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**PLANNING STATEMENT**

HORKESLEY PARK  
HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION CENTRE

FEBRUARY 2009

# Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre

‘A Celebration of the English Countryside’

## PLANNING STATEMENT

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## **PART 1: BACKGROUND, VISION AND PROPOSALS**

The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) straddles the Essex – Suffolk border and was the birthplace and inspiration for the paintings of John Constable. His depiction of the English countryside in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century has created an enduring image of rural England recognised and appreciated around the world. “The Corn Field”, “The Hay-Wain” and “Scene on a Navigable River (Flatford Mill)” are instantly recognisable as the quintessence of the English landscape past and present – now synonymous with “Constable Country”. Almost two centuries later, much of the beauty portrayed in Constable’s paintings survive in the living landscape of today. Many of the views are remarkably unchanged. It is reassuring that despite development pressures and massive changes in agriculture and rural life, the essential quality and character of the Vale landscape still remains intact for today’s visitors to enjoy.

For many, the imagery of John Constable harks back to a rural idyll but such a notion of rustic perfection is one that masks the truth. Many of the scenes painted by Constable depict a countryside hard at work – ploughing, reaping, gleaning, loading, unloading and towing barges, boat building and tending animals – and workers resting after their toils. The setting may be picturesque but what we are seeing are working environments, industrial infrastructure such as mills and locks, and sinewy boatmen and farm labourers. Human activity in and interaction with the rural landscape is a recurring theme throughout Constable’s paintings and drawings – and there is a feeling of struggle as well as harmony. We would do well to remember that our stewardship of the Vale today should not seek to resist all change but continue to maintain an appropriate balance between human activity and its landscape setting.

The Dedham Vale - and the Stour Valley of which it is a part – lie within a wider area of growth which embraces the whole of the East of England region. Not only is this region the fastest growing in Britain, the Dedham Vale is accessible to the London conurbation and close to the major growth centres of Colchester and Ipswich. The needs of an increasing population for leisure and recreation facilities will impose greater pressures on the region’s countryside and rural resources. Visiting the countryside will remain the most popular of leisure time activities for an increasingly urbanised population. It is therefore essential to anticipate future recreational and leisure needs and to make appropriate provision. This is especially true in relation to areas such as the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley where visitor pressures are focussed on a limited number of locations and venues and where the balance between conservation and public access requires positive action.

It would be wrong to suggest that the character of the Dedham Vale has survived entirely by chance. A debt of gratitude is owed to those landowners, farmers and local communities who have embraced the concept of conservation and who have resisted opportunities to exploit the area in a way which would be harmful to its “natural beauty”. With the designation of the Dedham Vale as an AONB in 1970, the administrative and political organisation to co-ordinate planning and management responsibilities were put in place. Initially policy orientated, the introduction of a project team has enabled direct and positive action to be undertaken in relation to the provision and improvement of rural resources – in particular in relation to rights of way and landscape renewal and planting. More recently, following extensive public consultation, forward looking management plans identifying common goals now pave the way for future conservation and management initiatives. Planning policies operated by the constituent local planning authorities are now co-ordinated, whilst in the private sector, there have also been various initiatives relating to the rural economy, tourism and conservation in and around the Vale. These initiatives include projects to restore and improve the Stour Navigation and its industrial archaeology, and to encourage greater use of the river itself. At Nayland, a heritage farming scheme owned and run by Bunting & Sons, utilises traditional agricultural skills and finds an active role for the dwindling number of Suffolk Punches. At Stratford St. Mary there is a farm shop and restaurant complex, whilst just outside the Vale at Boxted, there are vineyards, also owned and run by Bunting & Sons that have been voted the most sustainable tourism business in Essex. Improved watersides and better facilities for visitors have also been provided at both Flatford and at Dedham.

Today, the Dedham Vale is a popular visitor attraction and tourist destination in its own right – especially for day trips from the main urban areas of north and east London and South Essex which are only a 1- 1.5 hour drive away. The main visitor pressure is absorbed in only three locations: at Dedham, at East Bergholt, and at nearby Flatford. At peak times, car parks are at capacity and streets are filled with vehicles and visitors. The historic and picturesque character of these locations can at times be marred by the sheer numbers of visitors and by the difficulty of access to and restricted capacity of their car parks. Outside these three centres, whilst there is a network of public rights of way, there are no extensive areas of public open space or private grounds accessible to the public. Opportunities for sitting outside or picnicking in the countryside for car borne visitors are limited. There are occasional roadside seats but no country parks, official picnic sites or public woodlands, few accessible viewpoints, and no official car parks outside the settlements. Walking along the riverside footpath is popular between Dedham and Flatford but is low key or absent elsewhere along the banks of the Stour. Apart from a small visitor centre and exhibition at Flatford, there is no art gallery or museum focusing on the artistic and cultural significance of “Constable Country” or its rich social and industrial history.

Opportunities exist to address this deficiency and to provide a major tourism attraction which would not only complement existing centres but also might assist in relieving undue pressure on existing tourism “honeypot” sites. Any new facilities should therefore promote cultural links between town and country and in particular between Colchester and its local countryside.

In other words, apart from limited facilities at Flatford, there is little within “Constable Country” to inform, absorb, and stimulate visitors on the life and times of John Constable and the heritage of the Stour Valley area which inspired his paintings. It was this recognition of the dearth of facilities and destinations for visitors, the limited opportunities for gaining access into the Vale’s open countryside, and the absence of any focus for celebrating the genius of John Constable and the beauty of his native area that led to the idea of a new Centre dedicated to redressing these deficiencies.

## **VISION AND EVOLUTION**

Whilst the origins of Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre, simply known as “Horkesley Park” are anchored firmly in the rural character and quality of the area made famous by John Constable, Bunting & Sons wished from the outset to avoid an unduly nostalgic and retrospective theme for the Centre and to ensure that contemporary rural life featured strongly. The subtitle: “A Celebration of the English Countryside” seemed to capture this aspiration. The potential to portray the life and times of John Constable and the social and economic history of the Stour Valley from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries would form the bedrock for a Heritage and Conservation Centre. The site presented opportunities to confine built development to previously developed land lying just outside the AONB – alongside extensive adjoining tracts of open countryside within the AONB to which the public would gain access for the first time. During the initial formulation of ideas and draft plan stages, the opportunity to purchase The Chantry introduced a major new dimension in terms of the cultural and economic potential of the scheme. The building possessed all the attributes to create an impressive art gallery, with its outbuildings offering potential for conversion into studios and craft workshops which would make a positive contribution to the contemporary rural economy. It therefore represented a microcosm of the concept of bridging the period between Constable’s time and the present day.

In elucidating the primary aim to create a visitor attraction which would constitute “A Celebration of the English Countryside” it was therefore felt to be extremely important to connect with the contemporary life of the Stour Valley. The Bunting family had already become deeply involved in heritage farming and breeding Suffolk Punches in the local area and were also committed to the rural economy in initiatives at Westwood Park Centre for Business at Little Horkesley, the Anchor Inn public house and Anchor Inn Heritage Farming

Project at Nayland, and at Carter's Vineyards at Boxted. The potential to generate further rural employment within the sphere of heritage and conservation was already recognised, In addition to management personnel and general staffing, opportunities were identified to promote Stour barge building and agricultural vehicle and plant restoration, and to provide studios and workshops as well as a host of other rurally-based jobs. At the same time there was a need to find a beneficial use for the extensive disused or underused glasshouse site and to consider the long term future of the adjoining estate. These key strands were drawn together to formulate Horkesley Park.

From the outset it was fully acknowledged that the creation of Horkesley Park would need to reflect and apply a very strong commitment to sustainability objectives. As the scheme evolved, opportunities have been taken to introduce and refine sustainability measures in relation to the proposed use of building materials, energy use and conservation, waste management, and sustainable transportation. In particular, a raft of measures relating to access to the site and a commitment to increasing the role of public transport as a means of visitor travel have become part and parcel of the scheme.

## **PROVISION OF FUTURE TOURISM AND CULTURAL FACILITIES**

The promotion and implementation of the Horkesley Park proposals has increasingly been seen as being bound up with the future of Colchester, which is defined as a Key Centre for Development and Change in the East of England Plan (Policy SS3). The regional importance of Colchester as a focus for growth is further recognised in the Haven Gateway Partnership area in which it lies. The relevant East of England Plan Policy is HG1 which states:-

*"The sub-regional strategy aims to achieve transformational development and change throughout Haven Gateway which will:*

- *develop the diverse economy of the sub-region, including provision for the needs of an expanding tourism sector, support for the establishment and expansion of ICT clusters and recognition of the potential and need for employment growth in smaller towns;*
- *support existing and proposed academic, scientific and research institutions;*
- *regenerate the sub-region to address unemployment, deprivation and social issues;*
- *provide for major housing growth at the key centres of Colchester and Ipswich. "*

The impetus for growth sanctioned in the East of England Plan and through the Haven Gateway Partnership initiative is reflected in the Council's Local Development Framework

Core Strategy adopted in late 2008. One of the key aims is for Colchester to become a “Prestigious Regional Centre” which will entail absorbing high levels of growth, large-scale employment generation, and substantial extensions and improvements to community facilities and infrastructure. It is therefore the aim that Colchester should perform as an important Regional Centre playing its full part in absorbing the very substantial growth pressures that must be met within the East of England. It will no longer be possible to limit growth simply to meet the needs of Colchester’s own population or even that within its wider hinterland. The needs of the Region and Sub-region are now material. With this elevated role in relation to growth and change it will be necessary to contribute wherever possible to the wider Regional and Sub-regional demand for cultural, recreational and leisure facilities. The Core Strategy recognises this and in defining Future Challenges specifically refers to “Promoting and supporting tourism”.

