
Suffolk View

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SUFFOLK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Issue No: 101

Winter 2005 and Spring 2006



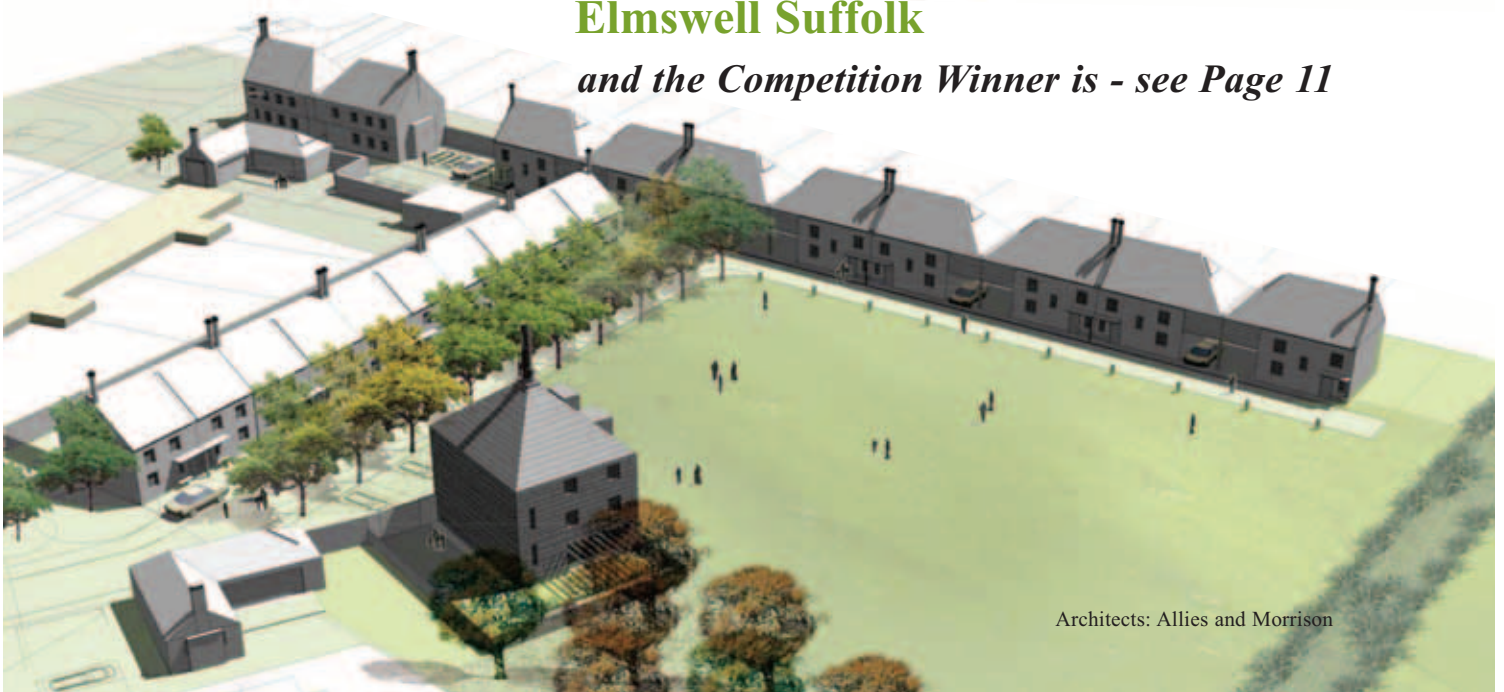
Architects: Alison Brooks

Architects: Henning Stummel



The Exemplar Affordable Housing Project Elmswell Suffolk

and the Competition Winner is - see Page 11



Architects: Allies and Morrison

Suffolk Preservation Society



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

The County Branch of CPRE

Founded in 1929, the SPS, a registered charity, (registered charity number 249981), is working to safeguard the buildings and landscape of Suffolk. –

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The six finalists – Affordable Housing
Competition, Elmswell, Suffolk.

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Snippets from the Cutting Room



*SPS Director,
Richard Ward,
writes -*

It was greatly heartening, and most unexpected to receive your letters and donations toward the Society's important work for the *Examination in Public (EiP)*, (Draft Regional Plan, RSS14), in response to our letter to members just before Christmas. Thank you for your kind support. Preparation for the EiP meant we were unable to produce the Winter Newsletter but fear not, normal services are resumed, and you will be fully up-dated on all matters.

