

AWH assists in complex construction project of period property



Careful planning and experienced industry knowledge save over £1m in building costs

INTRODUCTION

When a client needed help bringing the costs down for an extensive construction project being undertaken on an existing period property in central London, AWH was able to save them £1m in building costs, drawing on their extensive experience and contacts within the property market.

Set behind a row of Victorian houses and overlooking a large pond, the building work being undertaken will end up removing parts of an existing house, adding a basement and extending the property significantly, while not affecting the aesthetics of the frontage or surrounding properties. With project plans dating back to 2016, where architects were commissioned to draw up the relevant plans and secure necessary permissions, the client took the project to tender in 2018 only to be met with quotes that far exceeded their expectations.

Turning to their finance broker for guidance, they were put in touch with AWH and introduced to **Clive Morley FCIQB FRICS MAE MFPWS**, a Chartered Building Surveyor, Registered Valuer and Director of the Building Survey, Architectural Services and Project Management departments at AWH. In addition to Clive, **Jason Kerr MRICS**, a Director in Valuations and Professional Services. Being able to draw on Jason's extensive expertise in residential property development gave the client an invaluable asset they could draw upon.

Clive explained: *"The quotes the client had received can only be described as eye watering, sitting at around the £3.5m mark. With the planned property being 3,500 sq. ft. in size, that equates to roughly £1,000 per sq. ft. Normally you would expect the price for this complex to be about 2/3 of that."*

COMPLEXITY ADDED BY LOCATION AND ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

The price of the building work was not the only problem the client faced however. As the property abuts a large body of water, possible flooding and water damage had to be considered from the outset, especially with the planned addition of a basement.

As the client was seeking to add a basement to the property, the existing structure has to be supported correctly during excavation of the basement area to avoid the building collapsing in on itself.

And if those challenges were not enough to deal with, access to the construction site is limited to a 7 ft. archway between two of the neighbouring properties.

Clive commented: *"Because of the location of the property, the narrow roads and the archway to access the work site, transportation of the materials had to be considered carefully. Smaller lorries will have to be used than if you had free access to the site and the materials all have to be unloaded from the truck bed by hand. It's not quite as bad as moving the house brick-by-brick, but almost."*

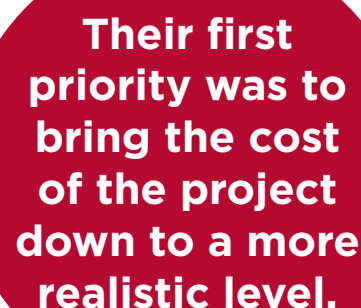
EXPERIENCE AND PLANNING FIND THE WAY FORWARD

With their extensive experience of property development, building surveying and property valuation, Clive and Jason were perfectly suited to tackle the job. Their first priority was to bring the cost of the project down to a more realistic level. The AWH team prepared the necessary documents to put together a package that they could use to put out their own tender. This included a construction plan; a 40 page document which discussed how the materials will be transported in a way that is most effective while avoiding excessive obstruction, and how the neighbouring properties will be protected throughout the building project.

After carefully reviewing all the quotes they received, the AWH team eventually sourced a construction company who have experience in doing work of a similar nature.

Working closely with both the client and the contractor, proposals were drawn up to use waterproof concrete for the basement shell. The training that Building Surveyors undergo to become RICS qualified includes a knowledge of the different kinds of concrete, so Clive was able to verify that this would indeed protect the property from any damage that otherwise could be possible due to the proximity of the body of water.

Seeking to overcome the difficulty of accessing the property in the future, Jason identified that the services which run along the inside of the already narrow archway meant that getting a car through the arch was impossible. Following extensive research, Clive found that the client has right of access to the property via the archway with a drop kerb in place.



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Jason added: *“We have recommended that the services are either raised or moved to a more convenient location. This will allow a car to access and park at the property, which will increase both the marketability and the value of the property.”*

To ensure the building remains intact during the removal of approx. 600 cubic meters of earth from underneath the house to make space for the basement, steel frames will be used to support the existing walls, before three of the walls are removed and replaced by new ones built on the piles of the new foundations.



SAVINGS MADE AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED ALLOW WORK TO PROCEED

While the final quote sits at £2.5m, having increased slightly due to an overall increase in the cost of materials since the initial quote was submitted, the client is the client was extremely happy with the expert guidance, advice and hard work AWH have put in to achieve this incredible saving.

“It has been a very interesting project to work on, with the nuances of the planning and construction needed, as well as the highly restricted access meaning neighbouring properties have to be considered carefully. I really look forward to seeing the property in its completed state!”

Clive Morley, AWH

“I am glad to be involved with this challenging but exciting high-end development in an affluent location. It is always rewarding to be able to research and make recommendations which add value and save money for the client where we can.”

Jason Kerr, AWH

With work due to complete in September 2023, there may still be some other challenges ahead. With Clive and the rest of the AWH team at the helm though, the client is confident that their property is in good hands.

Speak to Clive Morley or another member of the AWH team on **0800 197 1240** to discuss your residential or commercial surveying needs.

CAREFUL PLANNING AND EXPERIENCED INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE SAVE OVER £1M IN BUILDING COSTS



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