



DOORSTEP DIGEST

Choosing an RIBA architect as your Principal Designer

The Building Safety Act 2022 requires clients to appoint a Principal Designer with the right skills, knowledge, and experience for their specific project.

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The Building Safety Act 2022 places new responsibilities on clients when choosing a Principal Designer. They must ensure they select a designer who has relevant experience, knowledge and skills for the specific project.

One way to demonstrate this is to use an architect.

Using an architect for your domestic project provides you with valuable expertise and professional guidance. They will help you navigate the planning permission process and building regulations submission (which cover everything from foundations to damp-proofing, fire safety and ventilation) and reduce the risk of costly mistakes or delays.

Embarking on a project for your home is a daunting experience, but an architect will help set up and run your project to deliver the best outcome for you.

Their design services bring creativity and professional foresight, helping ensure you achieve the most for the least, while incurring only a small portion of the overall project cost.

Did you know?

- Building regulations have become more complex over recent years, with a new statutory role of 'Principal Designer' now required on all projects, including domestic ones.
- This role is naturally suited to the architect's competence as a leader and design coordinator, and the RIBA has been supporting architects and the wider construction industry in helping to embed this role as standard.
- Beyond regulatory compliance, an architect adds value in terms of design quality, budget oversight and resource access. An architect can bring their professional expertise to help maximise natural light, space flow and efficient storage, transforming the way you live, not just adding rooms. And by choosing a RIBA Chartered Architect or Practice, you will ensure they are of the highest professional standard.

Find out more about working with an architect with a range of articles and videos [here](#).

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Here are some ways RIBA can help you choose the right architect for your project:

Find an Architect

RIBA Find an Architect is a free and instant service designed to help you connect with Chartered Practices across the UK. By submitting details about your project, such as location, project type, and budget, the service will recommend and connect you with up to fifteen Chartered Practices who are best suited to bring your project to life.

Once you have your list of recommended practices, you can browse practice profiles to view some of their existing projects to inform your decision. Your details are also never shared with practices, and making contact with them is completely at your discretion.

Try Find an Architect now [here](#).



Practice Directories

RIBA Directories list Chartered Practices in the UK along with articles on some select projects, award-winning buildings and guidance on working with an architect. The directories are updated each year and have five editions.

There are sector-specific directories, including Residential, Commercial, Public Realm, and London, which contain contact details and work of those with expertise in these areas.

The List is the main directory which lists all Chartered Practices. Practice details are organised by location, making it easy to see who is based near you.

To view these directories, visit [this link](#).

Ask an Architect at client shows

A great way to seek advice from an architect is at client shows. RIBA runs an initiative called Ask an Architect, where a number of architects will sit down with you to discuss your project, free of charge. Sessions are roughly 15 minutes each, and as well as meeting a potential architect for your project, you will get the opportunity to pose them questions, such as its viability, cost and likely timescale.

Ask an Architect takes place at the Homebuilding and Renovating Show and Grand Designs Live, which are held in various locations across the country throughout the year. See when a [show will be held near you](#).

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RIBA Specialist Registers

For some projects and key roles that architects perform, RIBA has developed competence schemes to help clients find experts in these roles and to help RIBA members demonstrate their expertise to clients.

[RIBA Principal Designer Register](#)

[RIBA Conservation Register](#)

KEY ADVICE

Choosing an architect as your Principal Designer gives you confidence that your project is being led by someone with the right skills, experience and professional accountability.

The NHIC would like to thank the RMI WG2 Consumer Voice members for their contributions to this guide.

Please note that this guidance document, produced by the NHIC, was accurate when it was created. However, information and regulations may have changed since the publication of this document. Therefore, seeking the most up-to-date information and expert advice is always advisable before making any decisions related to improving your home.

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