



HOMES & HOUSE
EXTENSIONS

A close-up photograph of oak wood beams in a construction site. The beams are arranged in a complex, overlapping pattern, creating a sense of depth and texture. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the grain and knots of the wood. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the wooden structure and some construction elements.

YOUR HOME, OUR CRAFT

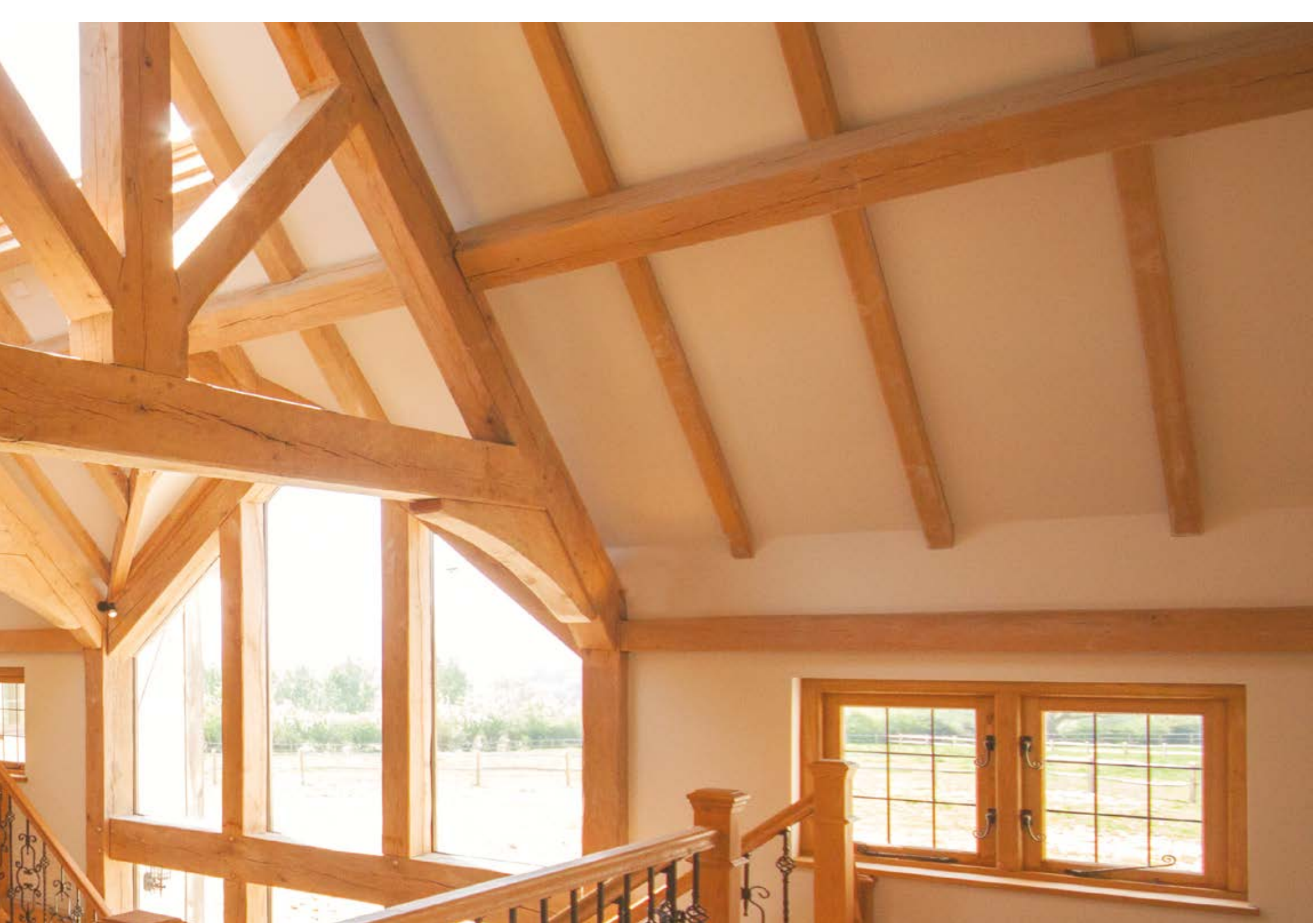
Our expert team of carpenters lovingly hand finish all our oak frames. Great attention is spent on the detail of each exposed oak beam enhancing the natural beauty of the wood. Creating a more refined and elegant environment for you to live in, to enjoy.

