



Our Self-Build Column

How to find the perfect plot for your self build

It's an exciting time for self builders. Projects are on the increase across the UK, with the number of self built homes up 6% in 2015, and set to rise again this year. Furthermore, a recent survey commissioned by the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) identified an encouragingly large number of people in the UK not only interested in self build, but actively pursuing their dream:

- **53% who would like to build their own home**
- **1 in 8 currently researching a self build project**
- **1million+ actively looking for a plot or already involved in a self build project**

Source: Ipsos MORI Poll for NaCSBA April 2016

These positive statistics were echoed recently when I attended NaCSBA's 'Right to Build Summit' at the House of Commons to find out what the Government is doing to make self build easier for all of us. The Housing Minister Brandon Lewis was one of the key speakers and commented: "We are committed to helping people build their own home and have ensured councils now have to keep a register of aspiring self and custom house builders when planning for future housing and land use". Positive signs indeed, but where you do you start?

Finding Your Land

Richard Bacon, MP highlighted at the Selfbuild Showcase at Hethel last week, that the national Self Build Register, as a result of The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, is bringing local councils and self builders together. Websites such as Plot-Search feature thousands of land listings and general property-hunting portals allow you to refine your search to 'land'. Registering your interest with estate agents (especially independents) in your chosen area remains an effective approach as well as contacting local surveyors and architects.



Plots suitable for single houses are regularly sold at auction and it could also be worth tactful leafletting in your chosen area as an owner may not have considered selling an area of their land, but could be more interested in doing so if there is already a buyer ready and waiting.

Planning Permission

It's vital to consider planning permission in tandem with your choice of plot. Land is available with one of two types of consent in place - outline planning permission (OPP) or detailed planning permission (DPP). OPP is consent in principal for development to occur, leaving some or all of the particulars to be established in a later application for DPP. However, don't dismiss a plot just because the permitted design doesn't suit you. Even if DPP is in place, you can submit a new application for a different design without revoking the existing permission. However, you should avoid buying land without any permission so resist the temptation to buy a cheap plot in the hope that 'we'll get planning one day'.

And last but by no means least, talk to the local Planning Department and try to establish a good rapport – an understanding of local planning guidelines and a good relationship can help make the planning process a whole lot smoother!

To read the blog on the EDP website [click here](#)