The Regional Plan seeks to ensure 478,000 new houses are built in the Region by 2021. Incredibly, however, even more increases are proposed in the Plan period and the East of England Regional Assembly (the body responsible for producing the draft plan) has described this latest Government proposal, *an extra 40,000 dwellings per year over the next ten years across the whole of England*, as "**undeliverable and a potential environmental disaster**" - see page 22 for Corrine Meakins' comments on the EiP.

It has been a very busy time since the publication of the 100th Edition Newsletter. The *New Members Party* at Little Hall, which was great fun, and a *visit to Long Wall*, near Sudbury, occupied us during August. Long Wall is an unusual listed modern home, (many thanks to our kind hosts John and Linda Burke), and with an illuminating interpretation from Architect Hugh Pilkington, who was responsible for later sensitive alterations, members enjoyed a day with a difference. The Society's two *Training Day Seminars* in October and November - "Understanding Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas" - attracted 156 people to Haughley Park Barn.

The *Elmswell Affordable Housing Competition* has been moving apace and reached its critical stage just before the end of last year. All six finalists (*featured on the cover*) had merit but the winning scheme was considered to have the best combination of design excellence and sustainable features. See page 11.

This year is already proving to be even busier. The Society has commented on the Government's most recent proposals for housing set out in draft *Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3)*, focusing on the policies relating to development in general, and to rural and affordable housing, its design and sustainability. Organisation of the Society's *Conference*, scheduled for *Thursday, 12th October*, is well under way, (**note in diary now**). Its subject - climate change brought about by global warming - will challenge us in all areas, see page 26. This important conference "Climate Change - What Can You Do"? is not to be missed, and more details will follow in the next Newsletter.

Work at *Pakenham Water Mill* is progressing well, see pages 9 & 10. The rotten window frames on the Mill are to be repaired and/or replaced this spring, and at the same time it will be re-decorated externally. Your generous support with the Appeal has enabled us to start these important and urgent works.

The Society wishes to record, with deep regret, the passing of the wives of two of our former Chairmen, Sheila, wife of Barry Porter, and Elisabeth, Lady Rose, wife of Sir Clive Rose, and of a former Director of the Society, David Bremner.

Comment

SPS Director, Dr. Mike Coleman, writes

Since my introduction in the Summer 2005 Newsletter I have now had the opportunity to act as your Chairman for some months. Albeit a short time in post I was nevertheless allowed a Christmas break!

This was spent in Lyme Regis with relatives in their new home which, incidentally, had needed a lot of remedial work. I have been to Lyme several times in my life but it has always been crowded and busy so it was not shown to advantage. However, Boxing Day was cold and crisp and we had a walk down the back lanes into the town and it was truly delightful, particularly without the melée of summer visitors. I realised, particularly on the return, how the old buildings fitted in with their surroundings. This was particularly reinforced in the more modern part of the town: there the buildings could have been plucked from any part of the country – there was no local character at all.

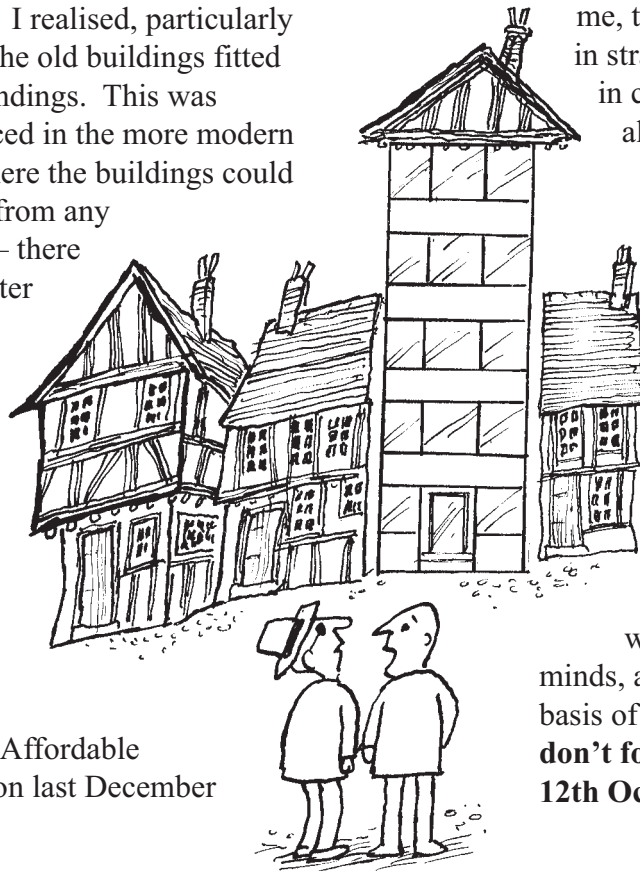
Modern housing can reflect a sense of place if thoughtfully planned and designed. It gave me great pleasure to attend the judging of the Society's Elmswell Affordable Housing Competition last December

and to observe, first hand, the design proposals of the six finalists. Looking back now I am convinced we have not only selected a modern interpretation of Suffolk design, but one that is also truly sustainable. I hope that when it is built you will take the opportunity to visit Elmswell and judge for yourselves.

