

# Luvli Homes

## Concept, context, mission

**Amended for "Proposal C" February 2021**

**Land at Clive Hall Drive  
Longstanton CB24 3DT**

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Andrew R Taylor v52  
February 2021

\* Luvli Homes is a trade name of Resolute Estates Ltd.

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## Our development mission

- 1 This document has been prepared by Luvli Homes to support an application for development of 0.28 ha of land, part of a site of 0.8 ha, located on the north-east side of Clive Hall Drive, Longstanton, CB24 3DT.
- 2 Because we have split our land ownership, we shall now refer to the different land areas as follows:

0.28 ha within the built settlement	"The site for six"
0.53 ha of new green space	"The new green space"
0.81 ha, constituting our total ownership	"The Site"
- 3 We have studied the positions taken by the Council with regard to our first application for development of the site in 2016. Since then, we have corresponded with the Council from time to time and have provided an immense amount of information. We submitted this present application on 14/10/2020. It immediately became apparent to us that our proposal would not be acceptable. Now we submit an amended proposal, as agreed by the Council in a meeting with our case officer on 7 January.
- 4 However, despite a very thorough presentation of our case, we believe it is possible that the Council maintains the validity of certain objections raised in response to our first application. As a result, in managing this amended application, we have seen no alternative than assume that the Council's position is unchanged.
- 5 This document has therefore been amended only so as to apply to the new, reduced "Proposal C". We are grateful to the Council for permitting this amendment and agreeing the necessary extension of time.

## We shall give you beautiful houses

- 6 We shall not bring to the Council "just another scheme". The country needs houses.

We want to help to provide those houses. We want to provide the houses that people most want and that they will most enjoy living in. Of course, six houses is a drop in the ocean, as is any adverse impact which could be suggested. We described below other multiple benefits of our proposal.

- 7 We intend to build out the site, using modern methods of construction, superb design and fast production with **minimal disruption to the lives of local people**.
- 8 Through our new homes division “Luvli Homes”, we are a house-builder, constructing beautifully designed and engineered modern homes of which the superstructure is factory produced so that work on site is limited to provision of roads, services, foundations and other substructures and ground works, followed by fitting out after construction of the superstructure. Our range will be available to any developer in East Anglia.
- 9 We see our mission as providing hugely beneficial change in a way that people will accept and adore. Luvli Homes’ mantra for every development will be “**More light, more space, more storage.**” We believe that lack of those three features is a common thread running through all estate development of the last 70 years. Developers today tend to assume that when someone buys a house they will shoot off to IKEA to install the necessary storage. That is expensive for the new residents. Furthermore, it may often be difficult to find the space where it will be most useful. To overcome that issue, we shall provide unquestionably enough storage to accommodate our journey through life from prams, buggies and baby requirements through large toys for small children, and then onwards through bicycles and ski gear to the contents of a home office and the accumulated precious possessions that we treasure as we age.
- 10 Our intention is to provide homes at two levels of completion. In addition to providing complete homes, subject to fitting-out of options, we shall also offer homes as structural envelopes to self-builders on the basis that they buy the site then enter into a contract with us to provide a superstructure which they can then fit out in accordance with their dreams and plans. Under this arrangement:
  - 10.1 The prospective buyer is absolutely free of the up front costs of investigation, planning application, expert reports and the stress that accompanies this stage.
  - 10.2 The prospective buyer is free of the cost and stress and compliance issues which are an inevitable part of the construction process. Instead, he/she can spend their time and money on the fitting out of every aspect of their home, whether they wish to save money or create a private palace – or both.
- 11 We believe this form of self-build is the only practical way forward which satisfies the aspirations of so many people for self-build. It is also fundamental to our mission to lead the fight to make house prices affordable for families before they are 20 years into their working life.

