



# The 4 main influencers of the cost of a squat practice project

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Design



Build



Equip



Maintain

# TYPE OF BUILDING

## Low cost:

- Commercial units with existing false floors, lots of parking, sufficient services, easy access
- Newly build empty shells with existing services, bare walls, easy access
- Buildings with little or no rip out needed. Removals and rip outs often uncover unknowns, such as hidden issues like rotting floor joists or poor state of walls.

## Mid cost:

- Shop units on high streets. These often have an element of removals and therefore unknown.
- Old buildings. More chance of unknowns.
- Basements. These can be challenging to work around with fire, ventilation, damp, services requirements and can create a lot of additional costs.
- Split level practices. Working across several levels is slower, makes delivery of materials harder and increases fire regs complexity.
- Significant structural works needed, or major services missing (for example insufficient incoming power, or drainage)

## High cost:

- All of the above but on larger scales
- Raised access floors needed.
- Need for full MVHR systems for compliance
- Listed buildings
- Challenging geographical locations with little or no access parking, waste away
- Very poor condition buildings with subsidence, damp
- Need for replacement shopfronts

## PROJECT SCOPE

The project scope is largely dictated by the building type so closely links with the above points. Generally, the less invasive and less disruptive the work needs to be, the less it will cost.

For example, if a building has existing rooms which are being turned into surgeries, this will cost significantly less than if walls are being demolished and new partitions constructed.

If needing to reduce costs, consider:

- Having a scope that is straightforward and minimally invasive to the building
- Work with someone who is experienced in the building trade and can be trusted
- Consider phasing the work into stages that can be completed at a later date
- Consider what type of work really adds value to a practice. For example, a high quality reception / waiting area will add a lot more value than having a large store room.

# EQUIPMENT

The type and quantity of dental equipment will have a significant impact on costs.

It's imperative you seek advice from a dental engineering trusted advisor as going for basic, low cost equipment may not be the best value solution in the long term. There is no one size fits all approach, every case is different.

Some considerations:

- Consider fitting out one or two rooms initially and plumbing rooms ready for future expansion
- Think carefully about what is important to the users and patients. Retaining good staff and good patient experience is the priority. Be careful not to over specify on options 'just because you can'
- Well worth visiting showrooms and exhibitions to see equipment before purchasing
- Invest in good quality and reliable plant equipment (suction pump and compressor) with a back-up facility and changeover. Ensure you have planned for future expansion and seek specific technical advice. It is a false economy to buy the cheapest available!
- Consider 10 year lifecycle costs, including service kits.
- Purchase equipment that won't tie you to one provider ongoing for all the maintenance.

## FINISHES & SPECIFICATION

Obviously, the more fancy and design led the specification and finishes, the higher costs will be.

In most cases, creating a 'Wow' appearance to attract new patients is a priority as is retaining good staff. This all needs to be balanced with costs. There are some key suggestions and advice we can offer:

- Consider carefully where you want to make an impact. For example, spending a lot on a bespoke made corian reception desk may pay dividends in a boutique private practice but be an overkill in an NHS squat.
- Keep it simple where you can. Staff rooms, decon, surgeries, WCs. Use basic finishes and add a feature with wall murals, colours, feature cladding.
- Interior designers are worth considering for the right type of practice. Used correctly, they will set a practice apart from competition and create a statement. When using a designer, be aware that their input can lead to costly materials and concepts being selected. It's recommended to have the interior design pragmatically considered by a build team who have experience to seek their advice on the most cost effective ways of achieving desired outcomes.
- Know what you want and have designs 100% finalised and signed off before works commence on site. Changes, variations, delays may add significant cost to a project.



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