



PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS 3 THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU SIGN

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3 things to think about before signing on the dotted line

Imagine... one day, you are viewing a property in France which is everything you dreamed of. The property has amazing views, and it is within your budget... however, there are naturally some things you wish to change. Perhaps you wish to build a new extension, or convert an old barn into a gite?

Before you sign on the dotted line and commit to buy the property, there are some key things you need to think about. And of course, every building and project is different... So, we are highlighting three crucial issues in particular :-

1. Making changes to an existing building in France requires planning permission. For example, if you wish to convert a derelict barn into a self-catering gite, build an extension or install a swimming pool, you must firstly obtain planning permission. It's also important to allow yourself sufficient time to do this in terms of your planning timescales; in most cases it takes between two and three months – sometimes longer - from the date of submission of the application until an answer is given. You may also need to include conditional clauses relating to planning permission within the purchase contract.
2. Obtain a survey. Although not common in France, you may wish to consider it as an option to verify the condition of the property. An experienced property professional can identify any potential problems or defects before any purchase is completed, possibly saving you money and problems in the future. Important note: all vendors are legally obliged to provide you with various statutory diagnostic reports; however, these are for identifying specific issues and they do not cover the structural integrity of the property.
3. Fosse Septique (septic tank). If your property is not connected to mains sewage, then you need to be aware of the regulations and legislation concerning a Fosse Septique. These are systems which treat wastewater as an alternative to the mains. A property with an existing system may also need to have it upgraded in the event of an increase in the level of accommodation following an extension or attic conversion for example, with a requirement for a pre-installation report and approval as part of the planning application process.

French Plans has 20 + years' experience advising and helping clients buying and developing property in France. Our specialist knowledge means we can advise on all the relevant planning matters and how to proceed with your project, including obtaining surveys, preparing architectural plans, submitting planning applications and more.

If you are looking to realise a project for a property in France which you already own, whether it is a renovation, new build, extension or another project, residential or commercial – please get in touch.

A photograph of a window set in a stone wall. The window has bright blue wooden shutters on both sides. The window itself is covered with a white lace curtain featuring a repeating pattern of small scenes, possibly boats or buildings. Below the window, there is a white flower box with blue floral patterns, containing several vibrant red flowers. The background is a rustic stone wall.

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