

the christopher hunt practice

Architectural Technologist
A Member of The Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists - CIAT

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architectural and building design :: planning :: appeals :: measured surveys :: property development :: contract administration

Mr. D. O'Sullivan,
18 Daws Lea,
Off Daws Hill Lane,
High Wycombe,
Bucks, HP11 1QF.

Date : 13th May 2014

Our Ref : O'Sullivan1

Your Ref : -

FEASIBILITY REPORT & FEE ESTIMATE

Dear Mr. O'Sullivan,

Re: **PROPOSED TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION & INTERNAL ALTERATIONS
AT 18 DAWS LEA, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS, HP11 1QF.**



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for inviting me to view & assess your building requirements with a view to quoting for the professional services element. I do hope that our short meeting was productive & informative for you.

My goal is to provide all clients with an **unbiased** assessment & information so that you are informed of all the relevant potential design issues applicable to your scheme before you start. Having your scheme 'risk assessed' regarding Planning & Building Regulation issues is your very important first step which I hope to fulfil.

GENERAL SCOPE OF YOUR WORKS

- Further to my preliminary site visit to discuss your requirements, I would confirm that I would be delighted to act as your '**Building Designer**' for the preparation of Plans & Specification documents for Planning & Building Regulations submissions to the local Council subject to my fee proposal being acceptable to you.

I understand that, in principle, your overall requirements are as follows:-



"I recognise that understanding your requirements is often key to a successful design solution"

1. To erect a two storey side extension to provide a larger family kitchen & utility room, a rear reception room at the ground floor & a new bedroom over with additional en-suite & dressing facilities for the existing rear master bedroom.
2. Associated internal alterations to provide access, limited remodelling, opening up & better distribution of room layouts.

All to an external design & internal layout yet to be established & agreed.

Cont/...

I would make the following observations & comments on the scheme:-

PURPOSE OF THE INITIAL SITE VISIT

- The main purpose of my preliminary site visit with you today is to discuss your requirements in 'general' terms & for me to confirm or deny that 'in principle' that an extension or other building works within a location may be approved by the Council & is practically achievable.
- Detail design solutions for your scheme regarding layout & external design of the proposed building works can only be formed when I have the benefit of my own measured survey. Design solutions also arrive by way of an 'ongoing' process where I issue you my 'clients presentation scheme' (Design Stage 1) proposal drawing for your comments, assessment & modification if required after you have had time to evaluate the scheme & any other options or alternatives that may also be presented. This is called Design Stage 1.
- I believe that good home extension design is always a collaborative approach between the homeowner & the Building Designer. Part of the process often involves challenging your ideas / concepts & exploring alternatives whilst also listening to your key objectives. The worst kind of home extension designer is the 'yes man' who will simply do exactly what you ask irrespective of any inbuilt errors on external design or internal layout that may be incorporated. In other words (& to use a common phrase) 'stress testing' a clients design aspiration can often weed out a lot of unforeseen consequences early on in the design build up phase.
- The initial site visit also enables me to assess my work involvement & hours expended in order to provide you with a comprehensive fee estimate & most other costs which are scheduled at the end of this report.



"Understanding the key planning issues is fundamental to a successful planning application"

OVERALL DESIGN & PLANNING ISSUES - MY GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF YOUR SCHEME

- Your home extension scheme, in Planning terms appears to fit in with the Councils design guide criteria & current Planning Policy for extensions provided no sustainable objections are received from the public consultation process (neighbours, parish, highways etc.)
- **From what we discussed & described today, it is my professional opinion that your home extension scheme will likely secure a suitable Planning Approval at the first attempt subject to final design.**
- However, Planning issues can be very subjective & often influenced by these external consultations. Therefore Planning is not an exact science so surprises do sometimes occur.
- At our meeting I explained several elements of the Planning Policy & the Councils Design Guides to you & how they may affect your scheme. I did not identify any significant design issues that are likely to become a sustainable planning issue for the Case Planning Officer.

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT - PLANNING NOT REQUIRED?



“Home extensions should always be design lead rather than simply winning at planning - Permitted Development design is usually the second best option for when the Planners become resistant to a particular scheme”.

- Your extension works fall outside of the limited ‘Permitted Development’ (PD) rights for your property & as such Formal Planning Permission will be required in my opinion.



