

# USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

do you need a site inspection? the telephone numbers below should help.

	Building Control
Breckland District Council	01362 656207
CNC (formally Broadland, Norwich & South Norfolk)	01603 430496
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	01493 846430
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	01553 616581
North Norfolk Council	
Cromer	01263 516225
Fakenham	01328 850116
North Walsham	01692 599695
Waveney District Council	01502 523031

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 07739 96 97 95 service@completebackup.co.uk  
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 Swoburn Ind Est  
 Norwich  
 NR3 2BB

email: readtrusses@aol.com

## Have you been thinking about how the Internet could benefit your building company?

As I'm sure you are aware, more and more people are using the Internet these days. It was recently reported that Norwich is the UK capital of the online auction house e Bay. Apparently Norwich has the highest density of registered members (121,553 members as of July 2005) compared to any other city in the UK. That's an incredible figure but is confirmed by Official Sources who report that in late 2004 that 52% of UK households were connected to the Internet.



What the figures show is huge numbers of people are using the Internet but how can this be good for your business?

A company domain name or web address makes you look professional. Using e mail will open up a really useful way of communicating with clients. Quick responses can be given, postage costs can be saved and clarity can be enhanced using e-mail.

A company web site can display your building portfolio and let clients know all about the good service you can provide. A web site can also provide a reference point for clients who ask 'frequently asked questions'. Web sites can help to attract the type of work you desire. If you want more barn conversion work, display the work you have already done to show the end results to potential clients who need what you can do. By displaying your web address on the side of company vehicles, in Yellow Pages adverts, on company stationary and any where else appropriate you will make your advertising much more effective.

Contact Steve or Jim at VIVEFY Ltd on 01603 638809 or 07747 031060 for a **FREE** Internet planning guide. It contains sections of information about how builders in East Anglia are using the Internet to their advantage, shows you how a low cost test web site can be set up and provides answers to a range of questions connected with setting up a company web site.

You can see the VIVEFY web site portfolio online at [www.vivefy.co.uk](http://www.vivefy.co.uk)



## Does your computer suffer from regular crashes or poor performance?

If so, one possible cause is adware. Most computer users are aware of computer viruses, but viruses are just one type of 'malware'. Other types include Adware, Spyware and Trojans. They are responsible for a wide range of computer problems and can have a significant impact on a host PC's performance. They often use the same techniques as viruses and cause similar problems but the motivation behind them is different – and virus checkers often don't spot them.

Adware is copied to a computer (usually without consent), to foist advertising on the user. It often takes the form of 'pop-ups' or it can 'hijack' the user's homepage to display ads. Spyware secretly monitors the activities of users.

Malware can get onto computers along with some free software or by exploiting security flaws in popular software – mainly Windows and Internet Explorer. Literally hundreds of such flaws have been discovered in both. Many can only be exploited if the user is duped into performing some action (e.g visiting a certain web page), however, you need do no more than connect a computer with the original version of XP (without service packs, updates or active firewall) to the internet to be almost certain of it contracting a virus and other malware. The exploits used by Sasser and MSBlaster can be used to infect such a machine via the internet.

The best ways to 'plug' these security holes are to regularly download the latest updates from <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com> or set your computer to do so automatically. Install a virus checker and keep it up to date ([www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com) offers 'AVG anti-virus' free). Enable WIndows XP firewall or install a firewall such as Zone Alarm from ([www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com)). Download and run AdawareSE from ([www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com)) - It's like a virus checker but gets Adware and Spyware that aren't technically viruses and are not picked-up by Norton et al. Lastly stop using Internet explorer – download Mozilla Firefox Browser from [www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org). All the above are currently available free (at least to home users). Contact Ian at Complete Backup Services for **FREE** advice on keeping your computer safe.

01603 465428

## Building Plans Ltd

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 Telephone: 01603 868377 Fax: 01603 868412  
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Architectural Design,  
 Building Surveyors  
 and Planning Service

# Building Plans Ltd

Telephone: 01603 868377  
 Fax: 01603 868412

established over 25 years with an exemplary portfolio of architectural construction projects

issue 1 spring 05

## introducing Building Plans Ltd

**Welcome to the very first Building Plans Ltd Newsletter!** Building Plans Ltd has been established for nearly 30 years as Architectural Technologists and Surveyors. We are based just outside Norwich on Beech Avenue, adjacent to Wensum Valley Golf Club in Taverham. We offer a full design service and plans for new builds, extensions, loft conversions, barn conversions and much more, in fact no job is too small or too large in both the residential and commercial markets.

We're looking to forge new links with local builders of all sizes by offering a **FREE** technical assistance helpline using e-mail address [help@constructionhelp.co.uk](mailto:help@constructionhelp.co.uk). Because we are involved in so many building projects we have a wealth of knowledge that can be used to keep builders informed about important and useful building related issues. An example would be, give you ideas about using alternative building materials to make the build easier and more profitable without cutting corners. Another way we can help builders is with on site problem solving.

