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# GRAND DESIGNS



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**NEW LOOK  
MAGAZINE!**

**ALL YOU NEED  
TO CREATE YOUR  
DREAM PROJECT**

## Amazing Country Home

**'We kept our cottage's character  
and added a modern extension'**

**10**  
things your  
architect  
wishes you  
knew

**IMPROVE &  
RENOVATE**

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BATHROOM IDEAS**

**CREATE THE ULTIMATE  
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**CONVERT AN  
OUTBUILDING**

**INSPIRATIONAL  
PASSIVHAUS  
PROJECTS**

**GREEN ROOFS & LIVING WALLS**

**Beautiful and  
sustainable ideas**

# PLANNING CONSENT

**GAIN PERMISSION WITHOUT A HITCH!**

**Q** I'm planning to project manage the build of my parents' new home. What's the best way to handle any disputes that arise due to work that I'm not happy with or deadlines not being met?



Property expert, social entrepreneur and TV presenter, **Kunle Barker**, replies

**A** I am asked this question a lot and my answer is always the same: disputes must be avoided at all costs. This is the main role of a project manager (PM). By effectively managing risk, a PM is able to make sure the project is delivered without the need for dispute proceedings. As the old adage goes, 'prevention is better than cure' and this is particularly true in construction.

A good PM will go through a simple three-step process: 1) identify the risk; 2) assess the risk; 3) mitigate the risk. It's important that this process is carried out for key sections of the works and not just the job as a whole. Most disputes arise over issues with quality of work, budget and schedule, so these are the first things a PM should be concerned with.

In the case of quality of work, it's important that this is first defined and then communicated to contractors. Remember that it's not just about the finish. The sub-structure (foundations, etc) and super-structure (external walls, for example) are equally important, so ensure checks and balances are in place to manage these parts of the process.

Budgets are always a source of considerable risk but can be mitigated by setting an adequate contingency –

15-20 per cent – and by making sure you have complete control over the finances. It's important that you have a standardised pricing document, sometimes referred to as a schedule of rates (SOR). This enables you to easily see contractor prices and forms the basis of your contract, and in the case of any dispute this will be the first document you refer to.

Delivering projects on schedule is vital. I prefer to use Gantt charts to program works, as they provide a visual representation of a project and it's easy to identify potential areas of concern in a particular job.

For example, a PM may identify steel installation as a risk.

They will then look at the fact that the steels could be manufactured or installed incorrectly.

To mitigate this risk, the PM would hold a post-demolition site meeting between the architect, client, structural engineer, manufacturer and installer.

This way any possible dispute can be avoided.

A word of warning: you may be an experienced project manager, but be aware that construction project management presents a unique set of challenges. Even if some of your skills are transferable it may still be worth working with an experienced construction PM. This could just be in a part time supporting capacity, but it'll be worth the investment. Mistakes on a construction project can be expensive, so as always it's important you get the right advice from the right people. **GD**

### Construction project management presents a unique set of challenges

● For information and advice on all things construction, head to **UK Construction Week at the NEC, Birmingham from 9-11 October. Visit [ukconstructionweek.com](http://ukconstructionweek.com)**

## 3 LUXURY PLOTS FOR SALE AROUND THE UK

These sites have plenty of potential. Is one of them the start of your self-build dream?



### RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE

A substantial countryside plot with full planning permission for an impressive 1,161 sqm luxury 5/6 bedroom home. Guide price £2,500,000, Knight Frank. ([knightfrank.co.uk](http://knightfrank.co.uk))



### EXETER, DEVON

This plot has detailed planning permission for a detached house. Offers in excess of £450,000, KLP Kitchener Land And Planning. (01392 879 300; [klp.land](http://klp.land))



### BUCKLEBURY, BERKSHIRE

A mature site with planning permission to build a 650sqm contemporary house. The proposed design is inspired by traditional agricultural-style buildings given a modern twist. Guide price £1,500,000, Strutt & Parker. (01635 897 948; [struttandparker.com](http://struttandparker.com))

### ESSENTIAL CONTACTS

[Plotbrowser \(plotbrowser.com\)](http://plotbrowser.com)  
[Plotfinder \(plotfinder.net\)](http://plotfinder.net)  
[PlotSearch \(plotsearch.co.uk\)](http://plotsearch.co.uk)  
[PrimeLocation \(primelocation.com\)](http://primelocation.com)  
[Rightmove \(rightmove.co.uk\)](http://rightmove.co.uk)  
 The Land Bank Partnership ([thelandbankpartnership.co.uk](http://thelandbankpartnership.co.uk))  
[Zoopla \(zoopla.co.uk\)](http://zoopla.co.uk)