

# Studio Elwes

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## The Garden Dispatch

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### *Procuration or Partnership*

The parks and gardens are filled with daffodils and crocuses ready to burst if not already burst, these shoots of hope can mean only one thing, Spring is upon us. Projects that started late last year or early this are preparing to go into construction which means that many landscape designers will be working closely with landscape contractors to get everything in place to begin building.

Traditionally there are two ways, on small to medium sized gardens, to enlist a landscape contractor: there is the tender process where three or sometimes four landscapers are handed a thorough construction package

that (should) capture every little element of the design. A good construction pack, in theory, will be so watertight that the contractor can cost up everything and return their tender within the time frame allocated. The Landscape Institute presumes that the contractors, recommended to tender by the landscape architect, ought to be equally capable and therefore the final decision can be purely down to the final cost. The second method for enlisting a contractor is for the landscape architect to put forward one contractor that they believe are well suited to carrying out the works and said contractor cost the works unopposed.

Now there are pros and cons for both of these options; the tender process will guarantee that the clients are getting the best value for their money, it also puts the construction pack under heavy scrutiny prior to construction with three or more people reviewing it in detail, thus reducing risk further down the line, that being said, however, the tender process can often add 6-8 weeks onto the time frame, which at this time of year could be the difference between using your garden this summer or not.

When going down the route of a direct appointment, you save all that time tendering, which also means the clients saves money as the landscape architect will charge for running the tender process. You are also privy to additional expert advise during the technical phase, which can result in further cost savings. There is, of course, always the opportunity for this option to be misused. I would always recommend that the client firstly carries out their own checks on the landscaper to make sure they're satisfied, and as a landscape architect I would always make sure the client and contractor meet at the first opportunity to make sure they are a good fit.

In short, each project is different and each client is different, sometimes the priority is time, sometimes the priority is cost, sometimes the priority is to make sure that the best most suitable people are on the project to get the best results.

**Studio Elwes Ltd.**

London  
United Kingdom



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