## Light, space and our precious environment

- 12 The European Commission reminded us only a year ago that 25 to 30% of all waste in Europe is generated by the construction industry. Much of that waste is heavy, dirty and expensive to remove. It cannot easily be recycled .
- 13 By using timber-based materials in factory construction:

- 13.1 data for the basic structure can be fed into software which will automate the production of structural panels and/or timber frames which form the basis of factory production.
  - 13.2 far finer tolerances can be achieved than could ever be possible using bricks and blocks and working in cold, wet, dark weather.
  - 13.3 off-cuts and other waste material from one operation can become the input material in some other operation.
  - 13.4 on-site production time is reduced, so that houses can be constructed and occupied more quickly.
  - 13.5 on-site noise, dust and congestion are substantially avoided.
- 14 The current buzzword is “Modern Methods of Construction”. However, modern methods also allow us to use modern materials which are constantly evolving so as to provide greater choice at lower cost.
  - 15 It is often overlooked that housing constructed substantially of timber produced in a factory also **weighs far less** than traditional concrete or brick and block work. That means we don’t have to dig deep to produce adequate foundations. Of even greater importance is the reduced requirement for archaeological investigation resulting from the reduction in deep trenching.
  - 16 Depending on the soil structure and the likelihood of working over the top of our archaeological heritage, we can use pads and rafts rather than walls of concrete. In that way, we can save on mined aggregates, heavy transport, time on site, the extent of archaeological investigation and much more.
  - 17 There are many ways in which technology can be applied to housebuilding. We intend to be at the forefront of that technological change.
  - 18 Using modern materials we shall provide roof structures which do away with old-fashioned trussed rafters, opening up internal space either to deliver additional daylight by extending room height to the roof or to provide an additional “half storey” of living space. (In this case the space will be used to lower the ridge so that views into the site are less obtrusive).
  - 19 All around us, we see that volume builders achieve adequate thermal performance at the lowest cost by providing comparatively small windows. By constructing the superstructure of a house from engineered panels, using largely timber and timber products, we shall be able to provide **extraordinarily high levels of insulation**, more than sufficient to meet required standards, **even with much higher levels of light**. What is more, the energy cost of running these Luvli Homes will be minimal.
  - 20 We lean hard on passive solar design. We agree with the Council in the definition of that term as:

*“Passive solar design is designing a building to take maximum advantage of the light and heat from the sun and natural ventilation, and can if designed correctly, significantly reduce the overall energy consumption of a building. This can be achieved by the location, grouping, orientation and layout of buildings along with landscape features and the appropriate use of thermal mass and natural ventilation within a building.”*

Whilst the most vociferous opponents of fossil fuels argue for energy provision from manufactured products, we argue that what really matters is the total carbon cost, including both manufacture and end-of-life disposal, and not merely the day-to-day operational cost of energy. Engineered products requiring a gigantic energy input in their manufacture happen to be very profitable whereas passive technology depends only on the brains and skills of architects and a small number of others. As a result, there is constant market pressure to buy “products” so that the sellers can buy more cars, holidays and aeroplanes. Our architects achieved by design large part of what others achieve using machines.

- 21 Furthermore, we will not be persuaded to export our carbon footprint to giant Chinese industrial complexes digging out rare earth minerals in Africa for incorporation into **our** solar panels, but rather to examine how design and construction of low energy buildings can leave the quartz, the cobalt and other mineral resources in the ground, and leave Congolese children to play and grow, and precious rain-forest wildlife to live on for another 100,000 years. (Ref: “Planet of the Humans” at <https://vimeo.com/423114384>)

## Flexible living

- 22 The design of every “Luvli” home will take account of the way our lives have been changing over the last 20 years and continue to change today. In particular, there are now over 4 million of us who work from home. The current pandemic is likely substantially to increase that number, from among the legions who have been made aware for the first time of the benefits of homework. Much of that work requires more space than the use of a cramped dining room table. We suggest that demand for houses providing space far greater than the present national standard will increase substantially over the next few years until equilibrium is achieved.
- 23 Our ageing population also requires not only more accommodation suitable for older couples and singles but also consideration of care at home or with relatives.
- 24 Finally, and more recently, there are now nearly 4 million 20 to 34-year-olds now living with parents. These people are not included in any list of minorities or others who qualify for special benefits or attention. They simply have to put up with their less-than-adequate accommodation because it is the best available
- 25 These changes indicate that account should be taken not only in the construction of houses now but also on the proposition that house design should be as flexible as possible to allow house owners to re-plan how they use their accommodation without having to move house every five years.
- 26 The six houses we propose will follow that philosophy.