“Not all Designers & Architects are able to carry your home extension scheme to full construction details suitable for builders pricing”

OBSERVATIONS RELATING TO SITE SPECIFIC ISSUES **THE BUILDING REGULATIONS.**

- Every extension scheme or other building works will need to comply with the Building Regulations & it is my job to prepare plans & details that shows compliance for an approval through the Council.
- Some of these details will have to be based upon assumptions regarding the suitability of the existing foundations & the structural make up of the existing property for example that may not be evident at the measured survey stage.
- Therefore changes to the design is sometimes required during the construction process on site to suit the exposed structure. This could lead to additional costs during the works on site & you are advised to have a contingency sum available.

I explained at our meeting today several observations & possible situations that may occur or become applicable to your scheme & the Building Regulations. I wont go over them all again in depth here but I would just recap on the items covered at our meeting being:-

- 1 - Existing foundations will need to be exposed & checked for adequacy during the build. Localised underpinning may be required.
- 2 - A separate Heat loss calculation may be required if your net new glazing exceeds 25% of the floor area & an extra fee to a separate consultant may be required.
- 3 - A ‘Thames Water Build Over Agreement’ may be required if the excavations are within 3M of a main sewer or shared drainage system which will require a fee to Thames Water.
- 4 - If your site has good sub-soil conditions then usual 1M deep foundations will be suitable. If the exposed sub soil is poor or of high clay content the foundations will need to be adjusted during the build on site unless you are prepared to have a prior soil test completed.

INTERNAL ALTERATIONS

- Internal alterations are usually necessary for any extension scheme. The extent of these works is often the issue here relating to costs & available budget. It is not unusual for internal alterations to cost more per square foot than new build. Therefore, any desire to 'remodel' or install extra works to the existing property whilst the major extension scheme is in progress should be considered carefully especially if your budget is already tight for the main extension. If your budget is fairly open then this warning is not too relevant but going by past experiences with some clients, it is often these works that can prevent the extension scheme financially.

PARTY WALL ACT

- As you 'may' be excavating within 6M of a party wall or within 3M of a neighbour's wall, you 'may' need to obtain 'party wall agreements' with your neighbour under the Party Wall Act 1996. This can either be very simple & straight forward or very complicated & costly in other surveyors fees should the neighbour choose not to co-operate or insist that they have their own Party Wall surveyor looking after their interests that you will have to pay for. This has to be resolved before you start on site but does not affect the design or application processes through the Council. It is just a civil matter to be assessed & resolved before you actually start work on site.
- **Solution:** Again, I can assist you in these matters later on provided the neighbour co-operates. If they do not then you will likely have to engage additional Party Wall Surveyors to administer the party wall 'awards' later on.



DISCLAIMER

- Please remember that all of my comments & opinions made in this report are based upon our very short initial site meeting & without the benefit of a measured survey or any knowledge of the sites previous Planning History & site zoning confirmation.
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“Pricing any home extension prior to final design is a ‘dark art’ that few can perform with any degree of accuracy”

✓ CONSTRUCTION COSTS

- Construction costs are always difficult to estimate especially now while we are into a new period of boom within the property sector. Materials & labour rates have vastly increased over the last year.
- Extension works to existing properties are particularly expensive (compared to new build green field site works) as the new extension works are often compromised or affected by existing structures & the fact that protection of the existing premises & the occupants form a high priority.
- It is my estimate that construction costs for extension work is around £2k per square meter (or £200 per square foot). Possible other costs on top of this could be for internal works, PC sums for the bathroom / kitchen furniture, repairs, external making good & even VAT.
- However, recent feedback from a few previous completed schemes suggests that final finished build cost per square meter can often be in excess of this estimated figure. A lot depends upon the complexity of the scheme, the location of the site & the final specification level of the fit out (bathrooms, kitchens, wardrobes, decorating, services etc.).
- You have not indicated what your maximum build budget will be & this is fairly common for most homeowners at this conceptual part of the design process preferring to try & assess what they can achieve on the property first & then later evaluate its value to them when the costs are established at the end of the design & approval process.
- However, until such time a specific extension design & the extent of the works has been established & approved through Planning & Building Regulations it is impossible to say with any degree of accuracy whether the works will actually be within this figure.
- Therefore, I really cannot confirm at this stage what the final price of the extension works will finally be & you should not wholly rely on my opinions relating to budget costs in deciding to take the scheme forward with myself. There will be an element of risk for you that the final designed scheme could be over your current estimated budget.
- I note that you are considering acting as your own project manager for the works on site & this may allow you to save on the construction costs provided you can afford the time.
- Please treat these figures as very rough ‘guesstimates’.



