

## Employing a Builder

Having obtained the necessary Building Regulation and Planning Permissions where they are required, your next decision may be in selecting a person to carry out the work. If you are not going to do all or any of the work yourself, your choice of builder is clearly important.

It would be improper for the Council to recommend a builder; however, the following advice may be useful:

1. First contact may be through a Local Directory or you may have friends or colleagues who have had work carried out.
2. Recommendation is a good way of assessing a builder and his work, particularly if you can inspect the work and hear first-hand what the builder is like.
3. If a builder is happy to give you the names and addresses of clients for whom he has done work, this is clearly a good indication that he is confident in the quality of his product.
4. Choose a builder who is familiar with the sort of project you are considering, for example, certain builders specialise in loft conversion work.

### Note:

An alternative application procedure to that noted above can be given in the form of a Building Notice, where the Building Works are of a minor nature in connection with Domestic Dwellings only

Your Building Control Surveyors will be pleased to assist you in any further enquiries. Please phone customer services and ask to be put through to building control.

Tel: (023) 9244 6019

**It is advisable to telephone between the following hours:  
9.00am – 10.30am and 4.00pm – 5.30pm  
(Outside office hours a telephone answering service operates)**

# BUILDING CONTROL 6

Information leaflet

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5. Check if the builder is a member of any Trade Associations such as, for example, the Federation of Master Builders, The Guild of Master Craftsmen or the Building Employers Confederation.
6. When you have two or three builders who you feel confident can meet your requirements, ask them for written quotations. Make sure that you provide them with as much information as possible; this may include scale drawings, specification notes and structural details (such as steel beams or specialist foundations).
7. Clarify who is responsible for providing the various building materials.
8. If you are able to calculate an approximate cost of the work for yourself, this may help you if there is a wide difference in the prices quoted by the various builders. If one quote is significantly lower than the others, and your own rough estimate, you may be suspicious and be inclined to select a builder with a higher quote.
9. You must use your own judgement and balance the various considerations of cost, quality, size of project and peace of mind!

10. Once you have selected a builder, if the work and cost is substantial, you may wish to agree formal written conditions of contract.

## **This would cover:**

*payment of the work, including stage and final payments;*

*the speed of the work  
(subject to weather conditions);*

*responsibility for leaving the site in a satisfactory state on completion.*

Such an agreement can prevent the sort of dispute that can arise and, considering the often-considerable sums involved, be worth a small outlay.

## **11. Advice on Payment**

Do not pay the entire cost at the outset but agree payments to be made as various stages of work are reached.

Include a retention until satisfactory completion of the work.

Negotiate the cost of additional work, making sure your request and the builders' quote are in writing.

Obtain written receipts for all payments including any materials you are responsible for purchasing.

12. It is advisable to ensure that the Building Control Surveyor has carried out a satisfactory final inspection **before** the builder leaves the site and any retention has been paid.
13. A Completion Certificate may then be available from the Building Control Service; the solicitors of prospective purchasers often require these should the property ever be sold on.
14. It is important to be aware that if a Notice of Contravention of the Building Regulations becomes necessary, this is served on the **owner**, not the builder. Ultimately, it is you, the owner, who is responsible for ensuring compliance and it is therefore in your interests to ensure that all statutory inspections are carried out.
15. Failure to request inspections, in particular a Final Inspection, is not only an offence but can also affect any future sale or mortgage agreement as the Council may make an entry against your property on the Local Land Searches Register (see Note 13 above).
16. Please note that our Building Control Surveyors can only control work subject to the Building Regulations. This does not include finishing work such as plaster and decorating or central heating work.

**This advice is given in outline only, it is not intended to be comprehensive or to be a substitute for taking proper legal or other advice. We hope it will help you consider**