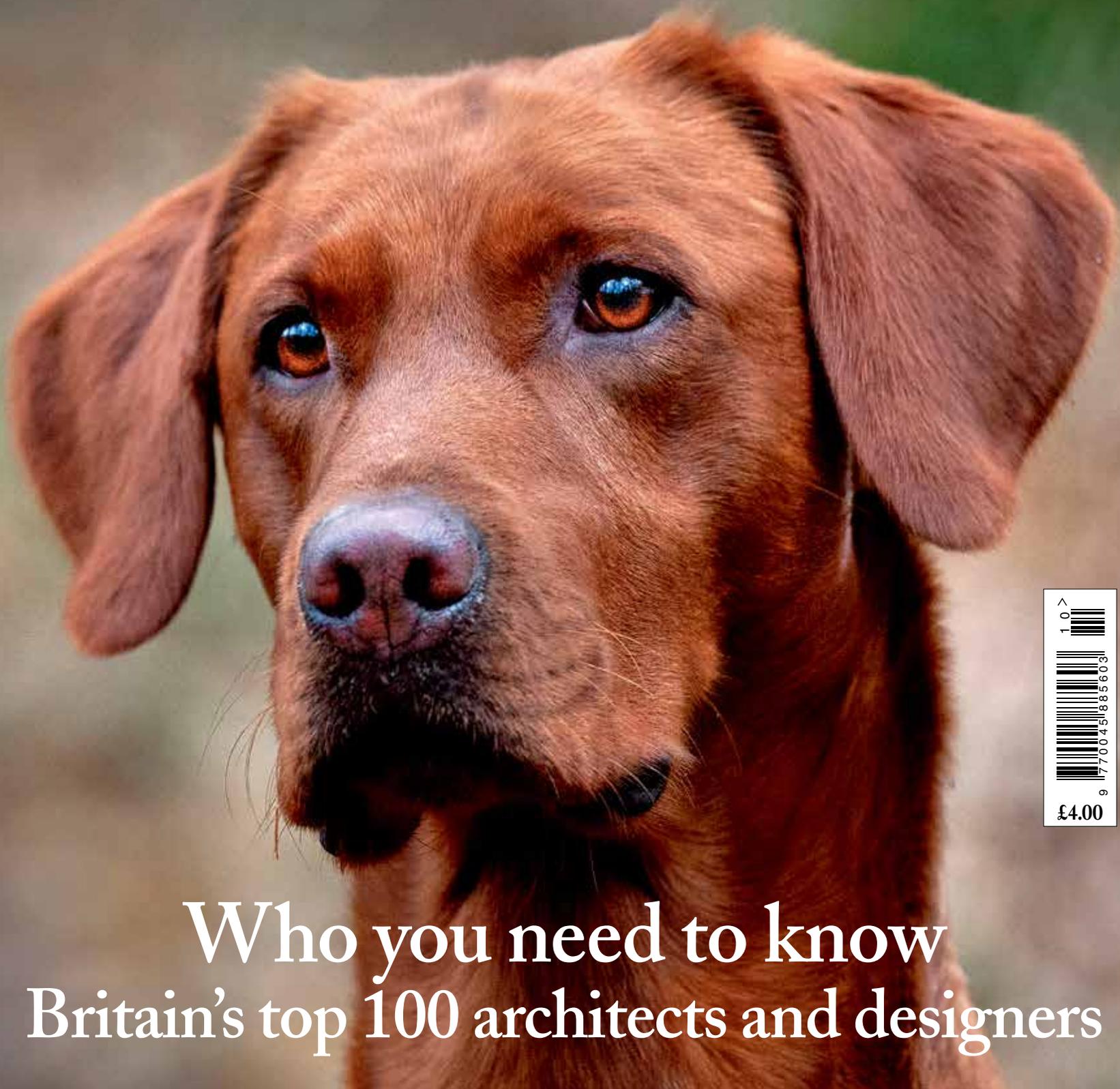


COUNTRY LIFE®

MARCH 6, 2019

EVERY WEEK

Red is the new black The glory of the fox-red labrador



Who you need to know
Britain's top 100 architects and designers



The COUNTRY LIFE Top 100

The secret to creating a beautiful country house is an expert with the experience, skills and creativity to turn a client's dreams into reality. For the third year, COUNTRY LIFE has compiled a list of interior designers, architects, garden designers, builders and specialists with demonstrable track records in creating the perfect rural sanctuary

In partnership with **DRUMMONDS**

THE business of breathing new life into a country house—or building one from scratch—requires a deep well of experience. That's why the members of COUNTRY LIFE's editorial team have combined their knowledge to create an updated list of the most respected practitioners in the field. It isn't exhaustive; there will be plenty of others, but those

included are representative examples of people whose work and reputation suggests they should be considered for large-scale country-house projects.

Because a key ingredient in any successful creative project is collaboration, this year's list is accompanied by advice in commissioning a designer, builder or crafts-person. There's also a guide to being a good

client, a skill that combines good communication, trust and chemistry. All three will ensure that everyone involved in a project, from architect and interior designer, to builder and garden designer, will share the same vision of its potential. ➤

This design by Artichoke was inspired by the kitchen at Lanhydrock in Cornwall

Being a good client

From Charles I and Inigo Jones to Country Life founder Edward Hudson and Sir Edwin Lutyens, collaborative partnerships are at the heart of some of Britain's most beautiful buildings. Such pairings are as vital today as they were then and shared vision, good communication and trust remain at the heart of achieving the best possible outcome. Here are 10 ideas to ensure the success of your project, as revealed by designers, gardeners and craftsmen.