It is envisaged that the future development and promotion of tourism within the Borough should encompass the town of Colchester and its surrounding countryside. There will be major opportunities to create linkages between the cultural facilities in Colchester and the rural areas as part of the vision of making Colchester Borough a centre of national importance in the field of art and culture. The exploitation of these linkages will also assist in elevating the status of Colchester Borough as a focus for tourism, recreation and leisure.

In developing the concept of a Heritage and Conservation Centre on a scale that will make a notable contribution to tourism within the Region, a draft scheme was submitted for consideration in the East of England Development Agency’s (EEDA) Landmark Project competition. EEDA were looking for an iconic image to reflect and unify the region and much experience was gained at this time on the need to reflect a regional as well as local dimension.

The emerging scheme has also been regularly reviewed and refined to reflect the need to have regard to the associated environmental impacts and to sustainability objectives. During the gestation period of the scheme, many of the aims and objectives became embodied in the wording of the now Adopted Policy C2 of the East of England Plan which deals with the Provision and Location of Strategic Cultural Facilities. The issues and safeguards referred to in Policy C2 are key to the appropriate assessment of the Horkesley Park proposals. It is for this reason that we draw particular attention to this Policy by setting it out in full below:-

***POLICY C2: Provision and Location of Strategic Cultural Facilities***

*Regionally or nationally significant leisure, sport, recreation, arts, tourism or other cultural facilities should be supported in locations where proposals:*

- will enhance existing facilities of regional or national significance or, elsewhere, reflect a sequential approach – with priority to locations in town centres before off-centre or out-of-town locations, and to the use of brownfield land in preference to greenfield sites. Exceptionally the specific attributes of a rural site may make it appropriate for a regionally strategic proposal;*
- are designed to enhance the environment and do not adversely affect areas designated for their ecological, landscape or historic value, including sites of European or international importance for nature conservation;*
- meet sustainable development objectives as outlined in this RSS;*
- maximise opportunities to use means of transport other than the car and use transport networks that have adequate capacity to accommodate passenger and rail freight requirements;*
- are well related to regional transport nodes (Policy T5);*
- minimise their use of energy and natural resources and impact on public services, and have satisfactory proposals for minimising their long-term use and impact; and*
- are of an appropriate scale and impact.*

*The above criteria may be met by the introduction of measures to ameliorate or mitigate adverse effects. Proposals that meet the above criteria and would benefit a priority area for regeneration should be given particular support.*

It is therefore clear that there is strong policy support for the promotion of major tourism/leisure initiatives subject to the necessary safeguards. With regard to locational factors, it is recognised in the wording of the Policy that, exceptionally, the specific attributes of a rural site may make it appropriate for a regionally strategic proposal. We believe that this specific recognition enables the Horkesley Park proposals to conform in principle to the spirit and letter of the Policy. Indeed, the need to locate a “Constable” and “Countryside” themed tourist attraction within “Constable Country” itself provides a strong justification in principle for a countryside location. Furthermore, having regard to the great importance attached to the extensive Country Park, it would be impossible to locate Horkesley Park within an urban location. The challenge is therefore one of ensuring that the proposed development can be successfully integrated with the rural fabric of the Stour Valley and the Dedham Vale AONB.

### **HORKESLEY PARK**

Horkesley Park will be strongly influenced by the pursuit and implementation of a number of Key Aims which include:

- to create a sustainable tourism attraction dedicated to East Anglia's agricultural and cultural heritage;
- to support the regional and local economy and create better recreational and leisure facilities to meet the needs of a growing population;
- to rekindle and safeguard valued aspects of traditional English rural and artistic life;
- to contribute and support Colchester's vision to become a prestigious Regional Centre;
- to provide a focal point for a deeper understanding of the Stour Valley landscape and its rural resources;
- to make positive provision to off-set the dearth of visitor attractions in Dedham Vale and especially the limited opportunities for visiting the countryside;
- to relieve some of the harmful pressures on the main tourism locations at Dedham, East Bergholt and Flatford;
- to be an educational resource in many areas including conservation, heritage, food production and sustainability measures;
- to create a deeper appreciation of the life and times of John Constable; and
- to help safeguard the future of the Suffolk Punch.

The site extends to 47.41 hectares (117.16 acres) on the southern side of the Stour Valley to the north of Colchester in the parish of Great Horkeley and is linked to Colchester and the A12 trunk road via the A134 Colchester – Sudbury road. The southern parts of the site are flat and are currently occupied by Bunting & Sons' redundant glasshouse nursery and industrial buildings. The eastern parts of the site towards the A134 comprise land associated with The Chantry – a fine country house set in its own grounds. The majority of the site, however, comprises open countryside forming part of the Stour Valley and a small tributary valley.

The entire site lies within a Countryside Conservation Area as defined in the Adopted Review Colchester Borough Local Plan and about 75% of the site lies within the Dedham Vale AONB. The scheme's main built form will be located on the footprint of the disused glasshouses which lie outside the AONB.

The main focus of the proposals involves the regeneration of the 4.20 hectares (10.38 acres) of the redundant glasshouse nursery site as a new visitor attraction on what is called the "Core Development Area". Here, a Main Building will house the main exhibitions and features with subordinate buildings accommodating a Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre, and a Farm Barn. The Chantry, currently a private residence, will become an Art Gallery with its outbuildings used for studios and crafts and a new Chinese Garden will be created within part of its grounds. The fields to the north will be dedicated to heritage farming and nature

conservation. All the western parts of the site extending to 40.89 hectares (101.04 acres) will form a Country Park with access for the public to enjoy the views and for informal recreation. The Country Park will also contain facilities for wildlife observation in the form of an underground “nature watch” known as The Warren and for children’s active recreation in an adventure play area known as The Hollow.

Detailed plans illustrate the site layout, elevations and floorspace arrangements and the 12 zonal divisions which distinguish the various components of the scheme.

The proposals have been the subject of detailed evaluation in relation to its likely impact on the environment. Following initial discussions with Colchester Borough Council leading to the preparation of a Scoping Report, an Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken and an Environmental Statement produced under the terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. This Environmental Statement forms part of the Application documents. The research and evaluation of impacts has focused on a wide range of topics and influences, namely:

- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Ecology
- Hydrology, Drainage & Flood Risk Assessment
- Ground Conditions & Contamination
- Tourism
- Socio-Economic Aspects
- Traffic, Transport & Access
- Air Quality & Climate
- Noise & Vibration
- Lighting

Each of the above topics is evaluated in terms of the nature of the impacts, the degree of the impacts, and the need if any to mitigate the impacts. The assessments also address the need to ensure that the proposals are as sustainable as possible. Consultants’ work was also undertaken with prior knowledge of the main Planning policy framework. Proposals and measures are therefore identified where appropriate to remove or minimise the environmental impacts and to promote sustainable development. For example, the Traffic, Transport & Access chapter promotes public transport and a Travel Plan as an essential part of the package.

The scheme has therefore been subjected to rigorous testing in terms of its environmental impacts, its sustainability, and its compatibility with Planning policy. The findings support the following main conclusions:-

- the Horkesley Park scheme accords with Government policy operating at a national level in relation to promoting the rural economy, especially tourism, the development of appropriate rural employment as a sustainable alternative to that in urban centres, whilst continuing to afford protection of the countryside;
- the built development can be absorbed without material harm to the Dedham Vale AONB landscape;
- tree and hedge planting schemes and the management and conservation of extensive areas of farmland, parkland and the Country Park site will positively enhance the AONB;
- the implementation of the scheme can be achieved without material harm to the area's nature conservation resources whilst habitat creation and conservation work will have a very positive impact in line with national policy objectives;
- the scheme will neither be susceptible to flooding nor contribute to flooding within the catchment area;
- the regeneration of the glasshouse nursery site will allow remediation of ground pollution associated with its former operation;
- air quality in the area is currently good. There will be some localised effects such as dust during the construction phase but of a limited scale and nature;
- the effect of heating systems on climate change is a factor but emissions are expected to be lower than when the nursery was in operation;
- the predicted traffic flows associated with the development will not cause significant change in pollutant levels;
- the appropriate management and disposal of farm waste from the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre and heritage farming enterprise will minimise agricultural pollution;
- subject to normal controls in terms of hours of operation and use of machinery, noise and vibration during construction should be minimal. The increase in traffic noise will give rise to negligible noise impact or a minor effect at worst;
- noise impacts are largely confined to the construction phase and can be mitigated;

- some light mitigation will be necessary during the construction phase and have a temporary moderate adverse effect but in the operational phase the mitigation methods proposed will eliminate glare. Overall there will be less light pollution than when the glasshouses were in use;
- there are a raft of potential benefits for the local economy, including the creation of 226 new jobs on-site (the equivalent of 155 full time jobs), as well as indirectly the creation of 45 full time jobs offsite, and an increase in overnight stays and increased spending;
- the development will not create any discernible competition for established centres and will enhance the status of Colchester as a tourism destination;
- Horkesley Park is sustainably located for a rural development having regard to its accessibility via an “A” Class road and its close proximity to Colchester; and
- measures to secure sustainable transport include improved access by public transport and a Travel Plan for staff and visitors. Access via pedestrian, cycling and bridleway links will be secured and full access for disabled visitors will be provided.

