



Frequently Asked Questions

1: What type of work do you undertake?

We undertake all types of architectural design and building work, predominantly involving historic and listed buildings, whether that is an extension to a historic house or a full-scale repair of a castle. If you are considering a 'Grand Design' in a difficult context, we can also take that from initial design stage to completion of the build.

2: What is the smallest job you would consider?

That depends! Small jobs can lead to other work, or if it suits our skills, we would be interested. Generally, we work on projects with a construction budget of £150,000 +.

3: How long has Corbel been going?

Corbel started in 2002, working on masonry repairs and has grown over the last 19 years to become an architectural practice and a team of historic building construction experts that co-ordinate and carry out a wide variety of projects taking them from start to finish. Our construction team work both with our in house architect's team and with other architects and professionals.

4: Do you provide an architectural design only service?

Yes, we can provide the design only service taking projects up to a start on site and manage the project on site if required.

5: What is the process for getting a project from start to finish.

See our attached pamphlet explaining all the stages required to get a project from your initial idea to completion.

6: What are the advantages of employing an architect and contractor together?

- We manage everything from design to completion - saving you time, money and stress.
- Our extensive knowledge & understanding of historic buildings, means that together we can understand and resolve often complex planning, budget or technical issues.
- Complete transparency and control of cost throughout the project.
- We can advise and provide clear budget forecasts for differing designs options at an early stage to avoid dead end paths.
- We work closely with you to make your budget work hard and place it where most effective.
- We have a team of highly skilled in-house project managers, craftsmen and craftswomen who help advise and steer the project at early stages

7: How long will design and construction work take?

That depends on several factors. Having our design and construction teams working together saves time and we can fairly accurately work out a programme from early stages. As an absolute minimum it will take 6 months to get a project from an initial idea to start on site, but this will be longer if the project is more complex.

8: What type of Planning Permission do I require?

If you are carrying out any alteration to an existing property, or extension over a certain size then Planning Permission will be required. Smaller scale extensions can use 'Permitted Development Rights' dependant on the certain restrictions, such as size, location, proximity to neighbours, and volume of extensions built since 1948. Listed Buildings don't have permitted development rights and need listed building consent for any alteration work. We can advise on details.

9: Do I need listed building consent?

If you intend to carry out any alterations to a listed building, or any alteration within its immediate curtilage, you will need to obtain listed building consent. However, if you are carrying out like for like repairs, listed building consent is not required. It is best to check with the local authority conservation officer before proceeding.

10: What is listed building consent?

Listed Building Consent is an extra layer of protection, required in addition to Planning Consents. The level of detail demanded by the Local Authority will depend on the type of work proposed and the Grade of listing. If Grade I or II* listed, Historic England will also need to be consulted and agree the details in conjunction with the Conservation Officer. Grade II listed buildings are usually dealt with by the local Conservation Officer.

11: What do I need to apply for a Listed Building Consent.

The level of detail required for a listed building consent application can be quite daunting at first. In addition to plans, sections and elevation drawings of the existing and proposed, all alterations will need to be fully justified. This can include; detailed drawings, Conservation Management Plans, Condition Surveys, Archaeological reports and Design and Access Statements. We can advise on the exact details.

15: How do I tell if my building is listed?

There are over 400,000 listed buildings in England. Type in the building's postcode to <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> to find out the full details.

16: What do the different Grades of Listing mean?

In England, there are three different levels of listing:

Grade 1: are '*of exceptional interest*' and account for the top 2.5% of all listed buildings.

Grade II*: are '*particularly important buildings of more than special interest.*' making up 5.8% of the total.

Grade II are '*of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them*'. They make up the remaining 90%.

17: How do I find out if my house is in Green Belt.

Most local authorities have an interactive planning map online. Search for Planning map and include your local authority; e.g 'North Somerset Planning map,' and it will identify all the local planning restrictions including Green Belt.

18: My house is in Green Belt. Can I construct an extension?

Generally, the answer is yes - but within limits. If your property has not been extended since the introduction of the Town and Planning Act on 1st July 1948, then most local authorities will allow an extension up to 30% increase in volume of the original property, and in some cases a 50% increase is allowed. We can advise and help establish what existed in 1948 and what is possible.

19: Do you work on Scheduled Ancient Monuments?

Scheduled Ancient Monuments are a layer of protection above listing. Generally, it applies to significant ruins or monuments and below ground archaeology. We have experience of gaining consents for work to Scheduled Ancient Monuments and carrying out the careful repair of these significant historic remains.

20; What does CDM 2015 mean?

'Construction Design Management' regulations were introduced in 2015 and place a responsibility on the client, architect and contractor to plan and manage the work to make them as safe as possible. The client has a responsibility to provide as much information about the existing property as feasible, such as if asbestos is known to exist. The architect and contractor can then use this information and take responsibility for ensuring that the design and construction phases are carried out safely.

21; What is the Technical Design Stage?

Often people think that once they have planning permission, they can jump straight to getting the work built. Planning usually only gives a broad overview of how the building will look. To gain an accurate price and allow the construction team to work out how to sequence the work, detailed drawings and schedules will be required - the nuts and bolts of the project. The technical design stage will also allow us to submit an application for Building Control, a legal requirement to ensure the design meets building regulations.

22. How do I know I am getting the best price?

We effectively run an open book and clearly show our pricing using a schedule and drawings to illustrate what is included for the price. Our approach is that our costing is transparent so you can see exactly where your money is being spent and the alternative prices we have obtained from sub-contractors. Often, our projects come in below budget through close collaboration with all parties involved.

23. What insurances will I need during the Build?

The following pamphlet gives an overview of what is required.

24. Can I live in the house while construction work progresses?

We will work closely with you, to try and allow you to stay in the house while work progresses. However, if the project is a large-scale repair, then it is safer, cheaper, quicker and generally much less hassle to move out for the period of construction!

25: Do you employ your own tradespeople?

Yes, we have a of full-time team of site foreman and carpenters, and we have an ongoing mentoring programme for training in house apprentices. We also work closely with several trusted sub-contractors including, masons, roofers, mechanical engineers, electricians, decorators and more.

26. Can I carry out some building work myself?

You may wish to carry out some items of work yourself, such as laying carpets or landscaping. If we have enough warning, we can usually programme our works to allow for this, so long as it is safe to do so.

27. What happens at handover at the end of construction?

The end of construction phase is called Practical Completion. We will leave the site clean and tidy and explain to you how all the various systems, such as how the heating works. We will also produce a complete manual, as a record of all the work that has been completed.

28. Will you carry out repairs after completion?

We aim to leave all our projects snag free, but building works do take time to settle down. There is generally a 6 month 'defect liability period' and we will be there if any rectification work needs to be carried out.



CORBEL