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Your architect will hire the builders and manage the building works.

But you need to understand what is happening because, in the end, it's your responsibility.

Download the toolkit



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Choosing your builder

Getting the right builder is about knowing what you need.

Put a list of builders together

You and your architect should put together a list of builders that you might want to work with. Then, invite them to tender for the work.

The builder will give you a price based on the degree of risk they are taking on.

If your drawings, specification and bill of quantities are clear and detailed, you are more likely to get good tender prices.

Compare the tenders

Your architect will go over each tender and:

- Make sure the builder has the right skills for your project (e.g. working with listed buildings)
- Look at how many employed staff compared to subcontractors they have
- Ask about the builder's reputation and get recommendations
- Look at previous projects (i.e. size, type, complexity)
- Make sure that those who will be doing the work come to the interview
- Run financial checks
- Visit previous projects
- Find out if they are good organisers

Sign the contract

There are different types of building contracts:

- **Traditional:** the client decides the details and describes them to the builders, who each give a price (i.e. RIBA stage 4 technical design)
- **Design and build:** the builder is hired after RIBA stage 3 (developed design) and is responsible for working up the details of the project.
- **Tender stage two:** the builder is chosen early on based on basic information and a series of agreed rates. The price for the works is gradually negotiated.

Your architect will help you choose the best type for you.

~~Find out more about procurement~~

Helpful hints

- [ChurchBuild: RIBA stages](#) (137.29 KB)
- [ChurchBuild: Find the right builder](#) (303.93 KB)
- [Tendering for contractors](#) (381.36 KB)
- [ChurchBuild: Contracts](#) (159.47 KB)
- [Parish Resources: Request for tenders](#) (90.94 KB)

What else will your architect do?

Your architect is responsible for:

- Finding the builder
- Managing the tender process
- Managing the building works and people involved
- Making sure the works are good quality and done like in the specification
- Making sure building regulations are complied with
- Monitoring risks and delays
- Making sure you know the reason why the design had to change a little (yes, this is normal)
- Making sure that this change doesn't cost you too much
- And making sure you get a set of "as-built" drawings once the works are done

Helpful hints

- [ChurchBuild: Managing the building works](#) (195.96 KB)
- [Building project glossary](#) (19.47 KB)

What should you be doing?

Select one person from your group to make decisions during the building works and keep in touch with the architect.

And think about:

How you can use the church while works are happening

Will you use part of the church during the building works or close the whole building?

What about services, weddings and funerals? Will you need to hold them somewhere else?

Make plans. Talk to your clergy and churchwardens. They will have to get permission from the bishop to stop worshipping in the building.

Keeping everyone informed

Tell everyone what is going on:

- Put up an exhibition outside with drawings, plans and models
- Take tour groups around rarely seen parts of the church
- Take photos to show people still on the ground and for your records

Find out more about keeping people informed

Controlling the noise and pollution

Most building works are dusty and messy. Protect the interior of your church (e.g. fixtures & fittings).

Be a good neighbour. Talk to residents and businesses nearby if they are going to be affected.

Having the right insurance

Call your insurer to make sure you have the right cover in place for the building works. And let them know if you are using volunteers.

Some dioceses now require you to have £10m public liability cover in place. Check with them first so you can include this in the tender documents.

Find out more about insurance

Case studies

- [Case study: St Peter Swainsthorpe](#) (2.95 MB)
- [Case study: St John Hackney](#) (356.17 KB)

Next steps

To make your vision become a reality you need to start thinking about:

- Organising your cash flow
- Preparing for a brave new world

Want more help?

Advice and guidance

[The NCT has a very useful section on managing building projects](#)

Get practical information

[The Churchbuild website can help you develop a building project](#)

Ecclesiastical Insurance

[Get more guidance about your responsibility when planning works](#)

Spending millions on your project?

[Hire a project manager](#)

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