It will not have escaped your notice that nuclear power is back on the agenda. Sizewell will almost certainly see new build and that will be a challenge for us. Do we want nuclear power and another blot on the horizon, or are we instead to have several hundred wind turbines covering many square miles, or is all this too simplistic? In future Newsletters I will, if you will allow me, try to explain nuclear power in straightforward terms and put it in context with other sources of alternative power.

So 2006 is shaping up to be an interesting year. The results of the Examination in Public of the Draft East of England Regional Plan are due, as is an energy review, and there is increasing concern in respect of climate change because of global warming. I suspect both

will considerably concentrate minds, and this topic will form the basis of our **Autumn Conference, don't forget the date – 12th October!**



“It's what's called a “good old British compromise.”

Food for thought



A growing trend?

It perhaps shouldn't surprise anyone to learn that many people in our country today do not know, or particularly care, where their food comes from: it appears on supermarket shelves so that's fine. They have lost the connection between the land and the food they eat. So says *Professor Jules Pretty, of Essex University*, talking to the *Hadleigh Farmers Agricultural Association* in February.

We have a population of mainly urban dwellers who pop into their 24 hour supermarket and simply buy almost anything they want. Perhaps they have no other choice. Little is done to discourage giant supermarket groups from establishing themselves in *market towns* throughout the country. Even less is put into food production by government other than regulation: to their analytical eye farming is just a minuscule contributor to the 'gross domestic product' of this country. Why support home grown food when you can just as easily buy any produce you want on the world market?

Wheaton's of Harrogate, however, is a success story. *Winner of the Countryside Alliance's Best Rural Retailer of the Year Award*, it set out to raise the profile of British food and describes itself as like a farmers' market but open all week and into the evenings.

The aim is to sell local produce and with more than half of its stock supplied by at least 35 Yorkshire farms, rising to 75 per cent when fruit and vegetables become more available in the spring, and all from within a radius of 40 miles, this is a truly remarkable achievement. Such is its success that it is on target to turn over £1.25 million within a year.

It is a dangerous route to ignore the link between land, agriculture and human life on earth, and to place too much reliance on road, sea and air transport and on economies in far off lands over which we have no control, especially if we are serious about emissions reduction. *Do we really need sprouts picked in Suffolk fields to go to Poland for trimming and packaging so that they can be re-transported back here for supermarket shelves?* It is also vital that young people understand where their food comes from, and that important skills and knowledge of husbandry are not lost; agriculture would, for some, be a viable career path especially when linked to the ethos of sustainability.

Meanwhile at *Hadleigh*, after three public inquiries spanning fifteen years, the latest *Inspector* has given permission for the largely protected landscape between the river and the important historic High Street to be earmarked in the *Local Plan* for supermarket development. *Hadleigh* already has many good local shops which serve its community well, including an excellent farm shop. Another site, very near to the town centre but without the adverse impact was available. It will be of note to watch the changes in the diversity of the High Street when yet another Suffolk market town has to accommodate, now waiting in the wings, *Tesco Supermarket*.

While some supermarkets have their place, allowing large supermarkets to dominate small market towns impacts on local economies, and encourages unsustainable purchasing while driving down farm prices to uncompetitive levels. A move to support good locally grown food, either in our market towns or at the farm gate, *might only make a small difference but it would be an important one, and one on which to build.*

The First Spring in the Cuckoo

*SPS Editorial Group Member,
Richard Toft, writes*

As spring presses eagerly on the coat tails of departing winter it is good to find cause for cautious optimism, if not outright rejoicing, around our coasts and in the countryside.

