



The Society of Garden Designers

Engaging a Garden Designer
Guidance for Clients on Professional Fees

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Engaging a Garden Designer Guidance for Clients on Fees

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FOREWORD

Although the Society membership includes Friends, Students, Graduates, Correspondents and Registered Members, only Registered Members are approved by the Society as professional garden designers. To achieve Registered Membership they will have passed the Society's adjudication interview which assesses all the skills necessary to provide a professional design service to clients. Many Registered Members will also have passed garden design courses and all Registered Members must have had a minimum of 2 years practical experience in garden design before they applied for Registered Membership. Only Registered Members of the Society can use MSGD (Member of Society of Garden Designers) or FSGD (if a Fellow) after their name. Registered Members work under the Code of Conduct and Constitution of the Society. They are listed in the Society's Directory of Registered Designers which is accessible on this web site and available by post or email from the Society.

All Registered members can provide a professional design service and in addition some may offer other specialist skills. They can advise on:

- Complete garden design: whether this be a small urban space or large estate
- Cost estimates for agreed works
- Planting design, providing detailed planting plans
- Hard landscape design such as walls, paving, decks
- Specialist elements such as water features, lighting and garden furniture
- Obtaining tender prices for works, nominating contractors and monitoring all works to completion.
- Maintenance
- In some cases members can also supply plants for you and some are also established contractors
- Other specific skills may include historic garden restoration, public spaces or school grounds design.

Our Registered Members are surprisingly approachable so give them a call. Some will work local to their area whilst others will work nationally. Sometimes you may be happy with the first person you speak to or alternatively it may be worth investing in time to speak to more than one Registered Member. All Registered Members will have a portfolio of their work to show you: they may send examples in the post to you, direct you to their own web sites or you could arrange an initial meeting.

Once you have chosen a designer they will guide you through the many options to achieving what you want and they will agree with you what service they will provide. The most common service is producing an agreed design, all necessary construction drawings/planting plans, finding a contractor for you and monitoring all the works on your behalf to completion.

Each Registered Members will advise you on how much they charge for their services and those charges may vary from designer to designer. They will only be able to give you an exact fee when you have agreed the service required. Fees can be charged in different ways. Examples include an hourly or day rate, a fixed percentage of the total contract value or an agreed fixed fee. Registered Members are used to advising on fees, so don't be afraid to ask. The most important point is that you are paying for a professional service, irrespective of the size of your garden or the extent of the service required.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This booklet has been compiled in response to requests both from clients and members of The Society of Garden Designers. Its purpose is to enhance the working relationship between clients and garden designers by providing information and guidance specifically addressed to clients that will lead to a better understanding of how garden designers' fees for a professional appointment may be calculated, charged and paid.

1.2 To assist clients The SGD publishes a List of Registered Members that includes information on individuals that meet the professional competence criteria required by The SGD.

1.3 The fee scale graph included in this booklet is indicative and is intended to act as a guide to help clients and garden designers' evaluate appropriate offers and agree fees by negotiation.

1.4 Any questions concerning the information contained within this Guide should be referred to the Company secretary by letter at:

Society of Garden Designers
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2. THE CLIENT AND THE GARDEN DESIGNER'S APPOINTMENT

2.1 Generally. A sound working relationship between the client and the garden designer contributes significantly to the success of a project.

Time spent in preliminary discussion with the garden designer is time well spent. The client should talk through the project requirements and discuss whether they can be realised within a budget and to a required programme.

The Society of Garden Designers recommends that clients should have a clear understanding of the total cost of consultancy services including what expenses and disbursements are likely.

2.2 Form of Agreement. The agreement between client and landscape consultant may take the form of an exchange of letters.

3. LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT'S FEES AND EXPENSES

3.1 Generally. The garden designer's fees are commonly calculated on a time-charge, lump sum or percentage basis. Expenses are generally charged separately in addition to fees.

3.2 Time Charged Fee Basis.

This basis is best used where services cannot be related to the construction cost of landscape works or for consultancy services. Accurate time sheets are kept and varying rates applied according to the level of personnel and services applied.

3.3 Lump Sum Fee Basis.

Lump sums are best used where the scope of the work can be clearly defined from the outset. It is necessary to define the services required and the project size and complexity, so that if these are varied by more than an agreed amount the lump sum itself may be varied. Alternatively, time charges may be agreed as the basis for payment for making variations.

3.4 Percentage Fee Basis.

The fees are calculated as a percentage of the contract cost of hard and soft landscaping. The services provided will depend on the proportion of the fee which is applicable.

