

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR PROJECT

Many of our clients have never embarked upon an architectural project before. With that in mind, this guide outlines and explains the role of your architect and the drawings you can expect to receive at each stage of the architectural design process.

Every project is different, so it's impossible for us to cover everything here. It's likely that you will still have queries about your project and, of course, that's why our team is on hand to support you every step of the way.

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# PLANNING/DESIGN :: PART 1

## EXISTING BUILDING/SITE

After you have instructed Studio J to work on your project, we will visit your development location. We take accurate measurements and photos of the existing property and the site itself. (On larger or more complex projects, a specialist surveyor may be engaged to do this). Plans and elevations are produced to show the existing building, site and related information.



## WHAT IS GENERALLY INCLUDED IN DRAWINGS AT THIS STAGE?

- Ordnance Survey: the proposed development in relation to its surrounding properties, plus any other land you own.
- Block/site plan: the existing property and proposed development in relation to the property boundary.
- The position and use of any other buildings within the boundary.

# PLANNING/DESIGN :: PART 2

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Drawings are produced to illustrate your proposed development. These include internal layouts whilst also indicating the scale and impact on the wider external environment. We work with you until you are happy these proposed designs. The existing and proposed plans and elevations will form the basis of any planning permission application you may require.

*Whilst some projects do not require planning permission, a similar set of drawings is still likely to be necessary.*



## WHAT IS GENERALLY INCLUDED IN DRAWINGS AT THIS STAGE?

- Internal layouts with indicative furniture placement.
- External elevations: 2D drawings of your proposed building from the outside. These show its height and the position of windows, doors etc.

A vertical architectural drawing of a building plan, showing various rooms, corridors, and structural lines. The drawing is in black ink on a light-colored background. It includes a scale bar labeled '0.8' and a north arrow pointing towards the top right.

# PLANNING PERMISSION

## DOES MY PROJECT REQUIRE PLANNING PERMISSION?

In some circumstances, planning permission is not required. As a general rule though, you will probably need permission if you want to do one of these things;

- Build something new
- Make a major change to a property (eg; build an extension over a certain size)
- Change the use of your building (eg; repurpose a residential building for use as a dental surgery)

## PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE AND OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION

We can often anticipate challenges that an application may encounter. However, sometimes it is advisable to request pre-application advice from the local planning department or to submit a less detailed application for Outline Planning Permission.

This is done prior to embarking on the full, detailed submission process

to find out, at an early stage, whether or not a proposal is likely to be approved by the planning authority. (Planning departments charge a fee for this service).

Pre-application advice provides nonbinding feedback on your proposed development from a planning officer, (with no guarantee that permission will be granted on any subsequent application). Conversely, outline planning permission represents approval in principal, pending a full planning application which will confirm comprehensive details.

*Although we cannot begin building work at this stage, seeking clarity early-on about how local planning policies and requirements may affect your proposal might reduce the likelihood of your submission being rejected. Thereby, saving you wasted time and expense.*



The final part of this stage is the submission of a planning application to your local authority planning department for approval.

In addition to the plans described previously, other things that may be needed as part of the planning application submission are as follows;

