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footprintarchitects

How to Get Planning Permission



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A quick introduction...

We'd love to hear about your project! Drop us an email:
enquiries@footprintarchitects.co.uk

Hi there! We're Footprint Architects, an architectural practice based in Bournemouth, UK. This is the first of our bi-monthly (or-so) issues of tips and guides to help you battle what you may face along your project journey.

Here at Footprint, we've become somewhat specialists at obtaining planning permission. This is not because we turn over a mass of easier projects - it's because we have battled with very difficult ones.

We understand the planning process can be daunting at first. Hopefully, these tips will give you enough knowledge and confidence to battle the process.

We've included a couple of case studies to give you an insight into how the process *can* be. These were difficult projects to get approval for, so don't be disheartened, yours may go a lot smoother!

Sit back, grab a coffee and use some of our tried and tested tips on the planning process.

Architectural jargon used in this eBook...

Augmented Reality

Augmented reality allows users to interact with a virtual realisation of a model through use of a device.

Agent

The agent, in planning terms, is the person/party communicating and dealing with the planners on your behalf.

Conditions

A condition is a criteria your application may receive upon gaining consent. These details must be addressed to comply with the consent.

Context

The existing surrounding land, and area, that your property sits within.

Grade II Listed

A grade given to a historic building considered to be of national significance and merit.

PassivHaus

A rigorous standard of building efficiency requirements in which the building must meet to be ultra-low energy with a minimal ecological footprint.

Photogrammetry

Photogrammetry is a process in which a 3D model is created by stitching photos together.

Research

It's probably not what you wanted to hear, but research is an integral part of this process. Look at previous planning applications to see what your neighbours have been rejected on, or had conditions for, so you can try to avoid the same mistakes.

As well as researching any previous applications, it is wise to also research the history of the site. This will mean you, and your architect, can relate your design to the history and context of the site. This is relative of course and depends on

you and your architect's vision, but can definitely benefit your scheme when it comes to planning.

Before you approach an architect, we recommend that you have a strong idea of your project. Collect images and inspiration, sketches, photos, anything that will help define your aspirations. You can take this to potential architects to find the best fit for your dream and your project.

A crystal clear vision

To ensure your dream project obtains the planning permission it rightfully deserves, you need to start with a clear vision. An architect can help with this, its our job!

Once you have found the perfect architect for your project, you are now working together in a team.

During this process, a good architect will create a narrative for the concept of the design, how it addresses the site and the planning constraints. This will become a

strong argument for your project, based upon site, context, history and will enable a planning officer to see the care, consideration and strength of your proposal.

The whole process is collaborative - its a team operation! Don't sit back during this process, you and your architect are a team - you both have the same goal.

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Survey the existing condition

It is really important your site and the surrounding houses, boundaries, trees, roads, access, below ground services, and more, are surveyed from the outset. This enables any constraints on development to be understood as well as informing the design response.

At Footprint, we utilise the latest technologies to survey and produce 3D models.

We use drone and 3D laser scanning to create the existing condition with great accuracy and detail. We can then model directly upon this and produce interactive models, allowing you and the planners to get a unique insight and a realistic perspective of the scheme that is not otherwise possible.

Pre-planning application

Before we talk about the pre-application process, we want to say that they are not compulsory. Sometimes they are not needed, other times you would definitely benefit from them. The decision is up to you, but your architect will advise if they think you need one or not.

The pre-application phase allows the planners to give you informal advice before you submit your full application. This can be beneficial as it allows you to see whether or not your scheme is viable.

The pre-app gives the architect the opportunity to discuss the scheme with the planners; areas of concern, areas to possibly change, and highlight the site constraints.

Once the pre-application has been submitted, the planners then offer us helpful comments relating to the site's history and planning policy in the context of the proposal.

The architect will get pointers of things the full application needs to consider and it's important we try and address these. A decision may also need to be made if the planning officer is fundamentally against the development.

Try to understand whether the *informal advice* they have given

you is supported by national and local planning policies, or whether it is largely a subjective response. In which case, this is going to differ from person to person and cannot be a reason to deny the application. Try to be objective in your decision making and set aside your emotional response as much as possible.

Remember, architects cannot guarantee success. Speak to them and understand the financial and emotional investment involved if you decide to proceed.

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What do I submit?