## Yes in my back yard - but houses must be factory built

- 27 The single most powerful and universal objection to new development is that everyone in England who has succeeded in arranging his/her life so as to live in a beautiful place, objects to nearby residential development. You can break down the objections into:
- 27.1 despoliation of rural views;
- 27.2 reduced amenity and fear of the unknown;

27.3 reduction in house values;

I take each of them in turn.

- 28 Rural views are spoiled largely as a result of the sheer size of modern residential developments. Few people would argue with the proposition that to look out on open country – even the most boring field of cereals as far as the eye can see, is preferable to looking out on a sea of red-brick boxes. In the White Paper of August 2020, I note the reference on page 14

*“As the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission found in its interim report last year, too often what we build is of low quality and considered ugly by local residents”.*

- 29 The 2<sup>nd</sup> item – reduced amenity, also results largely from the imposition of a great blob of new development being thrust onto the edge of a town or village. The proportionate impact on local services is largely disregarded by local planning authorities. Local people can get together to make their objections as strong and loud as possible but ultimately the local authority wins. As a result, any news of development immediately creates strong opposition in anticipation of a battle and extreme bad feeling between local inhabitants, the local planning authority, and subsequent new residents.

- 30 The reduction in amenity is likely to be perceived differently by different groups of people. For example, a large influx of people results in local people having to change their lives for a host of different reasons, for example:

30.1 rural peace being shattered by noise from schools and sports facilities.

30.2 more people driving more cars and causing more danger, more noise.

30.3 the breakup of a community “spirit” because suddenly the people you meet on your street every day are no longer mostly friends, but mostly strangers.

30.4 immediately local facilities are suddenly crowded. The queue in the post office is extended. You can’t get an appointment with your GP. Your injured dog seems to be at even greater risk as you wait for veterinary attention.

30.5 fear of the unknown – that is that is fear that the incomers will fail to comply with what is generally accepted as civilised behaviour. It is in human nature that we learn to understand who we can trust among those around us. Part of our survival technique, since animals first walked the Earth, has been to find a safe place to sleep, eat and breed. When we have found it, we defend it. End of story.

30.6 The last item is reduction in house values. Over the last 50 years, inflation alone has given every house owner a gigantic boost to the value of his/her total financial assets. This has been cost free and almost certain. As a result, for most homeowners today, the house they live in is their most important financial asset, so naturally they will always fight to preserve its value. The reduction in the value of their house arises from the other perceived and actual disadvantages I have discussed above. Usually, the reduction in value never actually materialises, but it is nevertheless feared.

- 31 Our goal is to challenge those fears and beliefs so as to persuade people who love the English countryside that not every development has to be of red brick boxes; not every

occupant has to be a potential thief; not every new owner has to own a vicious dog or drive furiously. Our tiny scheme will not spoil the feeling of community. On the contrary, people in the area will extend their goodwill and give the “benefit of the doubt” to a mere six new families, let alone the several hundred in most South Cambridgeshire developments.

- 32 We shall construct our business model in such a way as to provide clear benefit to local people so that they positively encourage businesses like ours to build the houses that they and their sons and daughters will yearn to live in.

# Background to our proposal

## Sustainability

- 33 The Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD provides approximately 100,000 words setting out the requirements of the Council in accordance with the title of the document. Paragraph 1.3 reads as follows:

*“Sustainable design and construction . . . . takes account of the resources used in construction, and of the environmental, social and economic impacts of the construction process itself and how buildings are designed and used. It is increasingly recognised that one of the most important factors in delivering a successful development scheme is ensuring that the principles of sustainable design and construction form a key part of development briefs, and are therefore integrated into the design from the outset.”*

We have followed that requirement in every element of our site design. Details are provided in our Design and Access Statement.

