

# R · F · R

THE PROPERTY PRIVATE OFFICE

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## Projects Clinic ♦ Mini-Series ♦ Part 1

As we embrace 2018 and resolutions are well underway, the RFR team are spreading our resolve to help our clients run smarter, more efficient and, most importantly, enjoyable construction projects!

With this in mind, we are producing a mini-series of newsletters, providing advice on how to strategise for and deliver a successful project. This month's instalment looks at mobilisation and how to set up your project 'right'.



## Mobilisation ♦ assembling the wider team

Twenty years ago, even large residential projects had a fairly limited team - a client would engage an architect, introduce him or her to their interior decorator and, when the design was complete, hire a contractor. Team meetings were often the architect and contractor sitting across from a client at a table.

Today, on a decent sized project, team members might include a project manager, architect, interior designer (plus specialist lighting, kitchen and other designers), quantity surveyor, planning consultant, structural engineer, mechanical engineer, party wall surveyor, home automation designer, specialists overseeing different aspects of building control and health and safety and, of course, a contractor and his sub-contractors. This requires a slightly larger table!



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## Why so many people?

There is no doubt about it, carrying out refurbishment projects in London has become vastly more complicated. Clients themselves are more ambitious about the schemes they want to achieve, the planning (particularly for listed buildings) and regulatory environment is increasingly complex, technology is constantly evolving and the very best consultants and contractors are in high demand.

Everyone has heard stories about when it all goes wrong: poor quality of build (at its most severe, basements collapsing), planning permissions being rejected time after time, contractors going bust, protracted neighbour disputes and budgets and timetables escalating all the while.

In our view, the key to a successful project is assembling an experienced, credible and proactive team of specialists from the outset rather than in response to things going wrong. It is undoubtedly an upfront investment with professional fees typically levied at 25%+ of total project costs. If, however, a project is planned properly, the correct consents are in place, the works are fully designed and specified and the budgets are locked down, the number of unknowns is hugely reduced and the whole experience will be more efficient and enjoyable for the client. In all projects there is an element of troubleshooting as issues arise but if you have the right team in place, who have the experience to respond efficiently, then problems can be contained and managed with minimal disruption.



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## First steps ♦ hire your project manager

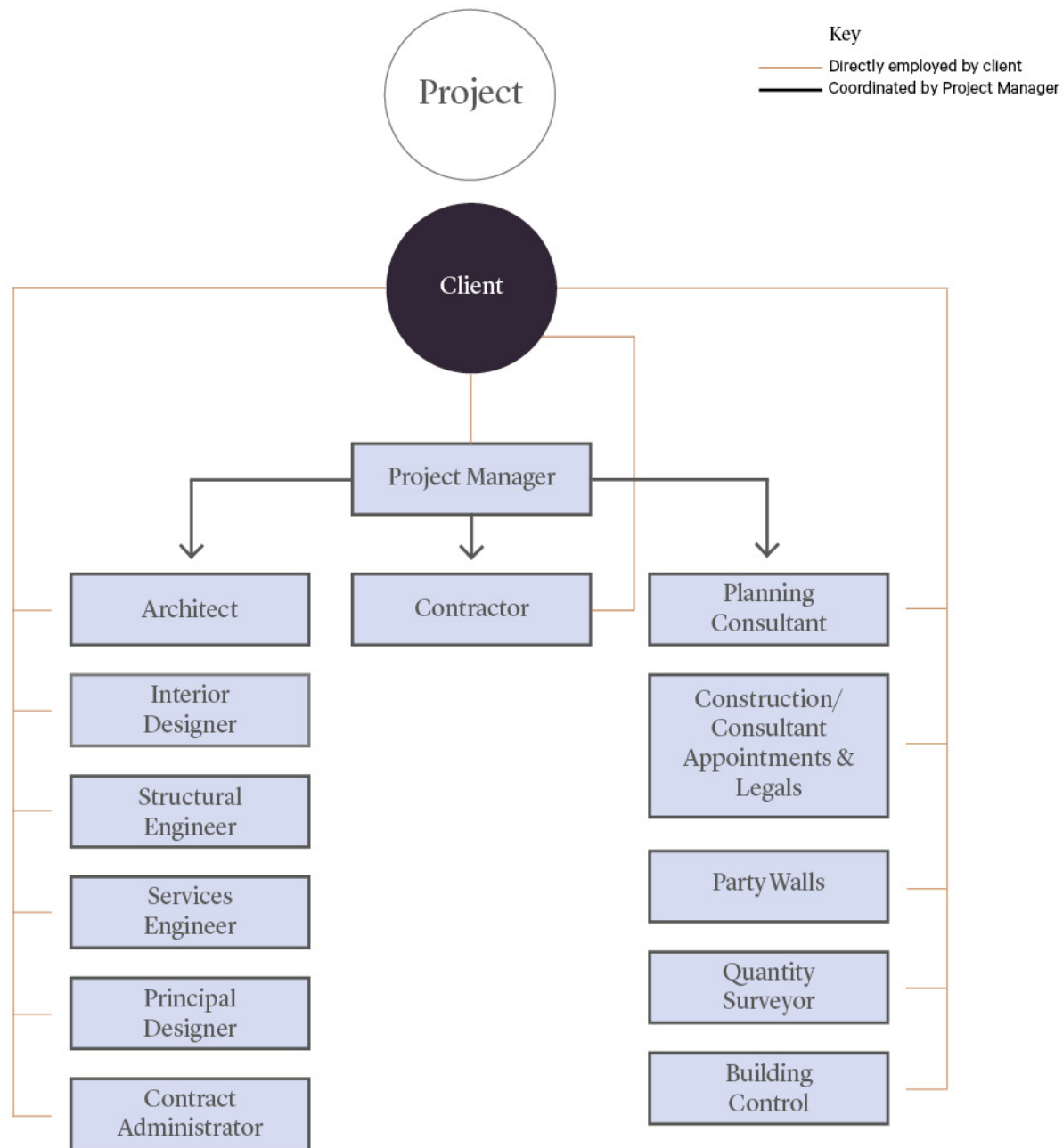
Many clients will have worked with an architect or interior designer in the past and might be tempted to start here. It can be dangerous though to proceed down the design route in isolation without considering feasibility: the structural implications, the cost and impact on timetable and often the planning context. In a perfect world, a client would start with the project manager.

He or she can then work with the client to create a full brief, assess the suitability of the client's existing team and then advise on how to fill the gaps with the right consultants, overseeing the forms of appointment and scope of works and ensuring each professional is qualified for the project, carries proper liability insurance and can offer warranties that are required beyond the completion of a project.

Alongside the design team (architects, designers, planning consultants, structural engineers etc), we would always recommend the appointment of a quantity

surveyor at the very earliest stage so that incremental cost plans can be produced in parallel with the design process to avoid any nasty shocks further down the line.

The below diagram illustrates how members of a project team should be organised, showing the correct lines of responsibility to avoid potential gaps in the design information being produced whilst also limiting overlap, potential “turf battles” and finger pointing!



## RFR Seminar ♦ “How to help your clients run a smooth construction project”

The Projects team at RFR are planning to present a full seminar on ‘How to help your clients run a smooth construction project’. If this is something that you think you and your team would be interested in attending, please do contact Amanda at [amanda@rfrproperty.com](mailto:amanda@rfrproperty.com) and we will make the necessary arrangements.

Stay tuned for Part 2 where we look at 'The technical design process and tendering a project'.



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