Based on a wide body of evidence, broad conclusions are able to be drawn that Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre will:

- provide a unique and much-needed supplement to the limited number of existing tourism venues in Constable Country;
- enable the public to experience and appreciate the Dedham Vale landscape at close quarters;
- create a cultural centre for the appreciation of the life and works of John Constable and for contemporary artists and craftsmen;
- help secure the future of the Suffolk Punch breed;
- contribute to the rural and local economy and enhance the status of the area as a whole as a tourist destination; and
- enhance the appearance and rural resources of Dedham Vale by woodland, tree and hedgerow planting, habitat creation and heritage farming.

Importantly, the evaluation of the various environmental effects in conjunction with the mitigation measures and other related proposals enables the scheme to be considered as sustainable. The balance weighs strongly in favour of the wide-ranging benefits that would accrue from the implementation of the scheme. The findings fully justify the vision that Horkesley Park will successfully deliver a new and much needed tourism and cultural

focus within the Stour Valley, thereby adding greatly to the status of this part of East Anglia and to the enjoyment of future visitors.

## **PART 2: DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SCHEME**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Application site extends 47.41 hectares (117.16 acres) and is located in a rural part of Colchester Borough near the Essex-Suffolk border in the angle between the A134 and London Road, Great Horkesley. It lies on the edge of the Stour Valley about 3.7 km north of the edge of Colchester within the Parish of Great Horkesley, whose Parish Church adjoins the site although the village lies a little to the south. Most of the site – in fact about 75% of the Application site area - lies within the Dedham Vale AONB. A large nursery complex and adjoining open land to the west and east lie within the Horkesley Park site but these areas lie outside the AONB. The site also contains a strip of land on the eastern side of the A134 lying within the designated AONB and a similar strip of land south of London Road which is outside the AONB boundary. These strips of land will be used for road improvements and widening as well as for the creations of greens with pedestrian and cycle pathways. To all intents and purposes, however, the main physical site boundaries are the A134 to the east, London Road to the south, field boundaries in open countryside forming the southern slopes of the Stour Valley to the north, and field boundaries and a stream within the Great Horkesley West tributary valley of the Stour to the west.

In addition to two private houses known as “Hillside” and “The Chantry Lodge” and the cricket ground at the A134/London Road junction, the Application site, as noted, contains a fine period country residence known as “The Chantry” together with its grounds. The site nevertheless comprises open countryside apart from the redundant glasshouse nursery and industrial building and hence largely constitutes an extensive tract of farmland on the edge of the Stour Valley.

The site as existing can be defined by 4 broadly distinctive areas, namely:-

<b><u>FIG 1: Existing Site</u></b>		
<b>The Park and Farmland</b>	=	40.89 ha. (101.04 acres)
<b>The Chantry</b>	=	2.14 ha. (5.30 acres)
<b>Hillside and The Chantry Lodge</b>	=	0.18 ha. (0.44 acres)
<b>The Nursery Site</b>	=	4.20 ha. (10.38 acres)
	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>47.41 ha. (117.16 acres)</u></b>

The Horkesley Park proposals subdivide these 4 areas to form 12 Zones as listed below. The Zones are used principally to define a specific function or use within Horkesley Park where many are confined to a particular room or building. However, in some cases (e.g. Gardens), elements of a Zone may be found in multiple locations across the Application site.

**FIG 2: Proposed Zones**

<b>Zone 1</b>	<b>Entrance and Main Exit Rotunda &amp; Stour Valley Walkway</b>
<b>Zone 2</b>	<b>The Life and Times of John Constable Experience</b>
<b>Zone 3</b>	<b>Heritage and Conservation</b>
<b>Zone 4</b>	<b>Farming Yesteryear Exhibition</b>
<b>Zone 5</b>	<b>Restoration and Reconstruction Workshop</b>
<b>Zone 6</b>	<b>The Food Experience (including Renewable Energy Centre)</b>
<b>Zone 7</b>	<b>Country Gardens and Parkland (including Specialist Garden Centre)</b>
<b>Zone 8</b>	<b>The Chantry Fine Art Gallery and Creative Design Workshops</b>
<b>Zone 9</b>	<b>The Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre</b>
<b>Zone 10</b>	<b>The Farm Barn, The Warren and The Hollow</b>
<b>Zone 11</b>	<b>Country Park</b>
<b>Zone 12</b>	<b>Supporting Facilities</b>

A description of each of the 12 Zones is provided in the following pages. For the purposes of this Planning Statement, however, the main areas of the proposal are considered below as 'The Country Park', 'The Chantry', 'Hillside and The Chantry Lodge' and 'The Core Development Area'.

**THE COUNTRY PARK**

The Country Park forms Zone 11 and extends to 40.89 hectares (101.04 acres) – about 86% of the total site area. It covers the entire western parts of the site from the Main Building to the side valley and stream along the western boundary together with the greensward areas along the A134 and London Road. Apart from The Warren (underground “nature watch”), the Hollow rustic play area, and the area earmarked for overflow parking immediately west of the main forecourt car park, the entire Country Park will remain open and undeveloped.

The two existing irrigation reservoirs in the Great Horkesley West valley will be used for recreational fishing, with extensive areas of parkland earmarked for heritage farming and grazing for Suffolk Punches. Specified areas are set aside for quiet rural pursuits and the entire area will be interlaced with a network of paths and tracks for walkers and cyclists.

The Country Park will therefore comprise a multiple-use area where heritage farming and informal recreational activities can coexist in a landscaped and managed, but still natural countryside setting. The contours of the site and the extensive views obtained from the higher ground, in particular across the Stour Valley and the tributary valley of the River Stour, will be enhanced by appropriate landscape and vista creation. The whole area will also be managed to protect and improve existing habitats and to create new ones.

The Warren (“nature watch” facility) is set into the hillside to the west of the Main Building. Its 1,126 sq.m floor space provide a self-contained learning and observation centre with refreshment facilities. The building will be underground set in a fold of the hillside enabling outward views to the east across to The Hollow. At the same time, new habitats will be created underground with viewing undercover from within the building. The Warren is the only new building within the designated AONB and will be integrated into the adjoining Country Park.

Finally, although not functionally part of the Country Park, the new ‘greensward’ areas along the A134 and London Road provide a landscaped setting for the Heritage and Conservation Centre as well as softening and buffering the road corridors to the east and south. These new greens extend to approximately 1.5 hectares (3.6 acres) and complete the ring of landscaped areas which wrap around the entire Centre and thus further assist with the integration of built elements of the site within the landscape setting. In particular, the land to the south of London Road will be enhanced with extensive tree planting to create the ‘London Green’ and provide an attractive pedestrian approach to the site and a ‘sense of arrival’ for visitors arriving or departing by bus from the A134. Indeed, the greens are seen as a green “Gateway” to Essex, to Horkesley Park, to the Stour Valley and to the village of Great Horkesley.

## **THE CHANTRY**

The Chantry (Zone 8) is an established period country residence and a former rectory for the incumbent of the Church of All Saints, Great Horkesley which lies adjacent to the Application site. The Chantry is a classic Georgian/Regency villa inspired by the work of Sir John Soane. It is accessed along an attractive tree-lined drive off London Road near to its junction with the A134, passing the Chantry cricket ground along the way. The Application seeks permission for the change of use of The Chantry to an Art Gallery, - to be provisionally known as “The Chantry Fine Art Gallery” – as an “outstation” for leading galleries and private collections

where works by important and notable artists from the region will be displayed. A key aim will be to house some of the works of John Constable as well as other important – including contemporary - East Anglian artists. The Chantry, with its elegant, well-proportioned rooms, some of which enjoys glorious countryside views, together with its attractive gardens and estate, will, as an art gallery, further enhance the growing reputation of Colchester as a cultural centre and complement Horkesley Park's strong artistic and heritage theme.

The Chantry's garden lies within Zone 7 – Gardens and Parkland whilst The Chantry and its outbuildings lie within Zone 8. The Application seeks permission to change the use of the outbuildings to form studios and craft workshops and for holding courses on country crafts or related interests. The outbuildings will therefore retain strong links with the main artistic focus within The Chantry itself.

The gardens of The Chantry will be restored in the late Georgian/Regency style, reflecting the period of the great "Plant Collectors" (1750-1850), spanning John Constable's lifetime (1776-1837). The gardens will include scent and touch features for the visually impaired, and a sculpture park.

Part of the gardens will be used to create a Chinese Garden, with a tea pavilion and water features. Strong cultural and trade links have already been forged between Essex and the Jiangsu Province in China which will be strengthened through the creation of an authentic Chinese Garden. Interest in China was high in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the creation of a Chinese Garden is compatible with the era of The Chantry within which a "Chinese room" is planned.

The Chantry will therefore form an important element of Horkesley Park and one that will provide the stimulus for future investment in this part of the site, including the parkland to the north which forms part of The Chantry estate.

## **HILLSIDE AND THE CHANTRY LODGE**

Hillside and The Chantry Lodge are private houses built as they now stand in 1980 and 1938 respectively, within their own private gardens. The properties are to remain as private residences and will house the Horkesley Park Manager and the Horkesley Park Stockman. The latter is considered to be particularly important as the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre will require round-the-clock support from a Stockman or Stockwoman living on site.

## **THE CORE DEVELOPMENT AREA**

The Core Development Area extends to 4.20 hectares (10.38 acres) containing the Main Building, the show gardens, the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre, the Suffolk Punch display ring (outside), the Farm Barn, the Warren, and the forecourt car park. This Core Development Area is currently occupied by a mixture of large multi-span glasshouse blocks, agricultural buildings, chimneys, oil tanks and other structures and hard-standings.

The Main Building takes the form of a large rotunda and side building, with a smaller rotunda forming a feature entrance from the forecourt car park. The building will house the principal heritage exhibitions and displays, the Specialist Garden Centre, the Restoration and Reconstruction Workshop for Stour barges and vintage farm equipment, the dialect studio, the Renewable Energy Centre, the restaurant, cafés and lounges, and the horse drawn vehicle pick-up/drop-off point (outside). The various internal components of the Core Development Area are set out in Fig 3 below.