Our core business is creating building plans and liaising with the various building control departments. We have the very latest computer aided design software called ALLPLAN and MAXON. The programs are very powerful and

can create accurate drawings quickly and with minimal fuss. Use our services by recommending us to your clients or allow us to provide plans as if they came from your company. Every time your recommendation goes to business you will go into a **FREE prize draw** to accompany us on the next Buildings Plans Fun Day. We only want you to recommend us if you are happy with our work so please feel free to call into our offices to meet us, see our drawing offices and learn more about what we can do to help you. **Call 01603 868377 to arrange a meeting.**

Our planning service will provide your customers with quality plans that may enable you to get more of the type of building projects you desire. We can create imagery that will enable your customers to see how the completed project will look before a brick is laid. See the article inside for further details about the scope of service we offer.

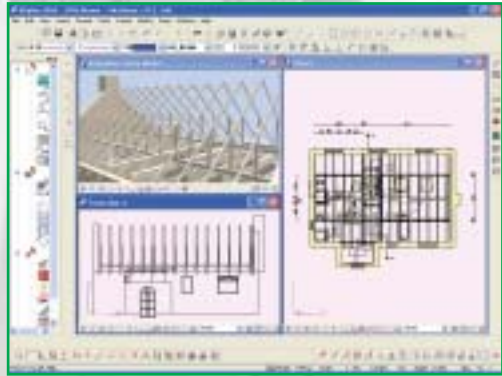
We want this Newsletter to be as beneficial to builders as possible. Please feel free to contact us to make suggestions of what you would like to see included in the future. Currently we plan to include articles covering new and imminent building regulations to help keep everyone up to speed. We'll also let you know more about our services as time goes by. The newsletter will be sent out each quarter but please let us know if you want to be removed from the mailing list.



### in this issue

introduction	p1
keep it virtually real	p2
building regulations	p3
project management	p3
how to impress your customers	p4
useful telephone numbers	p5
ads	p5
this months tips	p6
internet	p6

# keep it virtually real



Would you like to attract clients who wish to spend larger sums of money on their building requirements? Would you prefer to use planning diagrams that are easier to understand and that can get ideas over to clients more easily? It might seem obvious but a picture says a thousand words. Here at Building Plans we can give builders access to the latest technology 3D Computer Aided Design systems. By offering your clients our services they will be able to see a visualisation of the build project prior to work starting. Imagine how useful this could be to a client and how it could help attract more lucrative projects but at the same time help everyone involved understand the build specifications.

Working in 3 dimensions makes the whole process from conception to construction more efficient.

## 1. A useful tool in the early stages of a design is the computer generated conceptual sketch

You will save time by getting agreement from the client through better understanding. You will save money by reducing the possibility of costly errors occurring due to misinterpretation of plans.

New developments in computer software have made it possible to virtually walk through new builds or extensions and get 'a feel' for the space or check details which in 2D would be unclear or impossible.



The level of detail and accuracy included in a project can be increased to include specific interior fittings, carpets and finishes so as it is hard to spot the 3D model from the real thing.

## 2. A still from a virtual walk through helps get a feel for the space



A sun study can be created which takes into account date, time, longitude, latitude and surroundings to provide information on how natural light falls on a building or area. This can be achieved in still photos or a virtual movie.

## 3. A proposed new build house at 12noon on the 14th August



Television programmes such as grand designs and changing rooms have popularised some of these software techniques and increased customer expectations. If your clients ask for them we are here to assist. We can even give your clients a free demonstration of what we can do for them. We will work closely with you to ensure your client is happy to use your services. 3D CAD increases accuracy and the ease of communicating ideas in many areas of the construction industry, be it, a developer working with a planner, a builder trying to arrange sales before construction, or an architect proposing ideas to a client.

For information on using 3D CAD in architectural design or a demonstration of the latest graphics please contact Henry at Building Plans 01603 868377 or visit [www.constructionhelp.co.uk](http://www.constructionhelp.co.uk)

# news

Exciting things have been happening in Building Control in Norfolk. A partnership has been formed from the Building Control sections of Broadland District, Norwich City and South Norfolk Councils. CNC Building Control Consultancy, as the partnership is known has the largest geographical area of any Local Authority in the region. The pooling of resources and expertise will improve consistency in interpretation and allow CNC to provide a modern, flexible Building Control service. CNC's goal is continuous improvement of service and placing customers needs first and foremost.

Building Plans Ltd have recently signed up to partner with CNC. All their submissions will be channelled through CNC. Where they are outside CNC's geographical boundaries the relevant Local Authorities building control staff will still be undertaking the site inspections.

Last year also saw a number of changes to the Building Regulations, 'Robust Details' were introduced as a means of achieving the required level of sound insulation in new dwellings. Parts A,C & M were revised and ventilation of roof spaces has been moved from Part F to Part C. There are a number of implications on commercial work but apart from the additional sound insulation requirements none of the revisions have any significant impact on residential developments.

The 1st January however has seen the implementation of the new Part P relating to electrical installations in domestic premises. Any work other than very minor work on the electrical system may now require an application under the Building Regulations. CNC are recommending that the work be undertaken by a competent electrician or inspected and certified by a suitably qualified competent electrician.

