

THE 7 BIGGEST MISTAKES HOME OWNERS MAKE WHEN HIRING AN ARCHITECT

...And How to Avoid Them

Contents

THE 7 BIGGEST MISTAKES HOME OWNERS MAKE WHEN HIRING AN ARCHITECT ...	1
<i>...And How to Avoid Them.....</i>	<i>1</i>
THE ROLE OF AN ARCHITECT	3
7 BIGGEST MISTAKES HOME OWNERS MAKE WHEN HIRING AN ARCHITECT.....	5
1. NOT BUDGETING SENSIBLY	6
2. NOT KNOWING THE MOST SUITABLE SERVICE PACKAGE FOR YOUR PROJECT.....	9
3. SETTING UNREALISTIC TIMELINES	13
4. THINKING ALL ARCHITECTS ARE THE SAME.....	15
5. NOT KNOWING THE DESIGN SPECIALISTS YOU NEED IN YOUR TEAM	17
6. NOT COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	19
7. OVERLOOKING THE IMPORTANCE OF REFERENCE CHECKING.....	21
GLOSSARY - A GUIDE TO ARCHITECT (AND LOFT CONVERSION) TERMINOLOGY.	25
REQUEST A QUOTACTION FROM LOFT COVERSION ARCHITECT.....	28

THE ROLE OF AN ARCHITECT

Architects carry out many services throughout the process of home construction - many of which have the potential to easily become overlooked. An architect's broad ranging expertise is a valuable asset to all types of building projects – their design experience enables them to create sketches and models which not only comply to regulations and keep a project on track and to specification, but breathes creative life into plans and visions, transforming them into a reality.

Architects help you to define your needs, offer you options based on their industry knowledge and experience, understand budgets and assist in obtaining permits and contractors.

For any aspect of building design and construction, hiring an architect is not merely a sensible thing to do, it's crucial. It will always be money well spent as an architect's input into elements such as energy efficiency, sustainability, technology and new materials and techniques will continue to be reflected in the value of your home. In short, can you afford not to hire an architect?

Typically, the services offered by architects cover –

- Measured Drawings and Surveys
- Planning Research
- Conservation skills for Protected and Historic Buildings
- Planning Drawings
- Planning Permission Application
- Building Design
- Building Regulation Drawings

- Working Drawings
- Project Management

7 BIGGEST MISTAKES HOME OWNERS MAKE WHEN HIRING AN ARCHITECT

It's fair to say that many home owners enter into the construction process without a complete understanding of the role of an architect and how they can make a real difference to any project.

This lack of knowledge and awareness either results in failing to hire an architect at all for their construction project or employing contractors who may not be ideally suited to the individual tasks required.

Our easy to read guide - **'The Seven Biggest Mistakes Home Owners Make When Hiring an Architect ... and How to Avoid Them'** - offers clear, straightforward tips and advice for hiring an architect together with how Architecture 100 differs from the competition with its range of affordable packages.

THE SEVEN BIGGEST MISTAKES HOME OWNERS MAKE WHEN HIRING AN ARCHITECT... AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

1. NOT BUDGETING SENSIBLY

Considering your budget for any project is one of the most important things a home owner must do.

You do need to be realistic about how much you can spend, but architects appreciate it's an unfamiliar and daunting task and are able to guide and advise.

Architecture 100 is very familiar with the costs of construction – it's our bread and butter – and are always happy to discuss design options, highlight ideas that you may have overlooked and advise on their associated costs.

Remember that you, as a home owner, also have a role to play in keeping to your budget and keeping your project to the size initially planned. Effective budgeting is achieved with good communication with your architect. It's a mutual process – one of trust, communication and understanding – and one which in the long term will help to save you money.

Discuss your budget honestly and understand your limitations. A significant part of keeping to a budget is selecting readily available materials and equipment rather than custom built, imported equipment which will obviously be more expensive than locally sourced goods. It's also very easy to forget to take into account the 'behind the scenes' necessities - the basic infrastructure of heating,

plumbing, electrics, insulation etc – and just focus on the things which will be seen, the aesthetics and colour schemes. However, the infrastructure is the critical part – the nuts and bolts of a well-designed home, and a home owner must allocate sufficient money for these to ensure that the home will function efficiently and effectively for a long while.