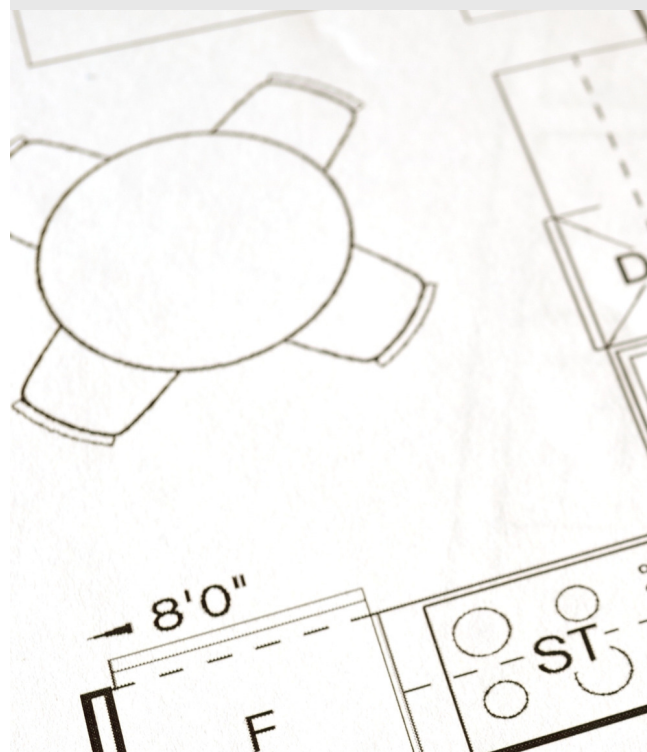
- Design and Access Statement (generally required for new build dwellings or commercial properties. Not required for householder applications): This is a written document that justifies the design as being appropriate for its setting.
- Specialist surveys: these are dictated by the site and/or project specifics and might include trees or wildlife surveys; traffic impact or historical assessments. An experienced architect will often be able to pre-empt the requirement for a survey, and if you obtain pre-application advice the planners are also likely to note any survey requirements. Surveys are usually produced by specialist consultants at additional cost.

In most cases there is a fee for the planning application, which will differ depending on the building location, size and various other factors (We will be able to estimate planning application fees for you at the start of the process). Add to this any survey costs and our fee for this initial phase of your project.

## IS IT ILLEGAL TO BUILD WITHOUT PLANNING PERMISSION?

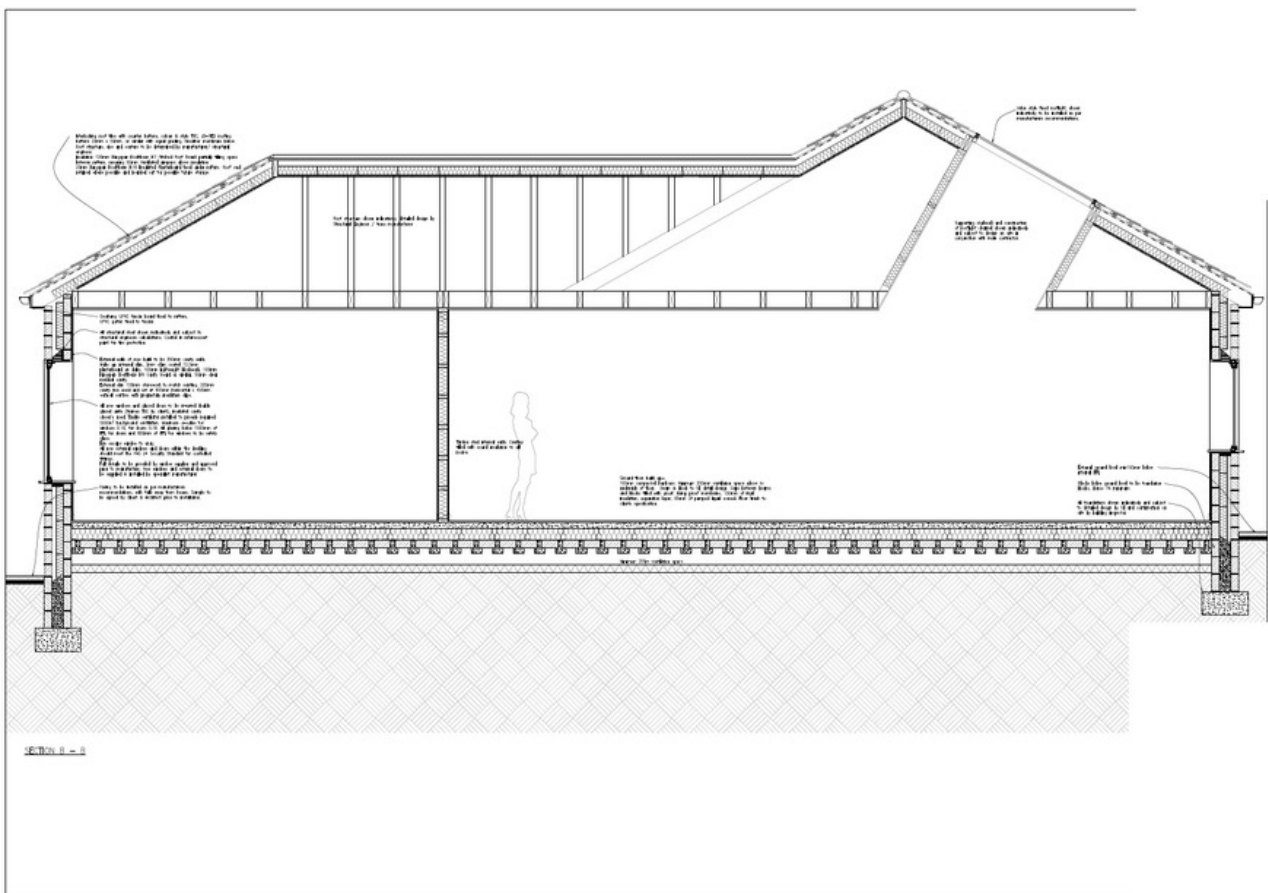
*If your project requires planning permission and you fail to secure it, you may be served an enforcement notice. This could demand that you undo any work undertaken. It is illegal to ignore an enforcement notice, although you can appeal against it.*

