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Before You Start

Engage Professionals Early

Engage professional consultants asap – the earlier the better! The success of your project relies on having the right team in place; from concept ideas through to the full design, construction management, cost advice, other roles and support functions.

Do not under-estimate the importance of having a professional team on-board, regardless of project size. (See our guides on [How We Can Help](#), and [QS info-graphic](#).)

Financial Budgeting & Legal Considerations

Be realistic with the overall budget; remember to include all fees and other charges. This reduces the risk of making compromises later on, having to find additional funds, or even worse! Correct advice is essential.

Be aware of the different VAT implications and options available. These can make a vast impact to viability, and can be the difference between a project going ahead or not. (See our [VAT guide](#)).

As a Client/Employer of construction works, you must comply with your legal obligations and requirements, which includes The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. Failure to comply with this could result in your prosecution and a period behind bars! (See our [CDM 2015 guide](#)).

Any work that may potentially affect a neighbour, adjoining property or boundary (or within 3 metres thereof), may need to comply with the Party Wall Act 1996. This is a legal obligation. (See our [Party Wall Act guide](#)).

When engaging a contractor/builder etc., ensure that you have a legally binding contract. An “Estimate”, “Quote”, or just because they are “a mate” will not be sufficient to protect you, especially against claims for additional monies or extras. Get an industry-recognised contract (e.g. JCT) professionally administered.

Choosing Contractors

Before shortlisting a contractor/builder, ensure they are suitably experienced for the type of work, have a good reputation, good financial status and are prepared to tender and work on a professional basis.

Insurances should not be overlooked, regardless of any that the contractor/builder may have. These may not be appropriate or compatible with the project. A Client’s existing insurance may not cover building works.

Maintain good relationships with the whole project team - everyone should be “in it together”. It is well proven that a happy team will produce far better results.

Be Realistic

Have realistic aspirations, in terms of design, end product, programme, and costs. Do not get carried away, or think that it can be done by cutting corners, or on a shoe-string.

Do not be fooled into thinking “I have seen it done on TV. If they can do it, so can I”. In fact, it is hard and can be very painful in many different ways. Engage specialists from the outset – do not put yourself at risk.