



GROUNDWATER ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

We are a local private architectural practice. The scale of work undertaken is of a varied nature and we have considerable experience in all aspects of architectural design, including commercial projects, general industrial, private housing, leisure and licensed premises, as well as listed and historic buildings.

Whether you are looking for traditional or contemporary design, we can provide a range of architectural services to meet your needs.

Clients often come to us looking to extend or alter their existing homes but have little or no understanding of the process involved. We have therefore prepared the following notes that we hope will go some way to clarifying the steps that need to be taken no matter the scale of the project.

1. INCEPTION & FEASIBILITY

Following the initial enquiry from a potential client, a representative from our office will arrange a meeting on site in order to appraise the site conditions and to discuss your requirements and ideas. We would advise on whether or not the scheme is feasible and identify any possible constraints on the proposed development. We would also suggest alternative ways of approaching the project which may not have previously considered. It would also be necessary at this stage to confirm the budget in order that we could advise on the size of development possible. This initial meeting will usually incur no costs to the client.

2. PRELIMINARY DESIGN

Should you wish to proceed further we will formalise the brief and give you an indication of our professional fees along with a breakdown of all other fees which are likely to be incurred (e.g. Structural Engineer, Quantity Surveyor and Local authority application fees etc.). We would then carry out a full dimensional and level survey of the existing building and site before producing a number of sketch drawings that would seek to interpret the brief and identify a possible solution. These sketch plans are likely to be modified a number of times until we have a design which meets your satisfaction

3. SCHEME DESIGN:

The approved layout is now developed into a set of drawings which clearly illustrate the appearance and external finishes of the proposed building. At this stage, we would strongly advise a client to employ the services of a Quantity Surveyor in order to check that the proposed scheme is still within the initial budget cost. This is a service which we can arrange on your behalf.

For most construction work it is necessary to obtain a Planning Consent from the Local Authority. Should we feel that the proposed scheme may be contentious in any way, we would enter into early discussions with the planning department in an attempt reduce the risk of planning refusal. When we are satisfied that we have a scheme which we believe would be considered favourably we would submit a formal planning application on your behalf. It should be noted however that there is no guarantee that an approval will be granted.

4. DETAILED DESIGN:

Before any construction work can begin, it will be necessary to obtain a Building Warrant consent from the Local Authority. This requires that we produce a detailed set of working drawings indicating how the building is to be constructed and proving that it will comply with the current Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations. These regulations cover all aspects of construction including drainage, fire escape, insulation levels, ventilation etc. Should there be significant structural work, it will also be necessary at this stage to employ the services of a structural engineer, which we can arrange on your behalf, in order to provide the necessary calculations and design certificates. Should you feel confident enough that a planning consent will be granted for the scheme, it is possible to submit the building warrant application during the planning stage, however there is a risk that this work could become abortive should planning be refused.

5. TENDER ACTION:

Once both the planning and building warrant consents have been received, we prepare and issue tender documentation for obtaining competitive quotes from no less than three competent building contractors. On projects over a value of £50,000 it may be advisable that the services of a quantity surveyor are used to prepare a schedule of work which is issued along with our tender documents. This schedule of work gives a much tighter means of controlling additional works and variations which may be encountered on site. Following our receipt and analysis of the contractor's prices, you may wish to interview a number of the contractors prior to making the final selection. We would then appoint the successful contractor on your behalf and prepare a suitable building contract for signing.

6. OPERATIONS ON SITE:

When work commences on site, our role becomes one of a contract administrator. This involves us in making periodic visits to the site in order to inspect the general progress of the work, issue instructions to the contractor, and if necessary rejecting work which is not in accordance with the contract. We would also report to you on matters of progress, any unforeseen circumstances on site and any variations in the budget or programme. In conjunction with the Quantity Surveyor, we would also issue periodic certificates for stage payments due to the contractor.

7. COMPLETION:

When in our opinion the building is in a condition which the client can move into, we will issue a Practical Completion Certificate which ends a number of the contractual obligations between you and the contractor. We will also apply for a Certificate of Completion from the local authority which confirms that the building has been constructed in accordance with the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations. We shall then agree the final account with the contractor and confirm the amount of retention money which is to be retained by you. This money is withheld for a period of time in case any minor defects arise from the building work. We will carry out a site inspection at the end of this period and if in our opinion everything is acceptable we will certify this final payment due to the contractor.