

A guide to ...

# Having Building Work Carried out

From your initial ideas through to completion

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“Having building work carried out can be exciting, but is fraught with potential problems if you don’t have at least a basic understanding of the process. After reading this guide, you’ll be better equipped to know what you can do yourself, and where you might need some professional help.”

**Daniel Sutherland MRICS**

For more information or free advice visit [www.sutherlandsurveyors.co.uk](http://www.sutherlandsurveyors.co.uk), email [info@sutherlandsurveyors.co.uk](mailto:info@sutherlandsurveyors.co.uk), or telephone 01202 237377

## Building works

When having building work carried out, whether it be residential or non-residential; alterations, an extension, or a new build; it is important to find the right professional team, namely a good builder and Chartered Building Surveyor, and maybe a Structural Engineer. They will work together to protect your interests and make sure you get the building you dreamed of.

The cost of building work usually amounts to a significant sum, so you need to make sure you get it right and get good value for money. When choosing your team, ask lots of questions: they are there to serve you. Employing the right people from the start will help ensure that your building project provides the right solution for you.

### **Take advantage of the skills and expertise of a Chartered Surveyor.**

The advantages of using an RICS Chartered Building Surveyor are:

- They give you clear, impartial and expert advice
- They act in your interest
- They are tightly regulated and have to follow strict rules of conduct - including having in place insurance to protect you
- They have specific rules and must follow best practice guidance
- They have to update their skills and knowledge throughout their careers so you can rely on their expertise
- You are protected by a complaints procedure
- They have detailed knowledge of building design and construction making them the most qualified to advise on your buildings.



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# The process

## 1. Considering your options

Make sure you get the design right first time. If you aren't sure what you want to achieve or how to achieve it, then you might want to have a feasibility study or options appraisal carried out.

## 2. Design

From the feasibility study or client brief, the design of the building, extension or alterations will be developed into a more detailed design in the form of CAD (computer aided design) drawings. These drawings may consist of a Location Plan, Site Plan, Floor Plans, Roof Plan, Elevations, and Sections depending on the intended use of the drawings.

## 3. Planning

Some building work will require planning permission from the local authority, whilst other work will be 'permitted development'.

## 4. Building Regulations

Most building work will require building regulations approval. There are several different ways of obtaining this.

## 5. Choosing a builder

There are two main ways of choosing a builder: simply asking your preferred builder to price a job and satisfy yourself that the price is fair and reasonable; or to ask several builders to price a job (go to tender).

## 6. Agreeing terms with your builder

In order for your builder to be able to do the best job and charge the most competitive rate, they will need:

- Detailed drawings
- A Specification or Schedule of work
- A contract.

## 7. Project managing the build

Making sure that the build is built to spec and goes to plan.

## 8. Handover

The dream turned into reality.

## 9. CDM Regulations

You have certain legal obligations in relation to safety, and you should make sure you know what these are.

## 10. The Party Wall, etc Act 1996

Protects the parties and allows for reasonable building work to be carried out.

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# 1. Considering your options

## **Get the design right first time; you don't get a second chance – get a feasibility study**

If you aren't sure what you want to achieve or how to achieve it, then you might want to have a feasibility study or options appraisal prepared with budget costings. Or you might just want to have a fresh pair of eyes look at the building.

This will help clarify your goals and how you can achieve them, perhaps by having sketch scheme designs drawn up and budget costings prepared. From this, a clear client brief will be developed, from which the more detailed design will evolve.

For example, if you want more space, but aren't sure how best to achieve it, alternative outline schemes can be prepared, for example an extension, or re-configuring the space you already have.

Or perhaps you have a redundant building and want to bring it back into use. A feasibility study will explore the possible uses and the costs involved so that you can assess the likely return or benefit that will be derived from the work.

Often, when a client advises the surveyor of what they are trying to achieve, a more economical or higher value solution will be developed at the feasibility stage.

Good communication between the client and surveyor is crucial. Don't hold back: if the surveyor doesn't know what your real goals or aspirations are, they won't be able to help you come up with the best solution. It doesn't matter who has the ideas; it's the end result that matters.

Even if you don't intend to use a surveyor for the detailed design or to project manage the build, great value can be added at this early stage.

A surveyor's fees for helping you consider the options will range from £200 for some general advice to maybe £2000 for a feasibility/options appraisal with budget costings.



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## 2. Design

**The most important thing about the design is that it works for you.**

From the feasibility study or client brief, the design of the building, extension or alterations will be developed into a more detailed design in the form of CAD (computer aided design) drawings.

These drawings may consist of a Location Plan, Site Plan, Floor Plans, Roof Plan, Elevations, and Sections depending on the intended use of the drawings.

