

Essential steps to assess whether a plot is suitable for residential development

Whether you're a developer, investor, or self-builder, this checklist ensures all critical feasibility items are reviewed before committing to a land purchase or progressing design.

## 1. Site Location & Access

- Adopted Highway Access or Right of Way Confirmed**  
Check for legal and physical access from a public road.
- Visibility Splays & Highways Approval**  
Are splays achievable under Highways requirements? Needed for planning.
- Topography and Slope Suitability**  
Does the plot allow for a level build or require major earthworks?
- Proximity to Services (Mains Gas, Electric, Water, Sewer)**  
Connection distance impacts cost - check with utility providers.

## 2. Planning Context & Constraints

- Current Land Use / Classification**  
Is the land classified as brownfield, greenfield, agricultural, etc.?
- Existing or Lapsed Planning Permissions**  
Review planning history and any unexpired consents.
- Local Plan Designations (LPA policies)**  
Check if the land sits in a settlement boundary, strategic site, or protected zone.
- Conservation Area / AONB / Green Belt**  
These areas carry stricter planning constraints.
- Listed Buildings or Heritage Nearby**  
May affect materials, layout, and design freedoms.
- Planning Pre-App Advised or Submitted**  
Engage LPA early to understand viability and likely planning conditions.

## 3. Site Surveys & Investigations

- Topographical Survey**  
Required for design & levels planning.
- Ground Investigation / Soil Report**  
Determines foundation type, contamination risk, and drainage viability.
- Drainage / Utilities Search**  
Establish location of mains, capacity, and easements.
- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)**  
Mandatory in Flood Zone 2/3 or for larger developments.
- Ecology / Tree Surveys (if applicable)**  
Especially for plots near protected species, mature trees, or woodland.
- Archaeology Report (if triggered by local history)**  
Required in certain areas under LPA conditions.

## 4. Design & Development Potential

- Preliminary Sketch Scheme or Massing Study**  
Can the desired number/size of units fit sensibly?
- Plot Orientation for Daylight & Privacy**  
Impacts layout, glazing, overheating risk, and resale appeal.
- Design Guidelines or Neighbouring Influences**  
Especially in design-sensitive areas (Conservation, Design Codes, etc.)
- Height & Density Compatibility**  
Must align with street character and LPA expectations.
- Bin Stores / Parking Standards**  
LPA has minimum requirements - don't overlook space planning.

## 5. Legal Checks

- Title Register Search**  
Are there restrictive covenants, ransom strips, or third-party rights?
- Section 106 or CIL Implications (if planning in place)**  
Cost implications can affect viability.
- Rights of Light / Party Wall Considerations**  
Especially if close to boundaries or existing structures.

## 6. Viability & Cost Planning

- Baseline Build Costs Per m<sup>2</sup>**  
Use current regional averages: £1,800–£2,400/m<sup>2</sup>+ depending on spec & site.
- Abnormal Site Costs Identified (Groundworks, Access, Services)**  
Include drainage solutions, retaining structures, etc.
- Professional Fees & Planning Costs Accounted For**  
Planning, architectural, structural, engineering, SAPs, NHBC, etc.
- Sales or Rental Value in Area Confirmed**  
Critical for appraisals - use local estate agents and comparables.
- Contingency & Developer Profit Margins Included**  
Typically 10–20% margin depending on risk profile and market.

## 7. Timeline Considerations

- Planning Timeframe (typically 10–14 weeks, or more with delays)
- Discharge of Conditions (add 2–3 months)
- Build Timeline Realistic (including procurement lag)
- Sales / Disposal Strategy Clear

### **DARK Construction Solutions offers full feasibility services, including:**

- Site walkovers
- Professional review of constraints
- Pre-app support
- Buildability advice
- Planning & design team coordination

**DM or email to book a feasibility consultation or get a site quote.**

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