



A HOMEOWNERS GUIDE
TO RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

*Everything you need to know before
you begin residential building works*

2017

ADAMS + COLLINGWOOD ARCHITECTS

INTRODUCTION

Extending or building a new home can be a big decision for a lot of homeowners; often the first building project they have undertaken.

Adams + Collingwood Architects specialise in residential architecture and work with a lot of homeowners. We understand that this can sometimes be an intimidating, costly and confusing process working with unknown professionals and tradespeople, regulations and technical language.

Every residential project we design and deliver is bespoke to our clients' requirements, but the working process will always follow the same template. We have prepared this guide to take you through the typical stages of a residential building project, so you know what to expect and how to prepare.

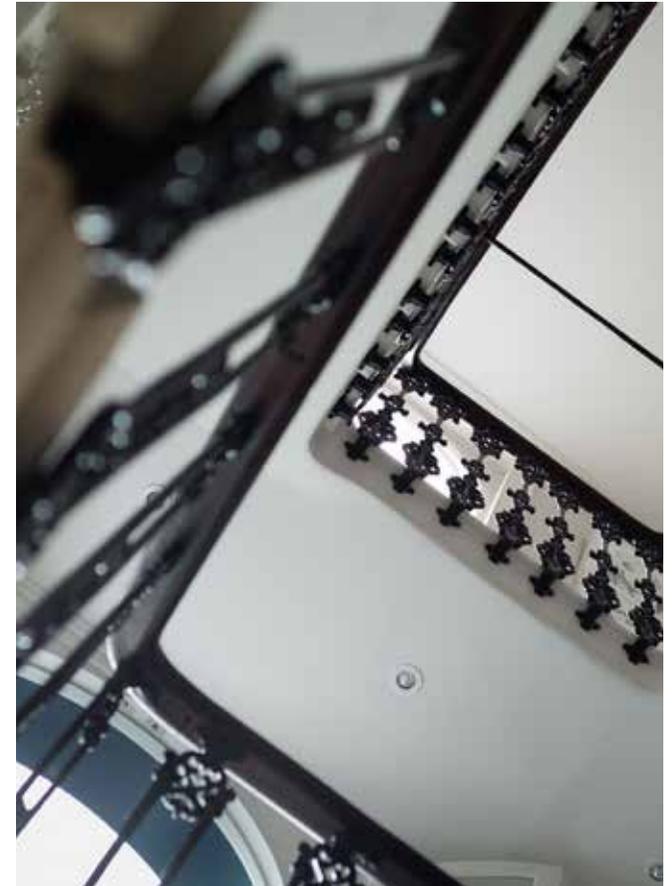


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I. BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Every successful building project begins with a clear brief. Experience tells us that cost, time and quality will inevitably conflict at some stage during the design and delivery process, so planning ahead is vital.

