



Councillor .....  
Colchester Borough Council  
PO Box 884  
Town Hall Colchester CO1 1FR

October 16<sup>th</sup> 2009

Dear Councillor ,

**Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre: Application No 090231**

You may recall that I wrote to you in May 2009 concerning the planning application for Horkesley Park by Bunting and Sons with a copy of the Stour Valley Action Group's response to this which gave full details of our objections to the current proposals. At the time, we anticipated that the Application would come before the Planning Committee of the Colchester Borough Council for determination in June or July. This obviously did not happen and we understand that the date for it to come before Council is still uncertain. The delay appears to have been caused mainly by the need for Buntings to provide new data to answer questions raised by the Highways Agency. For much the same reason there has not yet been any response in the Public Domain from Essex County Council Highways department. We understand that there are also other non-traffic related issues raised by the Planning Department which are still unresolved.

The delay in the process has caused public debate on the issue to go out of the local press but this should not be construed in any way to mean that the opposition has gone away; our resolve to convince you not to support this Planning Application remains as intense as ever.

I am sure you are aware that your own Spatial Policy Team has recommended refusal as well as the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Joint Advisory Committee which is supported by the Colchester Borough Council. The proposed development is on the border with Suffolk and all the neighbouring Parish Councils on both sides of the County border have written in objection as well as Babergh District Council and Suffolk Highways. In addition to this, letters of objection have been written by the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, the National Trust, CPRE Essex, the Suffolk Preservation Society, Gainsborough's House Museum, the Dedham Vale Society, Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society, the Colne Stour Association as well as over 1000 other individuals and organisations including Mr Tim Yeo MP, Dr John Constable and Dr Ronald Blythe. Mr Bernard Jenkin MP has written requesting that it be Called In for determination by the Secretary of State.

There are very many reasons for rejection but the main ones in our view are:

- The Application is contrary to the whole ethos of Government and Local Planning Policy. It is a 'departure application' and clearly does not meet the criteria set out in the Colchester Borough Plan and the Local Development Framework.
- Crucially, no over-riding national need has been established for such a development in or adjacent to an AONB as required in the retained policy from the Colchester Borough Plan.
- The development would irrevocably compromise the peace and tranquillity of the Dedham Vale AONB in a totally unacceptable way.
- The local road infrastructure is not sufficient to cope with the influx of traffic from the predicted 480,000 visitors in the first year.

- The potential job creation figures cannot be guaranteed and are far from reliable as pointed out by the Spatial Policy Team report. Furthermore the number of new jobs must depend on the validity of the business plan which our expert advisors have shown to be fatally flawed. Detailed reasons for this are given in our full report.

The Horkesley Park issue (or variants of it) has been hanging over our heads since 2001 and we strongly urge you to take all rational local opinion into account and reject it once and for all when it comes before you for determination.

Please let me know if I can be of help in any other way including the provision of an additional copy of our full response to the Council.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

William Pavry  
Chairman,  
Stour Valley Action Group

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