“Assessing added value can be hard to appreciate unless you have already experienced the ‘bargain basement’ approach” to building design.

FEE ESTIMATE FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

For your size of project I base my fees on a **quoted fixed price** for each stage of the work as this is what most clients prefer. Other fees for the Local Authority, Engineer or other consultants have been estimated.

Please note that completing the scheme in stages limits your exposure to abortive fees & you can dispense with my services at any stage should your situation or requirements change & you will only be billed for my work completed to date plus costs.

Design

Stage 1:- (Half stage Planning - clients presentation scheme) For measured survey, compiling existing ground & first floor plans with existing elevations, preparation of proposed floor plans with one or two proposed elevations for clients initial assessment for discussion & approval purposes. This may also include for any alternatives & options on the internal layouts & external design for your consideration:-

Fixed price fee =	£ 1,500.00
My own costs =	£ 50.00

Design

Stage 2:- (2nd half Planning - full planning scheme) For meeting to discuss clients initial scheme & incorporate any alterations, upgrade scheme with extra elevations & site/location plan to Planning application standard & to act as your Agent for the preparation of all forms, letters etc. to the Local Authority:-

Fixed price fee =	£ 300.00
My costs =	£ 50.00
Planning application fee (paid direct by client) =	£ 172.00 (full planning app.)

Design

Stage 3:- (Building Regulations scheme) After Planning Approval has been obtained to upgrade the scheme with additional constructional details, sections etc. & a specification manual ready for the Building Regulations application & your own tender application to seek builder prices. To act as your Agent for the preparation of all forms, letters etc. to the Local Authority:-

Fixed price fee =	£ 1,800.00
My costs =	£ 90.00
Building Regulations application fee (paid direct by client) =	£ 400.00 (estimated)
Building Regulations inspection fee (paid direct by client) =	£ 450.00 (estimated)

Other fees that ‘may??’ be required (paid direct by client) & subject to final design:-

For Structural Engineer to prove steel or timber beams & any other unusual loads that may need proving for Building Inspector =	£ 200.00 (estimated)
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For heat loss SAP calculation if glazing exceeds 25% of the floor area =	£ 380.00 (estimated)
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Thames Water Build Over Agreement if building Within 3M of a main sewer or shared drains =	£ 350.00 (estimated)
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Cont/....

Optional services offered that some clients require after Council approvals have been obtained (most clients wish to save fees & not use these services):-

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1) | Tender application:-
Fixed fee incl. printing & postage = | £ 350.00 plus costs |
| 2) | Contract administration during the works on site:-
(site monitoring & paperwork control) | 5% of contract cost paid in stages during the works. |

Generally:-

This fee arrangement should compare favourably with other 'chartered' practices who often charge a percentage of the estimated build price or use unspecified hourly rates for every stage of the design process & you should work these out carefully (in full) first for comparison should you be obtaining alternative fee quotes.

I do not normally negotiate on fees. However, If I forecast some spare capacity over the coming weeks then I will consider negotiating but in the end I do have to feel positive towards a scheme in terms of remuneration so that you can obtain a pro-active & motivated level of service. If this issue is the only 'deal breaker' for you then why not give me a call first.

Notes & terms of service:-

- I am not registered for VAT at this time.
- Terms are - invoices will be issued at relevant completed stages or at a maximum of 8 week intervals for work completed to date & are to be paid in full within 14 days of issue & before the applications are submitted. Overdue accounts will accrue monthly interest of 1% per month. Genuine hardship claims will be exempt.
- Planning Consent cannot be guaranteed.
- Once I have taken the site information my turn-round period for each stage is about 14 - 28 days depending upon current workload.

Should you wish to engage my services on the above basis, I would be pleased to receive your written instructions by simply completing the enclosed 'confirmation of instructions letter' & sending it to my office. Alternatively, simply telephone my office for a survey appointment & I will pick up the engagement letter after my measured survey.

Please be aware that by formally engaging my services you are NOT committing to all of my services offered here in one go - You can treat my services as a type of 'Menu System' where you can progress 'step by step' through each Design Stage at your own pace. You can cancel, hold, delay or reschedule my involvement at any time provided I have been paid for actual work completed on your project up to date.



AND FINALLY (the sales pitch).....

