

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Case study

This is based on attached freehold house over two floors undertaking internal alterations, rear extension and loft conversion including a new dormer.

### *Meeting the client*

First step is setting up a meeting with the client where we get the brief in outline and understand the requirements and style the client desire.

It is very important at this stage to establish how much the client wants to spend on the project. This gives us a good indication of what is achievable and also what our fees would be as we work on a percentage of the build cost. The percentage varies based on build cost and intricacy of the project.

### *Survey of the house*

When an agreement has been made we come out and measure up the house in detail. This will be the foundation of all future plans we will carry out.

### *Design*

The design stage now starts and we will come up with different conceptual designs for the house. In most cases this will take less than 2 weeks. The plans will be presented to our client and any amendments or changes are discussed where after we make the necessary changes and update our plans. The second presentation is made and we agree on the outline layout and scheme of the changes. This also takes less than 2 weeks.



### *Planning and/or permitted development*



The plans are now being prepared for submission to the planning department to obtain planning permission. Under some instances Permitted Development can be an alternative to a planning application. The Permitted Development application is processed much faster than

a planning application. However, certain criteria's have to be met before Permitted Development can be an alternative option. The submission fee to the council is normally £176.25 but can be more depending on the size of extension. This normally takes 2 weeks to prepare the drawings but upon submitting the plans, the planning department has 8 weeks to process the application.

### *Choosing a contractor*

The process of choosing a contractor can be relatively simple. We have very good relationships with a dozen of different contractors who we trust and know can provide the right service for the right job. Every project we work on is sent out to tender. This means that we send out drawings and specifications to at least three different contractors and get individual quotations from each of them. Most commonly the cheapest contractor gets the job. However, there may be reasons why a different contractor is chosen such as availability or predicted duration of the project.

### *Building Control*

48 hours before commencement a building notice needs to be submitted to the councils building control department or a private building control company. This authority will make sure the build work is carried out as per current regulations and that all certificates are obtained such as gas and electrical certificates. The fee to the building control department is set by the cost of the work being carried out which normally vary from £350–2,000.

### *Party Wall Award*

In most cases when a loft conversion is carried out the structural integrity of the building is compromised by taking out parts of the roof. This can relatively easy be solved by installing either steel or



wooden beams across the roof line (ridge). These beams are commonly inserted into the party wall which is shared by you and your neighbour. A Party Wall Award has to be obtained. A party wall surveyor shall be appointed and he will take care of all the legalities and liaison between you

and the neighbour. His fee can vary a lot but for a simple roof conversion it would be in the region of £1,500.

The same principal shall be applied for a rear or side extension on the ground floor. The fee will naturally increase accordingly.

297 mm

### *Structural Engineer*

Structural calculation accompanied with detailed drawings is an essential part of the whole process. The structural details shall be used for the Party Wall Award, submitted to the building control department and also the contractor when the actual build work commences.

A structural engineer shall be appointed and compile the documentation mentioned above. We have worked with many structural engineers in the past and always find it best to use a local engineer who has worked in your area before and is familiar with the same kind of building as yours. They might have worked on a similar project two houses up your road. Depending on the scheme of works i.e. changes to the internal load bearing walls, intricacy of layout etc. the structural engineer's fee can vary between £1,000 and £3,500

### *Contract administration*

Once a contractor has been chosen we will draw up a contract between our client and the contractor. We will also take care of the contract administration which means that everything is carried out as per the contract and also hold the fortnightly valuations. The contractor will only get paid when we provide him with a certificate for interim payment. The client shall then pay the contractor the agreed amount based on the current valuation for the work carried out to date.

### *Project management*

When all permissions have been obtained and a contractor has been chosen we can start the actual build work. We will inspect the work on a regular basis to insure all is going as planned and no delays occurring. Depending of the nature of the project we tend to visit site at least twice a week. Quality control is a big part of the work we do at this stage. Even though the building inspector will inspect the work we also have the obligation to make sure the contractor build to our standards and according to the drawings.

### *Our fee structure*

The majority of our projects are similar in the way they are structured. We spend most of our time in the beginning of the project designing, attending meeting, printing and sending out tender packages etc. This is why we have regulated the fee structure to reflect the work involved and time spent on a project. We ask for 35% down payment when we are instructed by our client. Then we invoice the outstanding money pro rata for every valuation held fortnightly.