

# Advice for Building Owners on Consultants & Contractors



## Consultants

Owing to the nature of the work it is advisable to seek professional advice, preferably from an architect with experience of working with historic buildings, for all but the smallest of projects. Although general advice regarding design and specification issues will be provided by the THI Project Officer, professional consultants will be required for:

- All major or complex works;
- All works with a significant design element (e.g. new shopfronts);
- All works where the cost exceeds £10,000;
- In such instances grant assistance will be available to successful applicants in respect of professional fees.

Depending on the scale and complexity of the agreed works, Falkirk THI has the right to insist on the appointment of appropriately qualified consultants to prepare the drawings, specifications and to monitor the works during implementation.

It is also a non-negotiable condition of the funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland that a Conservation Accredited Architect must be appointed to plan and oversee the works for all projects where grant aid exceeds £25k. You will be able to employ the services of the THI's pre-approved Conservation Architect/s for this purpose. Alternatively you should obtain competitive fee bids from at least three suitably qualified professional consultants and submit a summary of the tenders to the THI office. A list of all Conservation Accredited Architects in Scotland can be found here: <http://www.rias.org.uk/directory/conservation/>

If the work is modest and only involves like-for-like replacement, painting, reinstating timber windows etc., you may wish to organise and administer the contract yourself. You should refer to the relevant guidance in preparing a simple specification to allow you to obtain a minimum of three competitive tenders for the work from suitable contractors. You should also discuss your proposals with Falkirk Council to check if the work requires planning permission, listed building consent and/or building warrant. Drawings and specifications must be assessed by the THI Project Officer prior to the invitation of tenders.

# Contractors

If you have appointed a professional consultant to plan and oversee your project for you, after preparing specifications and drawings and obtaining any statutory consents, they will also arrange for at least three suitable building contractors to tender for the works on your behalf.

If you are managing your own small project then you will need to tender the works yourself. In simple terms this means obtaining prices from at least three different contractors or tradesmen for the work that you want carried out.

Specifications and drawn information are the best way to communicate your requirements to your potential contractors. A specification is a detailed description of the works down to the smallest detail. It should include a general description of the work, the type and quality of the materials, the way in which they are to be built, and all relevant details of size, shape, colour and texture. In some instances drawings or sketches will be necessary to communicate clearly your requirements. It is important to give each builder exactly the same information about the job so that you can compare prices fairly. Ask for detailed, written quotations clearly identifying the cost of the different parts of the job and giving a programme with firm start and completion dates.

Builder contractors are usually of two types, those specialising in a single trade, joiners, masons or bricklayers etc. or "all trades" contractors who provide a range of skills and who will often manage or co-ordinate projects requiring several disciplines. In either case they should be members of the appropriate trade association or registration body. These organisations should be able to provide lists of members local to your area.

Once you have identified a few names, contact the tradesmen or builders that suit the size and type of work you want carried out. Again, get confirmation that they have experience in the type of work involved, emphasising the need for tradesmen with the traditional skills needed to conserve and maintain older buildings. Not all tradesmen will have the skills necessary for this kind of work. Ask for information about recent jobs which they have done so that you can check the quality and talk to previous customers about the work which has been completed. Also check that they have full and current insurance cover.

Make up a list of builders who are prepared to price your job, who have knowledge of traditional building techniques, and with whom you would be happy to work. In order to make an application to the THI for grant funding you need three firm prices. It is usual to ask more than three companies to price the work - perhaps four or five - since some will inevitably drop out.

If you would like any further information or advice on procuring Consultants or Contractors please contact the THI Project Officer on:

01324 614 060

[susie.dibdin@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:susie.dibdin@falkirk.gov.uk)