We advise clients to make thorough checks to ensure any planning permission requirements are covered before commencing with any work on site. The process is sometimes complex but this is a job that we are very familiar with and can advise you about.



# BUILDING REGULATIONS

Building regulations set out minimum statutory requirements for design, construction and alterations. These legal rules apply to pretty much every building in the United Kingdom.



## WHAT IS GENERALLY INCLUDED IN BUILDING REGULATIONS DRAWINGS?

Expect to see construction sections with specifications for things like insulation and damp-proof course. These drawings are more detailed than those for planning permission because they include notes on the proposed construction methods for your project.

*Even if your project doesn't require planning permission, it's likely that you will need building regulations approval.*



## **WHAT ARE BUILDING REGULATIONS?**

Building regulations set out minimum statutory requirements for design, construction and alterations. These legal rules apply to pretty much every building in the United Kingdom.

Even if your project doesn't require planning permission, it's likely that you will still need building regulations approval.

## **HOW DO WE OBTAIN BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVAL?**

To obtain building regulations approval you can choose to call upon your local authority building control department (LABC) or a private Approved Inspector. We can coordinate this process on your behalf.

Drawings at this stage will feature construction sections with specifications for things like damp-proof course and insulation. They are more detailed than those for planning permission because they include comprehensive notes to explain the proposed construction methods for your project.

We may instruct (on your behalf) a structural engineer at this stage of your project. We will source necessary quotes and liaise with them on the building design.

## **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE STRUCTURAL ENGINEER?**

A structural engineer is a uniquely qualified and insured professional who produces an appropriate structural design and supporting calculations to suit the architect's building design.

Before work starts on your site, we will combine the building regulations drawings with the structural engineer's information. This package is then submitted to the building inspector for "plans approval." This is an approval given before building work begins and is based on the principal that the works will be carried out as proposed and in compliance with current standards.



Some projects may require that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) be notified of the planned work. Your builder or project manager should ensure that any relevant forms are submitted to HSE on your behalf.

Finally; the building inspector makes routine and statutory inspections as work progresses on your site. He/she ensures compliance with the approved drawings and relevant legislation.

Within 8 weeks of the completion of your project, provided the work complies with the previously approved drawings and specifications, the building inspector will provide a certificate as formal evidence of plans approval.

