

F.A.O Nicolas Pollard and Ros Sheppard
Hargrave Parish Council
Steering Group
Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan

25th September 2020

Our ref: BPG006/dc/hpf

Dear Sir/Madam

HARGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - Call for Sites Submission

Land to the south of Top Farm, Church Street, Hargrave – Bastion Group

We write on behalf of our client, Mr Philip Milne, Chief Executive of the Bastion Group ('Bastion'), who controls land to the south of Top Farm, Church Street, Hargrave ('the site'), to submit a "Call for Sites" submission into the emerging Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan process. This submission follows a previous 'Expression of Interest' and seeks to provide some minor additional detail and clarifications regarding the potential of Bastion's site to hopefully further demonstrate its suitability to accommodate small-scale sensitive development in Hargrave.

Bastion Group

Founded in 1994 the Bastion Group is a privately owned residential and commercial property development and building group based in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. With over a quarter of a century of experience, the Bastion Group of companies has established a superb reputation based upon genuine expertise, experience and the excellence of their developments.

Bastion have an in-house and wider consultant team that design, construct and develop residential and commercial property schemes priding themselves on the best possible design and construction practices with attention to detail. They are also fully committed to sustainability and contributions to social, economic and environmental wellbeing. This includes reducing energy, water and waste in the homes they construct and developing buildings that reduce their environmental impact through good design and sustainable construction practices. Bastion are also acutely aware of the impact that construction activities have on the environment and the local community and therefore work closely with Local Planning Authorities and Parish Councils to enhance and preserve the character of the areas where their developments are proposed and constructed.

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David Lock Associates ('DLA') has acted as planning consultant to Bastion for many years promoting various sites in Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire and securing planning permissions for small developments in Olney and Milton Keynes. One, at Olney, was for 8 no. dwellings on a previously developed site in the Conservation Area, which is illustrated in the photograph included at Image 1 below. This scheme received both support and praise from the Council's Conservation Officer for its positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Olney Conservation Area and its excellent detailing in-keeping with the local vernacular.

Further examples of Bastion schemes are enclosed at Appendix 1 to demonstrate different unit types and different architectural and material approaches and the high standard of design provided by Bastion – each responds positively to and is complementary to its surrounding context.



Image 1 – Street Scene at Bastion's Development at Olney

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Land to the South of Top Farm, Church Street, Hargrave

Bastion and DLA welcome this opportunity to engage with the Parish Council and its Steering Group on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. We are grateful to be able to take this first step towards presenting and discussing our client's outline proposals for potential development of its land at Church Street, which it has controlled for many years.

Policy Compliance

The extent of the land that Bastion control in Hargrave is shown on accompanying drawings BPG006-001/002 /003. The Bastion controlled land extends beyond the proposed settlement boundary (as shown in Image 2 below), however, the scheme that Bastion are putting forward for consideration as part of the Neighbourhood Plan would be policy compliant in that it would align with the draft settlement boundary (being proposed as part of the Plan) and would respond to the locally supported principle of linear 'roadside' development. Should this Bastion land be successful in securing an allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan, any future planning application for this scheme would also accord with the proposed settlement boundary and design principles favoured by the village. For clarity the extent of the site area being put forward and promoted as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process is that shown in yellow on the extract from the "Draft Policies Document" in Image 2 below.

It is important to reinforce that Bastion support the proposal in the "Draft Policies Document" that housing development in Hargrave Parish should be contained within the newly proposed settlement boundary which has been drawn up for the village in order to identify the built-up area within which future development is considered appropriate.

Planning Approach and Timing

Bastion primarily approaches its sites in two stages – 1) through initial promotion to secure a positive and supportive policy framework and then 2) following up with a policy compliant planning application. In Bastion's experience, working with the Local Planning Authority in bringing forward sites, creates a more successful relationship and helps achieve a scheme that hopefully meets the needs of all involved. As such, it is Bastion's current intention to promote the site through the Neighbourhood Plan, working with the Steering Group, and if successful in securing an allocation, to follow up with a planning application which accords with the allocation. In taking this approach it allows for consultation on the site both through the Neighbourhood Plan and Planning Application processes.