A planning application requires the following mandatory information:

- the standard application form,
- a location plan,
- a site plan,
- an ownership certificate of the property,
- an agricultural holdings certificate,
- a design and access statement,
- and the correct application fee.

For more information on this, visit the planning portal website.

The design and access statement can record the site condition, history, limitations, concept - the more information, the better. Your architect will create this for you, but you may notice something new! More on this on the following page.

Context

Your architect will analyse the site for a variety of different points, positive and negative, that will provide depth to your submission, Such as; surround building typologies, sun paths and site access.

History

Your architect will gather information on the history of the site, this may form an integral part of your argument for design. This will help relate your scheme to the context of the site.

Implications of your proposal

Understand your proposal's impact on its surrounding context - how it fits and interacts with the existing landscape. Your architect will analyse this with sun paths, for example; producing a study on the impact of your proposal for your neighbours, or the impact of surrounding houses or trees on your dream home.

Stay pro-active and positive

You've submitted your planning application, congratulations! The work doesn't stop now, unfortunately. Once the application has been submitted your architect will keep you informed on updates but also try to give them a nudge every now and then.

The architect is your representative to the planner, known as the Agent. We know, it sounds like a spy film, its just the way it is! The agent (your architect) will be the main point of contact on planning relations during the process.

The architect has many resources, a strong understanding of planning policies and hopefully a great history of planning approval. However, it is good if you can also inform yourself on planning jargon and policies.

Ring, ring, ring! But not too much...

Your job isn't necessarily top priority for them, but it is for you... so get ringing! We always try to start conversations with the planning officer after the 4 week consultation period, to understand any issues they may have.

Stay pro-active during the process, you will want to give the architect and planner your updates as well as them giving you the project updates. Planners are very busy people, they have numerous projects and jobs to complete at the same time.

Also, don't get disheartened by any comments, the planners are not trying to offend you and cannot deny an application just because they don't like it, especially if it complies with planning policies.

We can often fine tune aspects of the application to address any specific issues of the officer during the planning process.



Dentist House, Downton

Situated on a flood plain in Downton, Wiltshire, the Dentist House provides a family with a contemporary new home. The key design driver for the project was to create a contemporary design with consideration, and influence from, the traditional aesthetic of the village in the conservation area.

This tied our design and project to the site context, history, materials and forms of the conservation area, which the planners respected due to the sensitive nature of the proposal. The planning process

for this project was rather tricky due to the site condition. Being situated on a flood plain within a conservation area, we knew that the planning process wouldn't be straightforward.

We raised the building above the flood zone, away from the danger. This showcased to the planners that, through our site and historical analysis, we had provided enough understanding in our design decisions to avoid the possible implications.



Chalk House, Salisbury

This project is a self-build PassivHaus that involved replacing a dated 2 storey 1930's red brick house, which is located on Nadder River in Salisbury. Nadder River is one of the main tributaries of the Salisbury Avon and is one of only 200 chalk streams in the world.

The concept of the building was informed by the Nadder River. The building is visualised as a piece of white chalk lying within the river, referenced in the buildings strong pure forms and predominantly white exterior.

The proposal aims to create a comfortable living environment with minimal impact on the surrounding context. The proposed fenestration on the south facade incorporates environmental credentials such as solar shading, which contributes to the PassivHaus standard.

The scheme is a bold addition to an otherwise historic area and received planning due to our careful consideration of the site's full context.



Farm House, New Forest

The Farm House in the New Forest National Park is a private residential project involving the extension and renovation of an existing Grade II listed property. We were awarded Best Conservation for this project at the 2019 New Forest National Park Building Design Awards.

The vital factor to our approach was sensitivity to the existing property. Maintaining the history and heritage of the property was the fundamental aim throughout the design. The small extension

linking two buildings at the property respects the typology and form of the farm house, with a charred timber cladding aiming to distinguish the new from the old.

The planners accepted the new addition to the listed property with conditions. The conditions included the materials respective of the existing, and utilising specific joinery methods that, too, were respective of the property's heritage.

We hope that helps – good luck!

Now you will be approaching a full application, unless you have already done so and skipped the pre-application. Either way, we hope this short guide has given you some pointers of what you might find with the planning process.

Please do contact us if you have a project in mind, we're happy to help and would love to hear about your ideas.

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