

Plot Passports – your ticket to fast-track planning permission
Find out more on page 4

MARCH 2018



OverView

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Progress on site continues to blossom!

Spring has sprung and the Graven Hill site is a hive of activity as the former military base becomes a hub for the UK's largest self-build and custom build development!

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Message from the managing director

It's bizarre to think we are already approaching April. On the one hand, the time seems to be flying by; on the other so much has happened in the first quarter of this year it's hard to believe it's still only March!

Already this year we have hosted a successful sales event, welcomed self-builders on site, held a number of fact-finding site visits and are in the final stages of preparing to welcome our first residents into our Tailored Finish homes. You can read more about this in the coming pages.

With so many things to celebrate already this year, it's hard to pick one thing out. But something that is worth highlighting is the rise in completions in March. To date this month, we have completed on five Golden Brick plots, meaning each of these purchasers is now ready to start building their dream home! Follow along with the progress on our website and Social Media channels.

The surge in plot sales comes at a time when activity at Graven Hill is at its highest and the opportunities to move there

have never been more readily available. With self-build, custom build, Help to Buy and Tailored Finish options all to choose from, there really is something for everyone and we are starting to see that reflected in the rising number of plot completions.

It is also reflected in the continual successes of our open events; this month we were fully booked in advance for our Self-Build Made Simple event featuring Charlie Luxton. We have begun to recognise some familiar faces who join us at every opportunity to maximise their knowledge and take advantage of the seminars. However, for us it is always encouraging to welcome those who are new to the Graven Hill project and taking their first steps on their self or custom build journey.



Despite the increasing number of completions, you don't need to panic; there are still plots and Tailored Finish homes available to buy. You can call into our Plot Shop in Bicester town centre to find out more from our friendly Sales team, but don't delay; demand is on the rise and your dream home is closer than you think.

Karen Curtin, Managing Director

A priceless prize with Charlie

As if building a home at Graven Hill was not exciting enough, we are offering you the opportunity to fulfil your dream with the help and support of Charlie Luxton Design!

As a long-standing friend of Graven Hill, Charlie and his team are offering to share their knowledge, skills and experience with one lucky self-builder. This exclusive purchaser competition will give you the chance to win a concept design for your dream home!

Charlie Luxton Design prides itself on creating architecture for the 21st Century by working with designs that respond to local materials, traditions and climates. With over 12 years' experience designing environmental buildings; sustainability is integral to the work of the company.

The winner of the competition will meet Charlie and his team, who will work with you to understand your aspirations for your home. They will then create two different concept designs that meet the brief of your chosen plot at Graven Hill.

You can then work with the team, or a supplier of your choice, to develop your designs for the technical drawing stage, before submitting for planning and having your dream home built!

To enter the competition visit www.gravenhill.co.uk/charlie and let us know what you want from your new home and how it will change your life.



Progress on site

Less than five years ago Graven Hill was home to the soldiers of the 23 Pioneer Regiment, in whose honour the Pioneer Square development in Bicester town centre is named. Fast forward to now, and the site is a hive of activity as the former military base becomes the base for the UK's largest self and custom build development!

The Pioneers

Two years ago we welcomed the first ten self-builders onto Graven Hill to have their progress documented as part of a specially commissioned series, My Grand Design, presented by Kevin McCloud. The owners of these plots, known as the Pioneers, are now nearing completion and will have their journey broadcast on Channel 4.

Golden Brick

The end of 2017 saw the commencement of construction of the foundations for the first self-build properties and now, in March, we see these completing. With the success of plot sales and more completions confirmed, even more building work will be taking place as we start to transform more foundations into homes.



The Kirkmans completed on their Golden Brick plot earlier this month

Tailored Finish New Build Homes

As you scan your eyes across the site, you will see homes in various stages of construction. We have



Our Tailored Finish new build terraced houses showing their faces after having their scaffolding removed.

brick walls starting to come up, scaffolding starting to come down and even tilers on their marks ready to get started on bathroom interiors.

There are all sorts of building works taking place across the site; but soon there will be signs of life too. The first of our Tailored Finish terraces are finishing up and we hope that by April, we will be preparing to welcome our first residents on to the site who will set up home in these properties. We don't think they will be lonely for long as we are anticipating the first custom and self-builders to join them later this year!