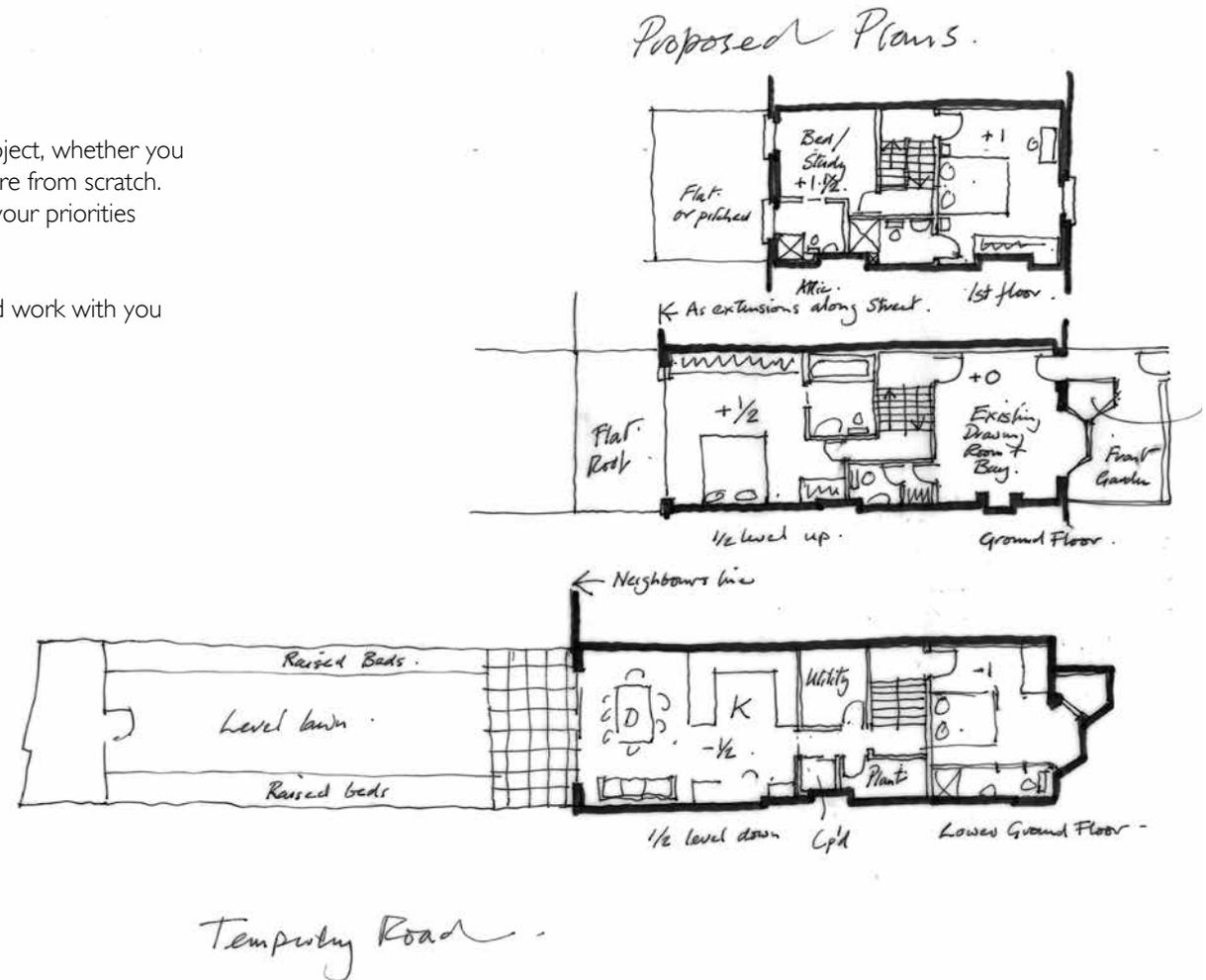


I. BEFORE YOU BEGIN

I.1 BRIEF

The purpose of the brief is to set out your objectives for your residential project, whether you are extending your home, renovating a tired space, or building a new structure from scratch. From budgets and timescales to your sense of style, it is vital to be clear on your priorities from the outset.

Your architect will be the first professional to talk you through your brief and work with you to develop a design that meets your expectations.



I. BEFORE YOU BEGIN

I.2 BUDGET

In our experience residential project budgets can vary significantly - your architect will tell you if your budget matches your project expectations. We always recommend including a contingency sum for the unforeseeable. Initially we usually calculate an approximate budget as an estimate of cost per sqft of the development – this will be based on previous experience of similar residential projects.

Once the design is firmed up we will provide an outline budget, however it should be noted that we are not specialist cost consultants and if more accurate budgeting is required for larger or complex projects, we would recommend appointing a quantity surveyor at this early stage.



I. BEFORE YOU BEGIN

I.3 WHO TO EMPLOY AND WHEN

If you are reading this guide, then it is safe to assume that you are considering commissioning an architect for your residential building project. To ensure a controlled design and construction process, it is essential to work with an architect you trust and bring them in at the briefing stage to guide you through your project from inception to completion.

We will work with you to design, develop and deliver your project, including handling planning applications and liaising with local authorities on your behalf.

Dependent on the extent and complexity of your project, you may require a contractor to provide materials, labour, equipment and services necessary for the construction of your building. If you do not have your own contacts, we will recommend reliable contractors. We can also recommend trustworthy builders and tradespeople suitable for all types of residential projects.