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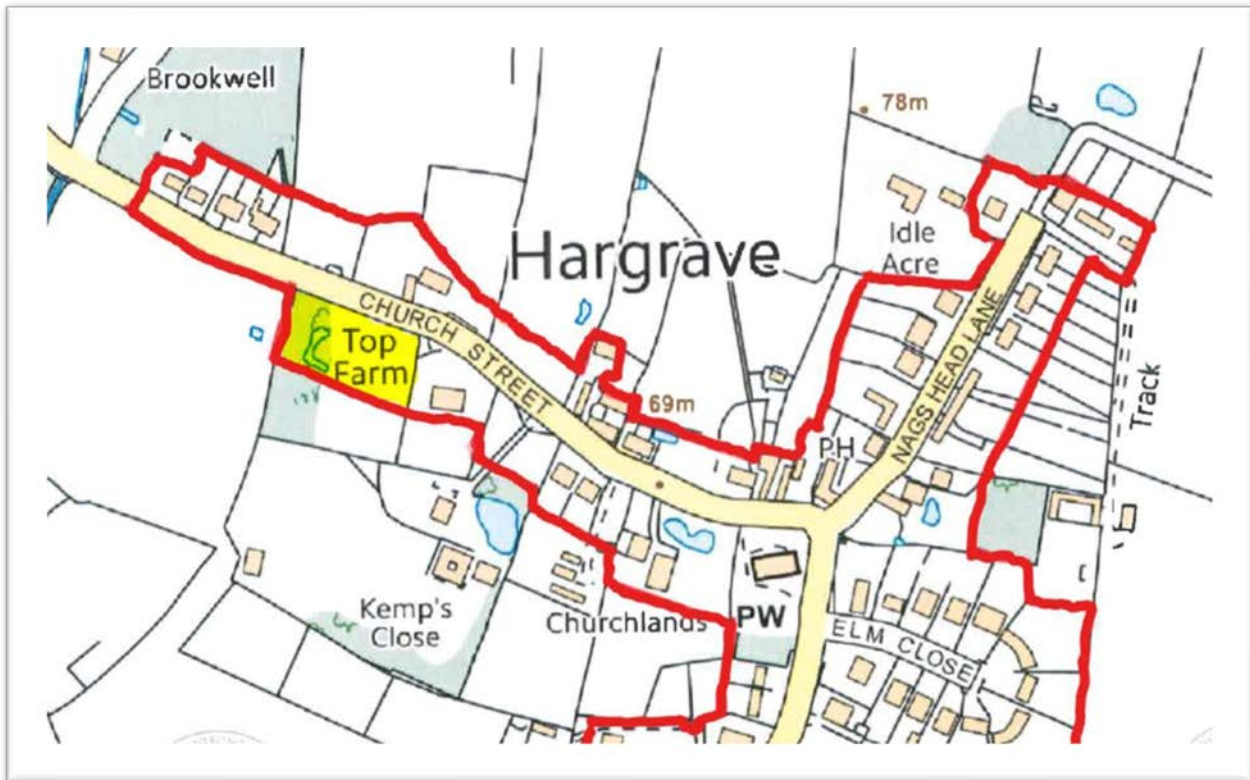


Image 2 –Extract from the Draft Policies Document - Bastion's Land shown in yellow within the Proposed Settlement Boundary

Merits of the Site

The site is well-contained, relates well to Church Street and sits between the core of the village and existing, established development further to the west along Church Street following the pattern of development within the existing settlement. Therefore, the site is well connected to the established built up area of the village. It is worth noting that the water body shown on the OS mapping is no longer present on the site.

The site is not affected by any statutory designations – see enclosed Site Analysis Plan – so is eminently suitable for development. The buildings at Top Farm are not designated heritage assets and there is no conservation area designation. The main dwelling at Top Farm is considered by the Local Planning Authority¹ to be a non-designated heritage asset but it lies on the opposite side of Church Street and a sensitive scheme on the site will respect the setting and qualities of this building.

¹ Officer's Report on Application No. 20/0568/FUL for solar panels at Top Farm, Church St.

