

A CLIENT'S GUIDE

WHERE TO START

HOW DO WE ADD VALUE

THE NEXT STEP

Our One Stop Approach



How do we add value

Welcome.

Some of our clients want us just to produce drawings to get them past planning permission and that is of course one of the services we offer. However, where we really shine, and add most value, is in those cases where we integrate all of our services for best effect.

We prepared this guide to help you choose the services you require if you are considering a refurbishment or new build project.

Understanding the various stages:

- Choosing a property or site, evaluating the possibilities and restrictions
- Initial drawings and planning permission
- Detailed construction drawings and building consent
- Budgeting and Tendering process
- Building and Project management stage

We can assist in each of these phases individually but our clients tend to be better off financially if we are involved from inception to completion.

Our architectural process is designed to be creative, while being pragmatic, practical and technical at the same time.

Making the most of our deep knowledge and understanding about various systems and



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construction processes, we package the work in detailed tendering documents, which generally saves our clients large sums of money.

Having grown up on building sites (and knowing all the tricks of the trade), our surveyor will handle the project management stage with ease to ensure the project is delivered on time and in budget

1. Comprehensive site evaluation

One of the first key steps to a successful project is proper site selection and evaluation. Owners often make the mistake of buying property without consulting a professional who can help them make the right choice.

Buyers usually turn to one of three kinds of people for advice when considering purchasing a property – estate agent, architect or surveyor. Honest estate agents, who don't sweet talk buyers just to make a sale, may be able to give the right advice at times. However, this will usually depend on the kinds of homes the estate agent has seen built on properties previously sold. Although estate agents might have some level of vision, they might not have the professional training necessary to give overall well informed advice that covers various critical aspects.

More savvy buyers will turn to either an architect or surveyor for advice when evaluating a property. This is of course the recommended course of action, where the buyer will be able to get advice from professionally trained individuals who are from the field of creation and construction. Ideally, you want a professional that considers both aspects of the property evaluation; the architectural design which evaluates and imagines what kind of project can be put on the property *and* a practical review which



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evaluates the ease of construction of the site and the logistics of being able to put a structure on the property.

Naftel Associates harnesses both approaches for a compounded vision. We consider and weigh various criteria into site election, evaluate and visualize the way a structure could be designed while keeping in mind logistics and construction of the structure. This ensures we consider and evaluate aspects and issues often overlooked and weigh these into the preliminary cost projections for one site vs. another.

2. Better design through understanding construction

Many architects can focus very strongly on their ability to create good designs and on what sets them apart. However, in doing so, they often completely ignore potential structural issues and complications that could arise due to an impractical built form or shape. They completely depend on the structural engineers to figure it out while in reality it can be incredibly challenging to build some of those forms. It can either get extremely expensive or sometimes it's just not possible to make an odd built form that is also structurally stable.

This is when difference of opinions start between architects and structural engineers causing delays in the progress of the project. The engineer starts offering solutions that may require slight design alterations in order to make the built form structurally stable, while the architect or designer is not willing to accept and incorporate those changes or alter their overall design in any way. The project can remain to a standstill until all concerned parties are in mutual agreement about design and structural issues.



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Naftel Associates offers an alternative to the above, working in the overall interest of the owner or client. We create and design while taking into account, structural and engineering challenges. We have an in depth understanding of the intricacies of construction and how overall systems are supposed to work, which allows us to design a project while keeping all technical aspects in mind. And since our design has already taken into account and addressed potential issues at the concept stage itself, it becomes easier for the engineers and contractors to execute on site without making any major alterations or changes. The project thereby can move on smoothly without any delays due to difference of opinions amongst professionals and the project execution will be fairly straightforward and simple since in most potential issues will have been addressed during the design phase itself.

The owner or client emerges a winner in this case, since not only the project is executed in a shorter time frame, with proper provisions for systems but also with integrated and smarter overall problem solving potential.

3. Project management

If we are not employed to coordinate and manage the project we will hand over the design to a contractor or a builder who will eventually construct and execute the project. This requires the contractor or builder to read and learn the drawings, interpret the design and build the project from a combination of information acquired from various different resources and teams. This could lead to problems arising from the contractor who may or may not have fully understood the drawings.

If we are managing the project, regular site visits by our surveyor will keep the builder on track and maintain quality control to avoid corners being cut. If surprises do come



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up during construction, they are minimised and solved relatively easily and sooner avoiding delay in the overall duration of the project.

With the project management system of **Naftel Associates** the client has to deal with a single point of contact for all communication on the project, making their own life much easier and hassle free.

In a **Non-managed Project**, the owner must often manage different personalities and agendas of independent service providing professionals as each of these professionals have only their personal interests in mind. The designer wants their design to excel even though it may be overlooking other important technical issues. Engineers often concentrate on their systems alone, even if it's detrimental to the design. And the owner is now left to evaluate and decide the best option from alternatives given to them and has to do so without any formal training, simply based on their best judgment or common sense.

In a **Managed Project**, Naftel Associates performs a careful balancing act, weighing in design, technical as well as budgeting aspects at all times and thereby provide the owner with best possible solutions. We take into account all aspects and criteria in order to make an informed decision. This combination of factors proves beneficial for the owner as they can now rest assured of their project being completed on time, with minimum compromises and headaches and most importantly within budget.



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4. Reducing construction costs

At **Naftel Associates** we use our extensive experience and understanding of the real costs involved in a project at every stage of the project. This gives us the ability to design a project within budget constraints, but we also make a difference in the tendering stage:

We have gained more than 20 years experience tendering a wide range of building projects, ranging from small loft conversions to large multi million pound partnering methods.

