

Your Building Project

If you are thinking of appointing someone to provide design and other services in connection with your building project it is important to make sure you appoint an appropriately qualified and insured professional, to add value to your project but also help protect you through the process.

What can a professional do for me?

Whatever your project, professionals can act on your behalf from the initial stages to the completion of your building project, whether it be;

- a residential, industrial, commercial or other building
- a traditional or contemporary new building
- maintenance, upgrading, alterations or an extension to an existing building
- large or small scale, simple or complex

In appointing a qualified and competent professional you will know they have the appropriate training and provide solutions on the best way to meet your requirements.

A professional's services can include the designs and negotiating and advising on statutory requirements such as planning permission and Building Regulations approvals. They will be able to inspect and certify the building work as well as provide guidance on costs. They will also advise if you need to involve other specialists involved in the design of buildings and how to find the appropriate people to undertake the construction work. Other specialists might include engineers (structural, civil, mechanical, electrical), and surveyors (building and quantity).

Whom should I appoint?

There are simple checks you can make to ensure you are working with someone who is competent. Professionals can be recognised by the following names and they may be able to help you get the best from your project; Architect, Chartered Architect and Chartered Architectural Technologist.

Architect and Chartered Architect

The traditional leader and co-ordinator of the design team is the architect who may also work with other professionals such as engineers and surveyors depending on the size and nature of your project.

Architects are all shown on the public Register held by the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and have met set standards of qualifications and experience. No one can use the title "architect" in connection with their business unless they are registered with ARB. You are advised to check the Register before making an appointment and to be aware that terms such as "Architecture" and "Architectural Consultant" and "Architectural Designer" do not necessarily mean that someone is registered.

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) is the UK's statutory regulator of architects, established by Parliament under the Architects Act. It maintains the UK register of architects; prescribes the qualifications needed to become an architect; sets standards of conduct and competence to guide architects in their professional lives and regulates the use of the title "architect". Using the title "architect" in business or practice while not on ARB's register not only misleads consumers, but is also a criminal offence in the UK. For more information and to check the Register go to www.arb.org.uk

Association of Consultant Architects (ACA) was founded to promote and support UK architectural practices. Through the support of practice methods it seeks to promote good practice of ACA members to the consumer.

The Society of Chief Architects of Local Authorities (SCALA) is a collaborative organisation of public sector architects and related professionals committed to assisting its members in achieving the highest possible standards in the development, design, construction and management of the public sector estate for the mutual benefit of their employers.

The title Chartered Architect is used by architects who are members of the RIBA, RSAW, RIAS or RSUA. Check with the professional bodies listed to find a Chartered Architect.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) represents Chartered Architects throughout the UK and overseas. It champions better buildings, communities and the environment through architecture and its members. The RIBA accredits architects practices through the RIBA Chartered Practice Scheme.

The Royal Society of Architects in Wales/Cymdeithas Frenhinol Penseiri yng Nghymru (RSAW) operates within the structural framework of the RIBA in Wales. Its mission is to promote architecture and the work of architects to potential clients, policy makers and the general public in Wales.

The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) is the professional body for all chartered architects in Scotland and provides a wide range of products and services to help architects, students of architecture, construction industry professionals, architectural clients and all those with an interest in the built environment and the design process.

Chartered Architectural Technologist

- Denotes membership of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT)
- They apply the science of architecture and specialise in the technology of building design and construction
- They can lead a building project from inception through to final certification including the co ordination of other professionals.

The Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) represents the Architectural Technology discipline internationally.

As the lead body in the discipline, CIAT qualifies and represents all those studying and practising Architectural Technology, awarding the Chartered Architectural Technologist, MCIAT qualification to its full members.

Things to consider:

- Architects, Chartered Architects and Chartered Architectural Technologists must all adhere to their regulatory or professional body's Code of Conduct. These require that they conduct their business and relationship with you in a proper and ethical way and each has disciplinary procedures for infringements of their Codes for your protection.

- As part of these Codes they are all required to have professional indemnity insurance (PII) if offering their services to you. Ensure that there is adequate and appropriate insurance in place to cover your project when you appoint your professional. This insurance is separate to a building warranty, which is the insurance you should check that your contractor has to cover for building defects.

- Speak to previous clients to find out their experience with the professional, ask to look at previous work they have carried out similar to your project and take up references should you wish to.

- If your project is specialised in any way ask if they have specialist skills in that area.

- Ensure that terms of appointment are provided in writing and that you fully understand these, i.e. which services your appointed professional will provide, over what time period, their costs including likely expenses and additional costs such as local authority application fees and whether additional specialists are required at an additional cost.

- When you choose a professional from the bodies listed, check the relevant Register or contact the relevant professional body. Think carefully before using someone who is neither registered nor a member of one of the bodies but is offering architectural services.

Professional Bodies and Regulator:

ARB
Architects Registration Board
8 Weymouth Street, London W1W 5BU
Professional Standards Department
t: 020 7580 5861 f: 020 7436 5269
e: professionalstandards@arb.org.uk
www.arb.org.uk

ACA
Association of Consultant Architects
60 Godwin Road, Bromley, Kent BR2 9LQ
Secretary General
t: 020 8466 9079
e: office@acarchitects.co.uk
www.acarchitects.co.uk

CIAT
Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists
397 City Road, London EC1V 1NH
Diane Dale, Practice and Technical Director
t: 020 7278 2206 f: 020 7837 3194
e: info@ciat.org.uk
www.ciat.org.uk

RIAS
The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland
15 Rutland Square, Edinburgh EH1 2BE
Neil Baxter, Secretary & Treasurer
t: 0131 229 7545 f: 0131 228 2188
e: nbaxter@rias.org.uk
www.rias.org.uk

RIBA
The Royal Institute of British Architects
66 Portland Place, London W1B 4AD
RIBA Practice Department
t: 020 7307 3749 f: 020 7307 3767
e: practice@inst.riba.org
www.architecture.com

(RSAW The Royal Society of Architects in Wales - see RIBA above)

SCALA
Society of Chief Architects of Local Authorities
Hillside, St Mary Church, Cambridge,
Vale of Glamorgan CF71 7LT
SCALA Manager
t: 01446 771 209
e: policy@scala.org.uk
w: www.scala.org.uk

A Guide for Consumers:

Who can help with your building project?

