



**P.A.Hollingworth & Co Ltd**  
**Building Contractors**

## *Hollingworth Guide to working with Builders*

*Pete Hollingworth is Managing Director at PA Hollingworth & Co Ltd, and has been involved with the building industry for 35 years. We asked Pete what questions do you get asked the most from new customers, some of whom are having building work done for the very first time.*



### ***“How do I choose good reputable builders”?***

This is always an issue but you can start by asking around your friends and relatives to see if they have had similar work done and what was their experience. You can also use your computer to check on the web for local contractors and then visit their web-sites to see if they show examples of similar work, or if they look professional.

Accreditations are always a useful indicator, look out for Health & Safety accreditations, you wouldn't like to employ a company with poor safety standards. ISO9001 is an industry recognised office management accreditation which is audited externally to show that a company is managing its office to a high standard of competency. Is the builder/company accessible? Do you know where he lives or where the office is and is the contact detail easily contactable and local? Is the builder/company fully insured for damage to your property or persons whilst carrying out the work?

### ***“How do I get a quotation for the work”?***

We would suggest you select no more than three companies of similar size and send them any drawings (you may need an architect to help you with these, see below) along with a covering letter requesting a quotation.

Include in this letter any specific requirements you may have i.e. with or without decorations or extent of wall tiling or with or without a fitted kitchen etc. Also include a date for when you would like the quotation returned (Usually 3 to 4 weeks at a minimum is reasonable).

NEW HOMES :: EXTENSIONS :: RENOVATIONS :: CONVERSIONS :: LOFT CONVERSIONS :: COMMERCIAL UNITS :: SHOPFITTING :: OFFICE FITOUT :: ELECTRICS :: SWIMMING POOLS





The builders should, on receipt of the drawings, contact you to arrange to visit the property and take a look at what is being proposed and chat to you about the process. For example: will you remain in residence or are you moving out for a period?

### ***“What is the process and what can you expect before the building work commences”?***

Once you have chosen your builder, you should request a “pre-contract meeting”. You should request that the builder bring with him his proposed Programme of Works, and you need to study this to make sure his proposals fit with your needs if you intend to remain in residence whilst the work is carried out. You need also to exchange some form of written contract. These are readily available for purchase off the internet and a good contractor can advise you which would be best suited to the needs of the individual project and supply them as required.

The difficulty with most contracts is that they require that someone administer them who sits between the builder and the client. In most cases this would be the architect or specifier, but in many cases the clients do not wish to spend their money on this service, they prefer to spend it on the bricks and mortar.

In these cases builders should be able to provide a simple “Form of Acceptance” which outlines what work is to be done, for how much money, terms of payment along with other terms and conditions and your rights. This is signed by both parties and copies held by each. Most importantly and in addition to the contract, a hand shake between parties is the oldest form of association and we highly recommend this as a good starting point.

### ***“What is the process and what can you expect during the building work”?***

During the process of the build, the builder should follow the detail of the drawing and any specification precisely and on the basis there are no changes needed or required by you then you should expect the quoted sum to remain fixed.

On the other hand if something unforeseen occurs or the building control officer requires a change or you request a change or addition, then additional costs may be incurred. In all cases if there are any changes to the drawing, from any source, they

the builder should be expected to put in writing detailing what the change is and the cost increase or cost saving. You the client would then need to respond in writing accepting or declining this change. Most disputes between builder and client arise from changes/variations of this kind which incur unknown additional costs which are presented at the end much to the shock of the customer.

All charges for work carried out should be in arrears. Never pay up-front for any work unless this is set-out in the contract prior to commencement and agreeable to both parties. Most builders will value the work they have done every few weeks and request payment of this sum only and all additional costs should be included in these valuations so you know how the costs are mounting.

### ***“What is the process and what can you expect after completion of the building work”?***

The builder should request visits from the local authority Building Control Officer (BCO) at frequent, and pre-arranged stages and assuming all these are carried out and the work is to the satisfaction of the BCO then, on completion, you will be issued with their official Completion Certificate. This should be kept safe as you will need this certificate if and when you decide to sell your property.

Also required to gain this certificate, the builder will need to supply you and the local authority with a recognised Electrical Installation certificate such as those provided by NICEIC approved electricians. Also required would be a new Gas Safe certificate necessary if any gas equipment has been installed or altered. Again this needs to be provided by the Gas Safe Registered installer used by the builder.

At this point and only following receipt of all the necessary paperwork you would be in a position to settle the builders Final Account and part company, hopefully on good terms. In some instances when a full contract has been used there would be a small percentage of the build cost retained by the client (Usually 2.5% of the total cost) and this sum would be released to the builder following a period of 3-6 months once the builder had snagged any problems that may have occurred over the period since completion. Even if you have not used a full contract and there has been no retained sum of money, it is reasonable to expect that a reputable builder will return after a few months and correct any problems, if any occur, free of charge.

### ***“Do I need Planning Permission to extend my home”?***



In most cases, an extension to your home is considered to be permitted development, it therefore does not require an application for planning permission, subject to some conditions. To find out more about these conditions go to: <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/extensions/>

### ***“Do I need Building Control approval to extend my home”?***

Building Regulations are to be followed by builders and developers to insure that certain codes and standards are followed to establish a finished project which is both long-lasting and safe for occupation for many years to come. Yes, most extensions of properties require approval under the Building Regulations and if you attempt to sell a property which has been extended without this approval you will find yourself bogged down in retrospective and often costly applications to correct this oversight.

There are, however, a number of classes of new buildings or extensions of existing buildings that do not need Building Regulations approval, and are exempt from the regulations. To find out more visit <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/responsibilities/buildingregulations/approvalneeded/exemptions>

### ***“Do I need an architect to extend my home”?***

Once you have established if you need local authority Planning and/or Building Control approval, you will need to employ the services of an Architect. If you don't know who to use, contact us at our offices and we can give you the contact details of several from which you can choose. As with all things - some are better than others!

Plans will be required to enable builders to provide quotations for your project and the more detailed the drawings the better and more accurate the quotations. The drawings relating to the Building Control approval will carry the information needed to provide a quotation and the detail can also include your specific requirements such as electrics or fittings.



**P.A.Hollingworth & Co**  
**Building Contractors**

---

*If you have any questions that you think PA Hollingworth & Co Ltd can help with please contact Pete or Sarah on 01304 611 967.*