**FIG 3. Internal Components of the Core Development Area**

<b><u>Feature</u></b>	<b><u>Function</u></b>	<b><u>Area (sq.m)</u></b>
<i>Main Centre:</i>		
Entrance Rotunda and The Stour Valley Walkway	Heritage/Exhibition	1,147
The Life & Times of John Constable Exhibition	Heritage/Exhibition	413
Heritage & Conservation	Heritage/Exhibition	298
Farming Yesteryear Exhibition	Heritage/Exhibition	963
Restoration & Reconstruction Workshop	Heritage	491
The Food Experience	Heritage/Commercial	1,427#
Specialist Garden Centre	Heritage/Commercial	3,050*
Restaurants, Café and Lounge	Commercial	1,148
First Floor Lecture Theatre and Exhibition Space	Heritage/Commercial	476
Supporting Facilities (stores, kitchens lounge etc)	Miscellaneous	566
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>9,979</b>
<i>Other Buildings:</i>		
Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre	Heritage	1,170
Farm Barn	Heritage	414
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,584</b>

**TOTAL**

**11,563**

# Includes renewable energy centre, exhibitions, back of house, store and cycle store

\* Includes entrance and exit, ancillary storage and office areas.

Entrance to the Main Building is gained via the entrance rotunda which contains the pay kiosks, information desks and general facilities for visitors. This leads directly into the primary features and exhibitions along the Stour Valley Walkway –depicting 23 miles of the lower Stour Valley in miniature. The first floor, with its “*circular outside terrace*”, provides Lecture Room facilities and a refreshment area with extensive vistas. It is accessed from the ground floor by a central circular staircase and lift shaft.

The design of the Main Building in terms of scale has been strongly influenced by the need to avoid breaching the tree ridge line when viewing the site from the north and the south. Drawing 2362-9 shows how the roof of the Main Building remains well below the tree ridge line as well as indicating its height relative to the existing glasshouses, to the nursery chimney and to the Church of All Saints in the background.

With regard to the use of materials, the Main Building will feature a combination of exposed brick, white render and living garden walls to its perimeter which will help soften the appearance of the elevations. The front façade will be brickwork, which will also include living garden walls to provide visual enhancement creating a mature and intimate perimeter to the main building. The plants will be applied to the façade as an active building material with the ability to reproduce itself. Furthermore, the green walls will use native species to attract wildlife and provide an important habitat, resting and feeding place for birds and insects.

The design of the Main Building will refrain from steep roof pitches, which would increase visual impact. The central faceted rotunda has been designed as an elegant pavilion and focus for the centre, creating roof and shadow sitting within the landscape.

With the use of a shallow pitched slate roof, the scale of the central rotunda will not be perceived by the visitor, who will only observe a more limited section of the roof area enhanced by deep shadows at ground level and a foreground of walled garden. The main rotunda interlocks with the single storey side wings to provide a combination of height and scale to the internal spaces. The flat roofs of the adjacent wings will comprise wildflower roofs to encourage wildlife and native species. The mature and indigenous planting will further enhance the sense of landscape and human scale. This quality and context will continue within the interior of the building with extensive natural light penetrating via skylights illuminating the interior and minimising the need for artificial light.

The Specialist Garden Centre forms part of Zone 7 and is situated immediately to the east of the Main Entrance rotunda. It forms an element of a wider theme incorporating the gardens and estate of The Chantry to the north. The Garden Centre extends to 3,050 sq.m which includes the entrance/exit, main area, exhibition areas, warehouse and offices and shall have no external sales area. It is accessed through the Main Entrance rotunda (Zone 1) but has a separate exit. Accordingly, it will be an integral element of the Heritage and Conservation Centre with entry by ticket purchased at the entrance, or till receipt obtained from the Art Gallery Gift Shop. Its products and displays will be interwoven with the heritage and conservation themes and the work of Bunting & Sons in the field of flower cultivation and biological pest control. The Specialist Garden Centre is part of the essential financial anchor for the scheme as a whole.

The Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre (Zone 9) lies immediately to the north of the Main Building and comprises a building of 1,170 sq.m and a yard surrounded by a post and rail fence enclosing the building and a paddock. It will perform a vital role in preserving the Suffolk Punch breed and will be directly linked to heritage farming initiatives at Horkesley Park. The building will contain 11 stables and an isolation box, a harness room, stores and a blacksmith's forge as well as staff facilities and a lecture room. There will also be visitor washroom and toilet facilities. Visitors will be able to observe Suffolk Punches at close quarters, undertake supervised grooming activities, and receive information and education provided in a lecture room, making the facility particularly attractive to school parties. With regard to the use of materials, walls will feature Douglas fir timber cladding painted black above a brick plinth, with a clay tiled roof.

The Farm Barn (part of Zone 10) is a specialist grass-roofed building housing animals and pets of particular interest to children and is located just to the north of the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre. The barn's floor space, extending to 414 sq.m, is sunken into a mound with a skylight at its summit and concealed sunken doorway entrances and exits. In addition to indoor pens within this "underground" barn, there will be outside open pens in a declivity within the mound as well as undercover pens beneath the mound. Access tunnels under the mound give further opportunities for exploration and discovery.

## **ZONES**

The following section reviews each of the Zones and examines in detail their function and relationship with other components of the Centre.

### **ZONE 1**

#### **ENTRANCE AND MAIN EXIT ROTUNDA AND STOUR VALLEY WALKWAY**

The whole of Horkesley Park is ticketed and all visitors will arrive through the Main Building Rotunda overlooking the south lawn and flower borders. From this point onwards, the Centre is divided into Zones which enable visitors to choose their preferred routes around Horkesley Park.

##### **Entrance and Main Exit Rotunda:**

The Rotunda of the Main Building provides a visually striking approach and sense of arrival where visitors are able to purchase tickets, find visitor and tourist information, leave coats/baggage, hire headsets, book tours, hire bicycles and obtain wheelchairs. The Rotunda leads directly into the Stour Valley Walkway which curves gently through the bright and attractive Main Building – designed to be, in itself, a beautiful and interesting feature housing many of the Centre's exhibitions and other attractions.

##### **Stour Valley Walkway:**

The Stour Valley Walkway provides a central focus on the Stour Valley with exhibitions, displays and interpretations relating to the landscape and other rural resources of the area.

A scale version of the 23 miles of the River Stour from Sudbury to the sea forms the central feature of the floor of the Walkway, which links in with displays and devices depicting the various elements which contribute to the character of the valley and surrounding area – its landscape, historic buildings, woodland, natural and social history.

This Walkway – the Stour Valley in microcosm – gives a glimpse of the ever changing elements which can be explored in depth elsewhere within Horkesley Park.

## **ZONE 2**

### **THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN CONSTABLE EXPERIENCE**

This Experience will provide an informative and visually stunning presentation of life in the Stour Valley in Constable's day and demonstrate the close links between the physical and social environment of the first half of the 19th century and its portrayal within the works of the artist.

The landscape of the Stour Valley provided the inspiration for the works of John Constable whose paintings are so evocative of English rural life. So many of his best loved paintings depict a working countryside – people hard at work, bringing home the harvest, transporting cargoes along the river, or building barges – scenes from real life and much more than a romantic rural idyll.

It is important to stress that this part of the Centre is not an art gallery but an exposition of the way in which the landscape and social history interact and then inspire John Constable in his portrayal of his native area. There is also great interest in the artist's life and achievements and thus the Experience will be an interactive interpretation chronicling the key events and influences in Constable's life (1776-1837). Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) and his works made a great impression upon Constable, as indeed Constable has made on many artists of the region and throughout the world for around two hundred years.

In addition to the interactive exhibition this area houses an audio visual theatre.

The Experience will encourage cross-referencing with the Farming Yesteryear and the Food Experience Exhibitions (Zones 4 and 6) respectively, enabling visitors to compare and contrast the lifestyles and pressures of 19th century rural England with those of today. The Chantry Fine Art Gallery (Zone 8) will display works of Constable, Gainsborough and other artists of the region to show them together in, or relatively close to, the landscape in which they were painted.

## **ZONE 3**

### **HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION**

#### **Stour Valley Heritage and Conservation Societies, Trusts and other Organisations**

This Zone is devoted to the contemporary concern for heritage and conservation within the Stour Valley and here many of the exhibitions, displays and interpretations featured along the Stour Valley Walkway will be elaborated upon.

Various societies, trusts and other organisations will be given the opportunity to provide manned or unmanned displays to illustrate their particular spheres of interest, activity and interaction, in order to enhance interest in their organisation and hopefully attract increased membership and support.

An exhibition of Colchester Engineering history in this Zone will include machinery, equipment and other devices which in the 19th and 20th centuries caused the greatest revolution in farming methods and in turn to the countryside and its landscape. This will interlink with the Farming Yesteryear Exhibition (Zone 4).

The focus is very much on the 'local' environment with linking features to illustrate the archaeology and history of the Stour Valley and nearby areas. This will include a virtual reality re-creation of mediaeval and other settlements and, as the Stour Valley in particular is so rich in archaeological features and history, there will also be an area to be used by a Children's Stour Valley Awareness Club. Here, there will be programmes of activities specifically aimed at generating interest by young people in the rural resources of the whole of the Stour Valley and its surrounding countryside, and in various related projects and initiatives.