Every project will hit some form of bump, so it is essential to be prepared for this and employ an architect, contractor and builder you trust and can establish good communications with.

Each building operation is unique and all decisions will be taken by us with an expert appreciation of your individual circumstances. Should you require specialist or legal advice, we will recommend this.



I. BEFORE YOU BEGIN

I.4 SUMMARY - KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

- Plan ahead and define your project brief – clearly describe your expectations and desires
- Budget carefully and include a contingency sum for the unforeseeable
- Employ an architect you trust and find easy to communicate with
- Choose a contractor capable of giving you what you want
- Work with the construction team to deliver a successful project
- Make firm decisions and try not to change them at a later date
- Expect problems and put in place a method of dealing with them
- Pay promptly (cash flow is key in the construction industry)



2. KEY STAGES OF A RESIDENTIAL PROJECT

All reputable architects in the UK follow the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) standard Plan of Work for architectural projects. Adams + Collingwood Architects have tailored this plan to suit private residential projects. Here are the key stages and project milestones you can expect.

RIBA Stage 1: Preparation & Brief

- A clear **vision** of what you want to achieve (*please refer to 1. Before You Begin*)
- An initial **site visit** with you to discuss your brief
- A **measured survey** of the existing site. This is vital to every project, because very little can be done until this information is provided. We can recommend a suitable surveyor, or obtain quotes on your behalf
- On receipt of the measured survey we will produce a **sketch design** to firm up our initial site visit discussions

RIBA Stage 2: Concept Design

- Agree initial sketch design and develop into a scheme design with a set of **planning drawings** incorporating plans, sections and elevations
- If required, submit a **planning application** and **design and access statement** to the relevant local council
- **Additional studies** are often required for the planning application and we will advise depending on the project
- Planning applications typically take **8 weeks** to decide, but we have found that many councils do experience delays in approvals
- It is common for planning approvals to come with **conditions** which will need to be acted upon before building works can commence



RIBA 

2. KEY STAGES OF A RESIDENTIAL PROJECT

Click here to
read the
RIBA
Plan of Work

RIBA Stages 3 & 4: Developed Design & Technical Design

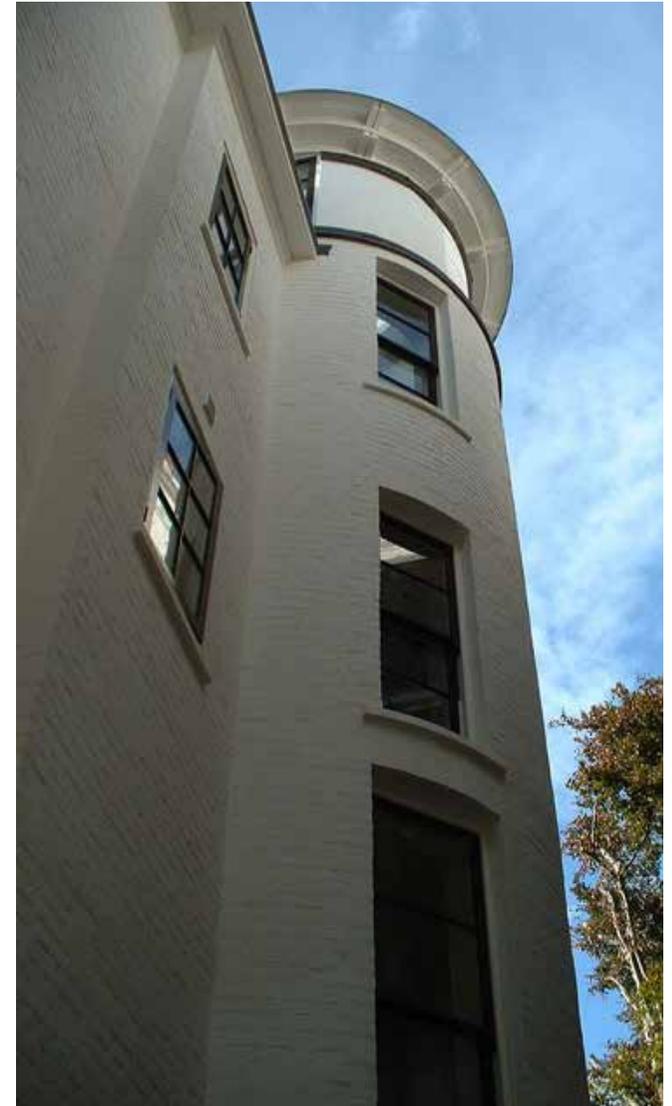
- We will agree detailed design finishes, product choices and firm spatial concepts and develop the planning drawings into a set of **working drawings** and **tender information**
- We will prepare the tender information suitable for the project and in accordance with the **British Standards Approved Documents**
- It can be possible to speed up the working process by overlapping the working drawings with the planning application, but if the planners ask for changes to be made in order for your project to gain planning approval, there may be a risk of paying abortive architectural fees. Dependent on the complexity and situation of the residential project, we will advise for or against this