Good chemistry is paramount

Find professionals you like. 'Trust your instincts—if you don't like somebody at first meeting, save yourself the hassle and don't hire them,' advises John Tehan, director of Smallwood Architects. 'Will you feel comfortable with this person sitting at your elbow in wellies on a muddy building site or is he the pompous type who might end up marching all over you?'

'If you understand and respect each other at the outset, you will be more likely to be the right people to work together.'

Devote your time to the project

'Something I hear a lot at the moment, from both architects and contractors, is that clients don't necessarily understand that they need to devote time to their project,' says architect Marc Deaves, who points out that building or refurbishing a house is a very personal thing.

'It's only a beautiful house in the eye of the beholder,' he says. 'The process the architect goes through with the client is actually understanding the client's needs, exploring

the wish list and expanding the possibilities. It's only by going through the design development process together that you actually get to a solution you're going to like.'

Recognise that there will be decisions to be made by you throughout the project and that it's crucial that they're made on time.

Know what you want

'A good client is somebody who has a clear idea of what they want and who is also prepared to listen to the input of a good professional,' advises John Tehan. Brief your architect with images of houses you like and a wish list of requirements and rooms.

The same applies to interior and garden designers. 'The clearer you can be about how you want to use the garden and what you want to include, the easier and more successful the process will be,' advises Graham Lloyd-Brunt of Lloyd Brunt Outdoor Design.

Give them some space

A client's lack of trust in the professional services they've hired makes for a miserable experience all round. Brief your architect, then allow them space to look at the site.

Their job is to consider the best spot for morning coffee or to enjoy a sunset view, the quietest side of the house for bedrooms or how to make the most of a view of the landscape you didn't expect at ground level. Give them a chance to come up with imaginative ideas, clever solutions and glorious design.

Consider the consents

'Sometimes, clients are so desperate to move in and sit around the table having breakfast that they forget about whether they've got

planning consent or whether they've dealt with the dry rot,' says Marc Deaves. 'It can take 12–18 months to negotiate consents and, of course, it's illegal to carry out works to a listed building without having them in place. I can't emphasise enough that time spent in advance planning is hugely valuable.'

Avoid changes

Don't keep changing your mind. If it's annoying for the professionals, it's worse for you, because you can lose control of costs by making changes as the job progresses. The contracted fees no longer hold and costs can spiral, untrammelled by prior agreement.

There's also a sequence to the way works are carried out: all building contracts run to a prescribed length of time and if the contractor doesn't proceed with due speed, the client can counterclaim. Once you instruct changes and disrupt the programme, you are no longer able to do that, so you can lose control of the schedule as well.

'I can't emphasise enough that time spent in advance planning is hugely valuable'

Don't make unrealistic demands

'Good suppliers are busy, lovely things have long lead times and antiques must be found,' notes interior designer Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors. 'They can't be rushed.'

Agree the schedule

A good builder will provide an accurate and detailed programme and progress will be regularly measured against it. Don't pressurise him into cutting it down because it may not work out well. 'Look into the logic and have grown-up conversations about it,' says Nigel Armstrong, chairman of building firm R. W. Armstrong. 'Don't hack eight weeks off the end in order to get in for Christmas.'

Be nice

'Speak to the workers on site. Engage with them. Your interest will be appreciated and rewarded,' says Nigel.

Don't panic

There may be a point when the wallpaper or worktop arrives on site and you suddenly fear you don't like it. 'It's at this point that you need to really trust your designer, because the sum of a scheme is so much more than its parts,' says Henriette. 'If you panic and pluck elements out of the design, it will have an impact on the overall interior—you won't see it come together as a whole.'



Henrietta von Stockhausen's experience of country-house projects includes work on a Grade I*-listed house in Buckinghamshire

Interior designers

When choosing a designer, create a shortlist and have initial meetings. 'When a project takes two or three years, the chemistry has to be right,' says Henriette. If they are engaged early in the planning process, an experienced interior designer can help to improve the flow of the layout, introduce inspiring ideas and contribute to a successful outcome.

There's no industry standard for charging: fees vary from a percentage cost of supplying goods and furnishings; a fixed sum for the project; a fee for the design work, plus a handling charge for purchasing; an hourly rate; or a combination of the above.

'It's important to have good communication between designer and client from the start. A clear brief should be agreed up front and then a detailed proposal with costs should follow, so that all parties are clear on how and when the project will be achieved and what it will cost,' advises Gilly Craft, the president of the British Institute of Interior Design (www.biid.org.uk).

Alidad

Expert at ultra-grand country-house style, Alidad (known only by his first name professionally) has recently completed projects for private clients in London, Paris and Lisbon. 020-7384 0121; www.alidad.com

Chester Jones

Former managing director of Colefax & Fowler Chester Jones set up his firm in 1990. Today, the practice is run by his sons Toby and Ben and is known for elegant interiors, sympathetic to a building's architectural history, plus the extensive use of art. 020-7498 2717; www.chesterjones.com

Colin Orchard

Former Colefax & Fowler designer Colin Orchard trained under the firm's decorating doyenne Imogen Taylor. Today, Mr Orchard is particularly well known for classic country-house style, with projects including Ballyfin, the Regency mansion in Ireland, and grand homes in America and the UK. 020-7351 5501; info@colinorchard.com

Douglas Mackie

After studying architecture at Cambridge, Douglas Mackie discovered a passion for

interior design when working in New York. Celebrated for classic-meets-contemporary interiors, he's also expert at integrating art and antiques into his projects. 020-7487 3295; www.douglasmackie.com

