

**PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANTS**

The appointment of professional consultants for a building project will be determined both by its size and by its nature. Major projects always require professional management. Complex projects usually require consultants to advise on matters such as structural design or mechanical and electrical services.

If a building project involves site redevelopment or disposal or if it is the subject of compensation by the Local Authority, it will be necessary to employ professionals with valuation and legal expertise.

The remainder of this section outlines the role and basis of appointment of the most commonly employed consultants.

**Architect**

The architect is responsible for overall building design and normally acts as leading consultant if other consultants are employed. He/she is responsible for monitoring construction. The RIBA Architect's Appointment is normally used with the fee usually related to project cost.

**Clerk of Works**

On a major project, a clerk of works may be appointed to assist the architect in monitoring construction. Fees are normally hourly based plus disbursements. If a project runs well and is well managed on site by the contractor, the clerk of works can be almost superfluous. If the project gets into difficulties, a good clerk of works will act as the architect's ears and eyes and will improve significantly the chances of completing the project on time and at no additional cost to the employer. A clerk of works is not usually engaged on a project costing less than £5M unless it is complex or involves extensive alterations to an existing structure where the scope of the work cannot easily be anticipated.

**Quantity Surveyor**

The quantity surveyor (Q.S.) is responsible for all aspects of estimating and valuing building work. He/she determines the structure of the tender documentation, checks and evaluates tenders, prepares interim valuations of work completed on site, values changes and negotiates the final account. A quantity surveyor is normally appointed under the RICS Standard Form of

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Agreement with a fee (typically RICS Scale 36 or 37) that is usually related to project cost.

### **Consultant Structural Engineer**

A consultant structural engineer advises the architect in technical matters of structural design. He/she is normally appointed under A.C.E. Conditions of Engagement Agreement 3. Fees are calculated either on the basis of the project cost or on the structural element of the project cost, although a lump sum fee may be negotiated for a project requiring limited input from a structural engineer.

### **Mechanical & Electrical Services Consultant**

A mechanical & electrical (M & E) consultant advises the architect and employer in technical matters relating to heating, plumbing, electrical and electronic (e.g. sound reinforcement and security systems) services. He/she is normally appointed under A.C.E. Conditions of Engagement Agreement 4a. Fees are calculated either on the basis of the project cost or on the services element of the project cost.

### **Building Surveyor**

A building surveyor may be appointed as an alternative to an Architect where the project consists mainly of repairs or reinstatement, e.g. after fire or storm damage. He/she is responsible for all design and contract documentation and administration and is normally appointed under the RICS Standard Form of Agreement. Fees (typically RICS Scale BS1) are usually related to the project cost.

### **Valuation Surveyor**

A valuation surveyor advises the trustees on land and building values (> 211) and negotiates terms with developers, with land purchasers or with those providing compensation for compulsory acquisition of land and/or buildings. Fees are usually related to the value of the transaction.

### **Planning Supervisor**

The Employer in a building contract will usually be required to appoint a Planning Supervisor under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 (> 221).

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### **Solicitor**

A solicitor advises the trustees in relation to any development agreement or land disposal and acts for the trustees in land conveyancing. Fees are either hourly based, value related or a combination of the two.

### **Planning Consultant**

A planning consultant may be required to assist in securing a planning consent. If the building is Listed or in a Conservation Area or if change of use is required, it may be wise to take the advice of a planning consultant at an early stage. Fees are usually agreed by negotiation.

### **Fees Generally**

Reference has been made above to the professional fee scales which traditionally have been used by consultants to the building industry. These scales are no longer enforceable (the Monopolies and Mergers Commission recommended that they were against the public interest) and in the current economic climate, professional consultants expect to tender competitively or negotiate fees significantly below the old scales. The scales might still be used to define the services required and it is essential to agree in writing the exact services to be provided for a particular project before entering into an agreement.