BRINGING YOUR VISION TO LIFE

We love working with oak. It's an amazing natural material. It is sumptuous, luxurious, and always adds a unique warmth and vitality to any building. It is also eco-friendly, very durable and extremely versatile.

Oakmasters can help you create the space you've always wanted. We use innovative methods and techniques in combination with traditional hand craftsmanship to produce beautifully-finished oak frames for complete houses, extensions or renovation projects. Whatever stage you're at, whether you're starting from scratch, have a few vague sketches or a complete master plan, we can assist you. You may want a complete oak frame, a 'hybrid house' where oak is used alongside other materials such as brick, or you may simply be looking for an internal decorative feature. We create beautiful period style properties but also work on designs that are contemporary and avant garde. Whatever your aspirations, we can help. Quality of service, planning and finish shines through in everything we create. With over thirty years' experience, our clients tell us it's our attention to detail, fine craftsmanship and personal approach that sets us apart. It's our mission to bring your vision to life.





WHY BUILD WITH OAK?

Oak is an affordable luxury that adds vitality, warmth and ambiance to any development. But aesthetics aren't the only reason to choose it:

Oak is strong – tough, dependable, doesn't buckle like steel in a fire. As it dries out and ages it actually gets stronger.

Oak is flexible – oak framing offers huge potential and architectural adaptability as it does not require solid walls throughout, as does masonry.

Oak is quick – frame kits assemble around 30% quicker than masonry

Oak is authentic – unlike most building materials and techniques, you can actually see and touch the beautiful organic structure holding up your house.

“We're really pleased with our Oakmasters' structure, everyone remarks on the building when they come round, it's been brilliant.”

Peter Peacock, Partner, Q Leisure, Sussex





ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

Perhaps counter-intuitively, oak is in fact a great environmentally-friendly option for home builders:

Renewable resource

A great renewable resource – it requires no industrial processing and can be used in its raw state with minimal waste and energy expended.

Sustainable supply

Oakmasters is dedicated to ecological conservation. We only source our materials from properly managed, sustainable sources.

“On the fall of an oak, every man gathers wood.”

Menander of Athens
(Ancient Greek Drama tist & poet, 342 BC – 292 BC)

WORKING WITH YOU

We specialise in the architectural design, engineering, crafting and assembly of oak frame houses and extensions. We are happy to get involved in your project at any point, but we've generally found that clients contact us at one of three stages:

Planning Services Required – If you do not have planning permission or you need revisions to your existing planning we can assist with concept designs to help progress your application. We will work closely with you to conceive a design that fits your vision, and can also liaise with external planning consultants to aid the process and iron out any difficulties. Your project can then progress to the next stage.

You already have planning permission – Oakmasters takes on your existing scheme and works with you to bring to life the ideal oak frame design for your requirements, while carefully considering other engineering, architectural and regulatory issues. From this point we can provide you with a complete set of drawings, specifications, and structural calculations required to satisfy building regulations, and to proceed with your build. We can then begin the manufacture of your frame.

Your architect needs specialist oak frame design – In this case, we can take your full specifications and work with you and your architect to engineer an oak frame aligned with your existing design. Oakmasters will act as an oak frame engineering consultant for your architect to use as required.

If you would like to discuss a self-build project with us, why not start with a free introductory meeting? Come in for a discussion and bring any photographs, sketches, mood board, and plot location details and plans you already have.

We like to be involved as early in the process as possible, even if you have your own architect or structural engineer, as we can advise and assist with the process of design, planning permission and construction.