Edward Bulmer

A champion of natural paints, architectural historian and interior designer Edward Bulmer uses his wide experience and colour expertise to create sensitively restored period houses, which are comfortable for modern life. His recent and current projects include White's club, Goodwood, Pitshill, Chevening and Dorfold Hall. 01544 388535; www.edwardbulmerinteriordesign.co.uk

Guy Goodfellow

Another Colefax & Fowler alumnus, Guy Goodfellow is a master of classic country-house style to which he lends an individual twist. He has his own large fabric and wallpaper offering, Guy Goodfellow Collection. 020-7349 0728; www.guygoodfellow.com

Henrietta Spencer-Churchill

Known for splendid, classic style, Henrietta Spencer-Churchill runs her interior-design >



Edward Bulmer was given a Georgian Group award for his work at Pitshill, West Sussex



Simon Brown/Country Life Picture Library

Penny Morrison's breakfast room on the Welsh borders is typical of her decorative approach

firm, Woodstock Designs, close to her ancestral home at Blenheim Palace. She's a prolific author and international lecturer, and counts restoration work at Blenheim among her current portfolio of projects. 01993 811887; www.spencerchurchilldesigns.com

Hugh Leslie

Modernist influences combined with striking colour and pattern sing out in Hugh Leslie's designs. Another expert who started his career at Colefax & Fowler, he now offers a full interior-architecture and design service teamed with a flexible approach. 020-7584 7185; www.hughleslie.com

Jane Churchill Interiors

Formal, elegant (yet comfortable) interiors are the hallmarks of a Jane Churchill design. A well-known name in the business since

she set up her firm in 1975, Mrs Churchill is the founder of Jane Churchill fabrics, now owned by the Colefax Group, and launched her JC Home collection of bedlinen in 2018. 020-7730 8564; www.janechurchillinteriors.co.uk

Janine Stone & Co

Unusually, this firm will manage a project from acquiring a site and obtaining planning permission all the way through complete architecture, build and interior-design services to the final cushion. It specialises in striking, classically inspired interiors with luxurious materials and a modern twist. 020-7349 8888; www.janinestone.com

Joanna Wood

Her recent designs include the American Ambassador's London residence, Winfield House, and the restoration of the Master's

Lodge at Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge. The designer's empire also includes a charming home-accessories shop (recently moved to a new home on Elizabeth Street in Belgravia), plus Lawson Wood bespoke upholstery, Phillips & Wood lighting and Lewis & Wood fabrics and wallpapers. 020-7730 0693; www.joannawood.com

John Evans Interior Architecture + Design

Led by John Evans, who has more than 35 years of experience in creating classic-contemporary interiors with a strong architectural style, this firm has offices in London and Birmingham and a diverse portfolio from new-build country homes to ski chalets and private swimming pools. 0121-233 9041; www.johnevansdesign.com

‘When a project takes two or three years, the chemistry between owner and designer has to be right’

Katharine Pooley

Fast becoming a global brand, Katharine Pooley's firm has luxury interiors boutiques in London and Doha, as well as operating full interior-architecture, design and home-dressing services here as well as across the Middle East. 020-7584 3223; www.katharinepooley.com

Linley

The recent acquisition of architectural interiors company Keech Green has strengthened the Linley design offering. Graham Green and Michael Keech both worked at Ralph Lauren before establishing their firm in 2002, known for its curated 'modern-deco' and timeless style. Current Linley projects include the interior of Ravenswick Hall, the first major new-build country house in Yorkshire for 200 years. 020-7730 7300; www.davidlinley.com

Lucy Elworthy

A former decoration editor of *House & Garden*, Lucy Elworthy has a style that's particularly sympathetic to period country houses. She mixes contemporary and antique pieces and has an imaginative eye for fabrics and texture. 07957 693246; www.lucyelworthy.co.uk

Max Rollitt

Antique dealer-turned-interior designer Max Rollitt uses his exceptional knowledge to transform the interiors of period houses.

He has an inspiring shop in a converted barn near Winchester in Hampshire selling antiques, plus a growing range of his own bespoke furniture designs. 01962 791124; www.maxrollitt.com

Melissa Wyndham

Continuing the spirit of the late, legendary interior designer Melissa Wyndham are Vanessa Macdonald and Honor Hebblethwaite. They bring a fresh eye and refined touch to classic rural and urban interiors. 020-7352 2874; www.melissawyndham.com

McWhirter Morris

Antique dealer and English furniture specialist James McWhirter and former Colefax & Fowler designer Sarah Morris joined forces in 2005 to set up their Chelsea-based practice. Traditional, timeless and tasteful are the by-words here. 020-7349 2575; www.mcwhirtermorris.com

Mlinaric, Henry and Zervudachi

The legendary decorator David Mlinaric set up his firm in 1964, and, today, the practice is run by directors Tino Zervudachi, Hugh Henry, Jason Roberts and Laurence Macadam, with offices in London, Paris and New York. They create sophisticated, elegant and

comfortable designs for city and country properties. Current projects include a palace in New Delhi, a classical villa in Athens and a chalet in Gstaad. 020-7730 9072; www.mhzlondon.com

Nina Campbell

The queen of British interior design, Nina Campbell counts Annabel's private members' club (in its first incarnation) as one of her very earliest commissions. She has a constantly evolving style and a growing clientele in the USA, plus successful collections of fabric, wallpaper and furniture and two London shops. 020-7225 1011; www.ninacampbell.com