Building Control Surveyors will need copies of certificates before the job can be signed off. Householders will also need these certificates when they sell their property. More information can be found on CNC's website [www.cncbuildingcontrol.gov.uk](http://www.cncbuildingcontrol.gov.uk).

It is worth reminding householders if they are considering 'DIY' that the cost of a competent electrician inspecting and certifying the work may be more expensive than having them do the work in the first place.



# project management

## Builders 1 – 1 Clients ..... Could YOU benefit from the Building Plans Project Management Service?

Many builders and clients are aware of the benefits of using a Project Manager to preside over building works. However others feel having a third party involved can mean unreasonable demands are placed on the builder and clients will end up paying through the nose for an unnecessary service. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Buildings Plans Project Managers can work with your clients to ensure building work progresses smoothly. Our objectives are to bring quality building work to a timely and profitable conclusion as safely as possible. We will make sure you get paid correctly and on time, keep your clients happy by managing their expectations and act as a buffer if anything goes wrong.

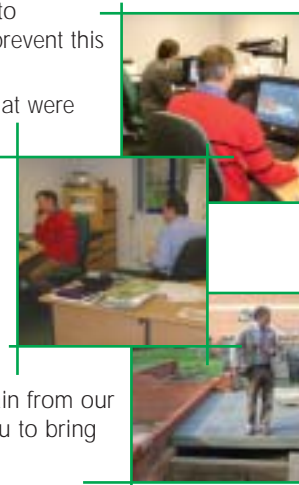
Right at the start we will consult clients to generate a building specification. It may mean that they opt for extra building work or higher specifications resulting in a larger order value. Such clarity will help reduce misunderstandings and mean that builders can get on and do what they are good at whilst the Project Manager deals with client concerns and issues. **Because there is a clear plan no one risks being disadvantaged.**

Correcting mistakes costs time and money. If mistakes are made, rather than just attributing blame, the Project Manager will work to find practical alternative solutions. It's not always necessary to demolish and start from the beginning. Clear diagrams and proper planning will prevent this from happening in the first place!

Building projects often encounter unknowns. Drainage pipes or electrical cables that were overlooked, rot or damp that has to be made good. By having a Project Manager on hand you will have a wealth of experience to add to you own to deliver the most practical solution as quickly as possible. Clients will often react better if the bad news is delivered from an impartial third party who will professionally resolve problems.

Let us talk to your clients to offer our Project Management services. They don't have to take up what we offer but if they do we'll make sure the resulting building work keeps everyone happy.

Contact Building Plans to receive further information on how your business can gain from our Project Management services. If you introduce us to your clients we'll work with you to bring projects in on time within budget and minimise any aggravation along the way.



## how to impress your customers & help them pay for their build project

### Building & Extending your home - the VAT Refund Scheme

As a builder, you're going to be keen to make sure that your customer has the funds to pay your bills, whether in stages or at the completion of the project and here's a way to help them with their budgeting.

The VAT man will, in some cases, refund some or all of the VAT paid out on a building project, helping your customer more easily afford the work they want you to do and giving you lots of 'brownie' points for pointing them in the right direction.

Its important to know and understand exactly what the VAT man will allow and will not allow and equally important that your customers create and keep proper records that will enable you to maximise this valuable tax concession.

First thing to remember is that it is a refund. Your customer is committed to paying out for everything as the project proceeds and will only get their money back after the project is completed and a full and complete claim is submitted. **You only get one chance at this particular cherry - one claim is all that's allowed - so make it clear to your customer that they MUST record absolutely everything that qualifies.** In addition, you must make sure that your customer checks every invoice (including yours) to ensure the correct VAT rate is charged for the goods or service concerned.

Another warning: The claim must be made within **THREE MONTHS** of the completion of the project.

You could go the extra mile and get a claim pack from the National Advice Service (tel: 0845 010 9000) for your customer.

It's best to get it at the outset so that everyone understands exactly what the VAT man wants.

The Vat man will need convincing that the project is completed by submitting evidence, e.g. a completion certificate from your local authority or a valuation rating or Council Tax Assessment. Check the current requirements when you get all the important VAT claim pack.

Once your project is complete, send the claim forms to DIY Builders & Converters Refund Scheme Processing Unit.

Ring the National Advice Service (0845 010 9000) to find the address for your local area.

Get a copy of Notice 719 VAT Refunds for 'do-it-yourself' builders and converters.

Check out: <http://www.hmce.gov.uk>

Call Di Chapman at **avn advantage limited** if you would like some more help and information.

contact **avn advantage limited** 01603 262000 for a record-keeping system.

**avn advantage limited** are founder members of the Added Value Network: a network of accountants helping UK owner-managed businesses become the most successful and enjoyable to run in the world

## THE SEARCH FOR STEEL

Looking for a steel provider for your clients' projects? Look no further than the Eagle at Standley Steel! Eagle strength is always evident at Standley Steel

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