



STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CLIENT

1. Calculations and sketch details are based on drawings provided by the Architect. Unless advised otherwise our scheme assumes that the property is of conventional load bearing masonry construction and with strip footing. Where it is suspected that this is not the case construction will require to be confirmed. Information may be obtained from various sources including the original builder, as built drawings or the Local Authority. Opening up may be required to confirm the presence of load bearing walls where dry-linings are used.
2. Calculations and sketch details are provided for Building Regulation Approval and construction purposes. It is advised that structural details should be incorporated within the Architects' drawings to avoid confusion during construction.
3. Structural alterations generally require Building Regulations Approval. It is our recommendation that a full plans submission should be made to the relevant Local Authority and work not commenced until Approval is received. This is considered to be particularly important where there are major structural alterations. The checking Authority have the opportunity to assess the scheme. We will deal with queries at this stage and when approved the work can proceed on the designed scheme. With a Building Notice the Authority can request changes as the work progresses.
4. Where new foundations are to be constructed or heavy loads placed on existing foundations, then it is advised that site investigation is undertaken. This may include exposing the existing foundations and examining the ground below. We are able to advise as to the required extent.
5. Following the construction of new foundations and the installation of new beams slight structural movements will occur. These may lead to cracking of both existing and new finishes. Cracking is not expected to be of structural significance and, in our experience, damage can generally be made good by cosmetic repair.
6. In general, pier sizes and beam depths are the minimum considered necessary to maintain the structural integrity of the building and should not be altered without prior consultation.
7. Where steel beams are specified, these will generally require to be fire protected unless forming part of the roof structure. This requirement is normal specified by the architect.
8. We would be pleased to deal with queries that may arise during the course of the work. Unless advised otherwise we have not included for site visits during the course of the work. Should these prove to be necessary then these will be charged on an agreed lump sum basis. In the event that significant changes are proposed then these would be subject to an additional fee.
9. Where building work is likely to affect the party wall, either with support for new beams or by excavation work, then it is probable that this will fall within the remit of the 'Party Wall Act'. We are experienced in dealing with party wall matters and are available to provide assistance if required.

Health and Safety Issues

10. Domestic clients have legal responsibilities under the C.D.M. Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 for safety on site. The client is to ensure that these responsibilities are transferred to either the building contractor or managed by the principal designer. Further advice can be obtained from the H.S.E. (Health and Safety Executive). It is essential that this issue is discussed with the principal designer. For domestic projects this would usually be the architect.