and complexity of the project and level of the service expected from the architect. Some architects will charge you on the basis of a total project cost, others on a fixed price lump sum or on a time-charge basis.

How much or how little you commission an architect to do is up to you. It can be anything from coming up with an initial design to seeing the project through to completion.

The Process



The RIBA's 'Plan of Work' sets out the key stages of a construction project from conception to completion.

What follows is an outline of the services that can be provided by an architect. Full details of the architect's services along with the terms and conditions will be specific to your project. They will be itemised and agreed with you by your appointed architect.

You can commission an architect for any of the stages you need for your project.



www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/riba-plan-of-work

'We cherish the past but craved the new. Our architect integrated both.'

Annette, Devon





RIBA Plan of Work

Stage 0

Strategic Definition

This stage is about confirming that a construction project is the right way to deliver the outcomes you want to achieve for your home. It is likely that you have already made this decision but an architect may help you explore the options that you can take forward for the budget you have prior to helping develop your project brief in the next stage.

Stage 1

Preparation and Briefing

This is the best moment for your architects to add real value not just in terms of addressing your immediate concerns but by setting out a grander vision for your home's aesthetic appeal, levels of comfort, and long-term sustainability.

Your architects will undertake some preliminary appraisals to assess your options and the project's feasibility. Ranging from a sketch design solution to a full feasibility study, the information will allow you to make an informed choice.

Your architects will identify the need for any approvals and other consultants, most commonly a structural engineer, helping to finalise your project brief.

Stage 2

Concept Design

Using the project brief, your architects will develop the design, including any plans for energy-saving measures and sustainability. They will present a number of initial concepts for you to choose from that are in line with your budget. They will also liaise with local planners as a priority.

The final concept design should reflect your aspirations and provide you with a home that adds value, minimises its impact on the environment, and improves your quality of life. Ideally, the design will be more or less fixed at this point.

Stage 3

Spatial Coordination

Your architects will spend more time at this stage transforming ideas into something that can be built. This includes coordinating the work of other consultants into the overall design and ensuring that strategies for sustainability are still on track.

Once agreed between you, the design proposals will then be submitted for planning approval, if required.

Stage 4

Technical Design

Your architects will now prepare the technical drawings and a specification and/or a schedule of works that will be used to price the tender and construct the building. This is when you finalize the selection of materials and finishes.

As well as completing the design in line with the Local Authority's planning approval and the Building Regulations, your architects can then invite builders (suitably qualified to deliver low-energy buildings if necessary), appraise their tenders, and administer the building contract on your behalf.

Stage 5

Manufacturing and Construction

Reaching this stage is a major landmark and marks the exciting moment when builders start on site.

Throughout the construction phase the architect can administer your contract with the builder, carry out regular inspections, deal with queries, instruct any additional work required, monitor progress on site, keep track of cost, value the works, and certify payments due to the builder.

The stage ends with the issue of a Certificate of Practical Completion, the moment when only minor defects and snags are left to do.

Stage 6

Handover

At this point your new house is ready to be handed over to you for you to move in. The building contract will require that your builders come back to fix outstanding problems and that you are given all the information you need to be able to operate the various systems in the house, especially important if they are unfamiliar low-energy systems.

After handover, your architects will be available to conduct a light-touch post-occupancy evaluation to help you understand how you building is bedding in. They will also be available to arrange for certifying the final payment at the end of the defects liability period.



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