



The Chartered Institute of Building is a professional body with the aims of furthering education, training and professionalism in construction management. Started in 1834 the Institute was incorporated in 1884. The Institute was granted a Royal Charter in 1980 and became the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB).

To achieve membership it is necessary for an individual to reach defined levels of education/ training and have several years experience in a managerial role. The current educational level for membership is Honours degree level.

Members of the Institute are permitted to use letters after their name as follows: -

FCIOB - a Fellow, the highest level of membership, highly experienced and holding a position of high responsibility.

MCIOB - a Member, very experienced and holding a position with extensive responsibilities.

ICIOB - an Incorporated Member, generally well qualified or very experienced and working to meet the requirements of full membership.

ACIOB - an Associate member, possibly well qualified in another discipline as well as construction. They may have extensive experience and may be working towards full membership.

Remember that doing building work in your home is a major task. Be professional in your approach and always question what you are told. Then check it out. You cannot be too careful.

Notes:

The Chartered Institute of Building
Englemere, Kings Ride
Ascot, Berkshire
SL5 7TB
Web: www.ciob.org.uk

CEO/002/0.4.03



Choosing a builder

Advice for house owners

Choosing a builder

Make a list of possible builders

If you have had plans produced by designers they should be able to help. If not, the best source is from friends and neighbours who have recently had work carried out. Look for signboards in your area. The council's planning department may be able to provide a list of local builders. Local directories and yellow pages often show information on the type of work a builder carries out. If you do not have plans and / or specification for the work you must select a builder who has the experience to provide these and then obtain approval of the work if this is required (planning permission, building regulation approval etc.).

Choice

Once you have a few names, contact the tradesmen or builders that suit the size and type of work you want carried out.

Get confirmation that they can do the type of work you want and when they are likely to be able to do the work. Ask for details of recent jobs they have carried out. Who for, when, where and type of work.

Contact the customers for their impression of the builder. With the nature of building work complete satisfaction is rare. What you should expect is for the work to be carried out to an acceptable standard, comparable with the rest of your home.



Comparing Prices

When comparing prices from different people make sure that they have included everything you want. Are they quotations (price fixed for the work) or estimates (price is only guidance)? Often it may be necessary to have a mixture of the two. For example a fixed price to install kitchen units but the cost of the units depends on your final choice.

Other checks

- Do they clearly show a contact address and telephone number (not just a mobile)?
- How long have they been in business?
- Have they full insurance cover? - even a good builder can make mistakes and/or cause accidental damage.
- Qualifications - many small builders are run by members of the Chartered Institute of Building (total membership over 35,000); tradesmen have often obtained a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card - these small cards show a photograph, trade and skill level (over 130,000 issued).

A reputable company is proud of its reputation and should always be willing to prove it.

VAT registered

Only a very small builder (one or two men!) can avoid registration. Remember even unregistered builders still have to pay VAT on materials, tools and equipment, vehicles and their running costs. The difference in price between a VAT registered builder and a non-registered builder is much less than you would expect. If the builder is not registered he will be passing the VAT on as a cost. "VAT free" is a myth.

Cash in hand

If someone is prepared to cheat on taxes, are you sure they will not cheat on you? If nothing is in writing what happens if you are not satisfied or something goes wrong? How do you prove who did the work and is liable for any faults? Peace of mind is worth a little extra cost. An invoice proves a relationship and, if a dispute follows, it can be helpful.

Contracts

For anything other than a very minor job you should ask for written details of the work to be carried out and the price you will have to pay. For larger jobs a standard industry form is available 'Building contract for a home owner/occupier' produced by the Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT). It is written in clear English, and copies can be purchased from high street shops such as WH Smith or from Construction Industry Publications 0121 722 8200. Agree start and planned finish dates, but remember completion may be delayed due to bad weather or unforeseen problems. Making changes to your requirements once work has started will cause delay and possibly a risk of mistakes. Costs for the work may also change. If changes are essential, agree the cost and length of extra time needed before the changes start.

Guarantees and Warranties

Many builders offer insurance backed warranties for their work. These may involve a small additional cost but do provide extra protection for you, the customer. The most well known are those provided for new dwellings by the NHBC and Zurich. Other organisations offer warranties, through the builder, for other types of work. Check the cost and the level of cover provided before you accept. It is worth finding out who the insurer is whether they are an established insurer.