

Choosing a Professional

The choice of consultants or specialists able to undertake work in relation to planning applications or similar schemes can be guided by the following principles:

I. Membership of an appropriate Institute

Architects are normally members of the [Royal Institute of British Architects](#) or are registered architects (details on [AARUK](#)) and have undertaken rigorous training in their field. RIBA can provide further information for choosing the appropriate architect for your project.

There is also a [Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation](#), which was established with the support of English Heritage.

Some historic building conservation specialists are members of the [Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation](#) and companies who specialise in historic building conservation may be registered with its [Historic Environment Service Providers Recognition](#) system.

Where a formal Environmental Impact Assessment is required, membership by a consultancy or individual of the [Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment](#) is a useful indication of competence. A suitably qualified ecologist can also be found at [CIEEM](#).

Consultants or specialists, depending on their field of expertise may also be members of other specific professional bodies, for example -

[The Royal Town Planning Institute](#)

[The Institution of Structural Engineers](#)

[The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors](#)

2. Knowledge of the Local Area

Knowledge of the local area can be useful in understanding the local materials, building types and features etc and in having good contacts with local contractors, suppliers and specialist building companies. It can also lead to a better understanding of local historic building conservation policies, constraints, and opportunities.

3. “In House” Expertise

Not all environmental, planning, or architectural consultancies will have their own in-house historic building conservation specialists and other freelance consultants may be used, particularly on cases / sites that require a multi-skilled approach. In such a case it is advisable to ascertain who the specialist or consultant will be, and what professional qualifications or relevant expertise they possess.

4. Relevant Experience and Knowledge

It is important to ensure that your historic building conservation consultant or specialist is qualified and experienced in the relevant fields, for example an architect with extensive experience of working on the re-development of historic docklands may not have the appropriate experience to work on the repair of rural timber framed buildings. It may even be necessary to appoint additional specialists for particular parts of the project, for example the repair of fine plasterwork or wall paintings.

5. Legal Requirements

It is important to ascertain whether the consultant that you have appointed has all the appropriate legal documentation and qualifications that are required both within their profession and for health and safety etc.

6. Located Locally

Is your expert located locally or will you be charged for travelling time and mileage? It is important to establish this before you appoint any expert advice.

7. Tenders and Detailed Written Proposals

It is always advisable to seek, for comparative purposes, several written tenders (at least 3) that include details of the work that the consultants would undertake. It may be helpful to ask for a “day rate” for any additional work that may also be required.

8. Insurance

Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance should be held by the consultants to cover the costs of any legal liabilities established against them.

9. References and Recommendations

It may be useful to ask for references from any potential consultant for similar projects that they have carried out. Local contacts can also be a good source of information as to suitable consultants.

Where do Consultants and Specialists Advertise?

Historic building conservation specialists and consultants often advertise in the relevant magazines and periodicals, for example -

In Context - [Institute of Historic Building Conservation](#)

The Victorian - [Victorian Society](#)

SPAB Magazine - [Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings](#)

Planning - [Planning Resource](#)

The [Building Conservation Directory](#) also provides contact details for many consultants, specialists and contractors who specialise in building conservation.

Other places:

Federation of Master Builders (FMB)

Website: www.fmb.org.uk

Guild of Master Craftsmen

Website: <https://www.guildmc.com/>

Glass and Glazing Federation

Website: www.ggf.org.uk

Lead Contractors Association

Email: info@leadcontractors.co.uk

Website: www.leadcontractors.co.uk

Lead Sheet Association

Website: www.leadsheet.co.uk

National Federation of Roofing Contractors Limited (NFRC)

Email: helpdesk@nfrcltd.co.uk

Website: www.nfrc.co.uk

Painting and Decorating Association

Email: info@paintingdecoratingassociation.co.uk

Website: www.paintingdecoratingassociation.co.uk

Stone Federation Great Britain
Email: enquiries@stonefed.org.uk
Website: www.stonefed.org.uk

National Society of Master Thatchers
Website: <https://nsmtltd.co.uk/find-a-thatcher/>

Thatch Advice Centre
Website: <https://www.thatchadvicecentre.co.uk/master-thatchers-associations>

Trust a Trader
Website: <https://www.trustatrader.com/>

Institute of Conservation (ICON)
Telephone: 01626 824 510
Email: parc@icon.org.uk
Website: www.icon.org.uk

Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)
Email: contact@ihbc.org.uk
Website: www.ihbc.org.uk

Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
Telephone: 01412 215 276
Website: www.ice.org.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Email: info@riba.org
Website: <https://www.architecture.com/>

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Telephone: 024 7686 8555
Email: contactrics@rics.org
Website: www.rics.org/uk

Passivhaus Trust
Website: <https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/>
Email: infor@passivehaustrust.org.uk

General Advice

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
Telephone: 020 7377 1644 or 020 7456 0916 for the Technical Advice Line
Email: info@spab.org.uk
Website: www.spab.org.uk

Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA)
Telephone: 020 7704 3501

Email: info@stbauk.org

Website: www.stbauk.org

Historic England

Website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/>

The Listed Property Owners Club

Website: <https://www.lpoc.co.uk/help-advice/>

Phone: 01795 844939