

HOW TO FIND A BUILDING PLOT

This fact sheet is written to give you some ideas about what you can do to find a plot of land.

KEY POINTS:

1. Subscribe to Plotsearch – it lists more than 6,000 building plots
2. Be proactive and get to know the area in which you want to build
3. Look for 'obvious' plots in streets and towns
4. Have a legal & binding agreement with a plot-owner
5. Contact the owner of a plot, as opposed to their agent

MORE INFORMATION/USEFUL CONTACTS:

Plotsearch 0870 870 9994 www.plotsearch.co.uk
Land4Developers 0870 870 9991 www.buildstore.co.uk/commercialplots

ONLINE SOLUTION FOR PLOT-HUNTERS:

The first port of call for anybody who is serious about finding a building plot or development opportunity is Plotsearch. At any one time, over six thousand properties are listed, with so much more information available from the listings. As not all estate agents are prepared to sell to private individuals, Plotsearch are the people, in any area, who you can rely on. Careful scrutiny of the listings will give you important additional information on the plot of your choice, such as the price, whether you will have to widen your horizons by looking further afield, or by increasing the amount of money which you have allocated for your project.

BE PROACTIVE:

Finding the right plot or development opportunity can require much luck, as well as perseverance; many people end up looking for a long time without finding what they are looking for. Many can immediately pick up a plot almost at will, whereas others seem to just stumble onto a plot when they are least expecting it. The key is to be proactive. When you are studying the lists of opportunities, it is important to learn all about the area you are looking in. For Example, get to know all of the good streets, along with the ones where you would not want to live. Make yourselves aware of values in the area which you will be building in and, above all, get to know the people. Word of mouth can be so important in finding a plot.

GET TO KNOW THE AREA:

Drive or walk around the area looking for potential plots, and don't be afraid to ask if you see a gap in the street or an obvious plot. Look out for areas where there has been obvious infilling in the past and where, perhaps, a house sits on a larger than average plot that has access to the highway. Also look out for streets where new homes have been built in the large rear gardens of houses, with access down the side of the original.

MAKE AN AGREEMENT WITH A PLOT-OWNER:

Remember that you do not have to actually own land in order to apply for planning permission on it. You do not even need the owner's permission, although you must give them the requisite notice of your intentions. However, it would be a waste of time applying for planning permission on someone else's land if you had not already made some arrangement with them to buy it in the event of your application being a success. This is because the benefit of the permission runs with the land, and not the applicant. So, at the very least, you should always enter into a legal agreement with the owners before you make the application.

This can be a fairly simple document that binds them to sell to you, and you to buy from them, in the event of the planning application being successful. It may mention the price, but if you are unsure - and if you do not want your potential deal to come to too much public notice - the document could leave the question of price to be resolved by reference to an independent valuer.

YOUR LOCAL PLANNING REGISTER:

Study the planning register at the local planning office as it will have a note of all the planning applications that have been made in your area. Concentrate on those for single dwellings, houses or bungalows, and make a note of the applicant's agent. The agent may not wish to sell you the plot for a number of reasons, so always make sure you write to the applicant for the best chance. Speak to the applicant, who may well live next door, and tell them of your interest. Explain that you are not a developer, but a self builder. Although they have applied for planning permission, this does not necessarily mean that they are looking to sell their plot, so tell them that if they are ever interested in selling, you would be delighted to hear from them. Take care to add that you would be more than happy to pay a fair market price.

Perhaps nothing will come of your enquiry, but just maybe, a few months down the line, when the agent has introduced a builder who has offered less for the plot, who is taking a long time to complete the legalities and who is trying to get planning permission for a house that is much bigger than the owners would have liked, they may well give you a ring.

ACT QUICKLY!

If you do see or find a plot that you want, do not hang about. Decent plots do not stay on the market for very long and you need to get there immediately, make your mind up quickly, and move fast to secure it.