



Barden Croft, Tonbridge, Kent

Cala Homes (South Home Counties)

April 2024



Local area photography

Overview

Barden Croft in Tonbridge, Kent, is a 125-home scheme situated on former agricultural land to the south-west of the town, next to a country park, and sprawling, open countryside that truly earns the moniker of the Garden of England.

This greenfield site had a varied planning and ownership history – the site already had Outline Planning Permission for 125 homes when Cala purchased the site in June 2022, pending design, landscaping, layout and scale details being approved. Following the acquisition of the site, Cala addressed the final details required and submitted a Reserved Matters application that received approval in July 2023.

Set alongside attractive open space and new ecological areas, the scheme will enhance community connectivity – including new cycling and pedestrian links and improved public transport infrastructure. Additional benefits will support local education, social care, medical and community amenities as well as leisure facilities.

The development, which will be delivered in two phases, showcases the South Home Counties team’s capability for bringing forward attractive and spacious new homes, with affordable housing and well-connected communities to meet local needs.

After engaging with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to understand their needs and bring this development to fruition, it was determined that this site would incorporate a design philosophy in keeping with the quintessentially Kent character of Tonbridge, alongside an above-and-beyond ecological focus, such as every home containing air source heat pumps. Moreover, Cala’s plans for this site will create new public green space for the community.



Local area photography



Local area photography

The opportunity

Cala has ambitious expansion plans in Kent and this site presented an opportunity to catalyse this ambition, deliver much-needed housing to Tonbridge, and help unlock growth and development in the region. Kent is acutely experiencing the effects of the housing crisis and Cala wanted to bring a range of options for people looking to move to or within the area.

The land was previously owned by Hallam Land Management and Cala worked collaboratively with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and the local community to understand the needs of the area.

Following engagement with the local authorities, Cala presented its design approach for this flagship project in keeping with local character. This included an opportunity to enrich the countryside surroundings by incorporating significant green public open spaces, as well as biodiversity measures such as bat, bird and dormouse boxes, and hedgehog highways, to protect and enhance local wildlife.



Local area photography



Site photography



Site photography



Site layout plan

Our approach

One of the initial primary challenges was developing an in-depth understanding of the local character and culture – particularly considering the site’s unique location. Tonbridge has a distinct ‘town-and-country’ feel, set in a famed agricultural area and Cala remained conscious of this while supporting the much-needed housing provision for the town. Cala engaged with local stakeholders and the community to share its initial plans, receive feedback, and update its proposals accordingly.

As a result, Cala made amendments to the location of a proposed block of flats and re-designed the original area they were planned for, as well as updating the design proposals for the Village Green to increase the attraction of the area. Furthermore, a range of local materials were proposed for the construction of the new homes, including rural red brick, white render, and red and grey roof tiles.

This community needs and local character focused approach informed the content of Cala’s Reserved Matters proposal, paving the way for an approved application by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

Additionally, this engagement built a firm understanding of the needs of the local community, paving the way for a generous Section 106 package that included £1.3m being paid towards a range of local education and healthcare facilities – two key concerns of the local community. Alongside this, Cala’s plans included the integration of new pedestrian and cycle routes, and the creation of new public parks on site.

Barden Croft also embraces a variety of sustainability measures to reduce its environmental footprint, with homes incorporating features like air source heat pumps.

In summary, Cala’s ability to understand the nuances of the local character and promptly deliver both market and affordable housing that incorporates a range of sustainability features ensured a speedy planning process to enable accelerated construction.





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Where are we now?

Following a Reserved Matters Planning consent in July 2023, construction started in September 2023, with the first homes expected to be completed in October 2024.

The scheme will deliver a range of one, two, three and four-bedroom affordable homes and one-to-five-bedroom private market houses with 40% of these homes being affordable. Additionally, the creation of a new public park, alongside a contribution of £150,000 for the

adjacent Haysden Country Park, highlight Cala's commitment to not just simply building houses but creating an environmentally conscious community and establishing a sense of place.

In providing these much-needed new homes, Cala's plans for Tonbridge and Malling's housing targets of 800 homes a year.





For more highlights from the
Cala South Home Counties team visit:

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Local area photography