RIBA Stage 5: Construction

- Tender for and appoint a **contractor** - typically contractors require approximately 4 weeks to put a competitive price together. We advise allowing an additional two weeks to check tenders received and before instructing your chosen contractor to proceed
- Once **construction works commence on site**, allow a programme and budget contingency for unforeseen variations and delays due to bad weather
- Make regular payments to your contractor to ensure all professional services and materials are paid for and work can continue unhindered

RIBA Stages 6 & 7: Handover & Close Out, In Use

- At **practical completion**, the building works will be completed and the building ready for use
- There will be an agreed period of time where defects and any incomplete works can be finished, whilst the building is inhabited
- At the end of this period, all works will be formally completed and a **final certificate** will be issued and any **final payments** owed will be made to the architect and contractor



3. EMPLOYING AN ARCHITECT

Adams + Collingwood Architects will always suggest an initial briefing meeting on your project site to informally discuss requirements, approximate budget, and timescale (please refer to I. Before You Begin). Once you wish to proceed, we will write to you with a contract that sets out the **terms and conditions** of our appointment and fees, and ask you to confirm acceptance in writing.



3. EMPLOYING AN ARCHITECT

3.1 ARCHITECTS' SERVICES

Following the key stages of a residential project outlined in the previous section, these are the services that you can expect from our architectural team:

Preliminary services (*RIBA Stage 1*)

1. Project definition & brief

Basic services (*RIBA Stages 2 to 7*)

2. Concept design
 Planning application
3. Detailed design
4. Working drawings
 Building control
5. Contractor appointment
6. Practical completion
7. End of defects

Additional Services

Principle Designer / CDM
Contract Administrator

Dependent on your particular circumstances, other specialist architectural services excluded from this list may be required for your residential project and we will advise how they can be procured.



3. EMPLOYING AN ARCHITECT

3.2 STANDARD FORMS OF CONTRACT

Click here
to purchase
these contracts
from the
RIBA Bookshop

The majority of domestic residential building projects adopt one of two standard forms of contract produced by the RIBA; a **Small Works Architects Appointment** or a **Standard Form of Appointment for an Architect**.

Over time, Adams + Collingwood Architects have developed a simple appointment document/email stating our terms and conditions. We use this in conjunction with the RIBA Standard Form of Appointment for an Architect.

On request Adams + Collingwood Architects are happy to share our standard **Terms and Conditions of Appointment** for your reference.

Please request a copy:

Email info@adamscollingwood.com

Tel 020 8735 5350



3. EMPLOYING AN ARCHITECT

3.3 FEES & EXPENSES

Over the course of a project, architectural services can be split into preliminary, basic and additional services (*see 3.1 Architects' Services*). Fees for each service are usually calculated in one of three ways outlined here:

- Preliminary services are usually charged on a time expended basis until the project reaches a stage that the construction cost can be accurately estimated.
- Basic services are usually charged on a percentage of the construction cost.
- Additional services are normally charged on a time expended or lump sum basis.