## Distinctiveness? Yes, distinctively beautiful and appropriate to their setting

- 34 We believe it is important that a development should fit its immediate surroundings comfortably so as to provide a valuable incremental addition to its location.
- 35 The site for six is a mere 2800 m<sup>2</sup> on the edge of the village. Quite coincidentally, there is an existing unkempt hedge which splits the Site of 8000 m<sup>2</sup> so as to provide a neat and clean physical edge to the settlement. The aerial photograph we have included in our submitted documents makes this very clear.
- 36 We intend substantially to increase the bulk of the existing hedge so as to provide a new and powerful natural edge to the village, and consequent separation of the remaining 5,100 m<sup>2</sup> of our ownership which now becomes part of the green separation between the village and Northstowe.
- 37 Our proposal does fit into and respond to its immediate environment but even more importantly, we shall build homes today that people still long to move into in 50 years time, just as people today love the “period homes” of yesterday.
- 38 The starting point in our design philosophy is to look around us and note with both amusement and sadness the excitement and glory of architecture with the label “modern” and the applause it receives from “progressive” architects. The sadness arises because it is in the nature of human beings that the home we love is a place where we feel comfortable and secure, and on what we usually refer to as a “human scale”.
- 39 If the buyers of our houses come looking for uniquely different shapes and colours, they may be disappointed. We do not believe that “Modern methods of construction” should be equated with strange room shapes and novelties which soon irritate.

- 40 We believe that modern methods of construction should imply use of modern materials and modern technology to create houses that fit their environment so that both owners and visitors instantly feel a sense of place and comfort rather than emphasising the “wow” factor. Our homes will limit the wow factor to considerations of the space, the light, the extent of storage and the multiple small thoughtful points of design which improve people’s lives.

## No harm to any significant historic asset

- 41 The NPPF states at paragraph 196:

*“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to **the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.**”*

We note:

- 41.1 In this case the designated heritage asset can only refer to the entire Longstanton Conservation Area. We have argued elsewhere, and provided an expert report, to the effect that the proposal does not harm the Conservation Area.
- 41.2 Back in November 2005, all of the green space between what was then the boundary of the village settlement on the one hand and the Ministry of Defence land which subsequently has become part of Northstowe, on the other hand, was brought into the Conservation Area, not on account of any historic value but purely to enlarge the green gap between the old settlement and the new proposal.
- 41.3 It is clear that the Council did not consider that any of this land (including the subject site) had any significant historic value because policy NH/1, written under the heading “Conservation Area and Green Separation at Longstanton” provides **no reference whatever to historic value** but instead suggests:
- “The area will contain only open land uses, such as playing fields, allotments and cemeteries, which will contribute towards effective separation between these communities.”*
- 41.4 The precise words of this policy have been carried forward since the local development plan of 2007. For a more detailed explanation of this subject, see our reports “Longstanton Conservation Area - Re-appraisal” and “Commentary on 2007 Inspectors Report”.
- 41.5 The only documentary evidence the Council put forward on this matter in connection with the First Application was first, the Longstanton Conservation Area Appraisal written in 2005, and second, the very brief report of one Celia Wignall which bears little relationship to the facts on the ground.

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## Why residential development is the best use of this site