Again, communication regarding budget is key. It's vital to ask questions, be aware of lead times or installation times and speak honestly about any affordability issues before a project begins.

We would always be able to modify an item to achieve a similar look and function as a custom-made one or substitute an item for an equally efficient one saving you a considerable sum.

Architecture 100's experienced team of passionate craftsmen all have deep insights into the industry and can put forward alternative designs and ideas to save you money. We see the end vision and know exactly what it takes to achieve it.

Furthermore, we don't wait until the end of a project to tot up your final bill. All of our packages have an upfront, fixed fee.

You'll never receive any unexpected surprises with regards to costs. We understand budgets and related costs and will never attempt to justify an inflated

fee. With us, you'll always know where you stand – no nonsense, straightforward and above all, a service based on honesty and integrity.

2. NOT KNOWING THE MOST SUITABLE SERVICE PACKAGE FOR YOUR PROJECT

Never has the adage ‘you get what you pay for’ had greater relevance than with regard to building and construction. It’s not always about the price, but the overall value you receive – and here we firmly believe that overall value is measured by the effect of three components: quality, service and price.

Understanding contracts and pricing can be a very difficult and time-consuming exercise, made even more complex by the range of services and prices offered.

Is it possible for one architect to offer the cheapest price, highest quality and most efficient service, for example? You may receive high quality and efficient service, but will that be at the lowest cost? Where do your priorities lie?

Pricing and contracts can pose a real dilemma. The building and construction arena can be a real minefield to understand with different architects approaching it in various methods and with differing fee structures. You may receive quotations based on the total of time spent on a project, or a single flat fee with an initial deposit required upfront.

And of course, hand in hand with this will be the quality of service you’re likely to receive. Does the lowest priced service include the expertise of high calibre expertly trained individuals? How will they treat you in the event of an error or misinterpretation coming to light? Would they try to cut corners and use inferior quality materials and equipment?

Remember – opting for the cheapest price ultimately might not work out to be such a saving in the long run as using cheaper services may result in items needing replacement sooner than anticipated. No amount of cost savings is worth shoddy or poor quality workmanship. You're investing a lot of time, effort and money into improving your home. – so why save a few pounds on the cheapest 'on paper' firm of architects?

Additionally, it's worth bearing in mind that with some architects, you're likely to be charged extra for things which other firms may normally include for in their initial quotation – even overtime due to poor time management. Some may use this tactic just to gain a foothold into your premises, bamboozling you into thinking you have a wonderful deal when in fact over the course of the project you'll end up paying far more. Spend time considering the entire package offered – quality, service and price - before entering into any contracts you may ultimately find yourself tied into.

At Architecture 100 we take away the worry about pricing and quality of service. Our dedicated team of designers and builders manage your project from start to finish – from the design stage where we listen, take your ideas and create a concept with workable plans, drawings and calculations, ensuring the process is managed correctly, conforms to specification and local authority regulations - and then following things through to final completion.

And of course, you'll always have full access to our entire team, who co-ordinate and project manage, offer quality assurance guarantees and liaise with office support to ensure everything runs smoothly. Our Architecture team has both RIBA accredited architects and an Architectural Technologist who are especially selected for their

experience, reputation and passion. This offers clients a choice of experience and therefore a choice in cost too.

You'll be assigned a designated Project Manager, an experienced expert in the field, who will oversee your scheme for concept thought to completion, providing that personal touch and giving you complete reassurance every step of the way.

Think of yourself as being at the centre of a wheel where each spoke is not only an expert in their specialist field but is able to collaborate with the others to turn the wheel forward and move the operation in the correct direction.