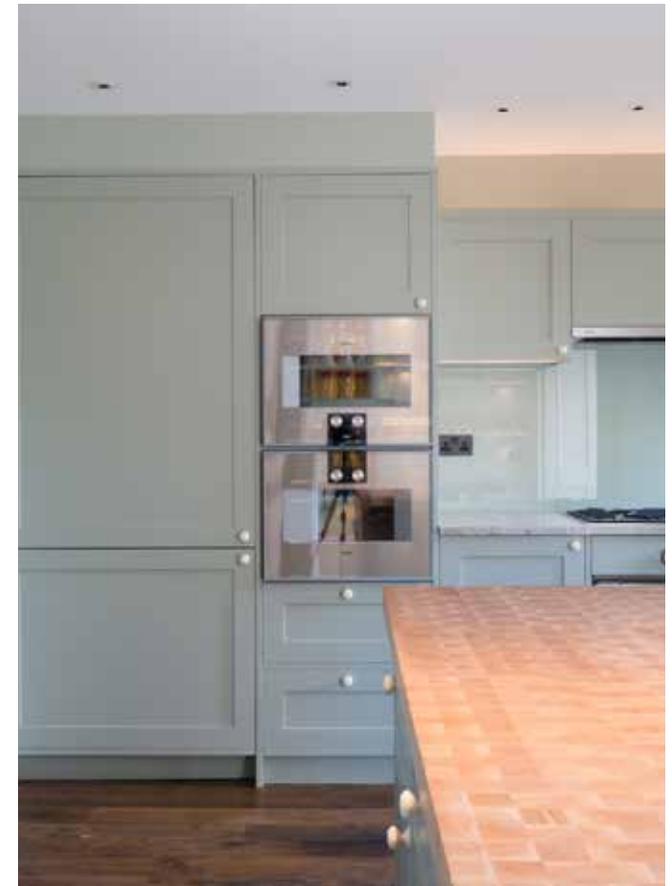
Below we describe recommended methods of calculating and paying fees for architectural services and expenses.

Percentage Fees

Percentage fees are based on the total construction cost of the works (excluding VAT). In domestic residential projects, percentage fees are typically used to calculate an architect's basic service fees where the construction cost is estimated to fall between £50,000 and £500,000. Here is an example percentage fee scale:

Total Construction Cost	Architect's % Fee
£50,000 - £100,000	14%
£100,000 - £250,000	13%
£250,000 - £500,000	12%

Once the final certificate is issued, (*please refer to RIBA Stages 6 & 7*), the final payment due should be recalculated on the actual total construction cost.



3. EMPLOYING AN ARCHITECT

3.3 FEES & EXPENSES

Time Charge Fees

Architectural fees charged against time expended (usually for preliminary services) are based on hourly rates for principals and other technical staff. In assessing the appropriate hourly rate we will consider all factors relevant to the project, including the complexity of the work and the character of any negotiations.

We will maintain records of time spent on services charged against time expended.

Lump Sum Fees

When the task is very clear and/or limited – typically for smaller projects where only specific basic services or additional services are required - we may agree to charge a fixed or lump sum fee. It is standard practice to add a % risk factor to a fixed lump sum fee offer.

By agreement a percentage of the lump sum fee may be compounded to cover all or any part of the architect's services and expenses.



3. EMPLOYING AN ARCHITECT

3.3 FEES & EXPENSES

Interim Payments

Percentage and lump sum fees and expenses should be paid in instalments, either at regular intervals or on completion of each work stage of the preliminary and basic services.

Where interim payments are related to completion of work stages (see above), here is the recommended apportionment:

Work Stage	Proportion of Fee	Cumulative Total
1	2.5%	2.5%
2	32.5%	35%
3-4	32.5%	67.5%
5-6	30%	97.5%
7	2.5%	100%

It is worth noting that this recommended apportionment of fees does not necessarily reflect the amount of work completed in any work stage and can usually be adjusted by agreement with our team.

VAT

It is important to note that in domestic residential works there is an opportunity to avoid VAT if the existing building is demolished and a new house is built.

Expenses

The fee we charge for architectural services will, as standard, exclude expenses and disbursements, such as:

- Planning application fees
- Inspection fees
- Out of pocket expenses such as train fares, printing, postage and photographic expenses
- International calls