- 42 We now suggest that our proposal is not merely the optimum viable use, but the only viable use.
- 43 In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the whole of the Site was undoubtedly part of the garden and orchard to Clive Hall. The new green space this clearly marked as orchard on old maps. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that the site for six was a garden of some sort. The Hall occupied approximately 3 ha of land between Woodside and the north eastern extent of Mills Lane. We assume that situation pertained until the final remnants of the Hall were removed to make way for the present small estate accessed off Woodside and Clive Hall Drive in or around 2008. In any event, the Site has been out of a residential use only since the last remnants of Clive Hall with cleared. We assume this was most probably immediately before construction commenced..
- 44 The site was never part of the land north of Mills Lane known as “The Paddocks” and revered by the Council for its alleged historic value. Until around 1985, it was not even in the same parish. We now submit that the basis of the false statements in the delegation report and refusal notice of May 2017 and the present-day confusion at South Cambs Hall on this point, arise because officers have simply misunderstood the history and thereby misinterpreted the Conservation Area Assessment of November 2005.
- 45 As for possible future use of the site, its small size excludes practical use of modern agricultural methods. Agricultural contractors for example, will not be interested in working in an enclosure smaller than 4 ha. Furthermore, arable farming creates a great deal of noise and dust. There are also problems in chemical spraying so close to housing. There are five alternatives: current use OR one of the three alternatives proposed by the Council in policy NH/1 for allotments or a cemetery or playing fields, OR our proposal for residential use.
- 45.1 **Agricultural use:** use of the site would be limited to keeping of sheep, pigs, goats or other small animals on a non-commercial basis. However, there will still be an ongoing problem because animals require close and frequent attention. It is unlikely that someone requiring grazing land would be interested in renting a small paddock on the edge of the village and over which he or she would have little or no control.
- 45.2 **Allotments:** allotment holders are usually people with small gardens. All of the houses at the southern end of Longstanton are substantial houses with gardens easily large enough to allocate a portion to household sustenance. Demand for an allotment is therefore likely to be low. Furthermore, allotment use would generate more traffic than would residential development, whilst on-site parking would require a level of development which would not be justified on the basis of the low rental value of allotment use.
- 45.3 **Cemetery:** we assume that qualification as a modern new cemetery would include woodland burial. Combined with our larger adjacent paddock to create a total area of 0.8 ha, this could be an attractive proposition. “Woodland burial” is increasing steadily in popularity throughout the country. However, this use requires on-site management as well as off-site office facilities. Existing woodland burial sites we have examined tend to be between 3 ha and 10 ha. The most attractive sites incorporate semi-natural woodland planting and foot paths and are therefore many times larger than this site.
- 45.4 **Sports facilities:** we cannot imagine that any sports facility could be viable on so small a site. Every sport requires people and extensive car parking. All require buildings to house maintenance facilities and most are not viable

without a pavilion or restroom. There would also be issues around traffic movement and noise, both heaviest at the weekend, when local people would no doubt prefer a quiet life.

## Obligation of the Council to find small sites

46 So much for what we cannot do. We note however that paragraph 68 of the NPPF states:

*“68. Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:*

*(a) identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, **land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare**; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;”*

47 We submit that our site satisfies the above criterion precisely. Our site is perfect for a small residential development and not suitable for any other purpose.

## Enhancing local amenity and expanding natural habitats

48 The subject site is in an attractive location on the edge of the village notwithstanding that it is surrounded as to 70% of its boundary by residential development. Objections to our previous application were gathered in by the former district councillor who lives close by. These objections were based largely on a wish to protect private amenity and house values.

49 **Whatever the outcome of those pre-application discussions, we are confident that we shall be able to increase the width of all hedges in and around the “site for six” to at least 2m and to a height of at least 2.5m. As far as possible we will enforce that provision through a buyers covenant. We shall also plant a number of small trees on the site. Most importantly, we intend to add a 4 m width of shrubs and trees to the east side of the site for six. Combined with the existing small trees this will provide a very solid and well protected habitat for birds and small animals. We shall thereby provide at least double our obligation to increase biodiversity gain.**

50 The boundary hedge with Mills Lane shows indications of having been consistently cut back to a height of 1.2 m. So far as we are in a position to control hedge cutting on rural roads, we intend to allow that hedge to increase in both height and width, both to limit the views into and out of the site and to provide another increase in ecological habitat. Every fence that we might install will contain small gaps for hedgehog routes. Unfortunately, we shall not be able to compel owners to maintain either of these but we shall strongly encourage them to do so.

51 The houses on the Clive Hall Drive development are already well screened. Until recently one of the bungalows to the north west of Mills Lane have looked into the site over the low hedge which, until five years ago, was regularly maintained – presumably

for stock security. Of course that will no longer be an issue when the site has been developed and the hedges grow ever larger.

- 52 The boundary with the park homes development on the south-western corner of the site is presently delineated by a low conventional hedge in poor condition. Subject to expert advice, and discussion with the owner, we shall either expand it or replant it so that it will ultimately match the other hedges around the site.

