



Respecting the past, shaping the future

*Press release from
Suffolk Preservation Society
Date: 15/ 10/ 08*

Society urges rejection of “unacceptable” truck proposal

Revisions to a proposal for a forklift truck and excavator training facility in the heart of the Suffolk countryside have done nothing to reduce an unacceptable increase in noise disturbance for nearby residents, environmental campaigners have warned.

The Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) says the plans earmarked for land neighbouring Pakenham’s historic watermill would eat away at the area’s cherished tranquillity and damage its special character.

The noise and visual impact of the development, SPS says, would also adversely affect what is currently an undisturbed area of beautiful Suffolk countryside.

The revised application has been lodged with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, requesting permission to change the use of the land at Grimstone End, Pakenham, from a gravel pit to forklift and excavator training facility. Alongside SPS, Suffolk Building Preservation Trust, which owns the nearby Pakenham Watermill, has also objected to the scheme.

A “landscape noise reduction bund” would be added to the site as part of the plans – but the society has warned this measure simply does not go far enough towards reducing the proposal’s potential impact on its surroundings.

“This is a delightfully peaceful area of Suffolk countryside which is home to both Pakenham Watermill and the neighbouring Millers House, listed grade II*,” said Richard Ward, director of the society.

“Approving these plans would diminish the tranquility of this area and would represent yet another example of the erosion of Suffolk’s beautiful countryside.

“The revised proposals only go to demonstrate that the applicant accepts and acknowledges that the development would have significant and adverse impacts in terms of noise and visual impact. A noise reduction bund will simply will not mitigate this unacceptable level of disturbance.

“The changes to this proposal have failed to address the fundamental issue and concerns of the original application. This facility is simply not suitable for a site in the open countryside, and we urge the council to reject it.”

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A similar application was submitted for the same site in 1994 and later refused by the local planning authority.

Mr Ward urged planners to do the same with the latest proposal – which is contrary to government policies stating that the countryside’s character and beauty should be protected.

“Applications like this are gradually threatening the heritage and special character of our county,” added Mr Ward. “We must do everything we can to protect that character before it is gone for good.

“For councillors to do anything other than refuse the application would be perverse.”

Ends

Note to editors:

SPS, founded in 1929, originally worked to protect the county’s buildings and landscape. Today, the society has broadened its focus to help shape Suffolk’s future, largely campaigning for sensitive and appropriate development, more and better quality affordable homes and to ensure sustainable infrastructures are in place to support the county’s communities.

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