

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

The process can be adapted to suit your individual requirements but in general terms the following stages will be required:

Preliminary consultation

An initial visit to your home or the site to discuss your aims, ambitions and dreams, SR:A will always try to see beyond the brief to allow your own "Grand Design", whatever its size and scale, to be realised. In addition to getting a feel for what you require from the project other topics that may be discussed at this stage include timescale, budget, possible Planning constraints and other services that may be required to allow everything to proceed successfully. This visit and discussion will be **free**, with no commitment to you whatsoever.

Sketch schemes

Following on from the preliminary consultation, assuming you wish to proceed with SR:A, sketch schemes will be prepared as the design is developed. This is a to-and-fro process in which ideas are explored and the design evolves. Your involvement during this process is encouraged as it is important that your requirements and ideas are incorporated wherever possible and that you understand how the design is progressing. SR:A will always endeavour to explain everything clearly and avoid the use of jargon so that you know exactly what is proposed but if you are ever unclear about anything please do not hesitate to ask.

Changes are to be expected and can be dramatic; this is a normal part of the design process.

Where the proposed works involve the conversion of or extension to an existing building, a building survey will be required at this stage to allow the sketch schemes to be prepared. SR:A may carry this out themselves or may recommend that a survey firm is appointed. If the project is new build a topographical survey of the site will be necessary, which will require that a survey firm be appointed but, depending on the site, it may not be necessary at this stage. SR:A will, of course, be able to advise on the need for surveys, the pros and cons of when they should be carried out and can organise them on your behalf.

Scheme design

This is the conclusion of the sketch scheme process; presentation drawings will be prepared for submission to the Local Authority as part of the application for Planning Permission. Though the design is now becoming more defined further ideas and changes can be incorporated, it is only once the application has been submitted to the Planners that changes to the external form and appearance may be problematic.

In addition to the preparation of the presentation drawings SR:A will prepare a **Design and Access Statement** if one is required (this is a document that is required for many, but not all, planning applications; it explains how the design evolved, how it relates to its surroundings and to the Planners' requirements as set out in national legislation and in the Local Plan and describes what provisions have been made for access to and within the building). Also if the building is listed or is in a Conservation Area SR:A will prepare any additional documentation that might be required to support applications for Listed Building Consent or Conservation Area Approval.

Application for Planning Permission

SR:A will then complete all the forms required for the application, submit the application on your behalf, follow it up with the Planners to ensure that they have everything that is required to allow them to assess it and monitor the progress of the application on-line. SR:A cannot guarantee that Planning Permission will be granted but will do everything in their powers to achieve a successful outcome to the application and will keep you informed of its progress.

Under normal circumstances a decision would be expected 8 weeks after the application was received by the Council.

Working drawings

The drawings that have been prepared for submission to the Planners (the Planning Drawings) illustrate what the building will look like, how it will fit on the site, how it relates to the neighbouring buildings, how the rooms are arranged and what the external materials will be.

It is now necessary to prepare drawings and specification that will show how the building will be constructed and how it satisfies the technical requirements of the Building Regulations. These could be prepared immediately after the application for Planning Permission has been submitted but this would be at risk as the outcome of the Planning Application cannot be guaranteed, so this should only be considered if time is critical. Normally SR:A would recommend waiting until the outcome of the Planning Application is known before commencing working drawings, but of course this does not (and should not) prevent you from considering aspects of the construction that you would like to influence such as kitchen and bathroom fittings and layouts, floor finishes, joinery items like doors, architraves, skirting boards and stairs, electrical fittings, heating system etc., all of which will have a fundamental impact on the appearance and use of your home.

We have touched on the need to satisfy the technical requirements of the **Building Regulations**; whilst compliance with the Building Regulations is usually assessed by the same Local Authority as is assessing the application for Planning Permission, these are two separate and independent pieces of legislation that address different aspects of construction. The Planners will consider the function of the building, how it fits into its environment, what it will look like etc. The Building Regulations on the other hand have evolved out of Health and Safety legislation and are intended to ensure that the construction is sound and the building is safe to use, more recently this has been expanded to include catering for the needs of people with disabilities and to address the energy efficiency of the building and its carbon footprint.