## Effect on the local landscape

- 53 We refer specifically to the visual impact assessment of Kirsten Bowden dated July 2016. Her assessment and her photographs are as valid today as they were three years ago. However, distant views will change beyond recognition over the next few years as a result of Northstowe. We do have a number of professional panorama views into and out of the site if the Council requires them. We have not included them at this point
- 54 We note that the Council has now given permission to Homes England – the Northstowe developer – for construction of a substantial footpath and cycle track across Manor field. This was bought in 2016 at a price which makes it the most expensive piece of land in the entire Northstowe development. The permission is subject to a detailed management and maintenance plan for the remainder of the land. However, Homes England has made no concession in that contract which could prevent it from submitting a planning application for housing development at any time. We suggest that the Council would have some difficulty in refusing any such application since, in practical terms, the application would be made by the Minister.
- 55 An alternative development of the Northstowe land north of Mills Lane would be for playing fields, as presently permitted by policy NH/1. Playing fields today would involve complete terracing of this sloping land, development of a very substantial car park with access road and of course all the usual buildings associated with outdoor sporting activity.
- 56 We refer now to the concerns expressed by nearby residents concerning viewpoints from and around their homes. We suggest that their objections are misplaced. We note as follows:
- 56.1 only a single house in the Clive Hall Drive development has just one small window overlooking our site. Similarly, only a single bungalow opposite the site on Mills Lane, also has a small window from which views of our site are even possible.
- 56.2 When the boundary hedge on Mills Lane grows to the planned 2.5m height, our development will be virtually invisible to pedestrians on Mills Lane.
- 56.3 Local residents will soon acquire extensive views of the taller buildings likely to be constructed on the development proposed for Northstowe Phase 3, just beyond our site. That is what people will notice – not two or three rooftops on Clive Hall Drive.
- 57 The Council has in the past also suggested that our previous proposal would adversely affect the views from Long Lane. **There are no such views.** Their assessment was taken from the 2005 Conservation Area Appraisal. However that document did not specifically make a connection between Long Lane and our site. The references in that

document were to the entire green space filling the gap between Rampton Road and St Michaels Lane. **It is a fact that no part of our site can be identified from any part of Long Lane.** Accordingly it is extremely unlikely even that rooftops will be visible from Long Lane.

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## The benefits of our proposal weighed in the balance

- 58 After the Council agreed to our amending the original proposal, we considered the possibility that the Council might continue to support propositions which we have consistently believed to be untrue. In order to be certain that our proposal provided sufficient benefit for the Council, or other decision-maker, could not reasonably refuse to grant permission, we put forward the following alternative development proposals as options for consideration by the Council.
- 59 For reasons unknown to us, the Council has not seen fit to acknowledge receipt of these proposals or to comment. We take that as an indication that the Council is likely to refuse our application. That is why we have effectively abandoned the new green space as we press forward for a mere six houses on land area of around 2800 m<sup>2</sup>.
- 60 Nonetheless, we believe that each of the five schemes submitted is more beneficial to the Council than for the new green space to be left undeveloped. Accordingly, we now say that should the Council decide by 28 February to accept one of the alternative schemes, then we would be prepared to take it forward in lieu of this present proposal, subject only to a grant for this proposal by way of backstop.
- 61 In summary, the position until 28 February is that this Proposal C is our amended application and unless otherwise negotiated, the Council has refused each of the earlier proposals, details of which we set out briefly below.

## Proposals sent to the Council in these precise terms

### Proposal number one

We will build 20 houses, of which only 8 will be for market sale. **The remaining 12 will be “affordable”** in the wide definition used by the Government today. The affordables could be more in number and configured to the precise requirements of the Council.

Of course we will mix the market units with affordables. I strongly favour avoiding a ghetto attitude. It is absolutely wrong that any section of society should be identified as being inferior by pushing them into a separate section of an estate.

However, it is possible that housing associations may be constrained by budgets to buy only small houses. I see that Government has recently announced an increase in cash available to them but housing associations will discuss only firm proposals, preferably when planning permission has been obtained. I therefore need your decision first.

I mentioned 12 houses but of course, what really matters is the number of people accommodated. If you want 30 neat, one-bedroom flats, in blocks no more than two storeys high, we should be as happy to accommodate you as if you wanted 6 x 4-bedroom houses. **However, I can assure you that we will on no account reduce the quality of our product – low u-values, great natural light, loads of storage, under-floor heating, part triple glazing.**

This proposal entails our giving up to the Council well over an acre of land, to be maintained by the prospective new residents, but we shall achieve some value by using the tiny scheme

for publicity purposes in promoting our eco-homes and the sheer attraction of a small scheme at the edge of a village.

