



Case Study: Refurbishment and extension to business premises within an industrial estate.

Project Type – Commercial redevelopment

Location - Southeast

Value - £115K

Programme – Commenced April 2017 – completed February 2018

Scope – Refurbishment and extension to business premises within an industrial estate.

Design

The first appointment was the designer, recommended by a friend. His experience was a mix of commercial and domestic work. I was concerned about the cost quoted for the design work and he encouraged me to seek another quotation for comparison. Not knowing where to find another designer he pointed me towards the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists ([CIAT](#)) and the Royal Institute of British Architects [RIBA - find an architect](#).

I did this, found the cost was comparable, but I did not have confidence that he would be as good as the one recommended, so went with the first designer.

I met the designer to agree exactly what I was aiming to achieve, and this turned into a brief. The brief then moved on to include outline drawings, which were used initially to engage and gain early feedback from the local planning authority. The design appointment was via a RIBA agreement - [RIBA contracts and agreements](#) as recommended by the designer, including the addendum on [CDM 2015](#). We also used the RIBA contract for the building works. As the work entailed a general builder, I was informed that the designer role needed to be as a [Principal Designer](#) as it was highly likely that my chosen builder would employ subcontractors. I was told that I needed to formally appoint him as such, which was covered in the contract.

The designer made me aware of my duties under [CDM 2015](#) regulations and guided me through all the information I needed to gather by directing me towards these links :

[HSE guidance on frequently asked questions](#)

[HSE need building work done](#)

The design work was executed as planned to an excellent standard and the designer continued to support me through the construction phase, which included advice and support on setting the budget.

Building Control/Planning consent

Build Control was carried out through a building control consultant, recommended by the designer. The scope did evolve during the construction phase due to my changing business needs, even though I was certain of what I wanted from the outset and committed not to change anything. I therefore had to resubmit for planning approval.

Insurance

Having informed the structural insurer that I intended to carry out building work to my premises, I was informed that my policy did not cover me and specialist insurance was required to the unaffected portions of the building/contents. This was in addition to the insurance carried by the builder.

Finding a builder

I asked my designer if he could recommend a builder. He was uncomfortable doing this, but suggested that I ask the friend about the builder they used and also undertook to talk to two of his previous clients to see if they would be happy to talk to me about their builders.

From this exercise I asked three builders to quote for the work based on the drawings, specification and timeframe we thought was reasonable given the nature of what was required.

All three builders had different strengths and weaknesses found when talking to their previous clients and the prices quoted varied considerably. Although tempting to take the lowest price, I was more comfortable with the middle one and having talked it through with designer, we decided that was the better one to run with. This was slightly over my budget.

My designer advised me that for work lasting longer than 30 days with more than 20 workers working at the same time, or involving 500 person days of work), you need to notify HSE of the project as soon as possible before construction work starts. My 11 month programme would make my project notifiable to the HSE if there was on average more than two workers on site, which the designer considered more likely than not. In practice, the client may request someone else to do this on their behalf, but the responsibility remains with the client to ensure this is done. Follow this link:

[HSE guidance on frequently asked questions](#) to find electronic Notification Form F10.

The build phase

I agreed with the designer that we would construct the extension first as it was relatively self contained and would be less disruptive to my business. The foundations proved to be more costly than the allowance within my budget. I asked my designer and builder to come up with some options to reduce costs. We found some savings by changing the flooring specified, but as this did not get the cost within budget, I decided to defer some of the work to the existing building until funds were available.

Lessons learnt

What went well and would recommend	Not recommend – or could do better
Taking the time to find a good designer and builder that can work well together.	Commencing work without money and time to deal with unexpected problems.
Having the designer support me through the building phase.	Understanding risks to business and people. Also my role in identifying and managing those within my control.
Going to see previous clients of the builders pricing to understand how they worked and completed the jobs.	Attempting to get fixed prices on all elements rather than having a more flexible approach. Foundations being a good example.
Not being driven by engaging on lowest cost. Behaviour encouraged by my designer.	Controlling dust and noise. Disrupted my business and not good for the health and safety of my staff or the workmen.
Having a detailed estimate to understand where the costs lie. Generally understanding what things cost to aid decision making.	Allowing construction workers to share Rest Room, toilets and kitchen facilities. Should have been identified in the estimate and clearly costed by the builder, rather than being told no allowance made and assumed shared facilities.
Having a simple contracts in place, making it clear who was responsible for what, when.	Allowing builder to progress additional work without understanding what it costs and agreeing in advance.

<p>Paying promptly as work progressed on the understanding that defects would be put right immediately.</p>	<p>Understanding my role as a client, which would have prompted more in depth discussions with both the designer and the builder i.e. visit and read the website links recommended by the designer.</p>
<p>Talking to your insurer. My existing policy did cover my business premises whilst construction work was in progress.</p>	<p>Ask the builder for a copy of the notification to the HSE which he agreed to do on your behalf, so you know it has been done.</p>