



ARCH angels

Richard Zinzen of ARCH angels aims to dispel the myths about architects

An architect shouldn't be a scary person who is only interested in taking on large, fantastical, expensive projects. I think Nicola and I are pretty normal! Since this is our first column, by way of an introduction, I thought I'd start off by telling you a few things you could get from an architect which might surprise you.



Architects save you money

That got you interested, didn't it?! Many people are nervous about even initiating a conversation with an architect for fear of the cost involved. The truth is, though, that by appointing an architect, you can actually save money. In the building world, making a mistake can be very costly, but experience with planners and regulatory bodies means getting things right first time. One way to keep control of your costs is to look for an architect who works on a fixed fee, so there are no hidden costs.

Architects listen

OK, so it's not going to be as expensive as maybe you first thought, but is it going to look like a cross between the Gherkin and the Guggenheim? The answer is, only if you want it to! You should tell your architect what you want, not the other way around, and first ideas and designs shouldn't be set in stone.

Architects love small projects

Some architects specialise in grand designs, but there are also many who enjoy working on different projects, from multi-million pound regenerations of whole streets to small porch renovations. The big projects can be exciting but there is just as much satisfaction to be had working in the domestic market.

Architects support

It can be stressful building or renovating your home or workspace and one of the biggest investments you'll ever make. It's important you feel confident and supported throughout the process, the mark of a true expert is someone who can offer knowledge and a listening ear, no matter what the project throws at you.

Architects talk your language

We are real people too. A good architect is approachable and here to help you realise your dreams not blind you with terminology. I think it's vital that you have a great rapport with your potential architect before you commence work, and can ask questions without feeling committed to take things further.

A great opportunity to get a feel for whether you click with an architect is at an expo or property/home improvement show. For example, at the Listed Property Show at London's Olympia on 18th and 19th February there will be a wealth of conservation officers, builders, craftsmen and suppliers happy to offer information and advice on the joys and potential pitfalls of owning and renovating a listed property. We'll be amongst them, and, actually, in our next column we're planning to write about the event and also more about Listed Properties generally. Look out for it.

Richard Zinzen and Nicola Thomas are founders of ARCH angels Architects, a local, Brighton-based approachable practice specialising in environmentally conscious and cost effective architecture. We work closely with you to maximise your space and provide beautiful buildings.

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