## **ZONE 4**

### **FARMING YESTERYEAR EXHIBITION**

Major exhibition space is devoted to chronicling farming through the ages in East Anglia with strong emphasis on the heavy horse, particularly the Suffolk Horse (known as the “Suffolk Punch”) in the service of man in agriculture for hundreds of years before the advent of the tractor, which caused the disappearance of these magnificent animals from almost every farm. The Exhibition will incorporate the Suffolk Punch Story and complement the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre (Zone 9). It will provide a vivid and to some extent nostalgic retrospective – principally focusing on the rich agricultural history and tradition of East Anglia.

The Exhibition will also provide an exposition of farming comparing farming of bygone times with modern large and small scale farming. The Exhibition will link with the Food Experience (Zone 6) and in particular to the “field to fork” displays.

The Exhibition will depict the role of the horse as the motive power for Lighters (Barges) on the River Stour – providing interesting linkages with both the Life and Times of John Constable Experience (Zone 2) and the activity in the Restoration and Reconstruction Workshop (Zone 5).

The Exhibition will contain a wide range of visual material and artefacts associated with the roles of heavy horses in agriculture and related industry and transportation. Exhibitions will include how farming with horse power shaped the landscape. This will interlink with the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre, the heritage farming and maintenance of the parkland. There will also be exhibition spaces dedicated to the traditional roles in farming of travellers and Farm Animal Rare Breeds promotion and information.

The Audio Visual Education Centre in this Zone, complementing the Farming Yesteryear Exhibition, will feature and provide interpretation about the many civilizations that have existed as hunter-gatherers and then farmers in the River Stour Valley since the end of the last ice age, over 10,000 years ago.

A separate studio will also be provided as a Centre of Local Dialects, Country Songs, Tales and Folklore. The aim will be to help preserve the oral, musical and literary heritage of the East Anglian countryside.

## **ZONE 5**

### **RESTORATION AND RECONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP**

A unique feature of Horkesley Park will be a large purpose-built well equipped workshop in which craftsmen and craftswomen will actively restore or reconstruct Stour Lighters (barges) and heritage farm equipment and vehicles, including wagons, as well as other items of historical interest relevant to the working river and countryside.

Horse-drawn Stour Lighters, crafts whose design is unique to the River Stour, feature prominently in many of John Constable's best-loved paintings so the activities in the workshop will therefore provide direct links with both The Life and Times of John Constable Exhibition (Zone 2) and the Farming Yesteryear Exhibition (Zone 4).

In 1914, on the outbreak of hostilities in the Great War, many Stour Lighters were scuttled in Ballingdon Cut at Sudbury near the head of the historic Stour Navigation. It is believed there is now only one Stour Lighter in existence. This, salvaged in the 1990s was subsequently restored to a point but later left to deteriorate, and as a result it may no longer be possible to restore the craft. However, as much is known about the construction of Stour Lighters, it will be possible for shipwrights to reconstruct them to the original design.

Viewing galleries will enable visitors to observe the shipwrights and other craftsmen and craftswomen working below on the Workshop floor.

When a "gang" of Stour Lighters is reconstructed the hope is the necessary permissions will be granted to enable it to be launched in a suitable place on the River Stour and kept there so the gang may be horse-drawn from time to time to re-create the scene and character of the river as it was in Constable's day.

Much of the heritage farm equipment and vehicles restored in the Workshop will be used throughout Horkesley Park.

## **ZONE 6**

### **THE FOOD EXPERIENCE**

**“Food - Where does it come from?” Exhibition – featuring Produce of the Region, incorporating “Tastes of Anglia”.**

The Food Experience can best be described as a cross between an exhibition, a farmer's market and a food show/fair. It will be a showcase of locally and regionally produced food and drink products, offering high quality produce, where consumers know exactly where the food comes from and how it has been treated.

The Food Experience is a contemporary 'live' exhibition of food with displays depicting the many facets of the food chain from “field to fork” – in a pragmatic and illustrative way. The Exhibition (linking with Farming through the ages in Zone 4) will starkly contrast 'traditional' farming methods of yesteryear with large scale farming practices and agri-business of today.

Visitors will be able to sample and purchase the products of exhibitors within a permanent market-style environment similar to the very best everyday markets of local produce in the UK and the much enjoyed and admired food markets in France and other countries where the provision of fresh high quality food and drink is considered to be all important, indeed an essential way of life.

The Food Experience will portray a vibrant and productive countryside which reflects many of the traditions and achievements of the region. It will be an important “food hub” providing a major facility for farmers and other producers in the region to display, promote and sell their local produce all year round. This, interlinked with the activities of the butcher, baker, greengrocer, fishmonger, tasting bars and chefs, will be a food education centre including a cooks' school, feature/demonstration and kitchen areas. The Centre will enable visitors to learn not only where food comes from, but also how it is made, how to cook it and what it tastes like. In a country of ever increasing supermarkets, which usually only deal with large suppliers Horkesley Park's focus on smaller and specialist local producers will help to enable them to thrive.

Zone 6 includes the Renewable Energy Centre as this will also be supplied by produce of the region - namely woodchip from sustainable sources for the biomass burner. The Centre with its plant room, exhibitions and viewing hall will enable visitors to learn more about the sustainable technologies operating extensively throughout Horkesley Park – photovoltaic and solar panels, geothermal heating, anaerobic digesters, recycling, rainwater harvesting and use.

## **ZONE 7**

### **COUNTRY GARDENS AND PARKLAND**

The key elements within this Zone are a variety of Gardens and wildflower features supported by a Specialist Garden Centre.

The gardens will include scent and touch features for the visually impaired.

Surrounding The Chantry are 2 hectares (5 acres) of gardens where it is proposed to restore the Georgian and walled gardens and create a Chinese garden. The restored Georgian gardens will surround the house and have spectacular views across the adjoining wildflower meadow and Stour Valley beyond to Stoke by Nayland Church, which was painted by John Constable. The walled garden will have its south wall extended to create a completely enclosed garden laid out and planted to reflect the period of the Great Plant Collectors from 1750 to 1850.

Behind the high walls of the walled garden an authentic Chinese garden including a tea pavilion will be created, hidden from external view. During the Georgian period the first Chinese gardens were introduced into England but as very few have survived it is exciting and fitting to have one at The Chantry.

The Chinese Garden is being created in Horkesley Park at the suggestion of the Essex County Council to help strengthen cultural links and in turn trade between China and the UK, particularly between the Province of Jiangsu and the County of Essex, which are twinned. The Chinese Garden will incorporate Bunting & Sons' historical trading links with the Far East and complement the gardens of the Great Plant Collectors. The tranquil gardens will make much use of water and rocks – an oasis of calm, where visitors will be able to enjoy traditional tea making rituals in the tea pavilion.

Immediately alongside the Main Building, to the east, will lie a great variety of many different Medal Winning Show Gardens. These inspirational and spectacular gardens of 0.8 hectares (2 acres) will be mostly created by renowned and international designers and specialists who have won medals for them at leading flower and garden shows prior to relocation/reconstruction within Horkesley Park.

The Show Gardens will be selected to impress, amuse, educate and inspire with information available to enable visitors to adapt the designs for their own use. Exhibits will change and evolve throughout the year.

In front of the Main Building the South Garden will have a series of lawns, paths, borders, clipped hedges, "living and clothed walls", and pleached trees, which will create a picturesque arrival point as visitors enter Horkesley Park. There will be regular guided tours of the gardens, including the South Garden where visitors will also view and be given information about the Wildflower Green Roof of the Main Building.

Inside the Main Building to the right of the Entrance Rotunda will be the Specialist Garden Centre, supporting all the gardens and gardening features of Horkesley Park. It will particularly stock plants and other products relating to The Chantry gardens, the Medal Winning Show Gardens, the South Garden, the Wildflower Meadows and Sculpture trails, both traditional and contemporary. It will also include exhibitions of biological pest control for worldwide crop protection pioneered by Bunting & Sons for over twenty years on the Horkesley Park site. A further unique feature will be displays of lily species grown by Bunting & Sons in Japan and Colchester for over 100 years and the Horkesley Park site for over 20 years.

## **ZONE 8**

### **THE CHANTRY FINE ART GALLERY AND CREATIVE DESIGN WORKSHOPS**

The creation of an art gallery within the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to display original paintings by John Constable and other great artists of the region in or near to the area in which they were painted will represent a major 'coup' for the area. When The Chantry has been adapted and is in use for hanging fine art, it will qualify as an outstation for leading galleries and private collections to enable great works to be exhibited.

Having many of the hallmarks of a classic late Georgian/Regency villa inspired by the works of Sir John Soane, fittingly The Chantry was rebuilt as it can be seen today during John Constable's youth and would probably have been known to him. It will provide a superb environment for exhibitions – not just of the works of John Constable and his contemporaries – but also a wide range of other leading East Anglian artists, particularly those having strong connections with the Stour Valley.

The Chantry will provide a prestigious setting for a new gallery of international significance supporting the objective of Colchester becoming an outstanding centre for culture.

The coach house of The Chantry will house Creative Design Workshops for specialists such as: artists, sculptors, flower arrangers, traditional crafts people and garden designers.

With its outstanding views from the house across the Stour Valley to Stoke by Nayland and its own old kitchen tea room The Chantry Fine Art Gallery and Creative Design Workshops will create an important visitor attraction in its own right.

## **ZONE 9**

### **THE SUFFOLK PUNCH BREEDING CENTRE**

The Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre will be sufficient in size and capability to play a vital part in helping to pull back the Suffolk Horse breed from near extinction. After the Second World War there were over 300,000 Suffolk Punches, mostly in East Anglia, but now there are only about 460 pure bred Suffolk Punches left in the world, including less than 150 viable breeding mares and about 25 stallions. The Suffolk Punch is classified as a critically endangered rare breed and, with there becoming less and less experienced heavy horsemen with knowledge in keeping and working Suffolk Punches, the future of the breed is precarious.

