

# PLANNING A SELF-BUILD?

By Chris Pipe, Director, Planning House



Most of us have watched Grand Designs and thought 'I could do that' but in reality, the UK is well behind Europe in terms of actually building or commissioning our own homes.

The onslaught of planning bureaucracy often associated with the show can make people wary about building their dream home - not to mention the rare occurrence when a Grand Design actually stays in budget!

The planning system is more receptive to self-build housing projects than Grand Designs may portray particularly with emphasis firmly from the Government on housing growth and choice.

The Government specifically promotes self-builds through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to plan for a mix of housing, including people wishing to build their own home and through the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 placing a requirement on each relevant authority to keep a register of people who are seeking to buy serviced plots of land in the authority's area in order to build houses.

Assuming you have the finance and drive to build your own home, the first hurdle you face is finding suitable land. There are a few common ways to source a site:

- **Internet search** – there are a few land search websites available, you may need to subscribe;
- **Local authority register** – contact the local authority to register interest in building your own home, they should hold a record of available land;
- **Land or Estate agents** – some sites may not be openly marketed therefore it is advisable to contact agents to make them aware you're looking for a site;
- **Local knowledge** – you may know of land which may be acquired.

Deciding if or when to bring professionals onboard is your choice. Some people navigate through the planning process successfully, however often the cost of a planning consultant can save you time, potentially money and in some instances can secure you a permission which you may not have been able to achieve. Even a small planning project can be complex, Planning House are here to help.

The services that Planning House provide are always tailored to the client. Some clients want to go head first into submitting a planning application and some are more cautious and want comfort from the local planning authority through pre-application discussions that 'in principle' their development will be supported – which I would in general advocate, however each case is different.

Should you decide to progress with a planning application without professional help make sure you have all relevant plans, application, fee and supporting documents for your proposal (i.e. Design & Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Contamination Risk Report, Bat Survey etc) not all applications need technical documents but be aware some do.

It's also a good idea to speak to neighbours before you submit an application to make them aware of the proposal and pacify any concerns they may have. One piece of advice I would give is don't take it personally if objections are lodged to your application everyone's home is their castle.

If you want to discuss your own Grand Design PLANNING HOUSE can be contacted on 07944844882/info@planninghouse.co.uk or by visiting [www.planninghouse.co.uk](http://www.planninghouse.co.uk)