These fees are best suited to straightforward projects. The fees are on a sliding scale and are adjusted to apply to the final contract sum certificate. They relate to work stages B to E.

3.4.1 The Fee Graph indicates the fee costs that may be incurred by the client for Garden Designers' "Standard Services," expressed as percentages of the contract sum. The graph curve shows the range of percentage fees for works of £10,000 and above. Projects below the £10,000 threshold should be agreed on a time-charge or lump sum fee basis.

3.5 Payment of Fees. Timely settlement of accounts is an essential part of a good working relationship. Clients may prefer to pay fees according to a plan of programmed instalments. The certainty of this arrangement allows payments to be budgeted for over a period. Alternatively, fees may be paid at the completion of each work stage. Where this arrangement is agreed, the apportionment in Table 1 is offered as a guide.

3.6 Expenses and Disbursements. In addition to appropriate fees the garden designer can agree with the client the reimbursement of expenses and disbursements properly incurred in connection with the appointment. If the client requests a budget estimate of expenses, the consultant should clearly state what has been included.

3.6.1 Expenses might include, for example, the cost of printing, reproduction or purchase of documents, drawings, maps, models, photographs, hotel and travelling expenses, the cost of postage, telephone, fax and any other agreed items.

3.6.2 Disbursements such as planning application fees, land survey and soil testing charges, are costs that may be necessarily incurred by the garden designer but should be properly borne by the client. Furthermore, where the landscape consultant is required to manage the work of other specialist suppliers or consultants and settle the account of a specialist appointed by agreement with the client, a handling charge may be added. Alternatively, the client may appoint the supplier or specialist separately and settle their accounts directly.

3.7 Contingency Fees. Where all, or part, of a fee is contingent upon the outcome of a decision such as the success of a competitive bid or a grant application, the terms of any fee should be stated particularly clearly.

3.7.1 In the event of the contract being awarded to a 'preferred contractor' without going out to competitive tender, it is assumed that the pricing is based on the latest version of Spon's Landscape and External Works Price Book by *E&FN Spon, (by Davis Langdon and Everest)*

Table 1

| WORK STAGE | RELEVANT FEE BASIS | | | PROPORTION OF FEE | |
|--|--------------------|------|------|-------------------|-------|
| | Time | Lump | %age | Proportion of fee | Total |
| Preliminary Services | | | | | |
| A. Initial Consultation | ✓ | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Site Report/investigation | ✓ | ✓ | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Feasibility study | ✓ | ✓ | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Standard Services | | | | | |
| B. Outline Proposals / Presentation Scheme | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 25% | 25% |
| C. Design Detail Setting Out Plans | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 20% | 45% |
| Construction detail | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 20% | 65% |
| D. Planting Detail | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 25% | 90% |
| E. Tender Documentation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10% | 100% |
| Other Services | ✓ | ✓ | N/A | | |