Partnerships

The foundations for the success at Graven Hill are built around strong partnerships.

From the beginning, we retained a strong partnership with Cherwell District Council, who acquired the site and formed the Graven Hill Village Development Company.

Since then, we have extended relationships. Last year, we

announced West Midlands based housing association, Bromford, would take responsibility for the initial 59 affordable homes comprising affordable rent and shared ownership opportunities.

The Government agreed to extend its Help to Buy support to those buying Tailored Finish homes at Graven Hill. By applying for a 20 per cent equity loan from the Government, customers would only need a five per cent cash deposit and a 75 per cent mortgage to cover the rest.



Backed by
HM Government

Away from the residential development, EP Barrus of Bicester announced it would be the first occupant for some of the one million square feet of commercial space at Graven Hill.

Architectural designer and TV presenter Charlie Luxton has also remained a good friend of Graven Hill, sharing his knowledge and expertise at our events and even offering his skills to one lucky self-builder (which you can read more about on page 2).

Educating and inspiring at Self-Build Made Simple

This month, in addition to welcoming over 80 people to our Self-Build Made Simple information event on 10 March, we hosted a number of visitors on site.

Sir Oliver Letwin visited us on a fact-finding mission to find out more about housing developments in the district and was impressed with the products that Graven Hill had to offer. Other fact-finders included guests from Uttlesford District Council and Real Estate students from Oxford Brookes, all of whom were left inspired from hearing more about the Graven Hill vision and experiencing the site up-close.

Whilst there have been some familiar faces at previous events, our Self-Build Made Simple event saw a raft of new prospective customers eager to learn more about the opportunities on offer at Graven Hill.

As per our previous events, the day was divided into seminars, workshops and one-to-one discussions. Graven Hill managing director, Karen Curtin, gave an overview of the project before TV presenter and architectural designer, Charlie Luxton, shared his words of wisdom on self and custom build.

The message was clear; keep it simple. Prioritise the structure and construction over the fixtures and fittings. The interior accessories and décor can easily be changed and updated in the future, unlike the foundations of a building.

A key element in keeping things simple related to budget. Agree a realistic budget and stick to it. Set aside some contingency funds for a rainy day but decide what is realistically affordable and don't overstretch yourself. The more complex the design, the more expensive it will cost.

Outside of the keynote speakers, customers had the opportunity to learn more about financing a self-build project, to get an insight into the Golden Brick journey and to the review different options available from custom build suppliers. Educating you all about the possibilities of self-build is at the heart of what we do at Graven Hill and we are so pleased to have received excellent feedback from those who attended. We are already looking forward to our next event in the middle of May and hope you will be able to join us!



Plot passport is the ticket to faster approval

There are lots of things unique to Graven Hill; the landscape, the concept of being the UK's largest self and custom build scheme, and our innovative plot passports to name a few.

A Plot Passport is the equivalent of personal identification and tells you everything you need to know about that plot of land so you can see if it meets your needs. It will tell you the total size of the plot, the maximum gross internal area and the maximum height of the building, as well as other vital information such as acceptable building material, how main services are provided and the likely ground conditions.

If your design falls within all of the guidance, that's great news as it means you are not only guaranteed to get planning permission, but your application



will be fast tracked and back with you within 28 days from registration. That's about half the time it usually takes to process a planning application. To provide even greater certainty, the local planning authority also offer a pre-application advice service. If you follow this advice and adhere to your Plot Passport, your self-build journey is guaranteed to start off smoothly.

Plot Passport Frequently Asked Questions

A Plot Passport - doesn't that take away the freedom to design my own home?

No. Graven Hill is comprised of a series of character areas and depending on which area you choose determines the freedom of the design you have.

Will a Plot Passport stipulate how I have to design my home?

No. A Plot Passport does not stipulate specifics. It offers a broad spectrum of choice that you can then interpret in your own way. For example it will tell you what the maximum gross internal area is, but you don't have to build to that size. You can have any size up to it. So if outdoor space is more important to you, give yourself a bigger garden!

Can I see my neighbours Plot Passport?

Yes. We know that some people may be a bit worried about what the houses around them will look alike. A Plot Passport will give you reassurance that homes within your character area will accord to certain design criteria.

