

Guiding Clients through Construction



As Chartered Project Managers one of our key duties is guiding clients through the stressful journey often associated with construction. Whether you are an individual building your dream home or a national business with an ambitious growth strategy, construction can be a daunting and sometimes overwhelming experience.

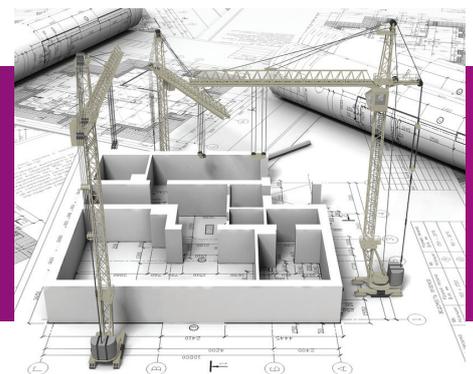
If you are embarking on a new construction project, or in the midst of one and feeling unsure where the future of the scheme is heading, then hopefully the points below will assist you further.

The first thing to do is to make sure you have the right person advising you. Construction can be a maze of Health and Safety compliance, Planning Regulations, Building Control, Architectural Design, Building Services Design, the list is endless. Appointing an independent project manager to protect your interest throughout the whole process will give you peace of mind, as well as ensuring a 100% focus on your project's successful completion.

While we would obviously hope that you choose Logic PM as your Project Managers, we are also happy to provide this guide as useful advice to anyone embarking on a construction project. You need to feel reassured that the person you put in charge of your scheme, will not only act in your best interest but have a good understanding of you as a client and what you require.

The below list of six points will help you identify the right advisor for your project:

1. What experience does your appointed advisor have and does this relate to the works you wish to complete? Can they demonstrate this experience with references from previous clients, photographs of completed projects, etc? Similarly, if the project team is collaborative (i.e. not all from the same company), do they have the combined experience and can they demonstrate it in the same way?
2. What are the health and safety implications of the project? Some projects fall under the Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations which place responsibilities on you as a client. It is imperative that you have a qualified professional advising you of your duties and responsibilities under the 2015 CDM Regulations.
3. Ask your lead consultant to provide a pre-construction programme of works showing when design works, surveys etc. will be undertaken. Significant time can be lost in the front end of a project, particularly in relation to Planning approval (usually 10 to 12 weeks) or the Design stage (usually 6 to 12 weeks plus depending on the scheme). Having a programme helps you to plan for and monitor that period. This should also be developed at a later stage to show how the construction works will be delivered so you can have an accurate schedule.
4. During the pre-construction period it is advisable that you request an anticipated project budget, this should include all upfront costs and legal fees as well as the construction works and design fees. Don't forget VAT either; as a business it will be less critical but as an individual it can add 20% (at current rates) to the cost of your project. A cashflow forecast will help you plan when the monies will be due throughout the project timeline.
5. The biggest thing that makes a successful project is selecting the right builder or building contractor. Membership of trade associations will show that they have been operating for some time and have a good level of workmanship. A project portfolio including photos is also worth asking for.
6. Before placing any order, make sure the price is fully detailed and you understand exactly what you are getting for the money you are paying. Sometimes quotations may lack full details, creating ambiguity and potentially a gap between expectations and final delivery. Make sure you and your team understand everything and if you are not sure, ask. It is better to ask a silly question at the outset than end up with something you don't want and additional costs.





Finally. The most important thing to do is make sure your builder or building contractor has a formal contract. Even a standard form of contract will provide better grounds for recourse than the ambiguity of a simple letter, though it is advisable to have a contract amended to reflect the specifics of your project.

'Letters of Intent' are suitable for quick start projects where contactors are required on site urgently but a formal contract and quotation allows you to revert back to something legally binding should the need arise.

Managing a Construction Project or your Day Job?

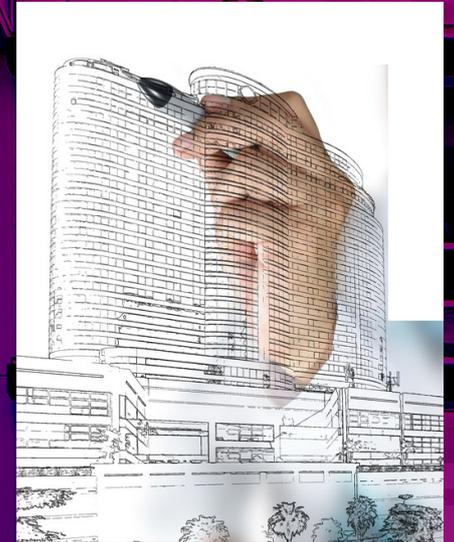
One of the other things we hear regularly is that construction projects become absorbing and the individual charged with the project has little to no time to do their day job. As a specialist in construction we understand this and part of our function is to manage that on behalf of our clients.

We know the right questions to ask and exactly what the answers should be, so you can be assured that you get what you are looking for and that your project meets all the necessary regulations and conforms to current best practice.

It is no surprise that changes are easier to accommodate at the design stage of a project as opposed to during construction. An experienced project manager can anticipate which changes may require amendments to Planning or may have significant cost implications and advise you of this at the outset so you can make the best decisions from the start.

The construction process can be very fragmented and relies on a number of trades interacting with each other. Making sure you that you and the project team understand this process requires excellent communication and management skills. If you are undertaking this yourself (in the role of the client) make sure you have all your normal duties covered and your team provide you with regular updates.

Logic 
Project Management



If you are undertaking a project and wish to ask advice on a construction related issue then please contact us for a free no obligation conversation and hopefully we can guide and help you further.

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