Penny Morrison

Known for comfortable English style and seemingly effortless, successful combinations of colour and pattern, Penny Morrison's interiors are timeless, relaxed and inviting. She also offers a tempting collection of hand-printed textiles, as well as cushions, rugs and lamps. 020-7384 2975; www.pennymorrison.com

Pippa Paton

Pippa Paton is admired for adding contemporary creature comforts to period houses,

many of which are in the Cotswolds. She is the author of *Twenty First Century Cotswolds* (2017) and has a second book in the pipeline. 01865 595470; www.pippapatondesign.co.uk

Rita Konig

She may be the daughter of Nina Campbell, but Rita Konig has her own take on English style. Known for chic yet relaxed interiors with a dose of transatlantic sophistication, she has recently completed the design of a boutique hotel in West Hollywood, Hotel 850 Bis. 020-3735 7280; www.ritakonig.com

Robert Kime

Antique dealer-turned-interior designer Robert Kime shuns fashion to create timeless interiors in which antiques and textiles lend a distinctive mood. His clients include The Prince of Wales, the Duke of Beaufort and Duran Duran's John Taylor. 020-7831 6066; www.robertkime.com

Salvesen Graham

The Wandsworth-based design duo Nicole Salvesen and Mary Graham are known for >



Nina Campbell: Elegance and Ease by Giles Kime, published by Rizzoli, 2018

This drawing room designed by Nina Campbell demonstrates her capacity to reflect the interests and tastes of her clients

classic interiors with a twist. Their portfolio of projects is wide, from family homes to ski chalets to private member's clubs.
020-7967 7777; www.salvesengraham.com

Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler

Founded in the 1930s, this iconic company is said to be the longest-established interior-decorating firm in Britain. Its move from Brook Street to the Pimlico Road in 2017 has attracted a new audience and, today, its strength is the breadth of talent and expertise offered by its designers Wendy Nicholls, Emma Burns, Philip Hooper, Roger Jones, Nicola Crawley, Janie Money, Daniel Slowik and Lucy Hammond Giles.
020-7493 2231; www.sibylcoifax.com

Sims Hilditch

Emma Sims-Hilditch specialises in dragging houses into the 21st century with her fresh take on English country style. She's particularly strong on creating comfortable and elegant spaces that work well for family life—from pool houses to utility rooms—and is recognised for bringing urban quality to the countryside.
01249 783087; www.simshilditch.com

Susie Atkinson

Susie Atkinson cut her teeth on interiors for the Soho House group, before bringing her contemporary look and sense of understated luxury to residential projects. Recently, she has completed rooms for Lime Wood and

Beaverbrook House hotels and has also launched her own range of furniture.
020-7384 0700; www.susieatkinson.com

Thorp

Clean, classic style for high-rolling clients is the strength of this well-regarded firm. Headed by founder Philippa Thorp, the company offers full interior design, architecture and landscaping services, drawing on its impressive experience across residential, yacht, plane and chalet projects.
020-7235 7808; www.thorp.co.uk

‘The system in this country means your ideas need to be clear by the time you go to planning,’

Todhunter Earle Interiors

Emily Todhunter and Kate Earle are known for classic interiors with a contemporary edge. Currently working on the interiors for a roster of major new-build country houses with some of Britain's leading architects, they have also reworked the layouts at Reddish House, owned by Cecil Beaton, and are renovating the Arts-and-Crafts gem Rodmarton Manor.
020-7349 9999; www.todhuntereale.com

Veere Grenney Associates

Known for his highly creative approach and the ability to combine contemporary pieces in historic settings, Veere Grenney conceives interiors with a discreetly luxurious feel. He has a fabric and wallpaper collection, which showcases his love of elegant pattern in subtle hues, and recently published a new book: *A Point of View: On Decorating*.
020-7351 7170; www.veeregrenney.com

Virginia Howard

Clients head to Virginia Howard for smartly tailored interiors with a traditional feel. She is at home with both town and country projects, including refurbishments of listed buildings.
020-7349 8180; www.virginiahoward.co.uk

VSP Interiors

Dorset-based Henriette von Stockhausen is known for designing large family houses in a classic, colourfully eclectic style, and is a dab hand at balancing the restrictions of listed properties with the demands of modern life.
01305 265892; www.vspinteriors.com

Wilkinson Beven

Led by founders Richard Wilkinson and John Beven, this firm offers a full interior-architecture and design service from its offices in Birmingham and London. It is particularly strong on Alpine chalets and homes with luxury features, such as indoor pools and spas.
0121-622 7366; www.wilkinsonbeven.com



A perfect marriage: this recent project by architect Ian Adam-Smith perfectly demonstrates his ability to blend new and old

Architects

The golden rule is to look for someone with a track record in country-house projects of a scale and type similar to yours. Interview two or three, ideally on site so that you can see how the architect responds to the location as well as to you. Are they enthusiastic? Do they pick up on the cues of the landscape? Do you like them?

‘We often work with people to move forward to a “feasibility-sketch” stage, to make sure the relationship is working,’ says John Tehan of Smallwood Architects. ‘Even if clients are clear about what they want, most people will need to stand back and think about things once the process has started.’

He stresses the necessity of taking the time at this stage, because any changes later may be too late. ‘The system in this country means that your ideas need to be clear by the time you go to planning; there isn’t really the luxury of reconsidering later, because you’ve already had to commit in order to get permission,’ he explains.