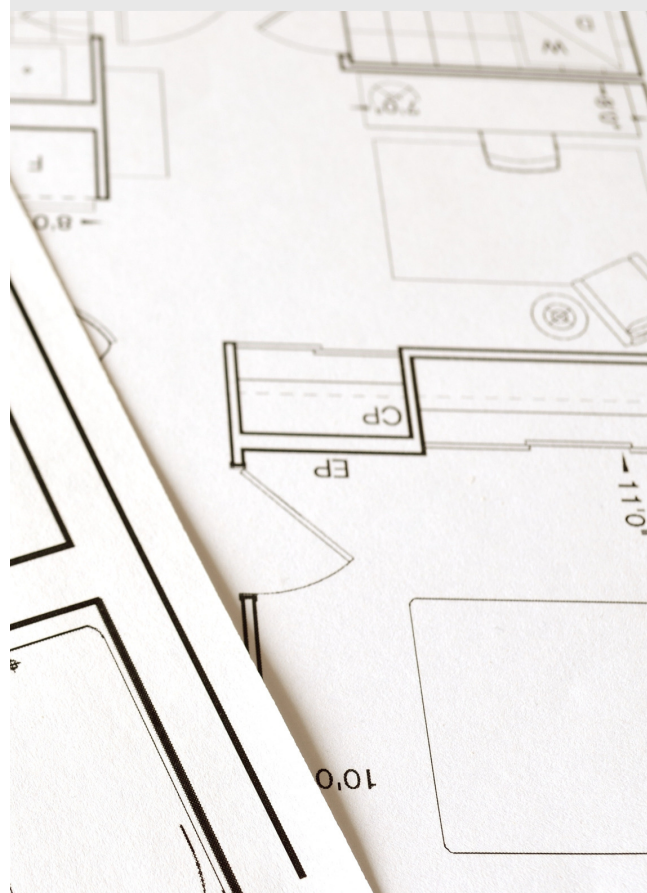
## HOW MUCH DOES THE BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVAL PROCESS COST?

Expect fees payable to your chosen building inspector for the application and subsequent inspections, plus a cost for the structural engineer and Studio J Architects. These costs will vary according to the nature of your project but we can confirm them at the beginning of the process.

## WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH BUILDING REGULATIONS?

Whoever is undertaking the building work will usually bear the responsibility for building regulations compliance; that might be you or a builder you employ.

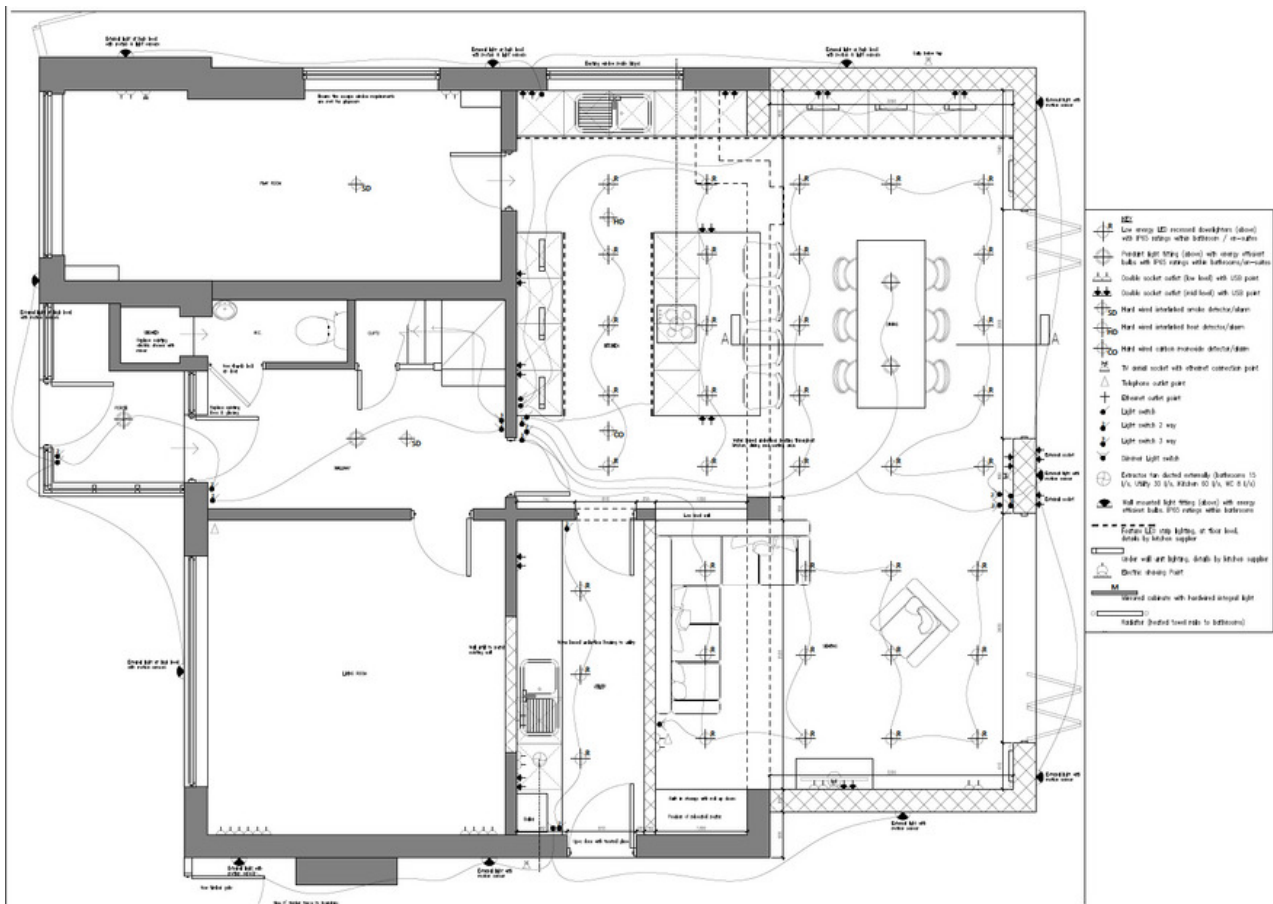
*Ultimately, the owner of the building may be served an enforcement notice if any work done falls foul of regulations. This is a legal notice which cannot be ignored and might demand that work is dismantled or corrected.*





