



CHOOSING A BUILDER

If you are considering any work to your property and you require a builder you need to consider this choice very carefully. This is especially the case if you are having a new home built as this is one of the biggest investments you are likely to make. It is recommended that you check out any builder before employing their services. You are advised to discuss **fully** the extent of your requirements with any potential builder before employing them.

Here are some of the things you need to consider:

- Do I need Planning Permission and/or a Building Permit and will the builder apply for these on my behalf? Will the builder prepare the plans or will he only carry out the actual site work?
- Try and obtain at least three quotations – and be fair and reasonable to the builders by making sure it is the same specification they look at and price for.
- Get a fixed price for the works whenever possible - you are advised to avoid hourly rates.
- How much of the work will be sub-contracted out?
- The cheapest quote may not necessarily be the best quote.

Ensure that you stipulate the full extent of the works to the builder. For example, have you considered and allowed for:

- Final connection of all the drainage – both surface and foul water.
- Provision of external steps to the doors.
- Plant hire and skip costs.
- Electrical works, which on new build require a certificate for the home owner.
- Surface and external finishes. If you are going to do any aspect of this work, will the builder allow you free access to use his ladders or scaffolding or is there a charge?
- Car parking, landscaping and the provision of driveways/parking areas.
- Provision of utilities, e.g. telephone line, water, heating, fuel tank.
- What will happen to any surplus materials?

Don't be afraid to ask questions of the builder, he will expect this. For example, you may wish to ask:

- Where have they worked before?
- Are they happy for you to see their work?
- What is their expertise in the particular project you intend to carry out?
- How do they want to be paid, on completion or in stages?
- Can they supply references from satisfied clients?
- Are they happy to accept a retention clause?
- Will they give you a final completion date?

Finally, and so important, please be fair to your builder

- If you have agreed stage payments then please pay promptly. It is quite normal for builders to ask for some money "up front" to buy materials.
- Please avoid suddenly asking for additional power points or a window to be repositioned or the WC to be moved. The builder can do these things but there are likely to be additional costs and, in some cases, planning and/or structural implications.