An architect’s fee can vary, sometimes a fixed sum for a specific job, such as a feasibility sketch or a master-plan, or a percentage related to the cost of the build. This will vary depending upon the scope of the architect’s services and the scale, complexity and type of the project, but 10%–15% (on top of the build cost, plus VAT) may be considered a reasonable rule of thumb.

ADAM Architecture

Specialists in creating significant new country houses in the Classical tradition, the firm is working on Ravenswick Hall in North Yorkshire, as well as refurbishments and scholarly alterations to listed properties, such as the early-18th-century Chettle House in Dorset.
01962 843843; www.adamarchitecture.com

Ben Pentreath

Architect, master planner, interior designer and author Ben Pentreath has an eye for Classical detail and a sensitivity to the timeless tradition of English country-house design. Also co-owner of interiors store Pentreath & Hall in Bloomsbury.
020-7430 2424; www.benpentreath.com

Craig Hamilton Architects

Committed to the development of the Classical language of architecture, Radnorshire-based Craig Hamilton specialises in country houses, including a new home for The Prince of Wales in Carmarthenshire. The company is also known for chapels and monuments.
01982 553312; www.craighamiltonarchitects.com

Donald Insall Associates

Specialists in the care, repair and adaptation of historic buildings, as well as the design of new buildings, including private houses, for sensitive sites, the firm’s recent projects include conservation at the Palace of Westminster, the Temperate House at Kew and the Georgian lido, Cleveland Pools, in Bath.
020-7245 9888; www.donaldinsallassociates.co.uk

Francis Johnson and Partners

Established in 1937 by the late, great Francis Johnson, the East Yorkshire practice reflects his reputation for handsome country houses in the Classical tradition and the restoration of historic buildings. It is a regular winner of Georgian Group Architectural Awards.
01262 674043; www.francisjohnson-architects.co.uk

Francis Terry and Associates

A leading light among the new generation of Classical architects, Francis Terry spent more than 20 years working for his eminent architect father, Quinlan Terry. He founded his own practice in 2016 and is the current chair of the Traditional Architecture Group, as well as an accomplished artist.
01206 580528; www.ftanda.co.uk

Gluckman Smith

Known for contemporary responses to historic settings, its projects include an imaginative conversion of a Cotswold barn to the award-winning new Font House in the grounds of Nevill Holt, Leicestershire, and a new farmhouse in the Cornish tradition near Falmouth.
020-7998 1525; www.gluckmansmith.com

Groves-Raines Architects

With a reputation for bringing new life to historic properties in Scotland and Ireland, this Edinburgh-based practice combines conservation expertise with a seamless integration of old and new. It was recently responsible for conservation at Hay’s Dock in Shetland, part of the new Shetland Museum & Archives.
0131-467 7777; www.grovesraines.com



Colin Orchard collaborated with the artist and muralist Lucinda Oakes on the Trellis Room at Ballyfin in Co Laois, Ireland

Giles Quarme & Associates

This London-based practice specialises in historic building work and new buildings within Conservation Areas. It consulted at Coal Drops Yard, the listed King's Cross railway buildings transformed into a new retail development that opened in October 2018. Other recent projects include the award-winning restoration of Elizabethan country house Glynde Place, in East Sussex. 020-7582 0748; www.quarme.com

Hoare, Ridge & Morris

Founders Mark Hoare, Ted Ridge and Charles Morris set up their practice in 2012, covering masterplanning to the design of furniture and interiors, as well as landscape and garden design. Projects include new-builds and repair of important listed buildings, such as, currently, Lyveden for the National Trust. It recently helped the owners rescue 13th-century Somerton Castle in Lincolnshire from the Buildings at Risk Register. 01728 688747; www.hrma.co.uk

Ian Adam-Smith Architects

A deep understanding of classic English country-house architecture has earned Ian Adam-Smith an impressive reputation. His practice works almost exclusively on private residences—many with a modern twist—across West Sussex, Hampshire, Surrey, Berkshire and London. 01428 644644; www.ianadam-smith.co.uk

John Simpson Architects

An eminent architect, known for promoting the Classical language of architecture, his company's recent projects include the new Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre (complete with its charming Bat House) to work at Kensington Palace, Eton College and the Royal College of Music. 020-7405 1285; www.johnsimpsonarchitects.com

John Stark & Crickmay Partnership

A well-established Dorchester-based practice that can trace its roots back to 1820 (Thomas Hardy spent six years with the firm), its team now offers multidisciplinary services across Dorset and beyond. 01305 262636; www.jsdp.co.uk

Julian Bicknell & Associates

This respected architecture firm is known for grand country houses in the Classical style across the Home Counties and beyond. A fine example is the impressive Corwen Manor on the St George's Hill Estate in Weybridge, Surrey, complete with a swimming pool that opens onto a sunken garden. 020-8891 1001; www.julianbicknell.co.uk

Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects

A medium-sized practice founded by Kay Pilsbury and now headed by her daughter Sibyl Thomas, the company specialises in historic-building conservation and extensions

designed to accommodate modern family living, plus new-builds in historic contexts. An interior-design service is also offered. 01799 599208; www.kpt.co.uk

Lindsay Buchan Architects

An Edinburgh architect with a fine reputation for the refurbishment, extension and construction of houses throughout Scotland, he is particularly well-known for his work on the buildings of country estates in the Highlands. 0131-554 9008; www.lindsaybuchan.com

Marc Deaves

Formerly an approved architect for London's Cadogan and Grosvenor Estates, he now works as a country-house expert handling a small number of projects each year, working closely with clients on all aspects of historic-building restoration and consents. He's currently at work on the comprehensive restoration of a 17th-century manor house and walled garden in Wiltshire, complete with timber barn conversion. 07970 458025; www.marcdeaves.com