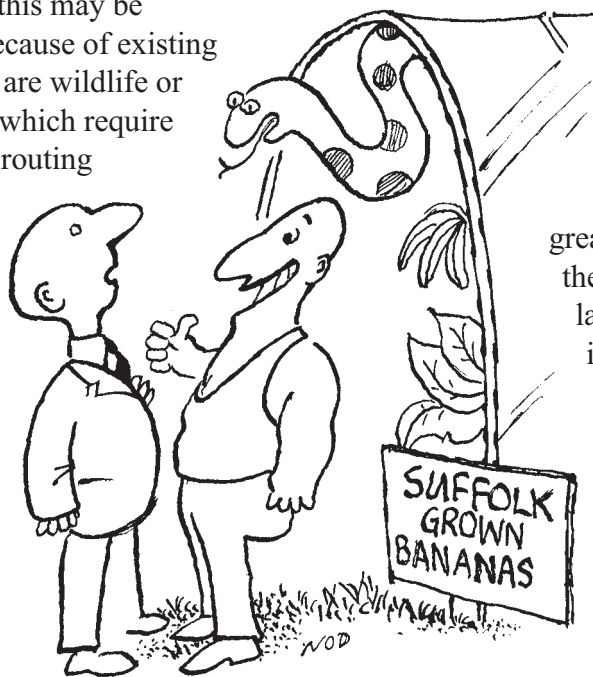
First, *Sir Martin Doughty*, the *Chairman of Natural England*, has announced that the organisation is setting itself the task of *opening up a two thousand miles long coastal corridor around England*. I am not too sure what is proposed for the border with Scotland, not to mention that with Wales. Perhaps Hadrian's Wall and Offa's Dyke will resume their ancient significance!

The intention, as I understand it, is to create and maintain, as far as is possible, a green walkway around England, largely free from further development, so that the coastline in all its variety becomes accessible to all who wish to enjoy it. Clearly, there are parts of the coastline where this may be difficult to achieve, either because of existing development or where there are wildlife or even landscape sensitivities which require a degree of flexibility in the routing of the path. Overall, however, the idea is to be welcomed, particularly if it encourages planning authorities to cast an even more critical eye on future coastline development proposals.

Secondly, we can I think welcome the recent decision of the Courts to require the *construction of polythene tunnels on farmland to be treated*

as "development" and, therefore, needing *planning permission*. This will, however, be a tricky one for planning authorities to handle. On the one hand there is clear pressure on many farmers to widen the scope of the activities on their land and in their farm buildings to maximise income return. On the other, the landscape value (and it is a "value") of the countryside can be significantly damaged, in the short term, by acres of gleaming sheets of polythene.

In a small and populous island that is, at the moment, still the fourth largest economy in the world, as we are frequently reminded, it is scarcely surprising that the countryside is under pressure from all sides. Polythene tunnels are just one more manifestation of this in a long line of similar pressures. Electricity pylons, motorways, industry and housing have all had to be accommodated but that has never exonerated us from trying to find ways of lessening their impact on the landscape.



"These polythene tunnels create almost tropical conditions."

Perhaps a way forward is to ensure that if polythene tunnels are to be given a nod of approval in any area, great care is taken about their impact on the local landscape. Reducing the impact might be a starting point. *A sustainable way forward would be to grow a range and variety of crops that can naturally extend the growing season and accept that, up to a point, all food has a natural season. Just a thought.*

A Wake-up Call

The Editor looks at some sombre facts.

Suffolk is still a lovely county. Those of us who live, work and visit here know why. Its rich pattern of diverse countryside and attractive towns and villages make it a special place. The Society does all that it can to protect its best qualities and promote good planning standards. The downward spiral of grot, as it sometimes seems, need not be the future, *but how sustainable is our planning system and is there an even greater threat?*

The Society is mindful of the demands on its county for major building expansion, as noted elsewhere here: the consequences for a rural county are huge, especially *with a government policy based on economic demand rather than needs-based*. However, it cannot have escaped anyone's notice that *generating building construction in itself is not a sustainable operation*. It requires a huge amount of aggregate most of which is transported by road, produces additional household waste, creates a massive demand for water: the knock-on effects of much of the industrial activity put additional carbon dioxide into the environment. All of this has a colossal impact, and trade-offs between industries to reduce CO₂ emissions will be but a drop in the ocean, for all the difference it will make.

According to the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, householders, motorists and businesses would have to reduce their contribution to UK carbon dioxide emissions to zero to balance out pollution from aviation alone. What about alternative energy? Will men in white coats come up with the answers?