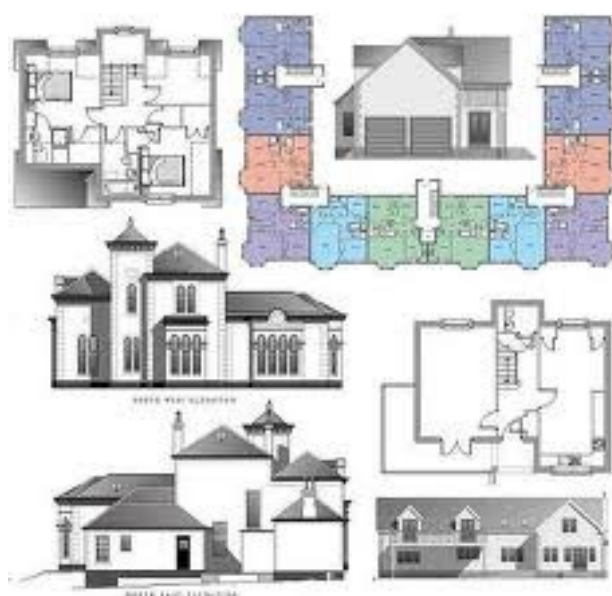
Drawings might be needed for a building contractor to work from, for a planning or Listed Building application, for a Building Regulations application, or simply as a record of the existing building.

Chartered Building Surveyors have the skills and training to develop a design that meets the client's needs, satisfies the Local Authority Planning Department and also complies with the requirements of the Building Regulations. Additionally, careful consideration will be given to such things as circulation space, ventilation, light, safety, being of a sympathetic design, and any other specific client requirements, whilst also making sure that the building does the basics like not falling down and keeping the rain out!

Building Contractors have many skills, but few have the necessary skills or qualifications to fully design a building project, and most prefer to work from drawings.

Chartered Architects are also qualified to design buildings. In general, a Chartered Architect is more suited to designing unique, one-off buildings, whilst a Chartered Building Surveyor is more suited to designing buildings that are consistent with the vernacular or extensions and alterations that complement the existing structure.

The design will develop and become more detailed through planning, building regulations, tender, and construction.



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### 3. Planning

#### **Good communication and clear drawings are essential in driving the planning process**

Some building work will require planning permission from the local authority, whilst other work will be 'permitted development'. If the work is 'permitted development' then you can just crack on with building regulations and obtaining quotations. You must, however, make sure that your 'permitted development' rights have not been withdrawn, perhaps as part of the original permission, or as a condition of planning permission received for an extension. The paperwork with your property, or your legal adviser should be able to tell you this. Often, small residential extensions to the rear will be 'permitted development'.

Assuming that the building work needs planning permission, then you will need a surveyor to prepare existing and proposed drawings, usually including floor-plans, elevations, roof plan, site plan, location plan, and possibly other documents such as a design and access statement and flood risk assessment, along with the application form itself. A fee will also be payable. Either ask your surveyor or check the Local Authority website.

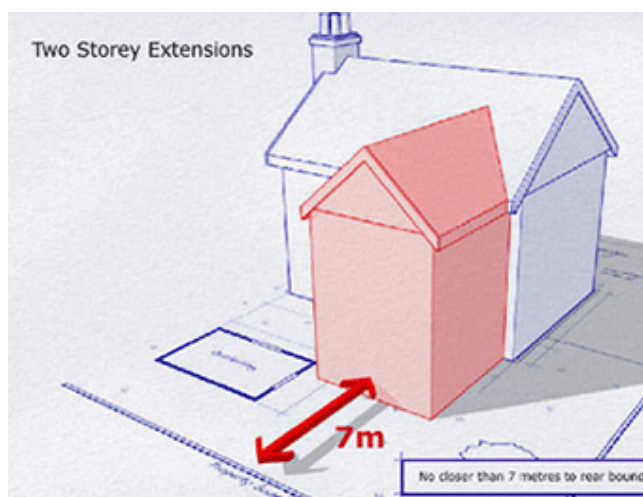
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If your building is Listed then a separate Listed Building's application will also be necessary. It is important to liaise with the Conservation Officer at an early stage and get them on side to ease the process.

Fees for design up to this stage and for preparing and submitting the planning application will range from about £500 to perhaps £5000 depending on the size and complexity of the project.

If you would like to see if your building works will need planning permission then you can visit the Planning Portal and use their interactive house:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/>



## 4. Building Regulations

**The point of Building Regulations is to provide safe and sound buildings, and to ensure energy efficiency**

Part of the designer's job is to ensure that the design complies with Building Regulations, although some alterations or additions are usually required after the original submission.

Most building work will require building regulations approval. There are several different ways of obtaining this.

For building work to residential buildings, a Building Notice can be submitted. This is simply a notification to Building Control that work is about to be started. A Building Control Officer will then make inspections to try to determine if it complies with the regulations. This is suitable really only for small and simple work. If any of the work is done not in accordance with the regulations, then the work will have to be 'undone' and rebuilt.