Nick Cox Architects

With projects including Woburn Abbey and the Grand Bridge at Blenheim Palace, this Oxfordshire-based practice specialises in the repair and conservation of historic buildings, such as Calke Abbey and Vyne House, as well as new buildings in historic contexts. 01869 238092; www.nickcoxarchitects.co.uk

Peregrine Bryant Architects

This conservation specialist is responsible for scholarly restorations at Crichel House in Dorset; a medieval timber-framed house in Herefordshire; Belmont, the Landmark Trust's seaside villa in Lyme Regis; and the Royal Hospital Chelsea Stable Block scheme. 020-7384 2111; www.peregrine-bryant.co.uk

Ptolemy Dean Architects

Surveyor of the Fabric at Westminster Abbey, Ptolemy Dean designed the new Weston Tower, which was described by *The Guardian* as 'a gothic space rocket' and was the first significant addition to the Abbey since 1745. He is currently overseeing the restoration and extension of Aldourie Castle on the shores of Loch Ness, and is also an author and television presenter. 020-7378 7714; www.ptolemydean.co.uk

Interview two or three architects, on site, so you can see how they respond to the location and to you

Purcell

Founded by conservation expert Donovan Purcell in the 1940s, this firm has grown to become one of the world's leading design practices with 11 studios across the UK, as well as in Hong Kong, Sydney and Melbourne. It boasts an impressive roll call of conservation projects, from St Paul's Cathedral to the picturesque whaling station in Grytviken, South Georgia, dating from 1904, and, recently, the £3 million renovation of Bristol's strikingly modern Clifton Cathedral. 020-7397 7171; www.purcelluk.com

Quinlan Terry Architects

The distinguished advocate of Classically inspired architecture is well known for high-profile projects, notably his work at the traditionalist village Poundbury in Dorset, as well as Ferne Park in Wiltshire, the New Infirmary at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in London and the conversion of Tedworth House in Wiltshire. 01206 323186; www.qtarchitects.com

Russell Taylor Architects

This firm specialises in Classical architecture, including new-builds, extensions and alterations. Its recent projects include the Fitzroy Square headquarters for the Royal Society of Musicians, extensive renovations of private houses and selected new-builds in Cornwall and London. 020-7261 1984; www.rtarchitects.co.uk



Smallwood Architects remodelled this Grade II*-listed house in Buckinghamshire

Simon Morray-Jones

Bath-based Simon Morray-Jones is an architect with almost 40 years' experience of restoration, conservation and new-builds. He's known for work refurbishing Babington House hotel in Frome and the Slaughters' Manor House in the Cotswolds. 01225 787900; www.sm-j.com

Simpson & Brown Architects

This Edinburgh-based conservation practice also covers new-building architecture, heritage consultancy and archaeological work via its Addyman Archaeology arm. The company recently worked on the restoration of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Willow Tea Rooms in Glasgow, returning the famous institution to its former glory. 0131-555 4678; www.simpsonandbrown.co.uk

Smallwood Architects

A specialist in the building of new homes and the remodelling and refurbishment of historic ones, this well-established practice is now run by its three directors: Jonathan Dinnewell, Julius Geeson and John Tehan. With an impressive portfolio of more than 900 projects, the practice covers both town and country, including Ireland. 020-7376 5744; www.smallwoodarchitects.co.uk

Thomas Croft Architects

Known for contemporary interventions in historic structures, as well as new buildings that relate imaginatively to historic settings, Tom Croft includes Paul McCartney and Richard Curtis among his residential clients.

Now working on the major renovation of a Grade I-listed Robert Adam house in Fitzroy Square, London W1, and the Royal Yacht Squadron pavilion in Cowes, he's also masterplanner for Sotheby's. 020-8962 0066; www.thomascroft.com

Stuart Martin Architects

This Dorset-based practice specialises in one-off houses and conservation work as required. It is currently working on the renovation of a moated Elizabethan manor house in Sussex, which was extended by Edwin Lutyens in the 1930s for Edward Hudson, the founder of COUNTRY LIFE. 01935 83543; www.stuartmartinarchitects.com

Watson, Bertram & Fell

Based in Bath and led by principal architect Mark Watson, this firm specialises in country houses, particularly work to listed buildings and properties in conservation areas. It is known for projects at country estates such as Ilchester and Ozeleworth, hotels, including Cliveden and The Royal Crescent, and projects for the Crown Estate. 01225 337273; www.wbf-bath.co.uk

Yiangou

This energetic Cotswolds-based practice has expertise in everything from contemporary structures to new country estates designed in the Classical tradition. It has undertaken projects for the National Trust, the Duchy of Cornwall and the University of Oxford, and is also particularly strong on swimming pools and leisure buildings. 01285 888150; www.yiangou.com



The light-filled, Jacobean-style banqueting hall of a house in the Cotswolds designed by Ross Sharp of Yiangou Architects

Garden designers

'It makes a lot of sense to have the landscape designer in the team from the outset, to be involved with the architect in masterplanning the site, including garages, outbuildings, swimming pools, tennis courts and so on, ensuring they are in the best possible location and to maximise the opportunities for the garden to run out from the house,' says garden designer Graham Lloyd-Brunt.

An initial feasibility meeting on site to talk about ideas will allow a designer to determine the potential and scope of a project, plus rough costs involved.

The next stage is the development of an initial creation of a masterplan before the agreed design and specification are prepared for contractor tendering and more formal costing.

