

Project management and materials supply- Questions and Answers

How does it work?

If you have your own builder, we are more than happy to assist as much or as little as suits you both. This may be just a case of helping out at the beginning with the lay-out and a detailed construction methodology discussion and a few visits.

Either way we simply charge for this on an agreed hourly rate and bill fortnightly or monthly as needed.



How much time will you spend on it?

We spend as much time on your project as you need us to. The working style usually emerges pretty organically after the first week or so. Most people we work with we find to be capable, so after the start we will usually rely on you or the builders to contact us as needed, rather than spending time (and your money) checking up on them, although we are happy to agree a schedule with you to do this if you prefer- just let us know.

Can you recommend the building team?



We do have our own small team, which allows us a full co-ordinated service all in one place, and a number of others that we work with regularly and have a high degree of confidence in. At the end of the day you will be employing the build team directly so will need to feel happy they are the people for you, although we will be on hand to help you manage them if you would like us to.

How does materials supply work?

Many general builders are not experts in landscaping, so although the building methods are the same, they probably aren't the best people to help you decide on paving, deck, planting, and other specialist items. There are no British Standards for most landscaping materials, so what one landscaper calls once thing another will call something different,



we always advise seeing samples of all the main materials- 2 landscapers working from the same specification could build very different looking gardens if you don't keep a close eye on it- which is where we come in.

Can I see the goods first (what if I hate them when they arrive!)?

We will show you samples of main materials before you order and do please read our general guidance on landscape materials to understand a bit more about what to expect and the variability of natural materials. There is always a way to change anything you don't like, so don't feel you will be saddled with something that you have changed your mind about, although there can be a cost attached. This might be in the form of a restocking fee, although plants and one-off items are rarely returnable at all so do make sure you are clear about which is which if you have any reservations about the order.

How do you charge for this?

Our goal is to share our expertise and skill in finding good suppliers and materials, to give our clients confidence that their main materials are the right ones. To keep your costs keen, we **do not** offer account terms. We operate a "pass through" system for charging. We ask for a deposit up front that is appropriate to the likely run rate on smaller materials, and then will ask for funds promptly to cover larger orders. Many items will need to be paid for prior to despatch, and orders can get held up if funds are not available promptly.

We will agree with you an estimated schedule of materials up front, obviously these are our estimate of what your builders might need, and will therefore be approximate although they are generally based on the scale drawings so should be close unless changes are made. Our experience is that most clients do make changes to the specification during the build, and we will do our best to keep you regularly updated. Where possible we will show metreage rates so that if you decide to increase the area of your paving or lawn for example, you can see what the cost will be. We itemise the materials purchased and regularly update you as to how your budget is being spent. Do bear in mind that there will be delivery charges and that prices on some materials (especially paving and larger plants) can change according to stock levels so the final materials cost may change from the early estimate- we keep you appraised of any



large changes, but will assume that small changes will be accommodated without prior agreement.

How do we deal with problems?

Like any building project, there are bound to be a few things that don't go according to plan. We try to be ready for as many as possible- Less predictable items have included a herd of 17 horses galloping across our newly laid turf, an ice house appearing under a lawn and major mud slide. All we can say is that we are very helpful people, and if you or your builder call us we will do our best, and with a can-do attitude, most things do get sorted out promptly. We assume that you will want us to sort out emergencies promptly, particularly if there is a risk of damage to other areas (such as with flooding)- we will



therefore also assume that you will cover the costs of such actions within reason- we won't hire a helicopter without clearing it with you, but we might go and buy some sandbags!

What if my builders have to wait for materials or other supplies?

Part of landscaping is the juggling act with supplies. We try to help your building team to plan, but sometimes deliveries can be a problem - we have a fully staffed project office that hounds these things down, but you will understand why we can't take financial responsibility for delays caused by situations like this that are outside of our control (do have a look at our landscape timings sheet as this can add helpful perspective). We have learned that we have to be prepared to swap our people around and change our plans, and recommend that your builders are similarly flexible- or they (and you) may be in for a frustrating time of it!



We advise that you choose all materials up front if possible- *paving is often on a 3-6 week timescale, sometimes more*, and special orders such as sculptures and water features can be 6-8 weeks. We chase regularly and do our best to ensure a prompt arrival, note that our costings do assume the use of the normal supply chain and once in a while this goes

wrong. If there is a "drop-dead" date for the project (a wedding or party for example) the whole project should probably be managed differently and we can advise on this - do look at our "landscape timings" sheet for more guidance.

If my builders do something wrong will you sort, it out and will you charge me for this?

Yes and yes. The good news is that you have not been abandoned. We will help you to achieve the best possible results with your chosen builders, but if they fall short it will be for you to take it up with them-with our support if this helps you. We will always offer to make things right, but if it was not our work in the first place we do have to charge for this.



We will:

- Advise you on the best approach for your garden based on lots of experience of different ones
- Help you to adjust the project management dependent on how your builders are performing
- Keep you apprised of our costs and advise of larger changes in advance
- Help you to decide on specification changes and the cost and design impact of those
- Be on hand to help with emergencies
- Provide all of the above at agreed hourly or daily rates

We will not:

- Guarantee delivery times or other timescales
- Provide financial account facilities- we ask for a deposit to cover sundries, and all larger payments are required before materials are despatched
- Guarantee the work of others-although we will try to head problems off at the pass