

# House Building

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## Acquiring a site

Over three quarters of the houses in Shetland are owner-occupied and have been built privately and this trend continues vigorously, with owners often putting some or a lot of their own labour into the construction of the property. A considerable number of houses are built on sites that have been made available by local crofters - typically at little or no cost, if it is going to a member of the crofter's family or community. Local knowledge and local connections are therefore very helpful for anyone wanting to find and acquire a good site to build a house in a particular location and community.

It is important to remember that it may be necessary to have the land [de-crofted](#) if it has been previously used for agricultural purposes. Even if you are buying a property to replace or renovate, this is also the case. For information on decrofting, please see the [Crofters Commission website](#).

Sites for sale are also advertised by [local Solicitors](#) and in the [Shetland Times](#). Prices vary from £15,000 to £35,000 in many parts of the mainland for unserviced sites to anything between £30,000 and £60,000 for serviced sites on the outskirts of Lerwick. However, house sites in Lerwick are difficult to acquire due to the lack of availability of land.

## Taking the next steps and getting good professional advice

Anyone wanting to build a house has to overcome a number of official hurdles before they are allowed to proceed to the building stage. Even before a potential house site has been identified, or as soon after as possible, professional advice should be sought about the following:

### Planning regulations and procedures

[Planning Officials](#) are more than happy to help anyone who is thinking of building a house with specific advice on the requirements of the planning system and more general advice on other aspects of the building process. They have a lot of useful experience and would much rather share it as early as possible to help the potential house-builder to avoid some of the pitfalls and delays that can arise from ignorance of what is needed to obtain planning consent.

For further information, please contact:

Shetland Islands Council Infrastructure Services <b>Planning</b> Grantfield Lerwick Shetland ZE1 0NT	Telephone: 01595 744800 Fax: 01595 695887 email: <a href="mailto:planning@shetland.gov.uk">planning@shetland.gov.uk</a> website: <a href="http://www.shetland.gov.uk/planning/">www.shetland.gov.uk/planning/</a>
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## Guidance and Advice

The Planning Officials will explain the Council's policies on the siting, design and location of any new house to be built in Shetland. They will advise on the requirements for drainage from the house site, road access and water supplies and they will provide assistance with, as well as advice on, preparing applications for outline and/or full Planning Permission and for a Building Warrant. Planning Officials also strongly advise anyone thinking about building a house to read the following design and guidance publications:

[Towards Better Design in Shetland](#): Guidance on design: broad guidance to ensure that new development is of the highest design quality and respects, safeguards and enhances the special characteristics of Shetland.

[The Shetland House](#): Guidance for Housing Development in Shetland: Broad guidance covering every aspect of designing and developing a house in Shetland.

[Examples of Shetland House Design](#): Examples of Shetland house design with style, originality and respect for a sustainable landscape.

[Housing and Colour](#): Guidance for using Colour: Guidance on choosing colours for houses within Shetland and encouraging an approach that respects indigenous approaches to colour and which emphasise the distinctiveness of Shetland.

**Towards Sustainable Construction**: Guidance on Sustainable Design and Construction for Dwelling houses and Other Buildings: Guidelines to encourage sustainable building practice within Shetland.

**Renewable Energy Techniques**: Guidance for Householders: The guidance highlights the options available to householders considering the installation of renewable energy devices and ways to improve energy efficiency.

**Advice Notes**: on a variety of subjects are available.

### Legal Advice

Good legal advice from a qualified [Solicitor](#) should also be sought at an early stage, particularly by those who have not yet acquired legal title to the house site.

### Designing and building the house

Both the SIC Planning Office in Lerwick and [Shetland Solicitors](#) can provide names and addresses of Architects and Building Contractors, also see [Housing Links](#). The Shetland Directory and the [Yellow Pages](#) Telephone Directory for Aberdeen also gives names of the manufacturers and suppliers of Kit houses, some building contractors and Kit suppliers also provide a choice of house designs. An experienced [Architect](#) may greatly reduce the amount of time and effort that would otherwise be spent by the client on overcoming some or all of the hurdles involved in building a new house.

### Funding for building

Contact should be made with banks or building societies at an early stage to discuss financing the building of a property. The [banks and building societies located in Shetland](#) have experience of dealing with people who are building their own properties and will advise you on mortgages and drawing down funds for this purpose.



### Shetland Islands Council



This information sheet is a reproduction of the **Housing Options Guide – Buying or Building a House without Grant Assistance (Building a House)** section.

If you would like this information produced in any other format, please telephone 01595 744360 or email [housing@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:housing@shetland.gov.uk).

### Useful Links

Solicitors and Estate Agents

[www.shetland.gov.uk/housingoptions/guide/LocalSolicitorsandEstateAgents.asp](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/housingoptions/guide/LocalSolicitorsandEstateAgents.asp)

Crofters Commission

[www.crofterscommission.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.crofterscommission.org.uk/index.htm)

Planning Applications Online

[www.shetland.gov.uk/planningcontrol/apps/default.asp](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/planningcontrol/apps/default.asp)

Planning Guidance and Advice

[www.shetland.gov.uk/developmentplans/GuidanceAdvice.asp](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/developmentplans/GuidanceAdvice.asp)

Advice Notes

[www.shetland.gov.uk/planningcontrol/advicenotes/default.asp](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/planningcontrol/advicenotes/default.asp)

The Shetland Local Plan

[www.shetland.gov.uk/developmentplans/ShetlandLocalPlan.asp](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/developmentplans/ShetlandLocalPlan.asp)

Housing Links

[www.shetland.gov.uk/housing/HousingLinks.asp](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/housing/HousingLinks.asp)

### Documents

Decrofting Leaflet

[www.crofterscommission.org.uk/documents.asp?catid=10#open](http://www.crofterscommission.org.uk/documents.asp?catid=10#open)

The Shetland House

[www.shetland.gov.uk/developmentplans/documents/TheShetlandHouseFinalVersion.pdf](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/developmentplans/documents/TheShetlandHouseFinalVersion.pdf)