The primary aim of the Horkesley Park Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre is to significantly increase the population and ensure the continuation of the traditional skills and knowledge required to support these indigenous horses. Bunting & Sons have been investing heavily in building up quality stock for the Breeding Centre and training staff, including working apprentices, in the necessary skills to keep, breed, show, drive and work Suffolk Punches.

All of the Suffolk Punches bred by Bunting & Sons have the prefix "Horkesley Park" and currently the stock includes 1 licensed stallion, 6 geldings, 2 fillies and 4 mares, of which 2 are in foal (due Spring 2009). The aim is to build up the stock to include 10-12 viable breeding mares.

Further aims will be to encourage other people to keep, breed and work Suffolk Punches, and to promote the Suffolk Horse Society (founded in 1877), which helps and supports all owners and breeders of Suffolk Punches.

The heavy horses will be worked throughout Horkesley Park on a daily basis (weather and ground conditions permitting). This horse power will range from drawing horse drawn vehicles conveying visitors to all types of heritage farming and site maintenance.

The Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre is designed in a low profile traditional farm building style block containing some 21 stables, a stallion isolation box, horse stalls, harness room, stores and displays – with standing and wash down areas where cleaning and grooming can be observed – and where grooms may be assisted by visitors. A blacksmith and farriers' area with a working forge will form part of the complex. The second floor of part of the Centre provides viewing galleries overlooking the internal working areas below for visitor viewing and tuition of school parties. As part of the Centre there will be an Outside All Weather Suffolk Punch display ring and behind that there will be a nearby Parkland pasture where Suffolk Punch mares and foals will be seen grazing at close quarters.

The Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre will also encompass a demonstration micro-dairy where visitors will have the opportunity to see first-hand how cows are cared for and milked.

It is intended that the Centre will be supported by Westwood Home Farm and other parts of the Bunting & Sons estate, which will not be open to the general public. This back-up will provide extra capacity and quarantine facilities when necessary for the livestock.

The Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre relates to many of the other zones including Farming Yesteryear Exhibitions (Zone 4), Country Park (Zone 11) and Restoration and Reconstruction Workshop (Zone 5).

## **ZONE 10**

### **THE FARM BARN, THE WARREN AND THE HOLLOW**

The Farm Barn, mainly underground and covered by pasture, lies beyond the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre and inside will house animals and pets of particular interest to children. It will feature domesticated farm animals including rare breeds that can be handled, hand fed and groomed safely.

Visitors will be able to meet friendly animals of all shapes and sizes, allowing children to learn about some of their favourites in an interactive way.

The Farm Barn will have a variety of ongoing educational programmes relating to animal handling and care.

The Hollow will be a rustic play area to provide enjoyment for children of all ages. Younger children will be able to explore the sand and water play areas, while older children can test their skills on the logs, swings and ropewalks. There is a nearby seating area for parents.

The Hollow is set in a natural valley and will be screened from external view, except from the Warren, by trees, bushes and hedging.

The Warren itself will house 'the countryside around us' nature displays – a nature watch and information about what to look out for in the County Park that day, a café refreshment area, toilets and the tunnel entrance to the Country Park.

The Warren will include educational resources, hidden cameras observing wildlife, interactive displays, interpretation and activity areas, changing exhibitions about the countryside around us, audio and visual recordings giving visitors a multi-sensory experience and opportunities to witness whole life cycles as they unfold throughout the year.

## **ZONE 11**

### **THE COUNTRY PARK**

The Country Park, extending to almost 41 hectares (101 acres), is approached in the south west through The Warren tunnel entrance and in the north east via the paths to The Chantry. It will be an area in multiple-use. It will include Parkland Pastures, some for Suffolk Punches to graze and some for smaller rare breeds and sheep to share with visitors. Other areas are earmarked for wildflower meadows, heritage husbandry and traditional farming with Suffolk Punches, school children's vegetable growing areas and informal leisure. It is intended to retain the Cricket Ground within the parkland. Designated areas will be provided for displays of falconry and birds of prey. The existing farm irrigation reservoirs will be naturalised to provide lakes for Fly Fishing supported by a gillie who will be on hand with tips for the experienced angler and lessons for beginners. Rod and tackle hire will be available.

The Parkland will include established and new woodlands as well as cricket bat willow plantations, restored ancient ponds, swampland and conservation projects, small animal pastures, as well as an area for archery demonstrations and tuition.

An aerial walkway through the trees of the wood, near the Warren, will span the dell in it to ensure level disabled access to the other side.

The Country Park is interwoven with many of the other zones of Horkeley Park, from the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre to the Heritage and Conservation exhibits in the Main Building.

Following the recreation of the parkland and planting of over 50,000 indigenous trees, shrubs and hedges the Country Park will be maintained as a natural landscape. The new parkland, designed to make a major contribution to the landscape character and quality of the area, will be managed to help with the absorption of visitor pressures within the Dedham Vale. It will provide an outlet for low key, informal recreation within an area where there are few opportunities for access to open countryside.

The Public Footpaths crossing the site, which are required to be only 1.2 metres wide, will be contained within 6 metre wide grassed Green Lanes flanked by 1 metre width indigenous hedges and stock-proof fencing which will be maintained to a height of 1.4 metres. These will become "wildlife" corridors.

Perimeter hedging and fencing of the parkland pastures and other areas will be similar to that of the Green Lanes.

The ponds which have become silted up will be reinstated for the benefit of wildlife.

The wildflower meadows will be starved of nutrients so that they become species rich. Nearby there will be a bee keeping project to enhance the fauna and flora. Grass paths will be cut through them so visitors can enjoy the wild flowers without spoiling anything.

Suffolk Punch drawn vehicles will convey visitors from the Main Building around to The Chantry drive, alternatively visitors can walk. As access to Horkesley Park is all ticketed, tickets will be the means of visitors passing through various gates to access different parts of Horkesley Park. With modern technology, sophisticated systems are available for this unobtrusive form of visitor access control.

## **ZONE 12**

### **SUPPORTING FACILITIES**

The Main Building contains the principal eating and refreshment areas, Lecture Theatre and Exhibition area.

The ground floor concourse is accessed directly off the Stour Valley Walkway. Outside the large area under the Main Building's overhanging roof is the pick up and drop off point for horse drawn vehicles which link to the Gardens (Zone 7), The Chantry Fine Art Gallery and Creative Design Workshops (Zone 8) and the Country Park (Zone 11).

The ground floor provides a lounge and rest area, a restaurant and cafés, toilets, showers, lockers, nappy changing and nursing facilities, and full disabled facilities.

The ground floor of the Main Building links with the landscape and has picturesque views across the Country Park and to the Suffolk Punch Breeding Centre.

The first floor of the Main Building is accessed via a central circular staircase and lift. It contains a 250 seat lecture theatre, a dedicated lecture theatre restaurant and an exhibition area.

There will be a 360° outside walkway on the first floor around the Main Building with views of the wildflower green roof and the Countryside beyond. This will enable visitors to look down upon the wildflower green roof with its irrigation system supplied from the rainwater harvesting system, the photovoltaic and solar thermal panels; all forming part of the sustainable technologies which will be used and demonstrated at Horkesley Park.

### **PART 3: SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

The following chapter presents a summary of the key findings of each Chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES).

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#### **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT**

LDA Design has produced a Landscape and Visual Assessment which forms part of the ES (Chapter 5). In order to assess the wider visual impact of the Horkesley Park proposals on the landscape, a wider Study Area has been defined to identify the landscape character of the sites' setting, its context within the Dedham Vale AONB and the visual impact of the site.

The site extends across the transition from the valley sides of a tributary of the River Stour to the more elevated upland fringe and plateau area above the Stour Valley. It is located within a rural setting in the northern part of the parish of Great Horkesley and immediately west of the A134. The land use is predominantly a mix of agricultural land interspersed with substantial areas of mature and semi-mature woodland. A complex of disused glasshouses and nursery infrastructure is located within the eastern section of the site and The Chantry - a country mansion set in its own grounds - is located to the north of the nursery site. The buildings are contained on their perimeters by linear belts of trees and hedgerows.

The western and northern sectors of the site are located within the Dedham Vale AONB and the whole of the site falls within the Stour Valley Countryside Conservation Area. The effect of any future development of the site on these protected areas of landscape is therefore an important issue.

The landscape and visual assessment has demonstrated that the site is well contained by a network of woodland areas, tree belts and hedgerows, which together with surrounding built development and landform, have limited the principal zone from which the site is visible. Re-development of the existing glasshouse complex and other agricultural buildings with a more sensitively designed structure would not, therefore, be an intrusive element in the landscape. Furthermore the development would provide the opportunity to introduce enhancement and long term management of the existing woodland within the site, as well as the establishment of significant areas of new woodland planting and enhanced landscape management. This new woodland infrastructure would contribute to both the character of the site and the wider setting within and on the perimeter of the Dedham Vale AONB.

The development of the site offers the opportunity to establish an associated area of parkland and recreational land with picnic areas, recreational routes and open spaces for the benefit of both local people and visitors. Such facilities can provide an important release of recreational pressures within the main part of the AONB. There is also potential to introduce an enhanced footpath and cycleway route to and within the site, and a hopper bus or coach for staff and local use to support the principles of more sustainable forms of transport.

There are significant opportunities to enhance the biodiversity interest of the site through the management of the existing and new areas of trees and woodland and the establishment of pasture, heritage farming areas, bee keeping and the restoration of ponds including the historic carp ponds in Fishponds Grove.

