

# Commissioning Architecture

Whether you intend to construct a new building, expand your current facility, or adapt an existing structure to a new use, it makes sense to consult Kenneth W Reed + Associates.



## The Value of an Architect

The architect's contribution to a building extends far beyond form and aesthetics. It can include the perception, performance and value of your business.

Brought in early and given the opportunity to understand your business, an architect can design a building, masterplan or interior that is tailored to your needs, both now and in the future, one that is not only productive but also a pleasure to work in and visit.

Consulting an architect at the earliest planning stages opens the door to cost savings, both in the construction and operation of the building, from innovative design solutions. Using an architect to manage your project and co-ordinate the work of consultants and contractors can save you and your staff time.

An architect's fees may be charged as a percentage of the total construction cost or at an hourly rate or as a lump sum, depending on the service supplied.

## A Sound Investment?

Good advice has its price but the price of skimping on design quality is far higher. Design fees will usually constitute just a small fraction of the total construction cost. And they pale into insignificance when measured against the company's total operating costs over the lifespan of the building.

High quality design can reduce those operating costs by maximising the efficiency of the building. A building that has received the input of design professionals from inception will be cheaper to run and command greater value in the long term. As the Government is now advising, procuring design services by fee competition will not buy the best value in the long term.

## Appointing Kenneth W Reed + Associates

The agreement you sign with us will detail the scope and cost of the services you will need. Together we will discuss the demands of the project, agree on what is expected and put it in writing. You may find it useful to formulate your brief first to establish your vision of the project and what it entails.

On smaller projects, an exchange of letters may suffice as a contract, as long as it covers everything. For larger schemes, we use a standard form of contract.

## RIBA Appointment Contracts

These are flexible documents that can be tailored to cover a wide range of project types and procurement paths, from restorations to new builds, from design and build to management contracting. They include a Memorandum of Agreement or contractual letter, a Schedule of Services and a Schedule of Fees.

## Which Procurement Path?

Construction management? Design and build? Or the traditional route? There are several alternative procurement paths open to clients and your architect can advise you on the most effective for your business and project.

The RIBA's published policy of procurement recommends that the route chosen provide:

- The best value to the commissioning client, present and future users, the public and society in general.
- A clear, collaborative and creative process.
- An appropriate balance to be reached between economic, social and environmental factors.
- An appropriate balance to be reached between conservation and innovation.

## The Brief

The quality of your finished building will reflect the quality of your brief. This is the key document defining your vision of the finished building and of how the project will be managed. For your architect it is the central reference point that will guide the direction they take and the services they provide.

## How to get it right

Wherever possible your brief should be clear and unambiguous. It should enshrine a common understanding between you and your architect.

Seek their help in formulating the brief. The process may foster a number of discussions and help to establish the dialogue between you that the project needs. Above all the document should describe:

- Your motivations and expectations: what do you hope to achieve by this project, in the short and long term, for your organisation and others? An image change? A more comfortable or better equipped working environment? An asset for the community?
- The functions of the finished project: who will use it and what activities will they be engaged in?
- A design direction: contrasting or in keeping with existing buildings? Contemporary or traditional? Are there certain materials, fixtures or finishes you favour? Is sustainability an issue for you?
- Authority for decision making: who will sign off decisions about design, about costs and about day to day matters on site?
- Timetables and budgets: when should key stages be completed, how much should they cost and how will they be financed?

You may still be uncertain about some of these issues, in which case your architect may be able to carry out some preliminary research or feasibility studies that will help you firm up your requirements.

## Being a Good Client

The project will need to be properly resourced and managed at your end as well as by the architect. It may be necessary to appoint a committee of carefully chosen people to share decision making and review responsibilities. These might include areas such as planning (deciding what or even whether to build), scheduling, budgeting and fundraising and cost control.

Make sure that one person becomes the designated point of contact with the architect. They should carry authority as your representative at planning sessions and project meetings.

## 10 Factors for Success

Finally a checklist: The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) publish a comprehensive guide for clients on creating excellent buildings. Its list of the key skills and attributes shared by clients on successful projects is reproduced here. Follow its advice and keep your project on track.

- Provide strong client leadership.
- Give enough time at the right time.
- Learn from your own and other successful projects.
- Develop and communicate a clear brief.
- Make a realistic financial commitment from the outset.
- Adopt integrated processes.
- Find the right people for the job.
- Respond and contribute to the context.
- Commit to sustainability.
- Sign off all key stages.

## More Information

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