New research conducted by Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute for the DTI has reported that the UK has the best wind resource in Europe, and that wind power in the UK is greater during peak daytime periods and during the winter, when we need it. It is also dependable and the chance of wind turbines shutting down because of very high wind speeds is exceedingly rare. However, it is estimated by some scientists that the power produced by the 240,000 wind turbines envisaged would be negligible. The annual output of a 750 kw wind turbine is 1.64m units. Insulating 485 houses would save this amount of energy every year. So will wind and other alternative energies solve the crisis?

Professor Lovelock, who conceived the idea of Gaia (Earth System Science) in the 1970's while examining the possibility of life on Mars for NASA in the US, has been warning of the dangers of climate change since major concerns about it first began nearly 20 years ago. Two years ago he called on environmentalists to drop their long-standing opposition to nuclear power, which does not produce the greenhouse gases of conventional power stations.

"Global warming is proceeding so fast that only a major expansion of nuclear power can bring it under control," he said.

Most of the 'Green' movements roundly reject his call, and there is still the question of how to deal safely with the 'waste'.

"At the moment the Earth System is amplifying change. The problem is that anything we do that increases carbon dioxide, it doesn't just produce a linear increase in temperature, it produces an amplified one and as you approach the threshold, (the tipping point), it increases and tends towards infinity.

Lovelock's unique viewpoint is that he is looking at the whole planet in terms of a different discipline - *planetary control theory*. He says that our planet has kept itself healthy and fit for life for most of the more than three billion years of its existence. It is ill luck that we started polluting at a time when the sun is too hot for comfort. Planetary control theory, he says, has always worked in our favour, but will now work against us. It has been made up of a host of positive feedback mechanisms; now, as the temperature starts to rise abnormally because of human activity, these will turn harmful in their effect, and put the situation beyond our control. It seems we have been here before but it took more than 100,000 years to recover.

New government figures estimate that in nearly half of local authority areas, the *domestic* sector generates more CO₂ emissions than industry, commerce and the public sector. The rate of emissions from the domestic sector can vary substantially between areas, due to a range of factors such as fuels used, climate, relative wealth and housing type, as well as energy efficiency. *If the public were to turn off all the household technology permanently left on 'standby' in their homes, this would significantly lower energy consumption.*

The international community accepts the reality of global warming, confirmed by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on

Little Hall: Rear Garden

"Oi Fred – 'ow many more new 'owes' needed in Suffolk?"
"Dunno Bert – but we're fast runnin owt o' timber mate!"



Climate Change. There remains, however, *an assumption that climate change is controllable, if CO₂ emissions can be curbed.* Lovelock warns us to think again. Planning may just be facing its greatest battle, as is the planet, and in the words of James Lovelock *"this is a wake-up call."*

Young people will want to know that there is no shortfall between political thought and action. After all they will be the ones to inherit a warmed world. Suffolk also wants to pass on an environment which is in good health and which will sustain the youth of tomorrow, but it cannot do it alone!

'Wind Power and the UK Wind Resource' from the Environmental Change Institute: www.eci.ox.ac.uk/renewables/ukwind
 'The Revenge of Gaia' by Prof. James Lovelock www.defra.gov.uk/news/2005/051021a.htm
www.tyndall.ac.uk
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

See also Suffolk View Spring 2005, Issue No. 99
 "Are we prepared for a climate of change?"

See Views, News and Reviews – *your letters* page 26.

Editor's note: *the ODPM is considering whether to produce a separate planning policy statement (PPS) on climate change, a few months after denying the need for one. Only two out of nine regional spatial strategies have emission reduction targets, according to Friends of the Earth.*

The Society's Conference on 12th October will focus on climate change – see Diary Dates.



Suffolk Building Preservation Trust

SBPT Chairman, Sue Tamlyn, writes

Our Appeal for funding last summer to carry out urgent works to Pakenham Water Mill resulted in a hugely generous response from 147 SPS Members and Friends which, with Gift Aid claimed, amounted to nearly £14,000. This, together with a substantial gift from the Society and a grant from Suffolk Environment Trust, has enabled the necessary work of dredging the mill pond, of repairing the main sluices and of reinforcing the banks to be undertaken. Work is now in hand to resurface the car park. We will also, shortly, be undertaking renovation work on the Mill windows before limewashing the exterior. *Further fund raising is now our priority.*

Meanwhile, volunteers have worked indefatigably not only renovating and improving much of the ground floor of the Mill House but also in holding a most successful Open Day in November which many of you attended.

Little Hall Management Committee recently held its Annual Meeting attended by some 50 volunteers and Board Members. Presentations were made by the Board and Committee to Stefan Labedzki, their Chairman, retiring after nearly five years in office.