HAND WROUGHT FINISH

You can tell an Oakmasters oak frame just by looking at it. Our meticulously crafted, hand-wrought finish is what sets our oak frames apart. We believe that oak is the most beautiful material that deserves nothing less than a beautiful hand finish. That's why we treat each exposed oak beam with great attention to detail, you won't find anywhere else.

'For me, oak is very much a living, tactile thing. I love the random undulations of a hand-wrought finish.'

Oakmasters' craftsman David Sheppard.

A COMPLETE SERVICE

Oakmasters provides:

Full architectural services including concept design, planning applications, building regulations and structural engineering.
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Manufacture and assembly of the very highest quality, hand-crafted and finished oak frame.
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Scalable solutions; from simply supplying the oak frame, to full turnkey packages, via our national network of building contractor partnerships.
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Supply and installation of related softwood sub-framing such as stud-work, joisting and rafters.
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Supply and installation of related joinery products such as windows and external doors.
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Supply and installation of various types of weather-tight shell wall build up, ranging from oak or softwood feather edge cladding, to exposed oak infill panels which are ready to render, or ready for masonry outer walls.
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Encapsulated oak frame glazing, both supply and installation
.....

Augmented frame requirements utilising other materials such as glulam and steel.

“Without Oakmasters on the project team, I couldn’t have done it. As, apart from visiting some houses and hotels in the UK with oak features, I didn’t really know much about oak.”

Oakmasters' customer David Hathersich-Jones





AN OAK FRAME PACKAGE THAT SUITS YOU

Oakmasters Frame

Choose Oakmasters Frame only package when you already have architect's designs and specifications in place. We can either supply the frame in kit form for your contractor to erect on site, or we can deliver and erect the frame for you, ready for your contractors to encapsulate. This option allows you to retain complete control and flexibility over your project with regards to the wall build, allowing you to follow your own or your architect's specifications.

Oakmasters Q-Wall

Choose Oakmasters Q-Wall system if you are looking for an encapsulated oak frame solution with excellent statistics for both air-tightness and insulation properties, whilst providing a relatively slim wall structure. Oakmasters Q-Wall is a complete encapsulation system using structural insulated panels (SIPs) supported and complemented by our structural oak frame. The panels are pre-constructed off site, specifically to your house design, which minimises material waste as well as time spent fitting panels on site. This encapsulation system can be varied in thickness to achieve target U (insulation) values. It provides complete flexibility for positioning of the services and is suitable for most exterior finishes, including stone, brick, rendering and wood cladding. Oakmasters Q-Wall system can also allow you to expose the oak frame features on the outside of the walls and the structural oak frame on the inside of your house.

Oakmasters Q-Wall Eco

Oakmasters sustainable system Q-Wall Eco is a premium oak frame encapsulation solution providing outstanding insulation and air-tightness. It also fulfils excellent green credentials by using sustainably produced closed panels together with the oak frame. The panels are pre-constructed off site specifically to your house design, thus significantly reducing material waste as well as fitting time on-site. Oakmasters Q-Wall Eco system is uniquely designed to give you full flexibility in terms of target U (insulation) values, positioning of the services and choice of exterior finishes, such as cladding, stone, brick or render. It also allows you to reveal oak frame features on the outside of the walls and the structural oak frame to be visible on the inside of your house.

CLIENTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

We've produced exceptionally-crafted oak products for more than twenty years. Our portfolio of long-term, repeat, national and international clients includes a variety of blue-chip corporates, several household name celebrities, hundreds of architects, developers and thousands of satisfied private clients.

For an up to date client list and a selection of their testimonials please visit our website at www.oakmasters.co.uk/about-us/





The homes that Oakmasters built...



MODERN COUNTRY HOUSE

“We knew what structural work we needed for our new house, so we looked at a few oak contractor adverts in magazines. After speaking with three or four, we soon realised Oakmasters were going to be the best choice.