The working drawings could be limited to the information that is necessary to satisfy the Building Regulations (a Building Regulations package); this should ensure that your home is safe to live in, is soundly constructed, weatherproof and energy efficient but will leave a lot of the detailed decisions to the builder. If you are proposing to self-build this may be ideal but if not you will probably want to have more control, in which case SR:A would recommend either:

Building Regs Plus: a full Building Regulations package with additional specification, schedules and drawings to ensure that the elements of the fit-out that are important to you are adequately controlled. This could include door & window schedules, finishes schedules, services layouts (showing what electrical fittings are proposed and where they should go, what types of radiators are proposed etc.), sanitaryware specification, kitchen layouts etc.

or:

Full working drawings: a comprehensive package of information that details all aspects of the construction with an extensive written specification cross referenced to the drawings to support it.

This stage of the work will require input from other specialists, this may include:

Structural Engineer to advise on the structural aspects of the design (foundations, beams, frames etc.)

Civil Engineer to advise on ground works and below ground drainage

Energy Advisor to prepare heat loss calculations

Code Assessor to show compliance with the Code for Sustainable Homes

Services Engineer if unusual or complex heating or electrical services are proposed

Quantity Surveyor, if detailed financial forecasting and cost control is required

Interior Designer

Kitchen Designer

In some cases these will be professional consultants and in others they may be specialist subcontractors or suppliers, SR:A will discuss the need for these specialists with you at the appropriate time and, if required, can organise their appointment and/or instruction on your behalf. SR:A will then coordinate their input to ensure that the service that you receive is seamless.

Building Regulations Application

SR:A will make the application to the Local Authority Building Control Department (or to an alternative Approved Inspector if required) for approval under the Building Regulations, discuss the proposals where necessary with Building Control and address any comments raised or provide any additional information that is required to allow them to pass the plans.

Tender action

SR:A can advise on the selection of contractors to tender for the works and on a suitable building contract. The contract will define the roles of the Contractor, you as the Employer and, if required, SR:A as your Agent. This doesn't guarantee that everything will run smoothly (unfortunately that is not possible) but it will improve the likelihood that it will and sets out the procedures to be followed if they don't, if unforeseen events occur or if changes are required during the construction process.

SR:A can then obtain competitive tenders for the works based on the drawings, schedules and specifications.

Upon receipt of those tenders SR:A can review them and prepare a report on them to assist you in the selection of a suitable firm to carry out the works.

Site works

SR:A can inspect the building works as they progress, administer the Building Contract and issue interim certificates to allow stage payments for the works.

This would normally entail visits on a weekly basis.

SR:A's role would not be to supervise or organise the works (that is the role of the Contractor and his foreman or site agent) but SR:A would inspect the works to ensure that they were generally in accordance with the contract drawings and specification and whilst SR:A could not dictate construction methods or sequencing they would monitor progress against the Contractor's programme so that you would have a clear view as to when works are likely to be completed.

Completion

When the works on site are nearing completion SR:A can inspect those works and prepare a snagging list identifying anything that is not considered to be acceptable under the terms of the Building Contract, SR:A would then monitor the completion of those snagging items and any remaining works and certify practical completion at which point a penultimate payment would be made to the Contractor and if you did not have it already you would take responsibility for insuring the building.

Usually there would then be a Defects Liability Period of six or ideally twelve months. This is a contractual provision that requires the Contractor to return at the end of the period to make good any defects resulting from workmanship or materials that have occurred. If SR:A had been responsible for administering the Contract they would be responsible for preparing the list of defects (which would be discussed with you before being issued) and upon their satisfactory completion the final payment would be made to the Contractor.

This effectively wraps up the Contract but the Contractor will still owe you a duty under common law for a further six years (or twelve if the contract was under seal) as would SR:A.

Fees

As no two projects are the same the fee for the architectural services will need to be tailored to suit your specific requirements.

Following on from the Preliminary Consultation, when the scope of the architectural service can be discussed and agreed, SR:A will prepare a lump sum fee proposal, broken down into stages identifying what is covered by those stages.

SR:A will also identify known additional costs (Planning and Building Regulations fees etc.) and additional services that may be required but for which the fees are not known (other consultants, surveys etc.).

Once you have agreed the fee proposal and instructed SR:A to proceed that lump sum will stand, unless there is a significant change to the scope of your brief