

Helpful Planning Document

step-by-step new build house timeline incorporating all phases of the project from concept to completion—including both bulk screed and thin levelling screed applications, as well as floor finishes. It outlines realistic durations and dependencies, while highlighting areas where tasks can run concurrently to reduce total build time.

1. Initial Planning (1–3 weeks active time, 8–12 weeks for land purchase)

- **Define Budget & Build Objectives (1–2 weeks):**
Set your financial limits, define your desired house size, layout, and whether you prefer a traditional or modern method (e.g., timber frame or brick/block).
- **Land Acquisition (8–12 weeks):**
Search for land, conduct surveys, and complete legal purchase. This can run in parallel with initial design ideas.
- **Engage an Architect or Designer (1–2 weeks):**
Begin concept designs, site layout, and architectural styling. Early-stage work can run alongside land buying.

2. Planning and Approvals (3–4 months in background)

- **Planning Permission Submission (1–2 weeks):**
Prepare full plans for submission to your local authority.
- **Planning Authority Decision (8–12 weeks):**
Statutory determination period. This can vary by council.
- **Building Regulations Approval (2–4 weeks):**
Submit drawings to Building Control or an Approved Inspector. Can run alongside planning.
- **Site Surveys and Ground Investigation (1–2 weeks):**
Soil tests and topographical surveys to inform foundation design.

3. Appoint Contractor (3–5 weeks)

- Tendering/Selection (2–4 weeks):
Choose a builder, package supplier, or main contractor.
- Contract Agreement (1 week):
Finalise build cost, stage payments, and timeline.

4. Groundworks and Substructure (4–5 weeks)

- Site Clearance (2–5 days):
Remove debris, vegetation, and old structures.
- Excavation and Foundation Works (1–2 weeks):
Trenches dug, concrete poured. Could be strip, raft, or piled foundations.
- Underground Drainage and Service Ducts (1 week):
Install foul/stormwater drains and ducts for water, electric, gas.
- Oversite Preparation & Slab (1 week):
Hardcore laid, DPM installed, insulation fitted, and floor slab poured or suspended floor completed.

5. Superstructure & Weathertight Envelope (6–8 weeks)

- Wall Construction (3–5 weeks):
Build up to roof level using blocks or timber frame.
- Intermediate Floors (1 week):
Fit concrete beams or timber joists + chipboard deck.
- Roof Structure and Covering (2–4 weeks):
Trusses installed, followed by underlay, battens, tiles/slates.
- Windows and External Doors (1 week):
Installed to make structure watertight.

6. Internal Build, Screeding & Services

First Fix Services (1–2 weeks)

- Install plumbing, heating pipework (including underfloor heating), electrical cables, and ventilation ducting.

Floor Build-Up Preparation (2–3 days)

- Lay insulation and DPM over slab.
- Fix UFH pipework and edge insulation ready for screed.

Main Screed Application (1–2 days)

- Pour the bulk screed (e.g., 50–75mm).
 - Could be sand/cement or flowing screed.
 - Flow screed is faster to install and better around pipes.

Screed Drying (4–45 days)

- Drying time varies significantly:
 - Fast-drying cement screed: ~4–7 days
 - Standard sand/cement: ~28 days
 - Anhydrite: up to 45 days, requires sanding
- During this time:
 - Plaster boarding and ceilings can proceed.
 - Some light prep and non-intrusive works allowed.
 - Moisture testing must be done before finishes.

Internal Plastering (1–2 weeks)

- Walls skimmed or drylined.
- Allow additional drying time if using wet plaster.

Thin Levelling Screed (Optional – 1 day + 2–3 days drying)

- If surface tolerance is critical, apply 2–6mm smoothing compound to flatten floor before finishes.

7. Second Fix & Interior Finishes (4–6 weeks)

- Second Fix Electrics and Plumbing (1–2 weeks):
 - Fit radiators, light fittings, switches, sockets, boilers.
- Kitchen & Bathroom Install (1–2 weeks):
 - Units, taps, WC, baths, etc.
- Floor Finishes (2–7 days depending on type):
 - Tiling, LVT, engineered timber, or carpet.
 - Must wait until screed is dry (typically <75% RH).
- Joinery (3–5 days):
 - Internal doors, skirting, architraves, stair balustrades.
- Decoration (1–2 weeks):
 - Painting, sealing, silicone finishes.
- Final Cleaning (1–2 days):
 - “Sparkle” clean before snagging and handover.

8. Snagging, Certification & Sign-Off (1–2 weeks)

- Snagging Inspection (1–3 days):
 - Final fix issues, surface checks, joinery gaps.
- Testing and Commissioning (2–5 days):
 - Gas Safe, electrical certification, air tests, and water tests.
- Building Control Sign-Off (1 week):

- Completion certificate issued.
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9. External Works & Landscaping (2–4 weeks)

- Driveway & Paving (1–2 weeks):
 - Sub-base, drainage, and final finish (asphalt, stone, resin).
- Boundary Treatments (1 week):
 - Fences, walls, gates.
- Gardening and Landscaping (1–3 weeks):
 - Turfing, seeding, planting beds, decking or patios.

Total Build Time Summary (with Fast-Track Options)

Phase	Optimised Duration	Typical Duration
Pre-construction (incl. planning)	3-4 months	4-6 months
Construction (slab to handover)	5-7 months	8-10 months
External works & snagging	1-2 months (overlapping)	2-3 months

Key Tips for Efficiency

- Use fast-drying screeds where timelines are tight.
- Overlap trades sensibly (e.g. plaster boarding during screed drying).
- Apply for utility connections early—they can delay handover.
- Plan floor finish lead times in advance (especially tiles and LVT).