- As this is my main profession I have additional overheads associated with running a CIAT recognised professional service (a copy of our 'Code of Conduct' is enclosed).
 - Regretfully, my fees are sometimes higher than some other Agents who usually complete work on a casual or part time basis ('simple plan draftsmen') who will normally just do the bare minimum for the Planning & Building Regulations submissions which could lead to deficient or inconclusive plans & limited specifications for your builder which are not really suitable for obtaining fixed price tenders from builders.
 - Please remember that the drawings & documents prepared by any Building Designer **MUST** be suitable to also be used as the **CONTRACT DOCUMENTS** between you & your builder later on. With my system you will be provided with a separate detailed Specification Manual which is to be read in conjunction with all the drawings.
- If they are not suitable then this could leave you exposed to excessive claims of 'extras' from your builder for work or fittings not scheduled or specified during or after the extension works. A few hundred pounds saved in fees at the design stage could cost you many thousands of pounds later on. Please make sure that you engage a professionally qualified person who can supply you with the required level of service & resources.
 - I also offer a **free 'back office' service** to my clients who can contact me after all the approvals have been obtained with regard to any issues they may be experiencing at any stage afterwards where I will always offer an opinion and/or advise. If a site visit is necessary then that too can be accommodated free of charge. I aim to always support my clients where I can.
 - I take pride in leading all my clients through the various stages of the development & intend to be a proactive & supportive in all areas required. Having 'personal ownership' of your scheme is very important to me.
 - For the last 20 years I have been actively involved with Wycombe District Council as part of their '**Customer & Agents Panels**' for Planning & Building Regulations which helps keep me informed & they receive customer feedback from their 'stakeholders'. This is very useful for building working relationships & communication avenues with the Council.
 - I can offer references & previous schemes that you may visit & I have already explained my approach to building design issues. I would also, if you are able, refer you to my website www.christopherhunt.co.uk for information on my practice, a gallery of previous schemes, advice on builders & a clients guide which you may find useful.
 - I also attach an estimated programme schedule for guidance on timings which I trust you will find useful for your own Planning of the works. Please be aware that I have included some generous client 'turnaround' times that can be compressed if you can get back to me quickly after each design stage issue.
 - I trust that this information will be of use to you in assessing my services. Should you wish to view my office & any previous projects then please do not hesitate to contact me for an appointment. I am a small practice with assistance from my father from time to time who is also an Architectural Technician (semi-retired). I like to think that we provide a friendly & approachable 'plain speaking' kind of service tailored very much to the clients requirements.
 - We also complete work on Computer Aided Design (CAD) which makes for easy client alterations once the information has been drawn. We also hold the CAD files 'forever' so any future schemes in the years to come can be easily accommodated & processed into a working scheme later on either for yourselves or any future home owners.

- We can communicate with you via a series of methods including meetings, hard copies of drawings & letters in the post or email with pdf attachments. We prefer post & hard copy paper issues as drawn plans are often easier to read, mark up & assess for the client. However, many clients prefer digital plans viewed on a monitor. The choice is yours.



Yours sincerely,

Chris Hunt

Christopher Hunt MCIAT

Encls.

PS - I am also author of several established home improvement websites that you may find interesting for your further research & due diligence:-

www.permitteddevelopment.org	How to extend your home without formal Planning permission.
www.house-extension.info	Article related website about how to build a home extension.



Cont/....



ESTIMATED PROGRAMME SCHEDULE FOR SCHEME DESIGN

Date : 13th May 2014
Client : Mr. D. O'Sullivan.
Site : 18 Daws Lea, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1QF
Project : Two storey side extension & associated internal alterations.

MONTH & STAGE	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May
Measured Survey (half a day)	*											
Issue of stage 1 design (clients presentation scheme) 2 to 4 weeks	****											
Client approval period 1 to 2 weeks		**										
Issue of stage 2 design (Planning scheme) 1 to 2 weeks		**										
Planning application 8 weeks minimum		**	****	**								
Stage 3 design (Building Regulations upgrade) after Planning Approval				****								
Client approval period 1 to 2 weeks					**							
Issue to Structural Engineer - 2 weeks					**							
Building Regulations submission to Local Authority 5 weeks					***	**						
Tender period 4 to 8 weeks					***	****						
Client selection period 2 to 4 weeks							****					
Builder engaged							*					
Contract duration 12 weeks								****	****	****		
COMPLETED											*	

NOTES:-

- All dates are only approximate & are to be treated as a guide.
- The programme is affected by client approval periods for each stage, the current work load & efficiency of the Local Authority, Planning & Building Control issues that may need resolving during the application periods, the availability of builders & their willingness to tender which are ALL outside the control of CHP.