Last year's highlight was, of course, the visit by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall when, as ever, volunteers had ensured that both the house and garden were impeccably presented.

So much, and such a variety of work is undertaken at Little Hall that it is only by visiting it that one can appreciate the enthusiasm of guides, curators, cleaners and gardeners. Volunteers are always pleased to welcome SPS Members, the admission fee for whom is waived!

Editor's note: see page 10 – improvements at Pakenham Water Mill.

Stop Press – Pakenham Water Mill

Saturday & Sunday, 13th & 14th May – Mills Weekend - Special Family Day to be held on the Sunday.

Saturday 27th May to Sunday 4th June (half term), Mill open every day. On the last weekend, 3rd & 4th, local photographers, photographic clubs and artists will be invited to take part in a mass photographic/art session with an exhibition and prizes awarded later in the year on 9th & 10th September. During half term, children will be issued with a disposable camera to take photographs of the mill. They will then be able to submit prints for the exhibition in September. More events to come over the summer, for information see www.pakenhamwatermill.co.uk



Little Hall: interior view of Library

Volunteers Required

As regular readers will know Little Hall, as well as being the home of the Suffolk Preservation Society, is a *registered museum*. The museum was the home of the Gayer-Anderson twins who were great collectors, and it contains parts of their fascinating acquisitions. It is open to the public from Easter until October and the admission charges contribute to the maintenance of Little Hall. The volunteers are *key* to the work of the museum and the time they give is greatly appreciated. If you can spare some of your time and have skills such as *marketing, research, event organising or guiding*, or would like to learn, please contact Renee Attew on 01284 828454.

Suffolk Building Preservation Trust Pakenham Water Mill

*PWM Management Committee Chairman,
Roger Bowden, writes*

Banks and Mill Pool Restored

Thanks to the generous response by so many SPS members to our fund raising appeal, plus grants by the SPS and Suffolk Environment Trust, to our great relief and pleasure it has been possible to complete the emergency work to save the mill pool and to be able to continue milling. We now expect to start replacing the rotten mill windows and limewashing the outside of the mill in late spring to complete the first stage.



Before work commenced – November 2005.

The work carried out made it possible to remove over 50 years' accumulation of six to ten feet of silt and mud from the mill pool and repair the pool banks and sluices which were in danger of complete collapse. It had become almost impossible to get enough water to operate the waterwheel of the mill. We had lost all the fish and the water was almost stagnant because of mud, dead sedges, waterweeds and lilies, etc. We now have our three acre water meadow covered with two to eight feet of mud which we hope to restore for productive grazing, conservation and recreational use again within the next few years.



During work of dredging – December 2005.

We are greatly indebted to Miles Waterscapes Limited for completing this work so quickly with minimum disturbance to wildlife in such a sensitive conservation area.

We were unable to mill for only three weeks and the volunteers took the opportunity to repair, dress and rework the stones, to be ready immediately the pool water was allowed to fill to ten feet depth again, to turn the waterwheel. We are now milling again most Thursday mornings and open every Thursday morning throughout the year from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon to the public, as well as at weekends, Bank Holidays and half terms from 1st April to October.

First day water back in pool – end of December 2005.



The Exemplar Affordable Housing Project - Elmswell

*Ralph Carpenter, Chartered Architect, and
Richard Ward, SPS Director, write*

The Design Stage

Introduction and Background

The Society has for a number of years been concerned about affordable housing, in terms of both the quantity and quality of provision. It is a problem which has profound implications for the social balance and well-being of every community in the county. It is shared by every town and parish council in Suffolk, and is without exception highlighted when the Director attends their meetings. In 2004, when it celebrated its 75th Anniversary, and to mark the occasion, it was decided that the Society should spearhead a positive initiative to address affordable housing problems.