Tendering procedures can be rather basic and could consist of simply asking various builders to provide a quotation, although the common and widely recognised tendering procedures are set out in 'JCT 2012 – Tendering, a guidance note', which offers some structure to tendering projects.

Traditional tendering procedures would involve a 'competitive' approach. Meaning the project is detailed and specified in tender documentation and main contractors are then invited to tender for the whole package (including electrics / plumbing / tiling, along with the main builders work).

This means the builder, commonly referred to as 'main contractor', will take the responsibility of organizing all the trades, sequence of working and will take what we call 'possession' of the site. They have overall responsibility to the client; if anything goes wrong they are to blame.



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Therefore, with this responsibility, main contractors are charging a premium on top of normal construction costs. Site Managers, Foremen, Head Office Overheads etc are all solid reasons why the premium is added.

What is always surprising is the range of costs you receive when tendering like this. Imagine a refurbishment of a residential building. The client budget has been carefully considered and calculated at £150,000. We tender the project using the traditional route with a minimum of three local contractors. Prices are returned and there is a wide range between the tenders.

Why? The works have been detailed, the drawings clearly state what we want to create, a specification has been drafted and the builder provides itemized prices. Why has builder C submitted a price £100k over the budget, whilst builder A has priced significantly lower.

The answer is down to builder selection, the risk you are asking them to take and how keen they are to work on the project. The builder's risk comes down to the level of responsibility for quality control, project planning, damages and losses. Increased responsibility translates into a higher price tag.

So a balance of risk is the route to keeping costs down; if the client takes on more risk, project control, planning, responsibility for damages and losses, than the builders are not adding costs to their tenders.

Clients who are prepared to take on a little more risk are benefitting from a series of financial savings.



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We offer a 'Work Package' route to tendering. Rather than a main contractor being employed and taking all the responsibility and risk, we divide the works up into work packages, for example; 'WP 1 – Scaffolding', 'WP2 Builders Works' / 'Foundation' / 'Walls', 'WP3 Roof structure' / 'Floor Structure', 'WP4 Electrics', 'WP5 Plumbing'.

We have in the past seen a disconnect many architects have with realities of construction and the costs associated with it. Typically, finished design is supplied to the owner who then puts it out for different contractors to bid upon. These bids usually come back with considerably higher quotes than the owner had initially budgeted for. As a result the owner has to go back into the negotiation process with contractors to see who will provide the best price. This however can get tricky and even dangerous, since chances of the lowest bidder compromising on quality in order to meet the lower costs rises.

Even worse situations arise when the project costs shoot beyond the owner's original budget owing to the designer's shortsightedness and disconnect with practicality. And at this point there may be no other alternative but to redesign the entire project. This can set the project back by months and not to mention a huge disappointment to the owner who has a design that just cannot be built anymore due to being over budget.



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The **Tradional Tendering** Process Rather than inviting say 3 main contractors to tender for the overall project, we package the project into 'work packages' and invite detailed individual tenders from builders, electricians, plumbers and other professionals; with this method we have been able to reduce the building cost by up to 50%.

5. **Faster overall delivery**

We have already seen some of the problems that commonly face projects done in the non-managed system. The budget disconnect of the designers, lack of agreement between designer and engineers, the delayed timeframe due to redesigns or selection of contractor within budget etc., all lead to an extended timeframe.

A **complete managed** project does not lose quite as much time due to miscommunications between the teams, budget discrepancies, back and forth between contractor bids etc. Additionally, the permits process can be initiated as soon as the design is completed and final sets of plans and copies are printed. This saves a lot of time between completion of design, sifting through several bids and finally hiring the right contractor.



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6. Decreased administrative burden

On a non-managed project, the client ends up spending a large amount of time in administrative issues, managing large amounts of paper work and bills for the project coming in from all directions. Often, the owner ends up spending so much time tending to paperwork and bills that he is left with little time to devote to the project itself. This can cause for him to make some delayed decisions affecting the progress of the project.

In a **Project managed by Naftel Associates** the administrative burden for the owner is reduced since all bills from builders and sub-contractors are checked and approved by our surveyor before submission to the client; therefore the amount of time spent on reviewing information is greatly reduced. The owner thus has more time to dedicate to the project itself, enabling him to make quicker choices and decisions.



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7. Tighter knowledge and control of the project

In a **non-managed Project**, the owner will be solely responsible for management of various aspects of the entire project including design, technical decisions, budgeting etc. Most owners are not good at balancing all of this at once since their time is already invested in their own professional commitments. All hired professionals will handle only their part of the job and will perform within the boundaries of their trade. Often the owner ends up being the one who makes all the decisions.

In a **Managed Project**, we handle everything, which creates a huge advantage for the owner as the coordination and management of the entire project is now the responsibility of Naftel Associates. If need be, the owner only needs to manage this single point of contact. The team at Naftel Associates have an integral knowledge about all aspects of the project from the start including design, budget, structural aspects etc. This allows the team members to have a better understanding and grip on the overall project enabling them to work hand in hand with each other and giving the owner a project experience that is smooth and enjoyable.



THE NEXT STEP

Congratulations! You now have the key information to our one stop approach.

It would be impossible to include every important piece of information about project delivery in this guide because each project is unique and the requirements differ based on a multitude of factors. But with the 7 reasons explained in this guide, you have the critical information to help understand where our one stop approach adds value.

If you are interested in exploring the possibilities for your project, let's talk. We can help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure. We offer a custom **Action Plan** where we will identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically, the **Action Plan** saves our clients both money and lost time, not to mention the stress and headache of getting something wrong.

To read more about the **Action Plan** as well as the price for this service and why it is important to your project's success visit my website. If you are ready to talk now, please give me a call.

Best wishes for the success of your project!