### **Proposal number two**

As above – 8 x market plus 12 x affordables, except that we will sell the 12 affordable homes as “Starter Homes” at a discount of **30% below market price** under whatever terms the Minister might approve or as the Council may otherwise decide. To satisfy other requirements of this scheme, we would be aiming to build houses with a market value of around £300,000, giving a discounted price of around £210,000. **On 12 houses, local residents will save around £1,000,000. This wipes out the entire uplift in value for the whole site, from obtaining planning permission**, leaving us only with a small builder’s profit.

### **Proposal number three**

We will build only 12 units – all for market sale. That low density will allow us plenty of space to intensify the planting both around the perimeter and within the site. For that grant, we would be prepared to make a section 106 **payment of £1,000,000 to the Council**, payable simply as £83,400 out of proceeds of sale as each sale is completed. Simple to set up, simple to administer.

### **Proposal number four**

Still working on 8 x market plus 12 x affordable, another alternative would be to treat the site as a “rural exception”. **The site satisfies the conditions perfectly.** Furthermore, after 6 years of encouragement from the Government, the District has **only five rural exception sites**. The law does provide for a certain number of market homes, sufficient to make the proposal viable. Forgive my reminding you that the Council’s publication “What is an exception site” includes the following text:

*“Average house prices in South Cambridgeshire September 2018 £441,539.  
A property is assumed to be unaffordable if the monthly cost is greater than 1/3 of monthly gross income, or greater than 45% of net income.”*

We have set down a reminder of the text as to what qualifies as a rural exception site in the addendum following this letter.

### **Proposal number five**

Yet another alternative would be for us to build only eight houses on that **half of the land** nearest to Clive Hall Drive, leaving **almost an acre of green space**. We would gift that to an appropriate ecology-based organisation after planting and landscape work, at our cost, to their design. That would create an acre of semi-wild area of solid greenery, providing substantial additional habitat for animals and birds. It would become a precious educational feature for groups of children and older students and maybe open to the public (no dogs!) for quiet enjoyment.

The Council has consistently made much noise about green separation, the Conservation Area and local landscape. This option is specifically intended to enable the Council to accept a mere eight houses to complete the approximate existing line of the settlement boundary in exchange for an acre of special nature reserve.

### **Proposal number six**

This proposal is the formal amended proposal which is covered in the documentation already submitted on 14 October together with the amended versions of many of those documents, of which this is just one. Specifically, we have cut the size of the site right back so that the boundary links up the extent of the built edge of the village that both sides and accordingly does not protrude even 1 m into the area referred to by the Council as “green separation”. This amended application is for a mere six units.

## **In summary, a refusal of permission is a refusal of:**

- 1 12 (60%) affordable homes with only eight for market sale; alternatively
- 2 a Starter Homes scheme heavily promoted by the Government which could place as much as **£1 million in the hands of lucky local residents**; alternatively
- 3 Only 12 detached houses for market sale, with greatly enhanced green coverage plus a payment of **£1,000,000 cash to the Council**, payable proportionately as each unit is sold.
- 4 the opportunity to demonstrate the Council's willingness to identify and promote "rural exception" sites for the benefit of Cambridge Acre or other organisations providing similar services.
- 5 eight houses on half the site and a **gift of 1 acre of land** to an approved (preferably local) ecological organisation, our having paid for the landscape work as that organisation will have specified.
- 6 six homes each on a plot of approximately 400 m<sup>2</sup> with zero disturbance to the alleged green separation, zero disturbance to landscape in or around the site, 40% increase in ecological value.

