

# What Does a Building Consultant Do?

By The LMM Team

**A building consultant advises property owners and organisations on how to plan, manage, and deliver construction projects while controlling risk, cost, and regulatory compliance. Their role is to act in the client's best interests throughout the entire lifecycle of a building, from early feasibility through to completion and occupation.**

**In simple terms, a building consultant exists to bring certainty to construction projects. They provide independent oversight in an industry that is complex, highly regulated, and financially exposed, ensuring that decisions made at one stage do not create avoidable problems later.**

## Why Building Consultants Are Used on Construction Projects

Construction projects involve multiple parties, competing priorities, and significant legal and financial obligations. Most clients do not deliver building projects frequently enough to maintain in-house expertise across regulation, procurement, cost control, and risk management.

A building consultant fills that gap. Their role is to represent the client professionally, ensuring that the project is viable, compliant, and commercially sound before commitments are made and throughout delivery.

## What Does a Building Consultant Do at the Start of a Project?

At the start of a project, a building consultant assesses whether the proposed development or refurbishment is realistic and viable. This includes reviewing site constraints, identifying regulatory requirements, and establishing whether budgets and programmes align with the client's objectives.

This early-stage work is critical because many construction failures originate from decisions made before design or procurement begins. By identifying risks early, a building consultant prevents clients from proceeding with projects that are underfunded, non-compliant, or undeliverable.

## What Does a Building Consultant Do During Design?

During the design stage, a building consultant provides oversight to ensure proposals can be approved, procured, and built without unnecessary risk. They review designs against Building Regulations, fire safety legislation, accessibility requirements, and any sector-specific standards that apply.

A building consultant does not design the building. Instead, they challenge assumptions, identify compliance issues, and ensure that design decisions do not introduce future cost, delay, or regulatory failure.

### **How Does a Building Consultant Control Cost and Risk?**

A building consultant controls cost and risk by ensuring that project scopes are clearly defined, risks are identified early, and changes are managed in a controlled and transparent way. They work to prevent uncontrolled contractor variations, which are a common cause of budget overruns.

Rather than reacting to problems once construction has started, a building consultant focuses on prevention. This proactive approach typically results in greater cost certainty and fewer disputes during delivery.

### **What Does a Building Consultant Do During Construction?**

During construction, a building consultant acts as the client's professional representative. They monitor progress, quality, and cost, ensuring the works being delivered align with contractual and statutory requirements.

When changes arise, the building consultant assesses their impact on cost and programme, ensuring decisions are made with full visibility rather than under pressure. This protects the client from informal changes that can erode budgets and timelines.

### **What Does a Building Consultant Do at Completion and Handover?**

At completion, a building consultant supports the transition from construction to occupation. This includes managing defects, confirming regulatory compliance, and ensuring accurate building and asset information is provided.

The objective at this stage is to ensure the building performs as intended in use, rather than simply achieving practical completion. A building consultant helps safeguard long-term operational performance and asset value.

### **Is a Building Consultant Responsible for Design or Construction?**

A building consultant is not responsible for designing or constructing a building. Their responsibility is to provide independent professional advice and oversight on behalf of the client, ensuring that others fulfil their contractual and statutory duties correctly.

This independence allows a building consultant to prioritise the client's interests and maintain continuity throughout the project lifecycle.

### **Why Building Consultancy Is Increasingly Important**

Building consultancy has become increasingly important due to greater regulatory scrutiny, particularly following changes to UK building safety legislation. Clients now carry greater accountability for compliance, record-keeping, and decision-making.

A building consultant helps manage this responsibility by maintaining oversight, ensuring compliance obligations are met, and providing a clear audit trail of professional advice and decisions.

### **Summary: What Does a Building Consultant Do?**

A building consultant advises, oversees, and safeguards construction projects on behalf of the client. They help ensure buildings are viable, compliant, cost-controlled, and fit for purpose by providing independent oversight from feasibility through to occupation.

For organisations undertaking construction or refurbishment projects, a building consultant provides certainty in an environment where uncertainty is otherwise the norm.