We realise that your home is your most important asset, and in combination with our team of architectural expertise, we can offer you an affordable, low cost facility to help you achieve your dream home without compromising on quality. We're unique in this respect – the only loft conversion company to be able to offer our clients a

finance option. We also appreciate that time is of the essence and you'll be keen to get your project off the ground. We're happy to give you a free quotation, after which the application for finance is an extremely simple and straightforward process with options and terms and conditions clearly set out in a timely manner.

We emphasise that we like to keep things simple, straightforward and completely transparent – always providing our clients with an honest quotation which includes ALL associated costs. This means you'll never be presented with any nasty surprises or hidden charges at the completion of the project. Our affordable fees work out more affordable than hiring a standard architect, giving you more scope to channel money into furnishing your new space.

3. SETTING UNREALISTIC TIMELINES

For the smooth and efficient running of any project, it's important to understand the importance of setting achievable schedules and timelines. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day, and to achieve worthy results, realistic targets need to be put in place.

Obviously, the amount of time needed will vary from project to project according to space, complexity of the task, sourcing materials and many other factors, but it is something to bear in mind when hiring an architect. An experienced architect can guide you through the process, offering not only guidelines for timescales, but monitoring and supervising along the way and providing updated revisions where necessary.

The bottom line is that through regular inspection and constant monitoring, the architect will guarantee that the project adheres to the plans and you're receiving the quality of materials and workmanship you're entitled to. Architects are obligated to provide a legal Standard of Care throughout the entirety of your project – guaranteeing that any mistakes or misinterpretations can be identified and remedied quickly and easily, keeping time delays to a minimum.

Architecture 100 appreciates that the concept of hiring an architect may be new to you. We aim to be one step ahead, thinking with you and for you, so that all parties are fully aware of their rights, responsibilities and instructions.

We'll get involved from the beginning and take as much time as needed to discuss your ideas and plans and we'll offer suggestions based on our many years of expertise within the industry.

External factors outside of our control can and do mean that sometimes projects may fall behind their initial timescales. Unfortunately, we too may find ourselves at the mercy of scheduling problems when communicating with local authority personnel or perhaps equipment ordered fails to meet the delivery terms laid out by a supplier. This is why we value communication and keeping you in the picture.

There may well be other methods of getting a project back on track when things don't go according to plan and so we welcome and put utmost importance on constant communication. We know that by doing so, it really will save an immense amount of time, effort and stress in the long term.

Here at Architecture 100 we like you to think of us as a project partner. We understand that that design and construction is likely to be an unknown territory for you and you're relying on us to take care of everything. We fully appreciate this commitment and do everything to honour that responsibility, but we also want you to feel involved and able to discuss any change of plans or queries you may have. Whilst we will always put your needs first, we like to think of it as a two-way process. We're both working together to achieve the same end goal – a home to be proud of.

4. THINKING ALL ARCHITECTS ARE THE SAME

Hiring an architect means buying experience and knowledge – and of course you'll gain a wider perspective from someone who's been in the industry for a long while. However, ultimately it's about finding the right fit. No two firms of architects are the same. Individual companies may offer a specialty – like loft conversion – while others may be masters of many trades. Obviously the number of staff within firms of architects also varies according to size and this may reflect on their abilities and capacity to perform certain tasks. Additionally, some architects may advertise impressive credentials but may not be quite the right fit for your project.

Hiring a friend who works in the industry is not always a good idea. Actually it's a potential recipe for disaster. You may think you'd feel more comfortable discussing budgets, plans and targets with someone you know personally, but does your friend the architect honour your timescales in the same way an external firm of architects would? Would your friend the architect expect you to 'give and take' a bit more. In short, how would they compare professionally? Would you feel nervous about ruining their friendship by disagreeing with them? There are many elements at play here which are likely to ruin an otherwise healthy friendship.

Don't underestimate the importance of personality and those initial vibes you get when meeting an architect for the first time. All projects require ongoing conversations which can become stressful when complications arise, so it's important to work with someone you're comfortable with. Human interaction and chemistry are important factors. If you like an architect's style, but somehow don't

get a good feeling when meeting them, you'll need to consider whether you're going to get along for the duration of your project.