We have already told the Council that we leave open all of the above offers until 28 February – or later by further negotiation.

in most of the above cases, the opportunity to demonstrate the Council's determination to defeat the problems set out in the following statement which appears in the 2018 Local Plan at 7.44:

*"There is a high level of housing need in the district with 3,378 households on the Council housing register as of March 2013. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment records that identifies that 11,838 affordable homes will be required to meet current and arising need in the period to 2031, a considerable proportion of all the homes to be built to 2031, however the delivery of such housing will be constrained by development viability, the availability of land, and the need to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities."*

## **Summary of benefits of this present amended application**

- 62 **Note: many of the items on this list are actually ideas or conditions taken from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-affordable-housing-funding> . Some are actual conditions, demonstrating their importance**

### **62.1 Super-eco:**

Low u-value through massive use of insulation and careful "passive" design.  
Timber - so a carbon store  
Sustainable timber - EU certified  
Used water heat recycled

- 62.2 The Natural England Land Classification states that the site is "Other land, primarily in non-agricultural use". It is not "green infrastructure" as defined in PPG Para 004 Ref ID: 8-004 of 21 July 2019. We note that the Council has told us specifically that the subject site was formerly the Orchard of the former Clive

Hall, the last remains of which were removed to accommodate the present Clive Hall development. Accordingly, our land is not technically "green field" but residential.

62.3 Not green field. The whole of the Site and in particular the site for six has been in domestic use for approximately the last 300 years, terminating only when the last remnants of Clive Hall were removed to enable construction of the Clive Hall Estate. (We do not yet have evidence of that date but will shortly make enquiry of the Council, for details of the planning application for that development, which will provide some indication.)

62.4 No square red boxes

62.5 Modern but eternal rural style that fits the environment - far from urban.

62.6 Optimum viable use, including abandoning over 1 acre as green separation, managed as recreation area by the owners of our houses.

62.7 The NPPF states at paragraph 196:

*"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*

We absolutely maintain that the site cannot harm any significant historic asset nor its setting for the many reasons set out in other accompanying documents. Nonetheless, if the Council continues to believe otherwise than we say, in the alternative, that the benefits listed in this section by far outweigh any harm which could be attributed to the development, all as provided in paragraph 196, above

62.8 Boundary planting will be increased. Total additional planting will exceed the extent of the present hedges around the site for six, by at least 20%.

62.9 Each of our proposals complies with Gov preference for:  
modern methods of construction  
satisfies Government requirement for 10% of assessed need to be provided by sites smaller than 1 ha  
small builder

62.10 The offer of £1 million specifically to local people on terms drawn by the Council.

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## Alternative to Northstowe

63 It has been suggested that the sheer size of the Northstowe development will provide more than enough houses for local need. We submit however, that the entire process of development of the Northstowe concept through to today's level of construction has been based on Northstowe as a "town". This understanding is based on the following points:

- 63.1 every housebuilder at Northstowe has marketed its houses as a location suitable for commuting to Cambridge.
- 63.2 it has been estimated that the population of Northstowe after completion in a few years time will exceed 25,000 people. By contrast, there are no specific figures available for the expectation of the number of new jobs or other indicators of new employment in the Longstanton area. This appears to confirm that Homes England and the Council regard Northstowe as a dormitory town to Cambridge City.
- 63.3 Northstowe has been designed so that the guided bus provides an obvious energy-saving and extremely convenient route southwards.
- 63.4 the car park for the Longstanton guided bus is gigantic. Furthermore, as far as we can identify, there are no plans for the introduction of an industrial or business sector within Northstowe. This is further confirmation that the Council intends that all of the residents of Northstowe will be employed in Cambridge City.
- 64 Against that suburban background, we have no doubt that our small development at the southern end of the village will serve the market **for those people who specifically do not wish to live in the urban development at Northstowe**. The occupiers of our mere six houses will immediately join established residents at the south end of Longstanton village with its strong sense of its own community and place.
- 65 The homes we shall build will be specifically designed to fit the village environment and the people who occupy them (so far as they are owner occupied) will be people who specifically choose **not** to live at Northstowe. Indeed, we note that Councillor Aidan van de Weyer is on record as saying:

*"People growing up here need somewhere to live and by building more homes we will help deliver a range of properties that, when you add up all your living costs, are affordable for people to live in. **I am a parent and want my children to be able to get on the housing ladder near where they grew up, as will thousands of other parents in the area.**"*

*It is never possible to put forward a plan that has complete consensus but if we had been in power at the Council when this process began, the plan put forward would have been different. However, we need to put the best interests of the area as a whole first and **our job now is to ensure that we put existing communities, especially those living nearest to where new homes will be built, at the heart of our development plans.**"*

That is exactly what we hope you will allow us to do.

**End**