

New Horkesley Park plans go on display

Revised bid for controversial heritage centre

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REVISED plans for a controversial heritage and conservation centre in the heart of the Dedham Vale are to go on display for the first time next month.

The new plans for Horkesley Park, put forward by developers Bunting and Sons, do not include the underground warren, which was to act as nature watch area.

Kate Bunting, partner at the firm, said: "We have listened to the concerns over the proposals and have made a lot of changes to them.

"The warren element of the building was included before. However, that element has been completely

removed and that is a direct response to the concerns of the public. We have also looked at the scale of the building and the design of the building, as well as the quantity of the retail elements."

Mrs Bunting added the final details for the plans would be put together before a public consultation on May 10 and 11. The consultation will be held at the Women's Institute Hall, in Great Horkesley, between 3pm and 9pm both days.

She added: "I feel a lot of concerns were down perception, as opposed to the reality of the proposals, but support has always outweighed the objectors. Objectors are always more vociferous."

No final budget has been set for the

fresh plans, but the project's new architects hope to finalise figures before the consultation.

Last year, the firm's plans for the 47.4-hectare space were refused by Colchester Council.

Some 5,513 letters of support for the initial plans were received, while there were 1,285 letters of objection.

Bunting and Sons had claimed the centre would become a sustainable tourism attraction, which would attract 485,000 visitors a year and bring 220 jobs. But the site is partly in an area of outstanding natural beauty and runs contrary to a number of national and local planning policies. Opponents claim it would destroy the tranquillity of the Dedham Vale.

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