

# Working with an architect for your home



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## Working with an architect for your home

Your home is likely to be your most valuable asset and the process of designing and building or extending it may feel like a daunting prospect.

Hiring an architect is the key to creating your dream home, tailored to your own personal tastes, needs and desires.

Whatever the 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 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, noting down all your requirements and highlighting any problems that need solving. Think in terms of how you will use the space now and in the future, rather than what needs to be built.

You should also try to establish your overall budget. This will help you discuss costs upfront with the architect and avoid disappointment at a later stage.





## Do you really need an architect?

Unless your project is very simple it makes sense to at least talk to an architect for advice before you get going.

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 and they can manage that on your behalf.





Live/Work

Family



Relaxation



Detailing



Energy Efficiency



Practical



Space



## What does an architect do?

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 it is more constrained, they can conjure extra space, seemingly from nowhere, imagining clever solutions or reconfiguring existing layouts to realize your lifestyle plans.

An 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.



Storage



Security



Modern

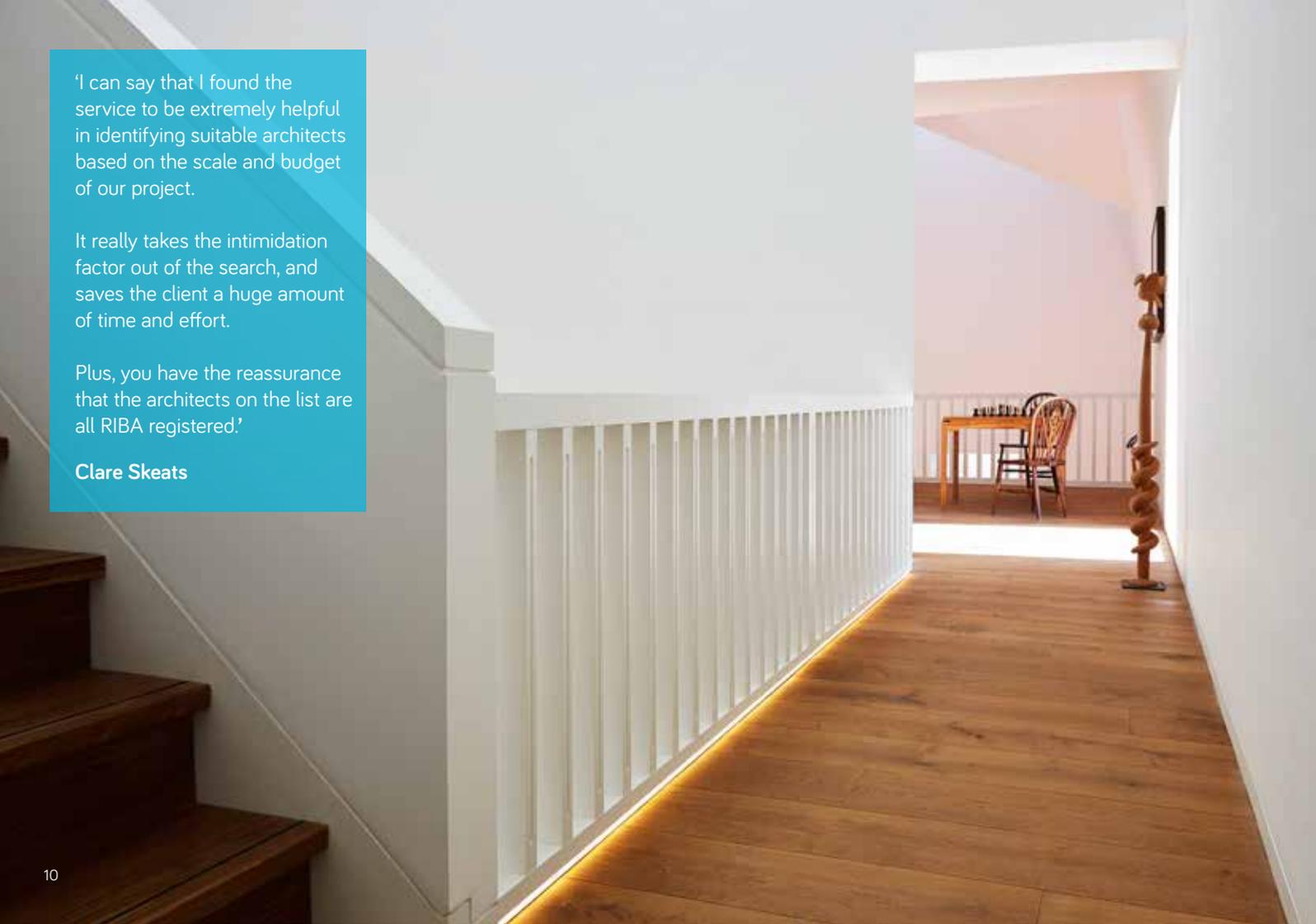


'I can say that I found the service to be extremely helpful in identifying suitable architects based on the scale and budget of our project.

It really takes the intimidation factor out of the search, and saves the client a huge amount of time and effort.

Plus, you have the reassurance that the architects on the list are all RIBA registered.'

**Clare Skeats**



## 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 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 the potential practices.

Use our Find an Architect website to narrow down your options from over 3,500 RIBA Chartered Practices.