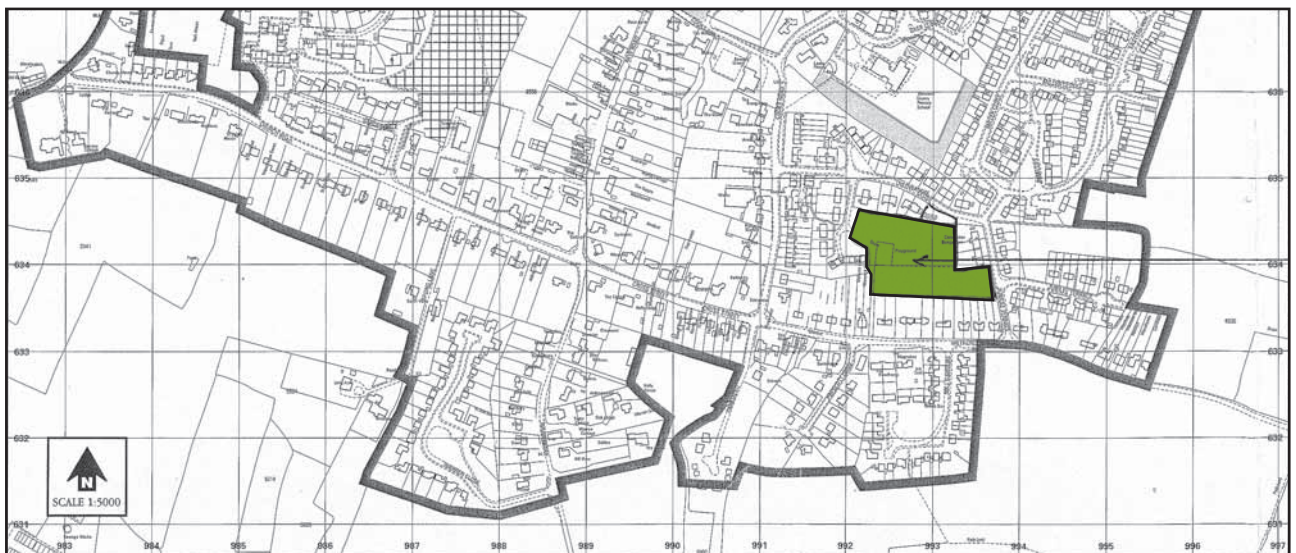
Affordable Housing – The Problems

As with many other areas in the country, house prices have risen dramatically in recent years. This makes it increasingly difficult for young people and first-time buyers to

purchase their first home. At the same time, local authorities have been required to sell their housing stock under the ‘right to buy’ scheme thereby reducing the number of affordable houses and adding to the difficulty. Initially, the Government did not accept there was a problem and no action was taken. Recently, however they have accepted that there is an acute problem which they are now addressing, but without having a holistic policy approach.

The number of new affordable houses being built in the county remains low, 318 (11.3% of the total) in 2002/3 and 311 (11.2%) in 2003/4, and this is clearly insufficient to meet the current and growing demand. Where affordable houses are built, the quality of design is variable despite the fact that public money is being used to fund their construction. This is due in part to the need to deliver numbers of homes rather than quality homes, and sustainability is rarely considered or is an issue at the site selection, layout and design stage.

If the concerns identified above were to be addressed the Society felt it had a duty to demonstrate the way forward by promoting



Elmswell, Suffolk: location map indicating the site.

an exemplar project. Because it does not have the necessary expertise and resources to undertake such an important initiative itself, the Society decided to try and work with suitable partners.

Selecting Partners and Recording the Project

It was evident that the key ingredients needed to progress the project were –

- *a high quality design;*
- *a suitable site on which to build the scheme;*
- *expertise on affordable housing;*
- *the finance to build;*
- *the support of the local planning authority;*
- *and, most importantly, the backing of the local community.*

Following interviews, the Orwell Housing Association was the first partner to join the Society and soon after, Mid Suffolk District Council and Elmswell Parish Council followed. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) were commissioned to organise the design competition. Finally, but not least, the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and Inspire East joined the team. The most important role was that of the Parish Council in representing the interests of the local community. All the partners acknowledged that community involvement in the project from the outset was critical to its eventual success.

There seemed little point in taking forward this project without ensuring it was properly recorded for others to see and learn from. Thanks to EEDA funding for this expensive part of the project was provided. A separate contract for the recording has been entered into and in addition several national television companies have been approached to see if they would like to be involved in recording the project.

Engaging the Local Community

This is seen as critical to the success of the project. In addition, the Society wanted a positive role for the community at the design stage, without being purely reliant on consultation once a draft scheme had been devised, as often happens with private developers. The Parish Council have played a key role in this and will continue to do so. There will be further opportunities for the community to influence this project which is aiming to deliver significant benefits to them.

The Role of the RIBA

Organising a national design competition is extremely difficult and time consuming. The RIBA undertake this work on a professional basis through their Competitions Office. The Society agreed to commission and fund the RIBA to implement the competition on its behalf. This represented a major financial commitment and reinforced the Society's *determination* to address the problems associated with affordable housing.

Site topography – 3-D





House plan layout also showing the three gardens at 1, 2 and 3.