At Architecture 100 we believe the difference lies within customer service and pride ourselves on the personal attention we give each client. It's our trademark, and one of the reasons we've established a reputation for excellence. We ensure all projects flow as consistently and predictably as possible to deliver tailor made planning applications. We also understand the importance of attention to detail. No matter how small or large individual projects are, we guarantee that all our team liaise, communicate and collaborate effectively to achieve a mutual end goal – your dream loft space.

Additionally, we have established a 'family first' ethos when conducting ourselves within your home, going the extra mile to think about the little things which are important to you and treating your home and its belongings with the utmost respect.

The diagram below highlights our missions and values. It illustrates what we do, how we do it and why and we firmly believe it differentiates us from our competitors.

5. NOT KNOWING THE DESIGN SPECIALISTS YOU NEED IN YOUR TEAM

Depending on the extent and complexity of your individual project, it's likely that you'll need a team of architects, technicians and surveyors to accomplish your final dream. Home owners often do not realise this and are unaware of the range of expertise and specialisms needed to complete their project. Hiring an architectural team is not about trying to bump up fees in an underhand way, but about providing you with industry experts – a team effort designed to work collaboratively and ultimately resulting in an end to end design to build package.

It's important to carry out extensive research on all parties involved, ensuring their fulfil your criteria and that you personally feel comfortable working with a particular company or individuals.

Architecture 100 has an established team of Architects, Technicians, Structural engineers, Quantity Surveyors and Project Managers who will take your project through from the concept and planning stage to completion, guiding you through the planning process and offering expert advice.

In addition to the architectural, planning and surveying team, Architecture 100 is proud to offer a widely experienced and practical Project Management team who overview, co-ordinate, consult, design, build and project manage and most importantly, our fees are clear and straightforward with affordable finance options.

We include you as part of our team, taking instruction and advice and answering any

queries as they may arise. This guarantees no nasty invoicing surprises and no hidden extras.

Hiring a design team is in fact a cheaper option than having to research multiple operatives and having to calculate and budget for their individual fees. Architecture 100 take that worry away for you, giving you immediate access to professionals with a reputation for excellence and an assurance that all eventualities are under our control.

6. NOT COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Following on from the importance of finding the right fit when hiring an architect, effective communication is the difference between success and failure when working together. If you do not communicate all your requirements, ideas and cost constraints clearly, it is likely that either an important feature may get overlooked or that your design won't measure up to your expectations.

Communication about visual elements of your project may involve pictures and photos of work you've seen previously. Feel free to show an architect photos and images of work or styles you like, perhaps pages taken from a magazine, as this will contribute to achieving the perfect end result.

It's also important not to assume that an architect's expertise and experience alone will automatically secure your dream vision. The majority of disputes between architects and clients arise out of poor communication skills. To avoid this, make sure the budget and the architect's responsibilities are set out in binding terms from the start. Changing your mind mid-way through development can cause immeasurable problems to a working relationship, not to mention time, effort and the related costs involved. It's also well worth while familiarising yourself with the terminology architects may use – (See glossary at the end of this guide). This will go a long way to minimising misconceptions and misinterpretations when communicating your requirements.

Appropriate questions to ask will be along the lines of –

- What experience do you have in completing projects similar to mine?
- Can you give me a list of references?
- Why should I choose you over any of the competition?
- Are you insured and can I see proof of this?
- What exactly does the price include and is there anything it excludes?
- Do you help with the planning application and how long will it take?

At Architecture 100 we take great care in treating all projects as unique tailor made tasks to individual requirements. No two loft conversions are the same! We positively welcome the opportunity to discuss all your 'must have priorities' and encourage you to continue to make notes for the duration of the project and ask us questions.

We won't be offended or upset if you overload us with photos, diagrams or written notes of what you want. In fact we value this two-way communication and see it as part and parcel of not only achieving the desired outcome, but avoiding any unnecessary pitfalls and setbacks along the way.