Cont/...

**Confirmation of instructions letter.
(to be signed & dated by client)**



To:-
The Christopher Hunt Practice,
26 Wycombe Road,
Marlow,
Bucks.
SL7 3HU.

Dear Christopher,

Re:- **ENGAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Site:- 18 Daws Lea, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1QF.

Thank you for your report letter dated 13th May 2014.

We / I wish to confirm that in accordance with your report letter we / I wish to engage your services as stated.

We / I confirm that we / I can dispense with your services at any stage subject to prior and reasonable notification provided we have paid for your services completed to date.

(Any further conditions or notes to be added by client here if required ?):-

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.....
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Yours sincerely,




Signed.....Date.....

From:-

Mr. D. O'Sullivan,
18 Daws Lea,
Off Daws Hill Lane,
High Wycombe,
Bucks, HP11 1QF.

Cont/....

	CLIENT CONTACT INFORMATION DATA SHEET
	Please add your contact details & preferences
	Please note that all information is for internal administration use only & will not be passed on to any third parties without your consent.

DESCRIPTION	ANSWER
Site address	Mr. D. O'Sullivan, 18 Daws Lea, Off Daws Hill Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1QF.
Posting address	Mr. D. O'Sullivan, 18 Daws Lea, Off Daws Hill Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1QF.
Telephone - home	
Telephone - work	
Telephone - mobile	0781 666 1469
Fax	
Email address	Danandcoral@gmail.com
Preferred contact choice	Home tel. <input type="checkbox"/> Work tel. <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Post <input type="checkbox"/> Any is OK
Any pending holiday dates	
Any other comments you wish to make	

CLIENT SURVEY & FEEDBACK FORM

I am keen to improve my service where I can. On average I am engaged 1 in 3 for all the schemes I initially visit. I can only improve on this if I can obtain feedback from you (my potential new client). If you choose not to use my services I would really appreciate a little of your time completing & returning this feedback form - **Many thanks.**

INITIAL SITE MEETING	FEASIBILITY REPORT
1 - How useful did you find our meeting? Very useful :: Useful :: Not Useful :: Confirmed what I knew	10 - How useful did you find my feasibility report? Very useful :: Useful :: Not Useful :: Confirmed what I knew
2 - How did you find the content of the meeting? OK :: Too detailed :: Not detailed enough	11- Did you understand my assessment of your scheme? Yes :: No :: Some of it :: Most of it
3 - Did I understand your requirements & what you are trying to achieve? Yes :: No	12 - How did you find the length of my report? OK :: Too long :: Too short
4 - How did I present myself? Clothing - OK :: Poor :: Could do better Attitude - OK :: Arrogant :: competent :: uncaring Knowledge - Good :: Adequate :: Poor	13 - Did I cover all the areas in the report that we discussed at our initial meeting? Yes :: No :: Some of it :: Most of it
5 - How did you find the length of the initial meeting? Just right :: Too short :: Too long	14 - I try to compile a balanced report explaining all the issues even if it means being uncomplimentary or negative. How did you find this approach? Very useful :: Useful :: Confusing :: Unhelpful :: Too negative
6 - At these meetings I have to assess your scheme in two ways - one being to locate the potential negative planning issues that could prevent you from being granted a planning approval & the other is to enhance your design aspirations including practicality etc. How did you value this open & honest opinionated approach? Very useful :: Useful :: Confusing :: Unhelpful :: Too negative	15 - Fees are always a contentious issue. How did you find my fee proposal? Good Value :: As expected :: Expensive
7 - Was our initial meeting what you expected? Yes :: No :: Surprising :: An eye opener!	16 - My fee proposal always includes an estimate of other costs & fees (Planning & B. Reg fees, Engineers fees etc) that can often make my fee look inflated. Did you value this 'all in' costing schedule? Yes :: No :: Didn't understand it
8 - Did you consider the initial £50.00 consultation fee to be of good value? Yes :: No	17 - Would you consider my services again to view another project you may have in the future? Yes :: No
	18 - If you are not selecting to use my Building Design Services, can you explain what your deciding factor was (eg - price, qualifications, experience, status, report etc)

Please send to:-

Christopher Hunt MCIAT, The Studio, 26 Wycombe Road, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 3HU.

You can send it back anonymously or your can supply your contact details below. (either is fine) :-

From:-

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Cont/....