

# CALCULATING YOUR BUILD COSTS

*A simple cost estimating guide for people building their own home*

**O**ne of the most important aspects when planning your self-build or home renovation/extension project is working out how much it is going to cost. This figure will depend on the size and shape of the house, the level of your own involvement, where in the country you intend to build, and the materials you're going to use. If you can make even rough decisions about these factors, then you can begin to

work out how much it is going to cost.

As a very general rule of thumb, expect a building plot to cost between a third and a half of the end value of the finished house. The costs of building a house will then depend on the variables listed above. All building work is usually quoted on a cost/m<sup>2</sup> basis. For example, a typical new four bedroom self-built home is around 200m<sup>2</sup> (with 100m<sup>2</sup> on two storeys)

and usually varies between £900-£1,500/m<sup>2</sup> (although self-builders can achieve costs of between £300-£3,000/m<sup>2</sup>).

Renovation costs are more difficult to establish as they involve many variables, but allow at the very least £1,000-£1,300/m<sup>2</sup> for work. This, added to the cost of the plot/house and with a 10-30% contingency, should result in less than the final end value of the house.

The table below, based on information from the Building Cost Information Service (part of RICS, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors), is updated monthly to help you work out a more accurate estimate (note, however, that these figures are for build costs only and do not account for VAT, which is not charged for self-build projects). There is a free online version at [homebuilding.co.uk/calculator](http://homebuilding.co.uk/calculator).

		BUILD ROUTE A			BUILD ROUTE B			BUILD ROUTE C			BUILD ROUTE D		
		(DIY + Subbies)			(Subbies)			(Builder/Subbies)			(Main Contractor)		
		Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent
<b>SINGLE STOREY</b>													
<90m <sup>2</sup>	Greater London	1249	1445	1738	1323	1530	1841	1396	1616	1943	1470	1701	2045
	South-East	1096	1268	1525	1160	1343	1615	1224	1417	1704	1289	1492	1794
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	996	1154	1387	1055	1222	1469	1114	1290	1550	1172	1358	1632
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	953	1103	1326	1009	1168	1404	1065	1233	1482	1121	1298	1560
91-160m <sup>2</sup>	Greater London	1144	1388	1804	1211	1470	1910	1279	1552	2016	1346	1633	2122
	South-East	1004	1217	1582	1063	1289	1675	1122	1360	1768	1181	1432	1861
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	913	1108	1441	967	1173	1525	1021	1238	1610	1074	1304	1695
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	873	1060	1377	925	1122	1458	976	1184	1539	1028	1247	1620
161m <sup>2</sup> +	Greater London	1019	1336	1676	1079	1415	1775	1138	1493	1873	1198	1572	1972
	South-East	893	1171	1470	946	1240	1557	998	1309	1643	1051	1378	1730
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	813	1066	1339	860	1128	1418	908	1191	1496	956	1254	1575
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	777	1020	1279	822	1080	1354	868	1140	1490	914	1200	1505
<b>TWO STOREY</b>													
90-130m <sup>2</sup>	Greater London	1202	1391	1709	1273	1473	1809	1344	1555	1910	1414	1636	2010
	South-East	1055	1220	1499	1117	1291	1587	1179	1363	1675	1241	1435	1763
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	959	1110	1365	1016	1176	1445	1072	1241	1525	1128	1306	1606
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	917	1062	1304	971	1125	1381	1025	1187	1457	1079	1250	1534
131-220m <sup>2</sup>	Greater London	1012	1226	1555	1072	1298	1646	1132	1370	1738	1191	1442	1829
	South-East	888	1076	1364	941	1139	1444	993	1202	1524	1045	1266	1604
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	808	979	1241	855	1037	1314	903	1094	1387	950	1152	1460
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	773	936	1186	818	991	1256	864	1046	1326	909	1101	1395
221m <sup>2</sup> +	Greater London	934	1196	1501	989	1266	1590	1044	1337	1678	1099	1407	1766
	South-East	820	1048	1318	868	1110	1395	917	1172	1473	965	1233	1550
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	746	954	1199	790	1010	1269	833	1066	1340	877	1123	1410
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	713	912	1146	755	966	1214	797	1019	1281	839	1073	1349