7. OVERLOOKING THE IMPORTANCE OF REFERENCE CHECKING

Related to not realising that architects and their services differ from company to company in terms of their pricing and quality of workmanship and failing to find the correct fit in terms of personality, approachability and specialism of work offered – another common mistake that home owners are likely to make is failing to seek out recommendations, referrals, checking credentials etc, and basically hiring on the basis of word of mouth.

Word of mouth recommendations are a great place to start, but you should do far than merely rely on hearsay and general recommendations. Relying on word of mouth is very much akin to playing a game of Chinese Whispers – things can easily be misinterpreted or misheard, resulting in inaccurate information which may not even be relevant to you and your specific project. This is particularly likely if you're searching through social media channels to find a local architect. You have no real certainty as to whether any of these recommendations are authentic. It's not unknown for family or friends to boost the social standing of architect relatives in order to make them seem as though they're popular in a certain location and have gained a lot of work. This may or may not be true, but you have no real way of ascertaining their credibility purely from reading through a stream of online reviews.

By all means Google local architects or those with a specialism in your particular project, but use that as a starting block to gather information for later use. Telephone prospective architects to discuss your individual project / budget / availability, etc,

bearing in mind this may weed out some which will fail to measure up to your requirements.

From here, invite those you'd like to work with to your home for a detailed estimate. Now is the time to do a bit more homework. It's vital to study the portfolio of a team of architects to gain a sense of their style and quality of work. They should have a website containing a gallery of previous projects at least. They may even have a page of recommendations to read through. As these are likely to be local projects, the likelihood of them being credible is far greater than the more anonymous nationwide recommendations you might find on social media platforms. It is also likely that local residents may feature an architect's advertisement board outside their home to showcase recent work undertaken. This in itself acts as a perfect recommendation and you could use it as an opportunity to ask the home owner about their experiences.

When making an appointment for an architect to visit your home to give you an estimate, it's important to have spent time beforehand planning the questions you wish to ask. These should cover their experience, qualifications, insurances, fees and payment options, services offered, methods of resolving disputes etc. as well as the more general questions relating to your project in terms of availability, keeping to budgets and timescales.

Architecture 100 understands that your home is your greatest asset and appreciate the need to preserve, protect and invest in it. In response, we'll offer you a free quotation for a high quality build which is guaranteed to enhance your home, both visually and in terms of its potential monetary value.

Our website - www.architecture100.com - details our extensive portfolio of successful projects and real life testimonials from several clients. Take time to browse through them. You'll gain an insight into the creative expertise of our team of specialists and discover new ways of enhancing your property, adding value, transforming spaces and bringing dreams to life.

We fully understand that deciding to go ahead with a loft conversion can seem rather daunting and that you're likely to have many questions relating to the practicalities of design - lighting, layout, provision of staircases, heating systems, storage etc.

When completing your free quotation, we'll fully assess the space you have available and give guidance and advice on the types of loft conversion which are most suitable for your property as well as answering any questions you may have regarding planning permission (if necessary).

Depending on the style of your property and aspects of the loft, the type of appropriate loft conversion style will vary. The main types are dormer, hip to gable and mansard conversions and are briefly described as follows together with a glossary of vocabulary commonly used.

Dormer Loft Conversions

This is the most common form of loft conversion. Including a vertical wall from the bottom of a sloping roof, a flat roof is then constructed to meet the vertical wall. This gives maximum headroom in the new space and is unlikely to require planning permission.

Hip to Gable Loft Conversions

A hip to gable conversion is only suitable for bungalows and detached or semi-detached properties. This type of loft conversion extends your property at the sloping side, effectively replacing the sloping roof with a vertical wall (the gable) at the end to the same height as the ridge and then filling in the space in between. This gives sufficient extra space for perhaps an office or playroom.

Mansard Loft Conversions

Typically, a mansard loft conversion is constructed at the rear of a property, has a flat roof and back wall sloping inwards. These types of conversion involve significant alteration to the structure of a property and are likely to be more expensive than dormer and hip to gable conversions. Mansard conversions do create far more extra space though, but as changes to the roof shape and structure are required, it is likely that planning permission from the local authority will be needed.

