

10 Ways a Project Manager and Surveyor can save you £000's

1, Good design delivers greater value

If you are carrying out a small commercial or domestic project the importance of good design is often overlooked however a property with a "builders box" (a brick extension utilizing the cheapest materials and elements) added to it, may not add any value and can compromise the value of a particularly fine or historic building. For this reason many 1960's or 1970's extensions are removed although they are perfectly functional and have a remaining lifespan. Good design will ensure that your project adds value to your property.

2, planning to gain

The design starts with the outline drawings, which will be used for the Planning Approval. Often a client will seek to maximise what they can achieve in terms of space and usage, which in itself will add considerable value to the property and may be crucial in achieving your business objectives.

Planning drawings form the basis of the design and will have to be carried through to the final completion, get the design right and this will follow through to the completed project.

We have carried out many planning approvals and understand the requirements of Planning Law, with this knowledge we can maximise your chance of success and ensure that any objections are properly founded, in short we can ensure you receive the best possible decision with regard to your circumstances.

3, Production systems, will it work for you?

A little recognised element of the design process is the systemisation and workflow of the space. This can be critical for production- based commercial uses such as factories, but is also important for office and home extensions.

We can design the spaces with the aid of flow charts to ensure that the spaces are sequenced for the most efficient usage and allow capacity for further expansion. This also includes the circulation requirements and means of escape, down to the detail of how you will use your commercial or domestic kitchen and where the appliances should be located.

This can save you £000's on post construction changes and adaptations and provide better usable space.

4, It's all in the detail

In many projects after planning is achieved there is a rush to site with the trades left to sort out the final details; this is a serious mistake leading to clashes of services and incorrectly specified items.

Once on site 'time is money' and the programme is held up at your peril leading to compromises on quality, workmanship. Remember design time is cheap and site time is expensive.

We fully detail a project and write a complete specification of works, this allows a contractor to make enquiries pre-tender and to pass on drawings to his sub-contractors so that they are aware of the project before they arrive on site. This avoids requests for additional money because items were not specified and variations where assumed solutions do not work.

5, A good builder is worth their weight in gold.

Get a bad builder and this will probably work out to be an understatement. We look for a good builder for you, a builder with experience of projects of a similar size and complexity. We can put forward people known to us or we can go to a public tender. Going through the tender process we will ensure that the builder has a good knowledge of the project; we will check the tenders with regard to arithmetical accuracy; compare the tenders looking for anomalies in pricing; agree the programme and finally recommend a contractor who provides the best value.

A builder is only as good as his tools and on a construction project this also includes the design drawings and specifications. If a contractor is expected to carry out works he has not priced for; a good working relationship can soon deteriorate into a dispute. We can work with a contractor and help them to get over the issues that arise in every project.

6, Regulations and Statutory Approvals

Complying with statutory regulations begins in the design stages, but we still need to ensure the works continue on that basis, we will inspect the site along with the Building Control officer and other bodies depending on the type of project. We will hold site meetings to discuss issues and ensure they are dealt with first time around to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

Construction Health and Safety is also a serious issue with the Health & Safety Executive actively visiting sites, we want to avoid any accidents on our sites, not just to avoid prosecution but to ensure that the job runs well and no one is injured or worse.

7, Money, money, money

We will ensure that your project is secured on a construction contract and we will certify payments tied to the completion of work Stages. We will vet applications for payment including any cost variations for an increase or reduction in payment. As Expert Witnesses; the main requests for our services are additional cost claims and building defects. Our experienced surveyors some of whom have worked for contractors in the past can manage this element of works for you so you can relax.

8, Watch the programme

The three elements of a successful project are time, cost and quality and your priority may be any of these, generally speaking a high quality project will cost more and take more time. Going over programme will always cost more money; as there will be more man days on site and either the contractor or the client will pay for this. To avoid this we carry out a realistic programme of works and agree this with the contractor and the client; some clients may need a project completed

quickly, perhaps to produce a product, in this case we may look for a specialist or fast-track contractor.

In any case we will monitor the project ensuring that the milestones are achieved and early warning is provided for any slippage so that this can be managed.

9, you don't know what you don't know

At G Dolden & Associates, individual staff members have up to thirty years construction management experience and all technical staff are Chartered or degree-qualified with up to six years of academic training. Qualified as Building Surveyors, Project managers, Technical Architects and Health and Safety managers, with further experience in Historic Buildings, Educational buildings and as Expert Witnesses.

We have met most of the problems before, do you think with that experience we can ensure your project runs smoothly and in doing so save you money?

10, Return on investment

While having an accreditation inspection recently the consultant was going through our procedures and projects, he began speaking about projects that he was carrying out and some of the problems that had arisen. We discussed these and some solutions and I suggested he used our services, he said he could not afford us. Then I showed him our full project cost for a similar project, he stated '*didn't realise you would be so reasonable you ought to tell people that*'.

Well I am, for construction projects our design and management costs are between 6.5% and 12.5% of the construction cost, normally the greater the cost the lower the percentage. I am posting a schedule of rates on our website www.gdasc.co.uk but we would rather see you and discuss your project and see what value we can add. We will then send you a written quotation with no obligation.

On most projects we cost no more than a plasterer, if you want the excitement of running your own project and you want to learn by experience that is fine but if you want peace of mind and certainty, we think it is a small price to pay.

Call 01376 573877 or 0207 078 7114 for a free consultation and we won't just save you money we will add real value to your project.

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Chartered Building Surveying and Consultancy Services