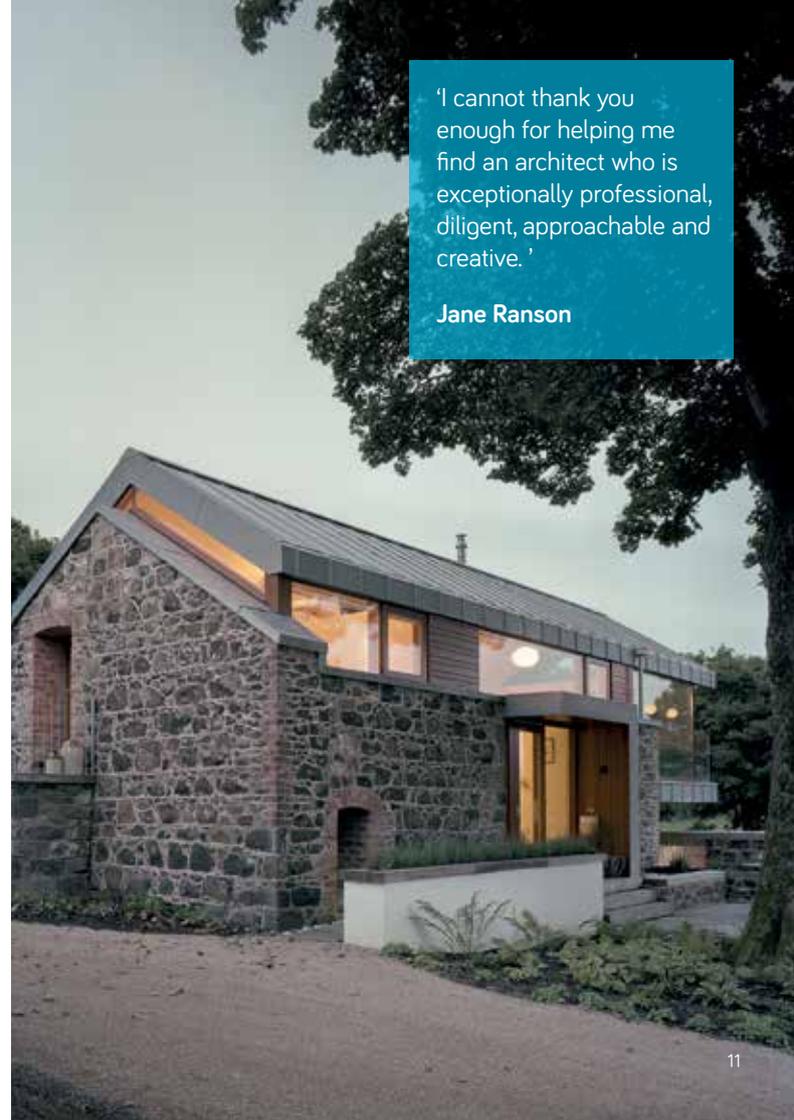
**[www.architecture.com/findanarchitect](http://www.architecture.com/findanarchitect)**

Alternatively, you can talk to us and we will 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](tel:02073073700) or email [clientservices@riba.org](mailto:clientservices@riba.org)

'I cannot thank you enough for helping me find an architect who is exceptionally professional, diligent, approachable and creative.'

**Jane Ranson**





## 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'. This can be purchased from [www.ribabookshops.com](http://www.ribabookshops.com)

## 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 is up to you – from coming up with an initial design to seeing the project through to completion.



# The Process

This 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.

The RIBA's 'Plan of Work 2013' sets out the key stages of a construction project from conception to completion.

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



**RIBA**  
Plan of  
Work  
2013

## Stage 0 / 1

### Preparation and Brief

This is the most important part of the project and where the architect can add real value.

The architect will undertake some preliminary appraisals to assess the options and feasibility of the project. This can range from a sketch design solution to a full feasibility study and will enable you to decide on the best way forward.

They will identify the need for any approvals and other consultants, most commonly a structural engineer.

## Stage 2

### Concept Design

Using the initial project brief the architect will develop outline proposals. An architect will present a number of initial concepts for you to choose from. They will also liaise with local planners as a priority.

The final design brief should reflect your aspirations and provide you with a home that adds value and improves your quality of life.

### Stage 3

## Developed Design

The architect 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 designs.

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

### Stage 4

## Technical Design

The architect 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.

The architect can then invite and appraise tenders from builders and administer the building contract on your behalf.

### Stage 5

## Construction

Throughout the construction phase the architect will 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.

### Stage 6

## Handover and Close Out

When the project is ready to handover the architect will make a final inspection and certify completion.

The architect will be available after handover and during any defects period to arrange for certifying the final payment.



With thanks to the following RIBA award winning architects

- 2 / 8 **Alison Brooks Architects** Lens House © Paul Riddle
- 8 / 9 / 12 **Carl Turner Architects** Slip House © Tim Crocker
- Covers **Denizen Works** House No. 7 © David Barbour
- 8 / 12 **Emrys Architects** Farningham House Cottage © Alan Williams
- 9 **Evans Vettori** High Edge © Tristan Poyser
- 8 **Jamie Fobert Architects** Luker House © Olivier Hess
- 12 **Jarmund/Vignsnaes Architects** and **Mole Architects**  
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- 13 **Knox Bhavan Architects** Crowbrook © Dennis Gilbert
- 9 / 12 / 13 **Loyn & Co Architects** Stormy Castle © Charles Hosea
- 10 / 12 **MacDonald Wright Architects** and **Rural Office for Architect**  
Caring Wood © Heiko Prigge
- 11 **McGarry-Moon Architects** Loughloughan Barn © Adam Currie
- 7 **Meloy Architects** The Kench © Jim Stephenson
- 6 / 8 / 9 / 13 **Mikhail Riches** Church Walk © Tim Crocker
- 8 **Piercy & Company** Martello Tower Y © Edmund Sumner
- 12 **Rural Office for Architecture** New Barn © Mojo Photography
- 8 **Smerin Architects** Red Bridge House © Tim Crocker
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