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Overview of Prospective Development Proposal

Form of development and unit types

Bastion has considered the character and vernacular of the village and proposes a scheme that is in-keeping and reflective of the village. In acknowledging the historic core of the village, Bastion consider that the site may be suitable for approximately eight “cottage style” properties. In view of the existing short cottage terraces in the village, these could be designed in two short blocks in order that Bastion may provide the appropriate access to the new homes along with the necessary car parking and vehicle manoeuvring space. There are alternative forms of development / unit types that may also lend themselves to the site to reflect local demand including incorporating ‘semi-detached’ units.

To demonstrate the flexibility of the site to accommodate different forms of development that respond to local housing needs and also to vernacular materials and character, two ‘Indicative Layout Options’ are submitted. These have been informed by an initial Site Appraisal Plan which also accompanies this submission. The two options indicate how the site can accommodate either a semi-detached development form, or semi-detached alongside a short terrace, subject to local demand if a mix of house types is required. Alternatively, if there is a strong local preference, the site could accommodate 4-6 units in a detached / semi-detached form.

Such a development would respect the general form and linear character of the village and maintain a similar pattern of development to that historically welcomed alongside the two principal roads running through the heart of the settlement. It would constitute ‘limited’ development along the roadside of Church Street, providing family homes and a mix of house size consistent with housing need and village architecture to meet the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. With Bastion’s track record on similar developments it would use or reflect local materials.

Access and Highways

Bastion has undertaken an initial review of the site access and character of Church Street and acknowledges that careful consideration will be required in terms of achieving a safe vehicular as well as pedestrian and cycle access. It would also be paramount that any scheme makes sufficient arrangement for on-site parking, including visitor parking, to ensure that it does not have a detrimental impact on the safety and convenience of traffic, pedestrians and other road users on Church Street.

In presenting the two Indicative Layout Options, subject to detailed highway design and obtaining highway boundaries, it is considered that highway access can be achieved as shown on the enclosed plans, which would allow for appropriate visibility splays onto Church Street. The parking shown also meets local standards for the dwellings shown, including visitor spaces.

As part of taking forward any future planning application, consultation and negotiation with the Local Highway Authority would be undertaken to determine if any local highway improvements should be delivered as part of the proposed development. If so, these would be subject to agreement with the County Council.

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Sustainability and Drainage

Both Bastion and DLA understand the critical need to address climate change challenges and ensure that new development plays an important role in doing so. Bastion is committed to minimising its environmental impact and thus pursues high standards of sustainable design and construction on its sites. Bastion is already proactively working towards the 'Future Homes Standard' and thus is looking at ways to incorporate higher levels of energy efficiency and low carbon technology in its future developments, including for any potential scheme at Hargrave.

A key factor of sustainable development is drainage and avoiding flood risk, and therefore Bastion would ensure that any scheme brought forward would not have a detrimental impact in terms of flood risk (including from surface water) and on the existing drainage network. Sustainable methods of drainage would be considered at both at individual unit level and site level.

Any future planning application, as mentioned above, would have regard to local planning policy in terms of the standards required.

It is worth noting that such a development on this site would be in accordance with the Development Plan (e.g. Policy 11 of the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy) which supports small scale infill development being permitted on suitable sites within the main built up areas of villages. It adds that:

'Local Plans and/or Neighbourhood Plans may define village boundaries or more detailed village boundary criteria, taking account of the character of the village. Village boundaries can provide a tool to plan positively for growth'...

Open Space

Importantly, in bringing forward this site for small-scale development to accommodate the village's housing needs, it would also help protect the rural setting of Hargrave as it would not affect any of the designated 'Green Spaces'. It would enable these to be retained to the south and west of the site. The scheme itself would seek to further reinforce the rural character by enhanced boundary planting to strengthen the existing vegetation surrounding the site and help protect and enhance biodiversity.

We hope that this information is of assistance and welcome the opportunity for a 'Zoom' meeting with the Steering Group to discuss the site and proposition in more detail. Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague, Helen Pearson-Flett on 01908 666276 or email hflett@davidlock.com or dchadwick@davidlock.com

Yours sincerely



Duncan Chadwick
Partner

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Appendix 1 – Photographs of other Bastion schemes

Please note the photographs below are provided as examples of the different Bastion products to demonstrate how the company tailors the architectural design, materials and unit types to respond positively to the local context and local need.



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