**HOW IT WORKS**

**1 Identify your build route from the four options** Your level of involvement in the project will influence the build costs. For simplicity, the four most common build routes have been identified below:

**● Build Route A: DIY + Subbies**

Building on a largely DIY basis, substituting around 30% of labour costs with DIY, and employing help with the rest of the building work. Materials purchased directly.

**● Build Route B: Subbies**

Building using tradespeople hired directly – you will be project managing, but there is minimal DIY involvement. Most or all materials purchased directly.

**● Build Route C: Builders/subbies**

Building using a main contractor or package supplier to complete the structure to a weathertight stage, with the remaining work undertaken by subcontractors and most materials purchased by self-builder direct from suppliers.

**● Build Route D: Main contractor**

Building using a main contractor. Building in this way requires the least involvement from the self-builder.

**2 Identify your expected level of specification** The standard of specification

that you choose will have an enormous influence on your build cost. For estimating purposes, three general categories of quality have been identified:

**● Standard:** This represents a basic build quality equivalent to that offered by most speculative developers. A house may include standard softwood joinery, studwork partitions, a contract kitchen, basic sanitaryware and radiator central heating.

**● Good:** This is equivalent to that offered by quality developers. Features may include high-end off-the-shelf softwood joinery, blockwork partition walls, contract quality kitchen and sanitaryware and underfloor heating (UFH) downstairs.

**● Excellent:** A very high standard. This house may include hardwood joinery, blockwork partition walls, a bespoke kitchen and quality sanitaryware, and UFH, for instance.

**3 Multiply the figure by your house size**

We have used gross internal floor area as a measure (it's the most common in the industry). It's the area of a building measured to the internal face of each perimeter wall for each floor level. It includes areas occupied by internal walls and partitions. **H**

**THREE SCOTTISH SELF-BUILDS PRICED**

**Build cost** £3,214/m<sup>2</sup>

**Size** 168m<sup>2</sup>

**Location** Isle of Tiree

**Build time** 20 months

**Liz and David Kerr** took on a Hebridean blackhouse, initially with the idea of adding a modest extension, but ended up demolishing and rebuilding it and adding a contemporary extension. The new build is constructed from a glulam timber frame on a Polarwall basement construction and was designed by their son, architect Murray Kerr of Denizen Works.



**Build cost** £1,483/m<sup>2</sup>

**Size** 337m<sup>2</sup>

**Location** Argyll

**Build time** Nine months

**Mike and Ann Urwin** built their new home overlooking a loch entirely out of steel frame. The design, from McInnes Gardner, draws on mid-century modern influences. The self-build features extensive glazing, a series of angular roofs – one flat, two sloping – and walls clad in a stone cladding system designed to replicate natural stone, as well as render in neutral tones, and larch.



**Build cost** £1,753/m<sup>2</sup>

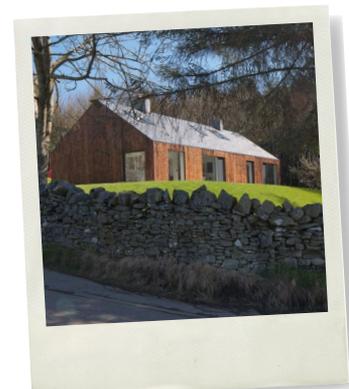
**Size** 154m<sup>2</sup>

**Location** Scottish Borders

**Build time** Nine months

**Anna Karczewska-Slowikowska**

renovated as much of the original 1930s bungalow on site as possible, and extended the original footprint to the east and west. The result is a contemporary cottage clad in scorched larch, which was blow torched on site before being installed. The design, by A449 Architects, also features a simple slate roof and large rooflights.



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