For other work, a Full Plans Building Regulations application will be required. This consists of drawings, similar to any planning application drawings, but with more detail (for example sections) showing how the building work is going to be carried out.

The drawings are accompanied by notes describing how the work will comply with the regulations, and possibly structural engineer's calculations and an assessment to show how it complies with energy efficiency requirements (SAP or SBEM assessment).

Some work can be deemed to comply with the regulations if it is carried out by a person registered with an appropriate 'competent persons' scheme. Examples of these schemes are FENSA (window installations), Gas Safe (for gas installations!) and electrical installations. You should check that your tradesman is registered with a suitable scheme and obtain a certificate on completion.

Assuming that planning drawings have been prepared, a Chartered Surveyors fees for a Full Plans Building Regulations submission will range from about £500 to £5000 depending on the size and complexity of the project.

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## 5. Choosing a builder

There are two main ways of choosing a builder: simply asking your preferred builder to price a job and satisfy yourself that the price is fair and reasonable; or to ask several builders to price a job (go to tender).

Negotiating with a preferred builder may be suitable where they have carried out work for you before, you are confident that they are competitive, and perhaps if quality, rather than price, is your main consideration. It can be very helpful to have your chosen builder 'on board' before the design is complete so that they can provide input to the design and advise on 'buildability' and on how things might be done to achieve better results or better value. In theory, the builder will also not have to 'price into' the job the costs associated with preparing a tender (if a builder has to price three jobs in order to 'win' one, then his tendering costs are three times higher for a competitively tendered job than they are for a negotiated job).

Going to tender is still the most common way of choosing a builder.

We can help you through the process of choosing a builder.

One of the best ways of choosing a builder is by recommendation, so ask your friends and family.

Checking affiliations with reputable trade associations is also a good idea.

You should also:

- Check their insurances.
- Advise your own building insurers and make sure you are covered during the building works.
- Consider taking out specialist insurance.
- See recently completed work and speak to their recent clients.

Be wary of VAT free 'deals'. They may be a legitimate small business who operates under the VAT threshold, but if they purchase materials and employ sub-contractors, then this will be unlikely.

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## 6. Agreeing terms with your builder

In order for your builder to be able to do the best job and charge the most competitive rate, they will need:

- Detailed drawings
- A Specification or Schedule of work
- A contract

Many disputes with builders arise because the builder does not, and cannot, fully understand the client's vision. The process of developing the design, checking and amending the drawings with your Chartered Building Surveyor or Chartered Architect is an important one to make sure that the client's vision is made into reality. Without drawings, the builder's work is largely guess work.

The Specification or Schedule of work will clearly describe the work that is to be carried out. This is needed in addition to the drawings to avoid any confusion about what materials should be used, the quantities that should be assumed, how the works should be carried out, who is assuming the risk for uncertain items like foundation depths, how much is allowed for the supply of certain materials, and so on. Without a Specification, any quotes you obtain from builders will not be comparable, as each will have made different assumptions. A good specification then makes it much easier to agree the final figure allowing for variations.

A contract between the client and builder is essential. JCT (Joint Contracts Tribunal) produce building contracts for those Home Owners/Occupiers who do want to, and those who do not want to, appoint a consultant to oversee the work. JCT are the leading provider of standard forms of building contract and are recognised across the industry as having developed unbiased contracts.

The contract will state each party's responsibilities, the amount to be paid, the frequency of payments, the method of agreeing variations, the contract period, and so on. The contract should refer to the relevant drawings and Specification so that those documents make up part of the contract.

You can find building contracts at the JCT website:

[www.homeownercontracts.com](http://www.homeownercontracts.com)



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## 7. Project managing the build

**You need to make sure that the build is built to spec and goes to plan**

On building work from a value of about £15,000 to £1 million a Chartered Building Surveyor will inspect and value the work (roles undertaken by Architects and Quantity Surveyors on larger projects). This will ensure that the work is being carried out to a required standard and that the work is progressing on time; and he/she will develop the design as the build progresses, facilitate communication between the builder and client, and value the work to authorise interim payments and value variations to calculate the final contract sum.

On smaller projects the client may decide to project manage the build themselves. If so, they must ensure that they have excellent communication skills, have a good relationship with their chosen builder and have a contract in place.



## 8. Handover

### The dream turned into reality

When the building work is complete, you or your surveyor will need to:

- Agree the final account with the builder allowing for variations
- Prepare a snagging list
- Prepare relevant Certificates if your contract requires it
- Inform your insurance company
- Obtain the Building Regulations Completion Certificate and other certificates
- Obtain User Manual and/or other paperwork.

You will then be able to enjoy your new space! Months of thought, imagination, designing, liaising and inspecting will now all become worth it.