Do I have to pay for a Plot Passport?

No. The Plot Passports are free to view for each available plot so you can see the guidance before you reserve.

Do all plots come with a Plot Passport?

Yes, all of the self-build plots come with a plot passport.

Are the Plot Passports restrictive to self or custom build homes?

No. Provided the homes fall within the guidelines, it does not matter if they are purely self-build or constructed by a custom build supplier.



If you have any further queries on our Plot Passports or anything else about the opportunities at Graven Hill then contact our Sales Team on the details below.

Get onto the property ladder at exciting Oxfordshire community

Bromford.



Are you a first-time buyer, a growing family, or perhaps you are looking to downsize? If you think the cost of owning your own home in Oxfordshire is out of reach then think again!

Nestling on the southern edge of Bicester, an exciting opportunity has presented itself at a former military base which is being transformed into the UK's largest self-build community. With breathtaking scenery and an abundance of green spaces as well as every amenity you could think of, living at Graven Hill truly combines the best of both worlds!

Bromford, one of England's leading housing associations, is taking ownership of 59 new homes, 32 of which will be for shared ownership. With shared ownership you can move into your own home for a fraction of what you might expect to pay to live in this delightful and sought after location.

Our beautifully designed two, three and four bedroom homes all have stylish fitted kitchens with built-in oven, hob and extractor hood, modern bathroom, double glazing

and high performance insulation, gas fired central heating, allocated parking spaces and a turfed rear garden. With excellent surrounding road and rail connections, Graven Hill also includes a new primary school (opening in 2020), community centre and village green as well as the potential for local shops, a pub, café and small business premises – not forgetting the world renowned Bicester Village designer outlet nearby!

Such is the interest in this one-of-a-kind development that Kevin McCloud of Grand Designs is currently on site filming a special six-part series following the builders at Graven Hill that will be broadcast on Channel 4.

Bromford sales manager, Kirsty Darby, said: "We are definitely finding that shared ownership is becoming more and more popular as people increasingly

look at alternative ways of getting into the marketplace. Buying a share in your own home through shared ownership can offer so many benefits and it is often an important step towards getting your foot onto the property ladder which can be a challenge for so many and then eventually owning your own home outright.

"Bromford's purpose is to support customers to live in sustainable, long-term communities where people are empowered to take control of their own lives and achieve their aspirations. Graven Hill fits perfectly with this philosophy as they combine eco, low carbon homes with commercial investment to form what will be a fantastic new sustainable garden town."

If you are interested in applying for one of these shared ownership homes in Bicester, please check your [local area connection](#) to ensure you are eligible and then [register and apply online with Help to Buy](#). Have any questions about applying for a shared ownership home? Please email our sales team at sales@bromford.co.uk.

In addition to the shared ownership properties, Bromford is also making 27 homes available at affordable rents – featuring a mix of two, three and four bed homes. Customers for these homes will be nominated to Bromford by the local authority so in order to be considered for one of them you should register with Cherwell District Council on their Home Choice website: www.cherwell-homechoice.org.uk.

EVENT DIARY 2018

22-25 March
Homebuilding & Renovating Show
– NEC, Birmingham

14 April
Graven Hill Guided Site Tours*

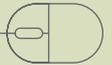


12 May
Open House at the Plot Shop -
Preview of the Graven Hill Tailored
Finish Detached Homes
More details coming soon

9-10 June
Build It Live, Bicester



*Bookings for the site tours can be made via **Eventbrite.co.uk**



To keep up-to-date with our events visit **gravenhill.co.uk**, follow us on social media or call the sales team on **01869 396070**.



KEEP IN TOUCH
www.gravenhill.co.uk

 @gravenhillbuild

 @www.facebook.com/gravenhillbuild

Contact the sales team:
sales@gravenhill.co.uk

01869 396070



The next Graven Hill Overview will be published in APRIL 2018.

Graven Hill Development Company
Plot Shop
Pioneer Square
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX26 6JU

IMPORTANT

Please note that the contents of this newsletter express Graven Hill Village Development Company's current thinking (October 2017). Graven Hill is a pioneering, long-term project which will inevitably evolve and change over time. Our sales team will advise you of the processes, procedures and terms and conditions of the sales contract in force at the time of purchase.

