



Guidelines for Hut Managers

No. 13 November 2008*



Planning & Managing a Major Building Project

1. Scope and context

These guidelines are a starting point for considering major alterations or new build huts. They should be supplemented with professional advice and your own research.

Note: These guidelines were written by a Scottish architect and there may be some minor differences in terminology and procedures when dealing with local authorities in England and Wales.

2. Inception and feasibility

In the early stages of a project it is important to form a consensus on what is required, how much it is likely to cost and who is going to be responsible for managing the project.

2.1 Obtaining the club's support

The first step to a construction project is getting consensus and agreement in the club. The project may take months or years, so make sure there is a person or group that can manage it, spare sufficient time, and stay enthusiastic. Each club will have different ideas about how to go about this; these key points should be included -

- Club Committee considers the project.
- Obtain the members' approval of the project at the AGM or an EGM if necessary.
- Appoint a sub-committee to handle the project.
- Ensure members are aware of fund raising targets, budget costs and of timescales through a newsletter or website.

2.2 Funding

Consider how the construction will be funded; this may come from club funds, grants, loans or fundraising activities. Remember, the cost of the project will include a number of items -

- Cost of building works.
- VAT (if applicable).
- Professional fees (usually a percentage of the works cost).
- Building warrant and planning fees (depending on the project size).

Also bear in mind that if you engage professionals they are likely to ask for a fixed fee for undertaking a feasibility study; you should consider how this will be funded.

If you have engaged a quantity surveyor (QS), they should provide you with a cost plan for the project, outlining the costs associated with each part of the development, this will give you a budget works cost. Be sure you understand what this includes or excludes.

A funding body is likely to want to see drawings, a condition report (if the building is disused) and a cost plan before considering a project.

* see information given on page 6

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Consider registering as a CASC to facilitate fundraising (see *Hut Guideline # 1 CASCs*). This will entail changes to the club's constitution at an AGM or EGM to comply with the relevant legislation.

2.3 Professional input

Early input of a professional team becomes more important the bigger the project. An architect and QS are the basic level of advice and they should be used for projects over the size of a 'small extension'. Early advice is essential to ensure that you get a realistic budget for the project to ensure that you understand what is achievable and to assist you with drawings, reports and advice for funding bodies.

When commissioning professionals you should ensure that they are qualified in their field, for example -

- Architects must be registered with the ARB (Architects Registration Board) and may choose to be registered with the RIAS (Scotland) or the RIBA (UK wide).
- Quantity Surveyors should be registered with the RICS.

An architect or QS should be able to assist you with names of engineers, CDM (see 1.5) co-ordinators and other consultants as required.

Be aware that not all architects or Qs have experience or sufficient knowledge of small rural work; you may find that you have to contact a few professionals to find one that is prepared to do the work you require at a suitable price. If you can, get recommendations from other clubs or members in the construction industry.

2.4 The feasibility study

Architects have a standard work structure (RIBA work stages), and a feasibility study is up to Stage C. In a feasibility study you should expect -

- A. Appraisal:** Identification of client's requirements and possible constraints on development. Preparation of studies to enable the client to decide whether to proceed and to select probable procurement method.
- B. Strategic briefing:** Preparation of a strategic brief on behalf of the client confirming key requirements and constraints. Identification of procedures, organisational structure and range of consultants and others to be engaged for the project.
- C. Outline proposals:** Development of the strategic brief into full project brief. Preparation of outline proposals and estimate of cost. Review of the procurement route.

An overview of the Architect's work stages, fees and the consents required can be found at www.ecan-architects.com/home.htm

2.5 Health & safety (CDM)

This is now a major issue in the construction industry. As the client, you can be heavily fined or imprisoned if you contravene the regulations. Ignorance is no excuse. Health and safety law is contained within the 'Construction (Design and Management) Regulations' abbreviated to CDM. Throughout the construction industry literature you will see references to CDM - read it as 'health & safety'.

For the most up-to-date advice see the Health and Safety Executive's website at www.hse.gov.uk/construction A quick guide to the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations can be downloaded from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.pdf

At the feasibility stage, the most important decision is whether the work is large enough to require a CDM co-ordinator. If the work lasts longer than 30 days or involves more

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than 500 person-days of construction work then you *must* appoint a suitably qualified CDM co-ordinator at the start of the project. They will advise you on your responsibilities after this.

Throughout the project there are additional duties for clients of construction projects - ask your architect or CDM co-ordinator to explain them or consult the HSE website.

3. Planning and development

3.1 Planning

Planning is essentially to ensure that development happens in the right places. Most developments require planning permission. If you are in any doubt, the club project manager(s) (or its architect) should write to the Planning Authority, including drawings or sketches, to ask if planning permission is required. In National Parks, planning restrictions are even tighter than in other areas, so even minor changes may need planning permission.

You will need to pay a fee so find out if you can get a discount for being a community organisation. The planning officer should be able to tell you how much this fee is; it is likely to be related to the size of development you are planning.

If you do need planning permission then factor in sufficient time for the planning authority to process it. The experience and knowledge of an architect at this stage may make the difference between an approval and refusal in sensitive areas.

3.2 Building warrant (building consent)

Buildings must be built to a minimum standard, set by either the Communities and Local Government Department (England and Wales) or the Scottish Executive (Scotland). For all but very minor work, you must obtain a Building Warrant (= Building Consent in England and Wales), demonstrating that your building is up to this minimum standard. An application to your local authority for a Building Warrant/Consent should be made before work starts and will require detailed plans, specifications, an application form and a fee. The fee is related to the cost of the works. If you are doing the works yourself or do not know how much it will cost, Building Control will make an estimate; similarly they will ask you for a higher fee if they think you have submitted too small a fee.