They took us around one of their finished houses to show us what we would be buying into. Their team was so knowledgeable and they clearly knew about quality. Value for money was a big factor in choosing them too.

We connected with the staff at Oakmasters straight away and this was also a major factor in choosing them. The team that worked on our house were fantastic. Their knowledge is unreal, and they are amazing craftsmen. The team started on the swimming pool complex first. Once I was happy with that job, I gave them the go ahead for the house. It was all on my terms. We felt like we could call up or come down to the yard at any time to ask questions and check on progress. I am in construction myself, but I've never worked with oak. It was completely new to me, but all the processes were explained in detail to us.

I'd definitely recommend working with Oakmasters. Oak is not cheap, but if you want something exceptional and out of this world - you get what you pay for. People walk into our house now and say “Wow!””

Steve from Essex







MANX STONE FARMHOUSE

David felt he needed a company with particular expertise in oak frame construction to take on his renovation project. He had a very clear vision for a 200-year-old farmhouse on the Isle of Man and had already spent time discussing his ideas and sketches with a local architect, who worked up the plans to gain planning permission for the 6,500 sq. ft plot. Local tradition dictated the exterior be decked out in Manx stone and red brick cladding. With this in mind, Oakmasters worked with David's architect and structural engineer to install a chunky, load-bearing oak frame interior, including solid oak window frames, tripling the size of the existing stone building. A crumbling outbuilding was also rejuvenated into a bespoke cottage, transformed with the addition of a gorgeous mezzanine gallery and vaulted ceilings.

A word from our client.

“Because of our location as an island, we had particular issues to deal with on transportation and needed a company that could work closely with us. We ended up transporting the pre-constructed oak beams in 15 containers on the Isle of Man ferry. As with any build, there is the odd hiccup, especially as you are dealing with a natural material, but Oakmasters craftsmanship is very high quality and they've overcome any problems to date. I wouldn't recommend living on site, it can be very muddy, but I think the finished project complements the surrounding environment very well and that's down to Oakmasters' design, as well as my own. It turned out exactly as I thought it would and works really well.”

David from the Isle of Man



MODERN MANOR HOUSE

Peter's dreams of building his own oak framed home began to come to life when he found a beautiful plot in the rolling Sussex hills. From the outset his aspirations for the building's aesthetics were clear. *"I always had a manor house in mind"* he says, *"and found a design I really liked and could adapt to maximise the views over the countryside."*

Oakmasters designers created a bespoke design based on Peter's initial ideas for the 6-bedroom house. This actually incorporated a larger quantity of beams and rafters than the original design that had inspired him. *"Positioning the doors and windows was quite tricky, especially at the back of the house, where we wanted to make the most of the views. I had worked with Oakmasters before so I knew the design team would always listen to what I wanted and deliver exactly what they promised. From design to completion there was always good communication and if I made changes, it was always redesigned to meet my needs. The most exciting part of the project was moving in and living the dream. I love the master bedroom with views over the downs. It's the best part."*

Peter from Sussex









FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We hope you're able to find some useful answers to your questions in this section – if not, don't hesitate to ring us for a chat.

What type of home projects do clients contact you about?

Over the years we've worked on a huge and exciting variety of designs, period and contemporary. Oak can be considered for all types of projects as it allows for great versatility in design.

How much input will I have in my self-build?

As much or as little as you desire. If you want us to, we are able to help organise everything from design to completion.

Do you use only English oak?

Oakmasters uses mixed sources from the UK and North West Europe, mostly France. We always carefully select sustainably managed sources. If you have a preference for a particular source of oak, we'll do our best to help.

Doesn't green oak shrink and crack?

Yes, oak shrinks – but it's no cause for alarm, because we know what it is going to do. Shrinkage only occurs across the grain and happens as the wood dries out and the fibres pull closer to each other. Some fibres get pulled apart, causing cracks along the grain (shakes), but oak framing is an art form that works with all this in mind, so the integrity is not affected. Any oak frame will dry out during its first few years in a centrally heated environment; the cracks and splits add to the character and charm of the finished product. We use structurally graded oak, with strict measures on knot-size and grain direction, so we know that the major shakes will occur along the grain of the beam and not across it. Beware the inexperienced framer; poor jointing and timber selection can lead to catastrophic cracks across the grain and structural issues.

