

# Checklist: Before hiring an architect

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You can use this checklist to make sure you have all the information you need to make an informed decision before commissioning an architect, and to learn more about how to compile a brief and to prepare for your initial meeting. The best guarantees for a successful project are:

- **A clear brief**
- **A good contract and comprehensive terms of engagement that set out what will happen if any problems arise**
- **Transparent information on fees**
- **Mutual respect and good communication throughout the project**

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## 1. Check your architect is on the Register

Every architect has a unique ARB registration number, which they will be able to give you on request. You can use this registration number, their name, and other details such as their registered business address to search for them on [the Architects Register](#).

If you can't find them on the Register using the details they have supplied, they are not an architect. If you suspect someone isn't an architect and may be misusing the title, [you can let us know here](#).

## 2. Prepare a brief

Before you meet with an architect, you should consider your needs and goals and what you want to achieve with your building project. You should ask yourself why you want to achieve what you are setting out to achieve. In preparing your brief, you should consider factors such as:

- **Aesthetics**
- **Use and lifestyle**
- **Space and location**
- **Timeframes**
- **Budget**

You may want to gather some sources of inspiration to show your architect, in the form of images or other media.

When you present your brief to the architect, they will offer advice and suggestions. You should take your architect's advice into account when making decisions, but if they suggest something that you are not comfortable with, you should tell them. If you both clearly understand what you want at an early stage, it may prevent problems from occurring later on.

### 3. Scope of services

An architect is a skilled individual who can carry out a number of tasks. As well as designing a building and providing conceptual and/or technical drawings, an architect can:

- **Obtain planning permission**
- **Obtain quotes from other construction professionals**
- **Manage the relationship between you and your builder**

Your architect will be able to explain more about the services they can provide. You should discuss what you envisage their role being in the project, and the scope of services you are looking for.

### 4. Contract and terms of engagement

When discussing the contract and terms of engagement, you should refer to [the Architects Code](#), which sets out what they should include. You should discuss:

#### Fees

- **What will the architect's fee be?**
- **How is this fee calculated?**
- **Are there any additional or potential extra costs you should be aware of?**
- **Does the architect take commission from other suppliers or contractors?**

#### Point of contact

- **Who will be your point of contact and what are their contact details?**
- **How do you want to be contacted?**
- **How often will your architect update you on the progress of your project?**
- **Who will be undertaking the work?**
  - If the architect you are meeting with will not be carrying out the work personally, is the person that will be appointed to the project ARB registered? If not, who will supervise their work?

#### Terms of engagement

When will you receive terms of engagement and a contract? At a minimum, these should state:

- **The contracting parties**
- **What work the architect will do**
- **What the fee will be, or how it will be worked out**
- **Who will be responsible for what on the project**
- **Any constraints or limitations on the responsibilities of the parties**
- **Any special provisions for cancelling the agreement**
- **Whether there are any special terms for settling disputes**
- **That the architect has adequate and appropriate insurance cover**
- **What you should do if you have a complaint about their service**