Timing of Fee Payments

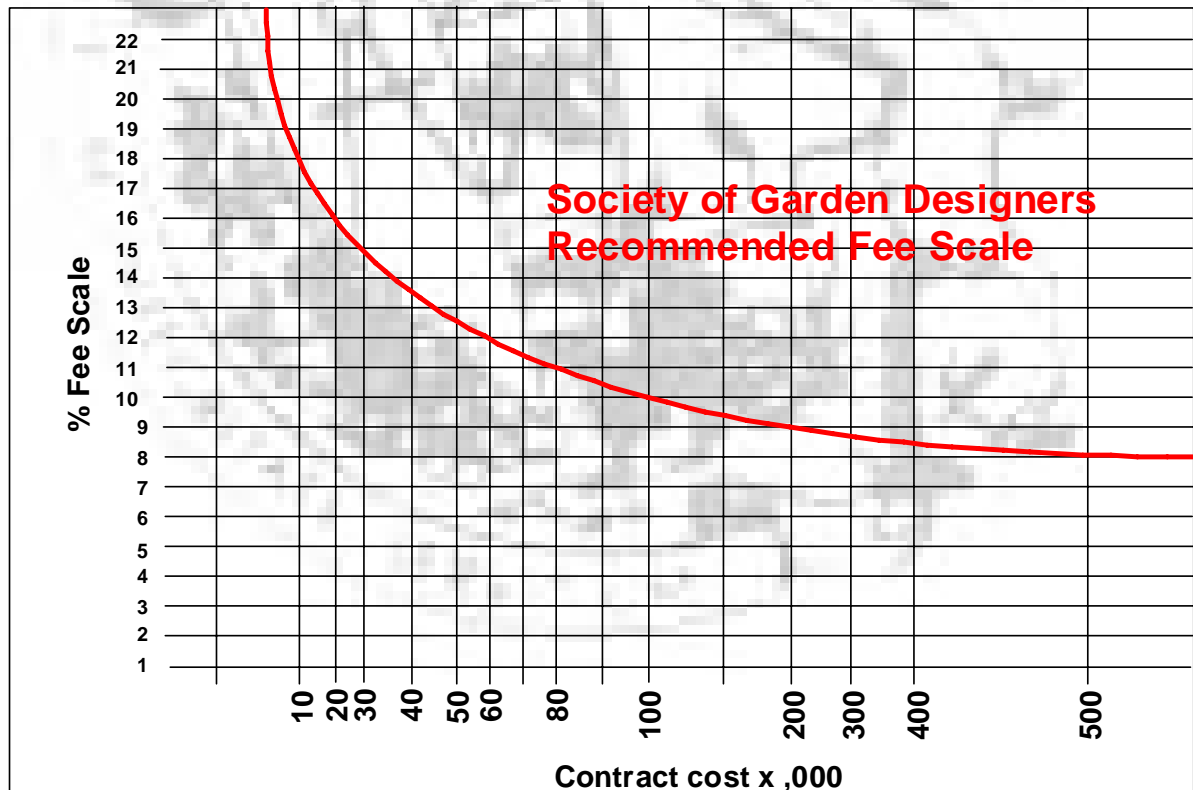
Percentage fees are normally paid at the end of each work stage. Time based fees are normally paid at monthly intervals. Lump sum fees are normally paid at intervals by agreement. Retainer or term commission fees are normally paid in advance, for predetermined periods of service.

- Stage A** **Initial Consultation** (other service)
Site visit to discuss landscape/garden requirements and inspections of site. Initial advice regarding statutory and legal obligations and probable landscape services and complementary professional services required. Approximate cost estimates (to be confirmed). Detailed cost analysis by others as an "other service".
- Stage B** **Outline proposals/scheme design** (normal service)
Outline design and presentation drawings.
Submission for necessary statutory approvals (other service)
- Stage C** **Detail design** (normal service)
Setting Out plans, construction details Drainage and irrigation.
- Stage D** **Planting details and schedule** (normal service)
Planting numbers variety and spacing to include species list
- Stage E** **Tender Documentation** (normal service)
Specifications, invitation to tender, tender report
- Stage F** **Site operations and Contract Administration** (other service)
Preparation of contract documents. Contract administration, site inspections, certification of payments, snagging and final certification.

Other Services:- Charged out at cost or pre-agreed hourly rate

1. Survey
2. Feasibility studies
3. Site investigations
4. Environmental Assessments
5. Phasing Development Plans
6. Special Drawings/models/artwork
7. Multi disciplinary meetings
8. Visits to nurseries
9. Cost planning
10. Quantity surveying
11. Detailed negotiations with Statutory Authorities
12. Planning Appeals
13. Planning and Building Regulation submissions
14. Landlords/tenants approval
15. Legal advice
16. CDM regulations
17. Party wall negotiations
18. Site operations and Contract Administration
19. Suspension
20. Record drawings
21. Contract claims
22. Litigation and arbitration
23. Additional Design Services (client instructions)
24. Arboricultural Survey

The Garden designer will advise which services need to be carried out by specialist consultants/contractors. (See Highlighted services)



WORKED EXAMPLES OF PERCENTAGE FEE CALCULATIONS (Residential)

Example 1

Landscape Budget of £25,000

Full Design Fee = 15%

| | |
|---|---------|
| Stage B. Outline Proposals / Presentation Scheme | £937.50 |
| Stage C. Design Detail | |
| Setting-Out | £750.00 |
| Construction Detail | £750.00 |
| Stage D. Planting Detail | £937.50 |
| Stage E. Tender Documentation | £375.00 |

Example 2

Landscape Budget of £60,000

Full Design Fee = 10%

| | |
|---|----------|
| Stage B. Outline Proposals / Presentation Scheme | £1500.00 |
| Stage C. Design Detail | |
| Setting-Out | £1200.00 |
| Construction Detail | £1200.00 |
| Stage D. Planting Detail | £1500.00 |
| Stage E. Tender Documentation | £600.00 |