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Site Management Market Insight

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Market Insight: Site Management

Scotland Housebuilding Sector

At a glance: Operational site salaries have moved upwards. Strong housebuilding Site Managers are now more commonly sitting around £60k to £65k base salary, Senior Site Managers around £68k to £75k, and Project Managers around £70k to £85k, before car allowance, bonus and wider benefits are considered.

Overview:

Scotland's housebuilding sector is facing sustained pressure across operational site leadership. Demand remains high from Assistant Site Manager level upwards, with the greatest competition sitting around experienced Site Managers, Senior Site Managers and Project Managers who can keep live developments moving safely, commercially and to programme.

At Pettigrew Recruitment Group, recent candidate conversations and client instructions suggest that previously published salary bands are now too light for proven residential talent, particularly in the Central Belt, East Scotland, Fife, the Lothians and Aberdeen markets.

This report updates the salary positioning by discipline and reflects the premium now being placed on candidates with strong housebuilding experience, NHBC performance, timber frame exposure, multi phase delivery and the ability to manage subcontractors under programme pressure.

Updated Salary Snapshot by Discipline:

The figures below reflect base salary expectations in the Scottish housebuilding market. They should be viewed alongside car or car allowance, bonus, healthcare, pension, development pipeline and regional travel requirements.

Discipline	Lower Market	Typical Market	Upper Market	Contract Day Rate
Assistant Site Manager	£38k	£42k to £45k	£50k to £52k	£220 to £300

Site Manager	£55k	£60k to £65k	£70k	£300 to £425
Senior Site Manager	£63k	£68k to £75k	£78k to £80k	£400 to £525
Project Manager	£60 to 65kk	£65k to £75k	£75k to £85k	£400 to £550
Contracts Manager / Construction Manager	£70k to £75k	£75k to £85k	£85 to £95k	£500 to £650

Market Overview:

Demand for experienced site leadership remains high across Scotland, particularly within private housebuilding and mixed tenure residential development. Developers are placing increasing emphasis on proven residential delivery experience rather than general construction management backgrounds.

Candidates with a strong record of plot delivery, clean handovers, NHBC performance, subcontractor management and multi phase development experience are in short supply. This is pushing expectations upwards, especially where employers need someone who can add value quickly rather than grow into the role over time.

The most active salary movement is being seen from Site Manager level upwards. Assistant Site Managers remain important for succession planning, however the strongest upward pressure is attached to Site Managers, Senior Site Managers and Project Managers who can take ownership of programme, quality and delivery across larger or more complex developments.

Assistant Site Managers:

Assistant Site Managers remain a critical talent pool for housebuilders looking to strengthen future Site Management capability. However, employers are increasingly looking for more than basic support experience.

- Candidates who can manage plots, sections or defined workstreams with minimal supervision are attracting stronger interest.
- Packages below the high £30k range are becoming harder to position unless the candidate is at an early stage or the progression route is particularly strong.
- The most competitive Assistant Site Manager offers are now commonly sitting around £42k to £45k, with stronger candidates pushing towards £50k where they are close to stepping up.

Site Managers:

The Site Manager market is where salary pressure is most visible. The previous typical range of £48,000 to £55k now feels light for experienced housebuilding candidates with a proven record of running live residential developments.

- Strong Site Managers in Scotland are now more commonly sitting around £60k to £65k base salary.
- Candidates with timber frame experience, strong NHBC results and evidence of consistent plot completions can command packages closer to £70k.

- Car allowance, bonus and regional travel expectations are often decisive when candidates are comparing opportunities.

Senior Site Managers and Project Managers:

Senior Site Managers and Project Managers are now among the most competitive operational appointments in Scottish housebuilding. These candidates are often expected to manage larger developments, multiple phases, complex programmes or future progression into wider construction leadership roles.

- Senior Site Manager salaries are increasingly sitting around £68k to £75k for proven housebuilding candidates.
- Project Manager salaries are now more commonly sitting around £80k to £90k, with stronger packages required where the role carries full development responsibility or larger regional importance.
- Contracts Manager and Construction Manager salaries are moving into the £90k to £100k range where employers need multi site leadership, delivery accountability and experienced people management.

Skills Employers Are Prioritising:

Technical and compliance requirements:

- SMSTS or appropriate progression towards SMSTS.
- Valid CSCS card.
- Strong understanding of NHBC standards and inspection expectations.
- Residential housebuilding experience, ideally with PLC or regional developer exposure.
- Quality assurance, snagging and customer handover management.
- Health and safety leadership, including RAMS and permit management.

Operational and leadership skills:

- Subcontractor coordination and performance management.
- Short term programming and weekly progress control.
- Plot completion discipline and programme recovery.
- Customer handover management and defect reduction.
- Strong communication with technical, commercial, sales and customer care teams.
- Ownership mentality and the ability to make decisions under pressure.

What This Means for Employers:

Employers should be cautious about benchmarking operational site roles too closely against generic construction salary averages. Broad job board averages can understate what is required to secure proven housebuilding talent, particularly where the role involves larger developments, tight programmes, timber frame delivery or strong NHBC expectations.

To attract the strongest candidates, employers should be clear early on about site scale, plot volume, build type, reporting line, regional travel and the strength of the forward development pipeline. These details are increasingly important in candidate decision making.

Where salary flexibility is limited, businesses may need to strengthen the wider proposition through car allowance, bonus, private healthcare, clearer progression and visibility of future site starts.

Looking Ahead:

Despite wider economic uncertainty, the Scottish housebuilding market continues to show high demand for operational site leadership talent. Experienced Site Managers, Senior Site Managers and Project Managers remain central to protecting build programmes, maintaining quality standards and improving customer satisfaction.

For candidates, this creates opportunities to secure improved packages, clearer progression and longer term career development. For employers, the challenge is moving quickly enough and presenting a package that reflects the current market rather than historic expectations.

At Pettigrew Recruitment Group, we continue to work closely with developers and contractors across Scotland to connect high quality Site Management professionals with some of the industry's most respected employers.