And don't forget to recommend your builder and surveyor to someone you know. Good builders and surveyors are always hard to find!

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## 9. CDM Regulations

### Ensuring the health and safety of construction workers and users

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) are designed to:

- improve health and safety in the construction industry
- have the right people for the right job at the right time to manage the risks on site
- focus on effective planning and manage the risk - not the paper-work

Everyone controlling site work has health and safety responsibilities. Checking that working conditions are healthy and safe before work begins, and ensuring that the proposed work is not going to put others at risk, require planning and organisation. This applies whatever the size of the site.

Clients should check the competence of the people they employ. Ideally, the people they employ would offer this evidence without prompting!

Every client of construction work has duties under these regulations. Your builder, architect, or surveyor should let you know what these duties are and should help you to discharge those duties.

Clients must make sure that:

- other dutyholders are appointed, for example designers and principal contractors.
- relevant information is prepared and provided to other dutyholders.
- welfare facilities are provided.

On any project with more than one contractor (likely to be any project other than the smallest job) a Principal Designer must be appointed. This can be a contractor if they have the appropriate skills, but would more often be your Chartered Surveyor.



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## 10. The Party Wall, etc Act

### Protect yourself and potentially save thousands of pounds

The Party Wall Act can add to the cost of your project and cause delays: surveyors might be instructed late, or act slowly, or the neighbour may act slowly in responding. If dealt with tactfully and professionally, however, the Party Wall Act protects the parties and allows for reasonable building work to be carried out by a 'building owner', without causing unnecessary inconvenience to a neighbour ('adjoining owner'). For example, the demolition and rebuilding of a party wall, the cutting of flashing into a neighbour's wall, and entry onto a neighbour's land, are all covered by the Act.

The Party Wall Act applies in the following circumstances:

- Building or carrying out work to a party (shared) wall;
- Building or carrying out work to a party structure, for example a floor or wall in a flat;
- Building or work to a garden wall astride the boundary line (Party Fence Wall);
- Building a wall which is up to the line of the boundary;
- Excavations within 3 metres to a greater depth than the 'adjoining owners' foundations;
- Excavations within 6 metres to a greater depth when a line is drawn at a 45 degree angle from the bottom of your foundations.

These circumstances are more easily understood with the benefit of diagrams. Click the link below for your free report.

[An Introduction to the Party Wall etc Act 1996](#)



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## Additional services

**Your Chartered Building Surveyor can also provide other services which you might not know about:**

### Extensions

Chartered Building Surveyors have the skills and training to help you extend your home, from considering the options, through design, planning, building regulations, choosing a builder, agreeing terms with your builder, project managing the build, and handover.

### Alterations

As above, a Chartered Building Surveyor can help you make internal alterations to make the best use of your space.

### Boundary walls and party walls

Any work near a neighbour may come under the Party Wall etc Act 1996. We also act as Party Wall Surveyors. See our website or our free guide: *An Introduction to the Party Wall etc Act 1996*.

### Defect diagnosis

Depending on the defects found in the survey, you may need a more detailed diagnosis of defects and design of the required remedial work.

## Useful links

**Here are some useful website addresses for advice when you're buying a home:**

**Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors -**  
[www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org)

**Which? -**  
[www.which.net](http://www.which.net)

**Inland Revenue -**  
[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

**Land Registry -**  
[www.landregistry.gov.uk](http://www.landregistry.gov.uk)

**The Leasehold Advisory Service -**  
[www.lease-advice.org](http://www.lease-advice.org)

**Council of Mortgage lenders -**  
[www.cml.org.uk](http://www.cml.org.uk)

**Law Society -**  
[www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

**Rightmove (property search website)**  
[www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

**Homecheck -**  
[www.homecheck.co.uk](http://www.homecheck.co.uk)

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## For more information

**We hope this guide is useful to you. If you'd like to know more about having building work carried out, please contact us for free advice and information.**

## Contact us

**Please telephone or email us, or visit our website. Our contact details are below.**

*Sutherland Surveyors*

25 Kings Park Road  
Bournemouth  
Dorset BH7 7AE

## Free advice and information

**We are a firm of Chartered Building Surveyors and specialise in helping our clients find solutions for:**

Buying and selling property

- Buying a home
- Selling a home
- Buying commercial property
- Land registry plans

Leasing commercial property

- Before the start of the lease
- Toward the end of the lease
- Lease plans

Maintaining your building

- Building defects
- Maintaining your home
- Maintaining non-residential property

Building work

- Considering the options (feasibility)
- Design
- Planning
- Building regulations
- Choosing a builder
- Agreeing terms with your builder
- Project managing the build
- Handover
- CDM Regulations
- The Party Wall etc Act

Disputes

- Building disputes
- Boundary disputes
- Expert witness

Building insurance

- Reinstatement valuations
- Claims

Chartered Building Surveyors Regulated by RICS

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