Contact the Building Control section of your local authority for more information. For details of the regulations see -

www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1115314110382.html
or www.sbsa.gov.uk

3.3 Up to the tender stage

Between a feasibility study and actually starting on site you can expect your architect to do the following for you -

- D. Detailed proposals:** Complete development of the project brief. Preparation of detailed proposals. Application for full development control approval.
- E. Final proposals:** Prepare final proposals for the project sufficient for co-ordination of all components and elements of the project.
- F. Production information:** Prepare production information in sufficient detail to enable a tender or tenders to be obtained. Application for statutory approvals. Prepare further production information required under the building contract.
- G. Tender documentation:** Prepare and collate tender documentation in sufficient detail to enable a tender or tenders to be obtained for the construction of the project.
- H. Tender action:** Identify and evaluate potential contractors and/or specialists for the project. Obtain and appraise tenders and submit recommendations to the client.

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An overview of the Architect's work stages, fees and consents required can be found at www.ecan-architects.com/home.htm

4. Funding

Most projects will have a range of funding from sources such as -

- Club funds
- Fundraising efforts
- Local grants
- Other grants, e.g. National Lottery

When applying for or accepting grants, consider the terms of the funding body. Be aware that adapting a current building to be fully disabled accessible or up to school/youth group required standards are usually expensive propositions, so be sure to allow for this in the sum of money you request. Remember the budget section above and ensure you cover all the fees, professional help, building cost and VAT in your bids and fundraising programme. For possible sources of funding see *Hut Guideline # 8 Sources of funding*.

5. Construction

5.1 Selecting a contractor

There are many ways to select a contractor depending on the funders' requirements, construction requirements and club's own contacts. The following general rules may assist -

- Approach at least three contractors for a price, based on the same drawings and specifications (many funders expect you to get competitive tenders).
- Visit any recent projects they have worked on.
- Look for contractors who regularly work on the scale of building that you are considering.
- Get personal recommendations where possible.
- Ensure that you give a contractor enough information regarding what you want them to build.
- Check to see if they belong to any industry bodies.

You can select a contractor at any stage in the process; selecting a contractor early on in the process may allow you to make use of their expertise and they could help you with savings and building to a tight budget. Allowing your architect to prepare a full package of drawings and specification, then tendering is better for buildings that are 'not the norm', e.g. 'green' specifications, and may allow you more control over the quality of the final product. Note that the contractor can still assist you with building to a particular budget whenever you appoint them.

5.2 The contract

The building contract is the written agreement between the club and the contractor. Every construction project should have a written contract that explains what each party expects to do for the other.

You can do this by writing a letter to the contractor, explaining the costs, detailing what the building work is going to be (refer to drawings), when you are going to pay them, when

you expect it to be finished etc. For very small jobs and very small amounts of money, this may be acceptable. For most projects what you need is a standard contract. An architect and

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QS should be able to advise you on the most appropriate standard contract. Perhaps the most well know suite of contracts is the JCT, which is a suite of Standard Building Contracts. Developed over many years, JCT gives standard clauses that give each party broadly equitable rights. For example, it tells both parties what happens if the client wants to change the design or if the contractor is delayed in their work. It is the small print, it does not describe the building (drawings and specification do this) but sets the terms of the deal. The good thing about JCT is that it is almost universally accepted, there are others but some contractors don't like them, or they give the client fewer rights. JCT have specific contracts for 'minor works' such as extensions or small buildings.

If your hut is remote from the road, requires special access or may be subject to more severe weather than usual, then remember to notify the contractor of this in writing when seeking a quotation and ask them to price accordingly. If the hut is particularly remote then detailed discussions with the contractor may be required before work commences to ensure that all the materials and labour can be transported to the site without destroying the route to the property.

5.3 Professional advice

An Architect and their professional team is still of value to you throughout the contract, particularly if you have never undertaken a building project before. The TV programme 'Grand Designs' is far more entertaining and the work fraught with difficulties if the client sacks their professional team and decides to go it alone! The work stages include the following services -

- J. Mobilisation:** Let the building contract; appoint the contractor; issue production information to the contractor; arrange site handover to the contractor.
- K. Construction to practical completion:** Administer the building contract up to and including practical completion. Provide the contractor with further Information as and when reasonably required.
- L. After practical completion:** Administer the building contract after practical completion. Make final inspections and settle the final account.

5.4 Club issues

During the construction work, it is likely that you will have to completely close the hut (due to Health & Safety regulations). If you think that it can remain open then remember to inform the contractor about this as they will need to make suitable arrangements.

Agreeing start and completion dates with the contractor is a standard procedure before the construction starts. It is always prudent to allow some time beyond the completion date before scheduling the hut-warming party in case there are delays!

Information (over →)

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Hut Guidelines - Information

These guidelines have been produced by the Huts Group of the British Mountaineering Council and the Huts Working Group of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland to assist those operating mountain huts in Britain.

Contact the BMC Huts Group by e-mail - Martin@thebmc.co.uk or telephone 0161 445 6111

Contact the MCoFS Huts Working Group by e-mail - huts@themcofs.org.uk

Websites: www.thebmc.co.uk and www.mcofs.org.uk

URLs: If any of the URLs (web addresses) given on the preceding pages are found to be 'dead links' please notify huts@themcofs.org.uk

Disclaimer: These guidelines were published in October 2008 and the information herein is believed to be accurate at the time of writing. No responsibility can be accepted for any loss of benefit or entitlement arising through use of these guidelines.

Version no. 2 November 2008 These guidelines are updated periodically; to check on the currency of this version go to one of the websites above where the latest version will always be displayed.