# DETAILED DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

At this stage we provide detailed plans of your property along with written notes and specifications. The finished developed design package might be fairly basic or very comprehensive, depending on the requirements of the project. Ideally though, we recommend that it should feature as much detail about the completed building as possible, to reduce the risk of confusion and/or complications during construction.



## WHAT IS GENERALLY INCLUDED IN THE DETAILED DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE?

Detailed design drawings will show accurate setting out measurements and the precise location of power points, sockets, radiators, light switches and other fixtures and fittings. Specifications for types of materials will be included with the architect's notes, and specific tasks will be delegated to the builder.

*For example; the notes may instruct the builder to tile all four walls of the bathroom from floor to ceiling using the client's chosen tile.*

## WHY IS THE DETAILED DESIGN DEVELOPMENT STAGE IMPORTANT?

We recommend this work to our clients for several reasons, detailed below.

### Establish reliable cost calculations

The more exhaustive this stage is, the closer the builder's quote will be to the final project costs.

Using our earlier example; the builder can pair the amount of tiling required with the accurate measurements detailed on the architect's drawings. This can be used to calculate the area of tiling required in order to source an accurate price from a tiler. The same process is then applied to every other material / trades person required, to produce a final cost.

### Clarify the remit of the builder / contractor

The package provided by the architect at this stage of your project will clearly delegate work to the builder and any related trades employed on your site.

In our example, the architect's notes state that the builder will tile all of the bathroom walls. Getting this finer detail agreed and written down before construction begins will mitigate the risk of any nasty surprises such as delays and unexpected costs once the build is underway.

### Mitigate potential oversights and errors

A commitment to focus on the finer details of what will be required before work starts will focus your mind on a clear vision of the complete project. The detailed design development process ensures that this vision is understood by the builder, and all of this contributes towards a formal contract between you and the builder/contractor.

*Drawing on the unbiased expertise and experience of an architect at this stage minimises any potential oversights and errors.*

## CHOOSING A BUILDER

We will be happy to recommend builders and we are familiar with briefing them, providing a comprehensive package of drawings and information and fielding their queries.

Working with our support at this stage assures you that you will get the best deal whilst reducing the likelihood of unexpected costs during construction.