

Famous name against heritage centre

Artist's descendant opposes rural centre

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roads around the area and lead to noise and light pollution in the Dedham Vale, which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Yesterday, Dr Constable told the EADT: "This does not seem to be of an appropriate scale.

"I think everybody understands that Stephen Bunting and his family want to do something else on that site, but the question is whether the particular development is of the right kind given its location.

"It would become a large retail site. It just doesn't seem the right thing to do.

"I had a long time talking with Mr Bunting, and they are very energetic and enthusiastic people, but I just think their energies are misdirected.

"There is not a chance of it becoming a major Constable centre. It is too far away from the major Constable associations of Dedham and Flatford Mill."

Yesterday, however, Mr Bunting said: "John Constable is, like anyone else, entitled to his opinion, but he is wrong in what he says.

"Assessments have been done by national specialists with experience in these things across the country and they say that this will be a perfectly acceptable scale.

"Horkesley Park will be 117 acres, the vast majority of which will be parkland worked by Suffolk Punches, East Anglia's native heavy horses.

"The proposed buildings will be half the size of the existing buildings, and nothing will be built above ground in the AONB."

The online edition of the paper also included this telling quote from Dr Constable: "It would become a large retail site and I really don't think people want to come to Constable country for Bluewater-on-Stour. It just doesn't seem the right thing to do."

ARTIST'S DESCENDANT: 117-acre site 'too far from Dedham and Flatford'

EXCLUSIVE
By Roddy Ashworth

A DESCENDANT of East Anglian artist John Constable has called for the rejection of proposals for a large rural heritage centre which would partly be associated with the painter's name.

Dr John Constable, the great-great-grandson of the artist who painted landscapes in the Dedham Vale, said he believed the Horkesley Park Conservation and Heritage Centre was out-of-scale and out-of-keeping with the countryside around it.

Dr Constable has now written to Colchester Borough Council urging it to turn down plans for the £20million project, which he described as "manifestly not an appropriate development".

The Great Horkesley scheme, billed as "a celebration of the English countryside", would see a 117-acre site transformed into parkland and gardens containing an information centre, an art gallery, shops, restaurants and a Suffolk Punch breeding centre.

It would include a "zone" called "The Life and Times of John Constable Experience" which would demonstrate how landscape and social history interacted to inspire the famous painter to paint nearby.

The site of the proposed heritage centre, owned by local firm Bunting and Sons, currently consists of open land and a number of redundant industrial greenhouses that previously formed a tomato nursery.

However, some people fear the new proposals could lead to traffic gridlock in

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