A designer's fee could be fixed or calculated as a percentage of the project cost—a rule of thumb percentage is about 15%–20% for the design and project management, but, of course, much depends on the scale and complexity of your project.

Acres Wild

Sussex-based Debbie Roberts and Ian Smith are known for well-structured designs softened with full, naturalistic planting. They are specialists in designs for country gardens and estates, mainly in the south of England. 01403 891084; www.acreswild.co.uk

Angela Collins Garden Design

Classic architectural shapes and romantic planting in large country gardens are Angela Collins's forte. She has deep plant knowledge and a notable ability to marry house and site. 07876 592440; www.angelacollins.co.uk

Arabella Lennox-Boyd

This hugely respected designer is known for creating magical spaces framed by pergolas, box hedging and quintessentially English herbaceous borders. 020–7931 9995; www.arabellalennoxboyd.com

Arne Maynard Garden Design

Known for creating a strong architectural structure in his garden designs, Arne Maynard softens formal lines with colourful summer perennials to create classic English gardens. He's an author, lecturer and expert plantsman. 020–7689 8100; www.arnemaynard.com

Balston Agius

Based in Devizes and London, Michael Balston and Marie-Louise Agius head this firm of landscape architects. It specialises in large, privately owned projects in the UK, as well as urban-design projects, including concepts for parks in China. 01380 848181; www.balstonagius.co.uk

Bradley-Hole Schoenaich Landscape

Christopher Bradley-Hole and Brita von Schoenaich are known for major contemporary landscapes, cityscapes, rooftop gardens, award-winning show gardens and heritage gardens. Their projects include the on-going design of RHS Wisley. 020–8939 1749; www.bhsla.co.uk

George Carter Garden Design

The master of classical and theatrical garden design, George Carter specialises in formal gardens. He's inspired by the past, using topiary, hedging, obelisks, stone arches and statues that would have been seen in the gardens of the 17th and early 18th centuries, and is also a garden historian and author. 01362 668130; www.georgecartergardens.co.uk

Dan Pearson Studio

A lifelong passion for planting and an artistic, naturalistic approach to garden design has earned Dan Pearson an outstanding reputation. He's also an author, broadcaster and landscape designer. 020–7928 3800; www.danpearsonstudio.com

Harris Bugg Studio

Known for formal and informal designs and the re-imagining of traditional materials such as steel, wood and paving, Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg are currently working on the kitchen-garden design at RHS Bridgewater. 01392 927172; www.harrisbugg.com

‘It makes sense to have the landscape designer in the team from the outset, for the masterplanning’

I. & J. Bannerman

Isabel and Julian Bannerman specialise in dreamy, luscious and floriferous gardens, filled with roses, delphiniums and spectacular climbers, as well as garden buildings. Their work includes designs for The Prince of Wales at Highgrove and the Castle of Mey. www.bannermansdesign.com

James Alexander-Sinclair

A writer, television presenter and speaker, he is also a well-established landscape and garden designer. Based in Oxfordshire, he works across the UK and internationally, turning his hand to everything from sleek modern to rustic cottage gardens. 07515 336356; www.jamesalexandersinclair.com

Jinny Blom

Landscape architect Jinny Blom is known for her sweeping vision and imaginative schemes. She's a repeat Chelsea medallist and recently completed the garden design for The Fife Arms, overlooking the River Clunie in Braemar, Aberdeenshire. 020–3950 2899; www.jinnyblom.com

Pip Morrison Landscape Designs

An expert in the historic development of old gardens, uncovering their layers and designing a way forward, Pip Morrison is currently working on the early-18th-century formal landscape at Chettle House in Dorset, as well as the masterplan of the gardens and restoration of the 17th-century walled garden at Auckland Castle in Co Durham. 07817 736360; pip@pipmorrison.co.uk



Clive Nichols

Embracing the romance of profusion: Angela Collins specialises in sumptuous plantings that complement their surroundings

Jo Thompson Landscape & Garden Design

An expert in creating gardens that sit naturally in their surroundings, Jo Thompson is considered one of the UK's leading plantswomen. She is the winner of four gold medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. 020–7127 8438; www.jothompson-garden-design.co.uk

Kim Wilkie

One of Britain's best-known landscape architects, Kim Wilkie is known for sculptural designs on a large scale. He's famous for the Orpheus landform design at Boughton House, home of the Duke of Buccleuch, and for the sweeping, stepped curves at Heveningham Hall. 01489 891691; www.kimwilkie.com

Lloyd Brunt Outdoor Design

Landscape designer Graham Lloyd-Brunt is known for gardens that combine strong structure with full and truly seasonal planting. He specialises in gardens for large private family homes across London, the Home Counties and the South of England. 020–7222 2777; www.lloydbrunt.com

Rosebank Landscaping

Led by award-winning garden designer Matt Keightley, famous for his Sentebale garden at Chelsea for The Duke of Sussex, this design-and-build studio works on small and large private gardens and on commercial schemes. It is currently working on a variety of imaginative projects, from roof terraces in the Battersea Power Station development to the Wellbeing Garden at RHS Wisley. 020–8255 0132; www.rosebanklandscaping.co.uk

Marcus Barnett Studio

Architectural landscaping and compositions of stone, water and specimen trees with rich planting make the work of Marcus Barnett's studio stand out. The winner of three RHS gold medals and a coveted Best Show Garden at Chelsea, design and project management of country estates and gardens are his forte. 020–7736 9761; www.marcusbarnett.com