We understand that inviting workmen into your home for any home improvement project can be incredibly stressful. We take time to explain up front exactly how we intend to work, the timelines involved and will answer any questions as they occur.

We pride ourselves on our excellent customer service, professionalism and creativity. It's a tried and tested package – guaranteed attention to detail, commitment to excellence, reliability and consideration – and it's why Architecture 100 is the first choice of growing satisfied customers.

GLOSSARY - A GUIDE TO ARCHITECT (AND LOFT CONVERSION) TERMINOLOGY

Architecture 100 realises that industry terminology – words we use day in, day out, may not be familiar to everyone. When discussing projects with architects, we aim to make things as simple as possible, but there may be unfamiliar industry related words and phrases which are important to understand. We've put together a glossary of relevant vocabulary together with clear definitions which should help you to feel at ease when speaking about your plans and the work carried out.

Batten – A small strip of sawn timber fixed horizontally across the rafters and dormer (see below) structure to provide fixing to tiles / slates.

Binders – Thin strips of timber nailed across the top of the ceiling rafters to strengthen it.

Cheeks – Side walls of a dormer window.

Dormer - Where the roof is extended to give more internal room to a conversion.

Eaves - Lowest part of a roof, projecting beyond the face of the wall below.

Fire check door - A door which can withstand fire for a given time.

Gable – Triangular upper portion of wall below the ends of the roof slopes.

Headroom – Clear height in a room or doorway to allow a person to stand without bending.

Lintel – A timber, steel or concrete structural member used to span an opening and supporting the load above. For example, door or window.

Load bearing – Any structural part of the building that carries loads. For example, brick wall or steel / timber posts.

MoE - Short form for means of escape when referring to windows, complying with the minimum dimensions set out by Building Regulations.

Mansard – Where the roof is converted to have two pitches on each side

Noggins – Short timber battens fitted between a pair of joists or timber studs to add strength.

Party Wall – The wall separating terraced or semi-detached houses – the boundary between the properties.

Plasterboard - A sheet of material used for stud walls and ceilings

Purlin – Horizontal timber or steel beam providing support for roof rafters.

RSJ - Rolled Steel Joist – An 'I' beam made of rolled steel, typically used to support the floor of the loft conversion and the ridge of the roof.

Rafters – Main sloping roof timbers forming the roof structure of a building.

Ridge – The apex of a pitched roof where the two slopes meet.

Roof Truss – Traditional roof structure comprising of a framed assembly of structural members.

Spine Wall - Main internal load -bearing wall commonly found in pre-1970 properties.

Stanchion – A vertical steel supporting beam.

Stretcher – The side of a brick, visible in walls, when laid lengthways.

Stud – Vertical timber used in the construction of stud partitions.

Stud Partition - Series of vertical studs and horizontal noggins nailed together to form a framed position covered with plasterboard on both sides.

Universal Beam – Steel beam, similar to a RSJ, but with a flat top and bottom flanges.

Universal Column – Steel beam, similar to a RSJ, but square in section.

Additionally, the following planning related terms may also be useful:

Approved Documents - A series of technical documents explaining the practical details in The Building Regulations and how they should be interpreted.

Building Act 1984 – Statutory Act of Parliament controlling the safe construction, extension and alterations to buildings in England

Building Inspector – An official of the local authority Building Control department who inspects work to ensure it complies to regulations

Building Regulations – Detailed rules of construction as specified in the Act

CAD – Computer Aided Design – Used for elevations, plans and 3-D models.

Conservation Area – Area designated to be of natural beauty or heritage which requires protection or preservation.

Estimate – Estimated price given for work – but not to be confused with a quotation.

Planning Permission – Approval by the local authority to do the work.

TCPA – The Town & Country Planning Act 1962 – a statutory Act of Parliament controlling the planned development of rural and urban areas in the UK.

Tender or Quotation - Firm price given for work – but not to be confused with an estimate.

Architecture 100

Request a quotation from Architecture 100

To contact ARCHITECTURE 100, please visit our website at

www.Architecture100.com

**Office Address - 12 High Street
Hampton Wick
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 4DB**