

The client

I commission the building work. For example, repairs, renovations or alterations to an existing building, or the construction of:

- a house
- an office block
- a factory
- a supermarket.

I will be responsible for paying for the work to be done. I can be:

- a private individual
- a local authority
- a company
- a government department
- a housing or other association.

I employ the building team either directly or indirectly.

My contribution towards sustainability is considering more environmentally friendly products for the work I have commissioned.

They may be more expensive.

The surveyor (specialist or quantity)

I am employed by the client or the architect.
My role is to:

- advise the client and/or architect about how the building can be designed within the budget
- measure the amount of labour and materials needed to complete the work and create the Bill of Quantities for use by the builders
- use drawings and other information prepared and supplied by the architect.

The architect

I am the client's agent and am considered to be the leader of the building team. My role is to:

- interpret the client's requirements
- translate them to the type of building required
- supervise all aspects of the work until it is completed.

I must be registered with our Registration Board.

Most of us are also members of the Royal Institute.

My contribution towards sustainability is considering the natural environment and the materials I recommend for the client. I also consider suitability, appearance and cost.

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- measure the amount of labour and materials needed to complete the work and create the Bill of Quantities for use by the builders
- use drawings and other information prepared and supplied by the architect.

During the contract, I measure the work carried out and prepare valuations so that interim payments can be made to the contractor.

At the end of the building contract, I prepare the final account for presentation to the client. In addition, I advise the architect on the cost of additional works or variations.

I always consider wastage and cost.

My contribution towards sustainability is to ensure the right amount of products are ordered allowing for minimum wastage.

The specialist engineer (civil, structural and service)

The architect needs advice from specialists like me to ensure the design of the building can work.

I prepare drawings and calculations to enable specialist contractors to quote for their fields of work.

I make regular inspections during the contract to ensure the installation is carried out in accordance with the design.

I always consider wastage and cost. My contribution towards sustainability is:

- choosing the right environmental products for the client
- reducing the heating and cooling needed in the building
- ensuring the right amount of products are ordered allowing for minimum wastage.

The clerk of works

I am appointed by the architect or client to act as their on-site representative. On large contracts, I am resident on site. On smaller sites, I will visit periodically.

I am an 'inspector of works' and make sure that the contractor carries out the work in accordance with the drawings and other contract documents.

I inspect the standard of work and the quality of materials and make regular reports to the architect. My role is to:

- keep a diary in case of disputes
- make a daily record of the weather, personnel employed on site and any stoppage
- give instructions and agree general matters directly with the building contractor; these must be confirmed by the architect in writing to be valid.

My contribution towards sustainability is to:

- ensure the correct environmental products are chosen
- check the quality of these products.

I carry out this work on behalf of the client.

The chief planning officer

I am normally responsible for making sure that proposed building works conform to relevant planning and building legislation.

I employ planning officers and building control officers to approve and inspect building work.

The client, through their architect or surveyor, puts forward their designs to me.

I give permission for them to go ahead with the project.

My contribution towards sustainability is to ensure that the project:

- meets the needs of the local development plan
- uses materials that comply with building regulations
- has a design which enhances the local environment.

The health and safety inspector

I am also known as the factory inspector and am employed by the Health and Safety Executive.

It is my duty to ensure that the government legislation concerning health and safety is fully implemented by the building contractor.

I have the authority to issue warnings and improvement notices if I find any contravention or breach of regulations. I can also help with health and safety documentation.

My contribution towards sustainability is to ensure that environmental products are used safely and in line with the health and safety regulations.

The building contractor

I am a very important member of the building team. My role is to:

- carry out building work in accordance with contract documents agreed with the client
- develop my own method and procedures for tendering and carrying out building work
- decide how many workers are required.

I employ a site supervisor who is responsible for:

- co-ordinating work of the craft supervisors, gangers and subcontractors
- liaising with the clerk of works
- the day-to-day engagement and deployment of operatives.

I always consider wastage and cost. My contribution towards sustainability is:

- ensuring that there is limited wastage when installing products or materials
- advising on the correct materials.

The suppliers and builders' merchants

We supply building materials, equipment and plant. Some of our firms manufacture building products. Without us, the industry would not function.

The builder negotiates with us to supply goods and equipment of the required quantity and quality at an agreed price. We agree to deliver the goods at a time when the builder needs them.

The client and the architect can instruct the builder to use a particular 'nominated' supplier for certain items such as windows, baths, toilets and kitchens.

Our contribution towards sustainability is ensuring that we have environmentally friendly products or materials available for the building contractor.

We can also advise on the correct materials to use and assist the building contractor to keep wastage and costs to a minimum.

The subcontractor

The building contractor may engage a specialist firm to carry out a specific part of the building work. They will enter into a subcontract with us.

We might get work such as structural steelwork, formwork, mechanical services, electrical installations, plastering, tiling, painting, bricklaying and carpentry.

We may offer labour only where we are subcontracted to use and fit the building contractor's material. We may supply and fit material.

Architects can name, or nominate, us to carry out specific work. We are then known as a nominated subcontractor.

Like the building contractor, our contribution towards sustainability is ensuring that there is limited wastage when installing the products or materials.

We might install specialist products such as solar panels, wind turbines or geo-thermal systems.