Does oak need to be treated?

Oak is one of the most durable and naturally defensive materials you will find. Essentially it is maintenance-free. There are treatments such as Sikkens or wax oils that can be used to retain the original colour. However, once this is applied in an exterior environment it will need to be maintained annually. If you allow the oak to gradually turn to its natural silver hue, which is very attractive, then it is maintenance-free.

What about finishes?

Adzing

Straight sawn oak beams tend to look rather rough and ready, usually featuring ugly saw marks, rough edges and splinters. We feel this can detract from the overall aesthetics of an oak frame structure or decorative installation. It seems a shame to spend money on such an attractive, premium material without taking any care over the end finish.

Quality is of paramount importance to us at Oakmasters so, unless otherwise requested, all of our oak products are given a 'hand-wrought' or 'adzed' surface finish to remove any imperfections. Our craftsmen meticulously use a simple but highly effective tool on all the exposed surfaces to give the timber a gently undulating surface similar to that of a pond on a breezy day. This process can be as pronounced as required, - available in a light, medium or heavy finish. To get an idea of the differences in appearance take a look at and compare our range of finishes by visiting our website at www.oakmasters.co.uk/about-us and reading our section on 'finishes'.

Fuming

The fuming process is peculiar to the use of green oak and does not add colour but rather changes the colour. It is a specialist technique, which reacts with the natural tannins in the wood to create a richer, darker hue in the finished product, close to the pleasant colour of walnut shell. In the case of a single oak beam this process can be completed before delivery. However with an entire oak frame we would fume the building post-erection so as to ensure an even finish.

PLANNING PERMISSION

Planning permission is crucial to changing a piece of land into a valuable building plot. You need it to go forward and it is even likely to dictate some of the design elements and decisions you make about your build. If you're seeking planning, you may find that the Government's planning resource, www.planningportal.gov.uk is of help. Alternatively you can visit the Oakmasters website, and look at our 'News and Info' section, for a range of helpful resources and advice on self-building and development planning.

You may also find the following resources helpful...

Land Registry

For a small fee, they can advise you who owns a particular plot.

Estate agents

Keep in regular contact with them, so they keep you informed about new property, renovation projects and advise their clients if they think part of their property can be sold as a plot.

Auctions

Local and property papers often list details of property auctions.

Media

Local papers, property and land websites, self-build publications such as Exchange & Mart, home interest magazines such as Country Life, Build-It and Self-Build & Design.

Local authorities, public organisations and industry

Make contact through a solicitor or via their estates department, chief executive or similar to see if they are selling any property.

Land finding agencies

These agencies can search on your behalf. Try the Plotsearch service at www.buildstore.co.uk/findingland

DIY landfinder

Hunt around the area your interested in, chat to local residents and businesses, maybe place an ad in a local paper or resident's newsletter, emphasising that land with planning permission is ideal. You never know what little gem might turn up.

Finding building contractors

You will generally need a building contractor to lay foundations for the frame and other tradesmen to install services at a later date. Make sure when on the lookout for a building contractor that you obtain several quotes, the cheapest may not always be the best option. Ask for references and check them. If you prefer, we can recommend or organise a building contractor for you.

Manufacturing process

It generally takes around 12 weeks for supply of oak fabrication and delivery to your site, although this varies depending on the complexity of the project and the existing work we have in progress. Meanwhile, your builders can work to get the groundworks in place and ready for the oak frame.

Once we are on site, the frame is quickly assembled, usually in a matter of weeks. Once the frame and encapsulation are assembled, your building contractor can get going with the roof coverings, insulation, partition walls, services, flooring, decoration, fixtures and fittings, etc., and adding the final touches to your dream home.