On the northern side of Great Horkesley and on the southern perimeter of the Dedham Vale AONB, there are opportunities to establish a landmark Gateway entrance to both the village and the AONB.

The proposals for the site include an associated overflow parking area to the south west of the Main Building which will be unobtrusively located below existing levels graded to a natural slope profile marrying into the adjacent existing levels.

The development of Horkesley Park and associated recreational facilities will support the principles of rural diversification and enhance the opportunities for wider local employment without compromising the integrity of the Dedham Vale AONB.

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## **ECOLOGY**

The Ecology input to the Environmental Assessment (Chapter 6) takes the form of a desk study undertaken by LDA Design Ecology and is supported by a Technical Appendix containing a suite of ecological surveys conducted over a number of years.

The findings in the Ecology Chapter demonstrate the ability of the scheme to satisfy the terms and tests imposed by policy. In essence, the majority of effects, even if held to be “harmful” and “material”, can be largely mitigated to achieve insignificant or even “significant beneficial” entries. For example, badgers have high baseline sensitivity but the scheme will not give rise to “significant effects”, even during the Construction phase. Indeed, the study concludes that the overall effect of the scheme will be one of creating new habitats and enhancing existing ones with the development supporting a greater level of biodiversity and increasing the complexity and connectivity of habitat linkages. Given the absence of “significant” or even

“moderate” effects, there are therefore clear indications that the scheme is capable of complying with the strict requirements imposed by PPS9 and strategic and local planning policies.

The detailed proposals for land use – which include an extensive landscape structure, woodland management, and heritage grassland – will have positive benefits for flora and fauna. Whilst outside any special designations such as NNRs and SSSIs – Horkesley Park reflects an exemplary approach to the management of the countryside by safeguarding and enhancing its nature conservation resources. It will enable specific management measures to be introduced to safeguard particular species, and enhance the biodiversity of the area, and in so doing encourage greater knowledge of, and commitment to the area’s rural resources.

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## **HYDROLOGY, DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT**

Chapter 7 of the ES is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) prepared by RPS Planning and Development and is included in Volume 2B, Technical Appendix 7.1.. The need for an FRA is a requirement of PPS25: Development and Flood Risk – which indicates, inter alia, that: *“The aims of planning policy on development and flood risk are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk.”* In broad terms, the effect of development on the wider catchment area, and not just within the immediate environs of the proposed development, needs to be taken into account.

In line with PPS25, RPS was commissioned to undertake an FRA for the proposed development. The FRA is contained within the ES and evaluates the potential flood risk of the proposed development and outlines the mitigation requirements. Only a small part of the “undeveloped” western parts of the site lies within an indicative floodplain – and not of the Stour itself but a small tributary stream. The vast majority of the Application site – including the new built environment on the higher ground – is located within Flood Zone 1: Low Risk and is not affected by the 1:100 year and 1:1000 year return period for fluvial flooding or the 1:200 years tidal floodplains as shown on the Environment Agency map. The key issue is therefore the potential adverse flood risk elsewhere in the catchment and hence the FRA focuses on the surface water run-off generated by the development and the effect on the capacity of any receiving watercourses/drainage systems. In this respect, the increase in hardstanding areas and consequent decrease in natural runoff will lead to an increase in surface water runoff rates from the site.

The FRA distinguishes between the watershed on the site, with the undeveloped western parts

of the site draining towards the tributary stream which feeds into the Stour, and the developed and undeveloped eastern part of the site which drain eastwards through a culvert under the A134 feeding into three irrigation reservoirs to the east of the A134. The Surface Water Runoff Assessment takes account of both these catchments.

The main car park drains into the eastern catchment and will require an interceptor or to be filtered through permeable paving, with additional runoff draining into the irrigation reservoirs to the east of the site. It may be necessary to increase the capacity of the pipes and the culverts to take account of highest flows. The reservoirs, however, are easily able to store the increased runoff. The southernmost of the three irrigation reservoirs has a surface area of 16,900 sq.m which, during a 100 year return period event, would only result in an increase in water level of approximately 3.7 cm. Water from this southern reservoir is currently pumped into the central reservoir which stands at a higher level, and this reservoir does not accept runoff from the surrounding land. There is therefore ample capacity to accommodate peak flows.

With regard to the western catchment, the limited surface water generated by The Warren (nature watch) building will be attenuated through a combination of infiltration trenches and storage ponds. Runoff from The Warren will be attenuated through the use of soakaways, with an infiltration trench around the building before being piped into the watercourse on the western boundary. The infiltration trenches will also be linked to the existing reservoirs which will accept any remaining runoff and which are able to accommodate peak flows with minimal increase in water levels.

The FRA concludes that the proposed development site is not at risk from flooding for return period events up to 100 years allowing for climate change. The drainage assessment demonstrates that with the adoption of an appropriate drainage strategy, the development will have no adverse impacts on flood risk elsewhere in the catchment.

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## **GROUND CONDITIONS & CONTAMINATION**

The Ground Conditions & Contamination input to the Environmental Assessment (Chapter 8) has been prepared by RPS Planning and Development and is supported by a Phase 1 Geo-environmental Assessment undertaken by STATS (2009) and Oakley Soils and Concrete Engineering Ltd Infiltration Tests (2007). These are found in Appendix 8.1 to the ES.

The principal area of risk is identified to be a “*tank farm*” used for fuel storage in connection with the heating of the glasshouses and the glasshouse nursery buildings generally. The tank

farm is located to the south of the two large glasshouses and to the north of the workshop. It comprises four tanks within a bunded area, two 20,000 gallon tanks containing some heavy oil, and 3 further tanks of 3000, 1000 and 300 gallon capacity containing “red” diesel. A further 1000 gallon tank for “white” diesel is encased in concrete between the workshops, with a diesel pump located to the south of the workshop.

Based on the results of the Phase 1 investigation, it is recommended that there is no current problem requiring remediation. However, if the tanks are to be removed, it is recommended that samples are obtained directly beneath the underground tanks and the above ground tanks. This needs to be carried out after the tanks and hardstandings have been removed as access is not available at present. Further details of any remediation that is necessary will therefore be based on further investigations.

An Envirocheck report contained in Technical Appendix 8.1 also revealed three known historical pollution incidents involving pig manure and oil discharges to controlled waters although these have long since been resolved. Overall, the magnitude of any adverse effects to ground conditions, soil contamination and geotechnical issues arising from the development are considered to be “low” and of “minor significance”.

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## **TOURISM**

The Tourism Feasibility Study has been prepared by Sykes Leisure Projects as an input to the Environmental Statement and can be read in Technical Appendix 9.1 of the ES. The Study represents an in-depth evaluation of the role that Horkesley Park could play in the regional and local economy. It is seen as complementary to the promotion of Colchester as a major centre of culture within the region. The Study is summarised below.

Bunting & Sons, one of Colchester’s oldest family businesses established in 1820, proposes to create Horkesley Park as an outstanding visitor attraction in place of the glasshouse nursery and on adjoining land totaling 47.41 hectares (117.16 acres).

The Horkesley Park development concept is defined as “*A Celebration of the English Countryside*” and interpretation of the Stour Valley with a great variety of exciting attractions and cultural focal points in and around a diversity of fascinating buildings sympathetic to their surroundings. It is proposed to be a unique and vibrant place with strong regional and local emphasis providing for all ages and interests, from education to recreation.

As a result of the research and findings of the Tourism Assessment Study, the following points

represent a summary of the key issues:

- The term “*Constable Country*” (location and geographical area) means different things to different people.
- Colchester’s unique selling proposition is its historic past.
- For many years the tourism industry within Colchester area has under performed.
- Essex needs a change of image.
- Many people do not know where Colchester is.
- There are three historic figures that have the potential to improve Colchester's image as a tourism destination – Emperor Claudius and Boudicca on the one hand and John Constable on the other.
- Colchester Borough Council's proposals for a significant Romano-British attraction have been put on hold due to lack of funding and the John Constable connections have been only “lightly” promoted as part of a sustainable tourism initiative within Dedham Vale.
- The value of tourism within the area has been growing over the years with only short temporary blips.
- In regional perception studies, “*Constable Country*” has the most widespread appeal for visitors.
- Constable paintings are familiar, and strike an evocative chord.
- The vast majority of (visitor) respondents did not consider that there were any detracting influences within the Vale.
- Of the minority of visitors who identified detracting influences, the most common concern was traffic congestion rather than density of people.
- Respondents (local residents) wanted to see traditional farming, more trees, additional and improved footpaths, additional and improved cycle trails, cycle hire shops, traffic restrictions (management), more informal recreational facilities, improved public transport, and park and ride.
- Respondents (local residents) did not want to see intensive agriculture, new holiday accommodation, larger farms, more shops and additional buildings.
- Most respondents (local residents) wanted to see a balance between conservation and development.
- Over 80% of visitors to Dedham Vale arrive by car.
- There is a high level of satisfaction with the visitor experience.
- Facilities that visitors would like to see in “*Constable Country*” were additional shops, more toilets and better signs and information.
- It is estimated that the Flatford Mill “honeypot” area attracts approximately 250,000 visitors per year.
- Both regional and local cultural and tourism strategies generally support in principle the development concepts for Horkesley Park.

