

Design Team – what do they do?

Architect

This is usually the first appointment, and is dealt with in a bit more detail in 'Choosing an Architect'. Aside from the obvious work of designing the building, the Architect has an important role in helping the client define their brief, in providing the church with the means to spread their vision for the project, and to advise on the appointment of the professional team. Trust and personality fit are very important; think of them as your critical friend.

Principal Designer

Deals with Health and Safety compliance, during design development, while on site, and once the building is in operation (eg how easy is to clean the high level windows?). As client, you have some serious responsibilities under the Construction Design and Management legislation, and the Principal Designer helps you fulfil these responsibilities. This appointment should be made as soon as is practicable after the feasibility stage.

Quantity Surveyor

A QS can help you with the financial management of the project. At the very least you should have an initial budget prepared on the basis of outline designs, and then refine this as more information becomes available; much better to invest in this information at an early stage than to have a nasty shock further down the line when money has been spent on professional fees etc for something that may not be affordable. A QS can also prepare a full 'Bill of Quantities' at tender stage to describe the works in full financial detail for each tenderer to price against, but this can be decided further down the line.

Structural Engineer

Designs the structural elements, eg beams and columns, foundations, and sometimes the underground drainage. If the design of the building is significantly affected by the structure (eg a particular design for the support of the roof) then the Structural Engineer should be involved in the early stages of design development; if not, then this appointment would follow the granting of planning permission.

Services Engineer

Designs the right heating system for the space and its occupancy pattern, the right lighting levels, the right ventilation etc. Again this usually follows the planning stage.

Design Team – what do they do?

Building Inspector

Previously this role was only carried out by the Local Authority; now you can choose to appoint an Approved Inspector, which is a private alternative. Generally speaking costs are similar. Whoever you use, it is important that there is a good level of understanding with the design team – if not this can be a major risk factor resulting in nasty surprises late in the day.

Builder

Usually chosen in competitive tender from a list agreed between the Architect and the Client. A good builder will not only produce work to a high standard, but will organise it in such a way that disruption to any existing uses is minimised. The builder is not normally thought of as part of the design team, but if they are chosen earlier in the process (see section 3.4 – Find the Right Builder) they can make a significant contribution to the design team, bringing their builder's intelligence to the process. There are pros and cons for this early appointment, but it is well worth considering.

Project Manager

Project management was a role that in the past architects traditionally undertook, with varying degrees of success. A good PM will have their eye on the successful delivery of the overall project. They will help you define those success criteria, monitor risk, respond to the inevitable challenges that will arise. Some architects provide this service very well, either built in, or as an add-on; others think they provide it, but don't...

Planning Or Heritage Consultant

Needed if the planning or conservation issues are particularly complex.

Party Wall Surveyor

If you are building close to a boundary, or with foundations within 3m of a neighbour's foundations you're likely to need employ a Party Wall Surveyor during RIBA stage 3 (after planning permission has been granted).

Acoustic Engineer

Would be needed where, for example, a new worship space is to be created, or if there was concern about noise pollution – eg where there are domestic properties close by. This input can be really helpful in the early stages of design development, when the form of the building is more fluid.

Design Team – what do they do?

Audio Visual Engineer

Only needed if multi-media is an important part of how your church works; basic AV work can be specified by the Services Engineer, or indeed from expertise within the church.

Lighting Designer

If there are very specific issues on the control of the lighting, or a need to create a particular effect, or to source a particular type of fitting, then it may be worth using a Lighting Designer.

Kitchen Designer

If you are including anything more than domestic catering – for example a cafe or a commercial kitchen – then you will need some specialist input in sourcing equipment etc. This may be part of the technical design post-planning, or this conversation might start earlier, particularly if it has an impact on the exterior of the building – commercial kitchens require substantial ventilation equipment.