Robert Myers Associates

This landscape-architecture practice undertakes private and commercial projects. It is working on the gardens at Clandon Park for the National Trust, having completed the Magic Garden at Hampton Court and the courtyard at Pensons Yard, near Tenbury Wells. 01885 227377; www.robertmyers-associates.co.uk

Sarah Eberle Landscape Design

Hampshire-based landscape architect and garden designer Sarah Eberle has designed several Chelsea Flower Show gardens. She is working on the Forestry Commission's Resilience Garden for 2019, showing how our forests, gardens and landscapes can be kept healthy for future generations. 01256 895754; www.saraheberle.com

Sarah Price Landscapes

Sarah Price trained in fine art, then worked as a gardener at Hampton Court Palace before starting to design professionally in 2006. She has four Chelsea gold medals under her belt, thanks to her plant-driven approach to design and her romantic and artistic sensibility. 020–7703 3973; www.sarahpricelandscapes.com

Tania Compton

Gardens on a grand scale are writer and designer Lady Tania Compton's speciality, but don't expect conventionality: her designs tend towards exuberance and generous planting. The garden at her Wiltshire home, Spilsbury Farm, is testament to her formality-meets-wilderness approach. www.taniacompton.co.uk

Todd Longstaffe-Gowan

Garden adviser to Historic Royal Palaces, lecturer and author, Todd Longstaffe-Gowan has had extensive input into work at historic landscapes such as the Tower of London, Hampton Court and Kensington Palace. His work includes contemporary garden designs, such as the lushly planted roof garden at the new-build 15, Clerkenwell Close, EC1. 020–7253 2100; www.tlg-landscape.co.uk

Tom Stuart-Smith

Winner of multiple gold medals at Chelsea, Tom Stuart-Smith is known for fluid, naturalistic planting and prairie-style gardens, with grasses and sturdy perennials. His stand-out projects are Le Jardin Secret in Marrakech and the Italian garden at the Trentham estate. 020–7253 2100; www.tomstuartsmith.co.uk

Xa Tollemache

The designer works with scale and proportion to create English estate gardens filled with lavender, roses and topiary. She is well-known for traditional walled gardens with cruciform herbaceous borders and arches of sweet peas and edible fruits, as seen in her garden at Helmingham Hall in Suffolk. 01473 890799; www.xa-tollemache.co.uk



Marianna Majoris

Strong structures and seasonal plantings are hallmarks of Lloyd Brunt Outdoor Design

Builders and craftspeople

Nigel Armstrong believes in the power of word of mouth. 'There's no substitute for personal recommendation,' he says. 'Research your builder thoroughly. Ask questions. Learn how they operate. Learn how the industry operates.'

A solid track record, he says, is vital: 'Only employ a builder with vast experience of country houses and their owners.' When comparing tenders and selecting your builder, consider quality, experience and service level, not only money.

Usually, the construction cost is fixed at the start of the work, so it's essential that the design and specification are complete at this stage. Details that are overlooked before starting on site could cause cost uncertainty and delays.

Artichoke

Expert in bespoke kitchens, fitted furniture and architectural joinery, made in the company's workshops in Somerset, it is sensitive to the requirements of listed and country houses and is in demand nationwide. 01934 745270; www.artichoke.co.uk

Carpenter Oak

Oak-framed house, building and extension specialist, it worked on the restoration of the Shackleton and Scott huts in Antarctica and, recently, the lantern-oak frames of the RIBA award-winning Brixton Department Store. 01803 732900; www.carpenteroak.com

Hare & Humphreys

Leading specialist decorator, known for the conservation of historic buildings, it has held a Royal Warrant since 2001, thanks to its work on Windsor Castle's restoration after the fire. 020-7833 8806; www.hare-humphreys.co.uk



No machine can re-create the skill of plasterwork specialists such as Locker & Riley



Whether new-build or restoration, R. W. Armstrong operates to the highest standards

Moulding

Family-run for eight generations, specialising in the restoration and repair of old buildings, this company is based near Salisbury and operates within a 50-mile radius. 01722 742228; www.rmoulding.co.uk

Oakwrights

This Hereford-based company works nationwide on oak-framed garden buildings, extensions, garages and complete houses, often using traditional vernacular styles. 01432 353353; www.oakwrights.co.uk

Locker & Riley

This plasterwork specialist—doing design, production and installation— was responsible for the restoration of the Gothic glory of the ornate ceiling details and gilded mouldings

of Sir George Gilbert Scott's Victorian masterpiece the Midland Grand at St Pancras. 01245 322022; www.lockerandriley.com

Prime Oak

The UK market leader in the manufacture and construction of oak-framed garden rooms and orangeries also produces timber-framed garages and annexes. 01384 296611; www.primeoak.co.uk

R. J. Smith & Co

Traditional builders with 40 years' experience in historic buildings, monuments and bespoke commissions, the company also does conservation work, such as lath and plastering, and installing renewable-energy systems. 01256 892276; www.rjsmith.co.uk

R. W. Armstrong

This Hampshire-based residential builder covers London and south of England, specialising in new-build homes and refurbishment of period and listed properties. 01256 850177; www.rwarmstrong.co.uk

Stevensons of Norwich

The go-to experts in plasterwork, this firm is known for creating, installing and restoring architectural mouldings inside and out. 01603 400824; www.stevensons-of-norwich.co.uk

Symm

An upmarket building contractor, the company has a reputation for top-quality work, from restoration, joinery, cabinetry, decoration and stone masonry to general construction. 01865 254900; www.symm.co.uk