- There is an increasing propensity for people to eat out and for the eating experience to become less formal.
- Although there has been a growth in the market for leisure venue catering due to improvements in the catering offer, consumers remain concerned with value for money and the quality of the eating experience.
- Different people demand different eating experiences and expect different things from the places they visit.
- There is a growth in demand for in-store cafes and coffee shops.
- The horticultural products market has grown by over 30% in the last four years.
- There is a trend towards products that reduce garden maintenance and help make the garden an area for relaxation.
- There is a growing trend for garden centres to incorporate leisure elements within their product mix. Similarly, there is a growing trend for garden/farm/countryside attractions to incorporate garden and plant centres within their product offer.
- There is a growing interest in healthy living and increased demand for fresh produce and organic foods.
- Consumers are keen to support local enterprises as a backlash against the supermarkets, which have tended to squeeze out village shops.
- Developing food produce as a tourism product provides a variety of benefits including:
  - broadening the range of attractions on offer to the visitor;
  - appeal to visitors who are looking to buy souvenirs or gifts with a local flavour, e.g. local wine or cheese;
  - strengthen regional identity and local distinctiveness by providing a showcase for local produce;
  - encouraging wider access to the countryside.

The Horkesley Park scheme is a unique opportunity to create a viable and sustainable rural based centre for visitors to experience and explore many facets of the English countryside. Bunting & Sons propose to have Horkesley Park fully built and operational by 2011, subject to planning permission being granted in reasonable time, to enable the park to be open in time for the 2012 Olympic Games. The proposals are in line with key tourism objectives for Eastern England and in the Colchester Local Development Framework Core Strategy

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## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS**

DTZ has produced a study that assesses and analyses the socio-economic impacts of the proposals. This study is found in Chapter 10 of the Environmental Assessment and identifies:-

- The opportunities for job creation directly by the development
- The potential for job creation indirectly from the development
- The potential broader impacts on the local tourist economy

The Study concludes that:

- *Once operational, it is expected that Horkesley Park will employ the equivalent of 226 people made up of around 84 full time employees and 142 part time employees.*
- *The proposed development will provide local rural employment in an area where there are limited local employment opportunities and may reduce distances travelled to work. It is estimated that 155 full time equivalents will be employed directly on the site. This would include a number of apprentices.*
- *In addition to jobs created on site, it is estimated that Horkesley Park will create a further 45 full time equivalent jobs indirectly off site in the Essex and Suffolk sub-region. These jobs would be created by off site spending by visitors to Horkesley Park and through the local supply chain (i.e. products and services purchased from local businesses for the operation of Horkesley Park).*
- *The proposed development will provide opportunities to increase visitor spend and therefore the value of tourism within the countryside by providing a new visitor experience and opportunities for spending.*
- *The proposed development will provide a product which should encourage additional overnight stays in the area therefore encouraging further spending in the economy.*

The creation of sustainable communities, where jobs, homes, and environment are closely interlinked, is the core national, regional and local planning objective. The Horkesley Park proposals will meet this objective by providing and facilitating significant employment in the local and wider community. The jobs provided by Horkesley Park would not compete with or prejudice the town centre. The employment element of the scheme constitutes a major private investment in the rural and tourism sectors of the regional economy, where the need for such investment is being firmly recognised and promoted. Finally, the scheme would be a major attractor to Colchester and fit well with the Borough Council's initiatives to promote economic diversity and growth and become a "sustainable and prestigious regional centre".

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## **TRAFFIC, TRANSPORT AND ACCESS**

This section follows on from Chapter 11 of the Environmental Statement and summarises the transport effects associated with the Horkesley Park proposals with reference to key policy and

other considerations. The text should be read in conjunction with the Transport Assessment (TA) prepared by RPS Planning and Development to accompany the Planning Application. The TA considers the transport characteristics of Horkesley Park for all modes, including public transport, pedestrian and cyclists. The resultant traffic impact associated with the development proposals has been quantified on the surrounding highway network.

The proposed development would generate a modest amount of traffic during the traditional peak periods, and would generate its highest levels of traffic during the weekend peak periods, when background traffic flows are lower. The increases in traffic from the proposed development would have an insignificant impact on the surrounding highway network, in particular, on the local roads which are assumed would be signposted with brown/tourist signs.

The proposed arrangements for highway access at the A134/London Road junction for the development would satisfactorily accommodate the development proposals.

Horkesley Park is accessible by alternative modes of transport to the private car, with these sustainable transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport.

The Horkesley Park proposals will also benefit the general public through the provision of a new bus service and significant proposed enhancements to pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities.

The existence of the Travel Plan would provide further positive advantages to staff and customers. As such, Horkesley Park would facilitate achieving the aims of sustainable development.

The proposed level of car parking spaces would be adequate to cater for periods of peak demand.

The Transport Assessment concludes that the highway network has sufficient capacity available to cope with the modest levels of traffic generated by the development proposal whilst the effect of transport movements in the local environment is deemed to be 'minor adverse' at worst.

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## **AIR QUALITY**

Chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement assesses the potential for the proposed development at Horkesley Park to affect both air quality and climate. The text should be read

in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) data provided in The UK National Air Quality Information Service National Air Quality Archive.

A review of data and predictions from Colchester Borough Council and the National Air Quality archive suggests that baseline air quality in the area of the proposed Horkesley Park development is good. It is noted, however that there is extensive agricultural activity in the area, which may give rise to episodes of increased dust concentration at certain times of the year. The greatest current contribution to air pollution in the area was considered to be motor vehicle derived emissions from the A134 road.

To confirm the "Baseline" air quality with particular respect to road emissions, site specific monitoring for pollution associated with vehicles was conducted at locations identified as key receptors surrounding the Application site. The results were in broad agreement with those from Colchester Borough Council and the National Air Quality Archive and confirm that air quality in the area is good.

The construction and operation of the proposed development, including the demolition of redundant facilities on the site, cooking and heating facilities, and agricultural aspects of the site, are expected to generate emissions and pollutant dust particles. However the magnitude and frequency of these factors are considered to be low.

Overall the effects of the proposed development on air quality and climate, including pollution arising from staff and visitor transport are considered to be "very minor adverse" or "neutral".

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## **NOISE AND VIBRATION**

Chapter 13 of the Environmental Assessment assesses the implications for the noise and vibration environment arising from the proposed Horkesley Park development. Changes in noise and vibration levels could result from the dismantling, demolition, construction and operational activities on the site. In order to determine the potential impacts of the proposed development, background noise measurements have been carried out and an assessment of the potential impacts undertaken. Information in this chapter has been drawn from studies conducted by STATS Limited included in Volume 2B of the Environmental Statement.

In respect of construction noise and vibration, minor adverse noise and negligible vibration effects are generally anticipated. During certain periods, however, noise and vibration impacts may rise to be moderately adverse over short time periods arising, for instance, when bulk earthworks operations are being carried out close to sections of the site boundary near

residential properties. Controls will be placed on the hours of construction working to minimise possible nuisance of the works to nearby residents.

The predicted increase in road traffic noise will typically, give rise to a negligible noise impact and at worst a minor effect.

In respect of noise and vibration from plant, equipment and services installed in the new buildings, it is anticipated that a negligible noise and vibration effect will be achieved by design.

The main significant effect from the proposed development will be temporary nuisance, mainly from noise, possibly affecting nearby residents during the initial stages of construction. All other adverse effects from the development will be either negligible or minor in nature. There will be no significant residual adverse effects from the proposed development in terms of noise and vibration.

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## **LIGHTING**

Chapter 14 of the Environmental Statement addresses the likely environmental effects resulting from the proposed exterior lighting at Horkesley Park.

Badly designed exterior lighting can be visually intrusive and offensive to nearby residents and even dangerous in the case of road users. It also represents an inefficient use of energy, as light is being directed into areas which do not need to be illuminated.

The chapter evaluates the impact of the existing lighting on the site, determines whether the proposed development would affect the baseline condition in a positive or negative way, and explains mitigating measures that should be used to ensure that the lighting of the proposed development has a beneficial effect.

The existing site can be considered a dark landscape despite the illumination of the glasshouses on the glasshouse nursery site, which is largely shielded by topographical and landscape features.

There is currently some poorly controlled security lighting within the glasshouses which causes a moderate level of obtrusive glare to some immediate neighbours.

Light pollution from the proposed development during the construction phase will be minimised by the use of the mitigating measures proposed, but due to the need for safe working and the

current dark environment, the construction phase is likely to have a Temporary Moderate Adverse effect on the local environment.

In the operational phase, the mitigating methods proposed will eliminate glare and produce a visually comfortable environment. Post-construction, the level of light egress to the local environment is likely to be significantly lower than the current baseline condition.

The application of sensitive interior and exterior architectural lighting techniques will provide a safe and interesting environment for both staff and visitors, whilst fully appreciating the local ecology and environment. As such, the exterior lighting of the proposed development should be considered as a Minor Beneficial effect.

## **PART 4: CONCLUSION**

This Planning Statement provides background information and a summary of key facts and issues to assist in the determination of the Planning Application for Horkesley Park . The Application is supported by in depth technical surveys and reports on a wide range of matters which are material to the environmental impacts associated with the development. Human factors are also examined in terms of socio-economic considerations and in terms of employment in particular, together with sustainable transportation and tourism.

The abiding aim is to demonstrate how an innovative and exciting tourism initiative can be integrated into the Essex landscape and how it can successfully contribute to wider regional as well as local planning objectives.

The promoters of Horkesley Park have considerable experience of land management and tourism development within a sensitive rural environment and are well placed to deliver the proposals in its totality.

The buildings and attractions in the form of the exhibitions and features together with The Chantry Art Gallery provide the main focus for the scheme but it is the Country Park that is the jewel in the crown. It provides a superb setting for the main building and a unique area of extensive open space where the landscape of the Dedham Vale can be accessed and enjoyed to the full. The value of the Country Park in terms of landscape conservation and as a recreational resource should not be underestimated. It will, with the attractions of the rest of the Centre, provide an unrivalled experience and setting for the English countryside to be celebrated.