

3 bed self build for £68.000

[£68,000 DIY ICF Self Build](#)



The site was previously a garden belonging to the next-door neighbour, which proved useful in the early stages for water and power supplies

First-time [DIY self builder](#) Richard Baldwin overcame a frustrating series of legal and planning hassles to create this efficient, stylish home near Chesterfield on a remarkable budget of just £68,000. He found his plot via RightMove; it was formed from the garden of a house and split into two. Each

plot came with detailed [planning permission](#) for a traditional-style brick-clad dormer bungalow. With an agreed price of £60,000 for the plot, Richard had a tight budget to get the house habitable.

The finished ICF structure achieves a U value well below 0.15 and an [airtightness](#) rating of 5 (“without even really trying,” says Richard), and lent itself to this DIY build. There is also a three-zone underfloor heating system run off a simple gas-powered combi boiler, and a mechanical [ventilation](#) heat recovery system.

How he built to a budget:

- Took on as much of the build as he could with some friends, including pouring the concrete strip foundations to building the [insulated concrete formwork \(ICF\)](#) walls, external brickwork, fitting windows, internal carpentry, plumbing, joinery and decorating.
- Used off the rack B&Q units, eBay finds and upcycled carcasses to build the kitchen himself.
- Internally, Richard used a mix of astute shopping and design solutions to come up with a quality look that belies the budget.



Removing the collar ties in the roof structure (in most cases, they serve no structural purpose) enabled Richard to gain height in the master bedroom and en suite built into the loft

Early dramas threatened to blow his meagre budget out of the water: when he submitted the building drawings for approval, the local authority told him that as the area was subject to historical shallow mining, he'd probably have to install [piled foundations](#) at a cost that would have scuppered his project before it had even started.

After shelling out nearly £1,000 on trial holes to assess the problem, he managed to avoid the need for piling, although he had to go 2m down on one elevation.

“There was more,” he says. “When I bought the site and saw the plans, I hadn't really given too much consideration to the slope (across the site) and kind of guessed I'd need two 20 tonne lorries to take it all away. I ended up needing 27, which was a real blow.”

“I've really enjoyed building the house and learned a lot,” he

says. "The paperwork and legal side of things were hugely difficult, but I got there in the end. The house is amazing and more than I could have hoped for."