

CHOOSING A BUILDER

Having obtained the necessary Building Regulation approval and Planning Permission (contact Development Control 01983 823552 for enquiries in respect of Planning Permission), your next decision may be in selecting a person to carry out the work.

If you are not going to do all or any of the work yourself, your choice of builder is clearly important. It would be improper for the Council to recommend a builder, however the following advice may be useful.

1. Start with referrals from family and friends.
2. Ask for three references – and check them!
3. When you have two or three builders who you feel confident can meet your requirements ask them for written quotations. Make sure that you can provide them with as much information as possible; this may include scale drawings, specification notes and structural details (such as steel beams or specialist foundations).
4. Remember – the cheapest price may not necessarily be the best price.
5. Agree the work and put it in writing. Clarify who is responsible for providing the various building materials.
6. Make sure there is adequate insurance cover.
7. Never pay in advance.
8. Consider employing a professional agent to advise you.

9. Beware of cash-in-hand or VAT fee “deals”.
10. Are they a member of a trade association? Check it out!
11. Consider taking out a warranty.
12. If problems arise tell the builder straightaway.
13. Once you have selected a builder, if the work and cost are substantial you may wish to agree formal written conditions of contract

This would cover:

- payment of the work, including stage and final payments;
- the speed of the work (subject to weather conditions);
- responsibility for leaving the site in a satisfactory state on completion.

Such an agreement can prevent the sort of dispute that can arise, and considering the often considerable sums involved, it might be worth a small outlay.

ADVICE ON PAYMENT

1. Do not pay the entire cost at the outset but agree payments to be made as various stages of the work are reached.
2. Include retention until satisfactory completion of the work.
3. Negotiate the cost of additional work making sure your request and the builders quote are in writing.

4. Obtain written receipts for all payments including any materials that you are responsible for purchasing.
5. It is advisable to ensure that the Building Control Surveyor has carried out a satisfactory final inspection before the builder leaves the site and any retention has been paid.
6. A Completion Certificate will be provided by the Building Control section on satisfactory completion of works under the Building Regulations. These are often required by the Solicitors of prospective purchasers should the property ever be sold on.
7. It is important to be aware that if a Notice of Contravention of the Building Regulations becomes necessary, this is served on the **owner**, not the builder. Ultimately it is you, the owner, who is responsible for ensuring compliance, and it is therefore in your interests to ensure that all statutory inspections are carried out.
8. Failure to request inspections is a criminal offence, for which you may be fined following a prosecution, and it can also affect any future sale or mortgage agreement as the Council may make an entry against your property on the Local Land Searches Register (see note 6 above).
9. Please note that Building Control Surveyors can only control work subject to the Building Regulations. This does not include finishing work such as plastering and decorating.



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Please note that these are only guidelines to assist you in choosing a builder. Ultimately, you must use your own judgement and balance the various considerations of cost, quality, size of the project and piece of mind. You should also note that the Building Control Surveyor's role is to check that the Building Regulations have been satisfied, and does not extend to acting as your clerk of works.

We are not permitted to recommend builders or designers, but the Isle of Wight Council Trading Standards Service run a "Buy with Confidence" scheme. This is a list of approved firms who have agreed to provide reliable and quality services, and builders are extensively vetted by Trading Standards to ensure that they are trading fairly. For more details, visit the "Buy with Confidence" website www.buywithconfidence.info or contact Trading Standards (01983 823370).

Note:

Persons proposing to carry out building work are reminded that Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent may also be required, and you are advised to contact Development Control for guidance (01983 823552).



Further advice can be obtained from:

Planning Services
Building Control Section
Seaclose Offices
Fairlee Road
NEWPORT
Isle of Wight
PO30 2QS

☎: 01983 823580

E-mail: building.control@iow.gov.uk

Website: www.iwight.com/buildingcontrol

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ADVISORY NOTE BC9

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PLANNING SERVICES