The Design Competition

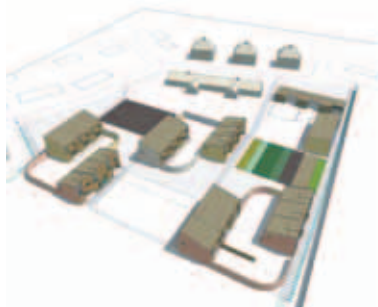
This was in two parts. The first involved the RIBA contacting all the architectural practices in the country with initial details about the project. Practices wishing to be considered for the detailed design stage had to submit an Expression of Interest detailing their understanding of the issues and problems. Unexpectedly, seventy-three Expressions of Interest were received, both nationally and internationally, and following detailed examination and judging, six practices were short-listed for stage two.

The second stage involved the six teams preparing detailed schemes for the site during a six week period. Their designs had to address and respond to the Aspiration

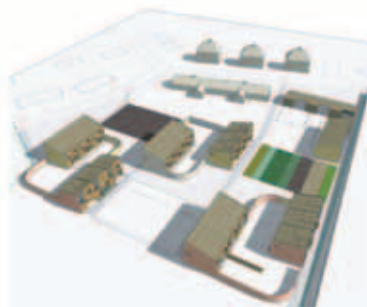
Statement which had been prepared in consultation with the community. This highlighted the need for the design team to -

- *demonstrate a clear understanding of the distinctiveness of Suffolk and interpret this in a contemporary way.*
- *demonstrate a sound grasp of the way buildings can be grouped to reflect the local character and landscape. They should create positive, private and public spaces, to foster a sense of community and mutual respect among the inhabitants.*
- *embrace the potential to harness natural energies, both in the design and the servicing of the buildings.*
- *design interiors which reflect the needs of private living in a rural environment, with an emphasis on 21st century living, quality of family space, natural light and flexibility of layout.*
- *integrate sustainable materials to deliver a greatly reduced carbon footprint, minimising the temptation to “greenwash” (the artificial*

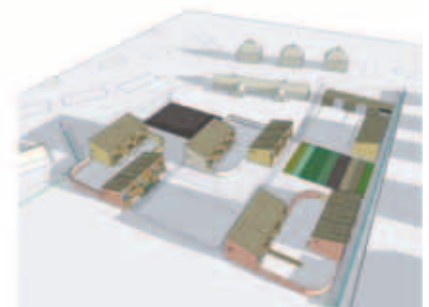
Midsummer shadowing



Autumn equinox shadowing



Midwinter shadowing





Ipswich - jury panel for the competition



modification of housing schemes to make them appear more sustainable and attract a higher eco-rating).

- *minimise embodied energy and running costs using carbon neutral energy sources.*
- *create a healthy living environment.*

The Six Finalists

On the 13th December 2005, the six architectural practices presented their schemes to the jury panel, which was made up of representatives from all the partner organisations and an architectural advisor from the RIBA. The panel was very impressed by the varied response to the vision statement and the obvious enthusiasm and commitment that each team demonstrated for the project.

The Winning Scheme

The panel felt that the Riches Hawley Mikhail (RHM) team had produced a subtle poetic response which was highly efficient in terms of its land take, and had skilfully resolved potential overshadowing issues on this challenging site. Their entry combined

imagination with practicality, an awareness of the past with an appreciation of future residents' needs. *The response showed how energy efficiency, sustainability and high quality design can be at the very heart of a well-thought out affordable housing scheme which involves the local community and inhabitants as equal partners.* The proposed use of rammed earth/chalk blocks was commended, and their site production would truly embrace the sustainable ethos behind the project, as well as providing a clear link to Suffolk's past.

What Next

The RHM Scheme will be submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council for planning permission shortly. If planning permission is granted, construction work will commence in summer this year.

Editor's note: in the next Issue we will be looking in detail at the design features, energy efficiency aspects, sustainability of the scheme and the winning architects' skill in interpreting the ethos of the site and project as a whole.

Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre Essex/Suffolk Border

SPS Member, Andora Carver, reports

The planning application for this £20m scheme, together with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), was launched in mid-September and since then local groups and individuals have been working immensely hard to advise people of the reality behind the glossy brochures distributed in their thousands to many local villagers.

The proposal is for a garden centre, food experience, restaurant and café with 1,125 covers, Suffolk Punch breeding centre, Farming Yesteryear Exhibition, “Life and Times of John Constable” art gallery in the Chantry Country House and a country park spreading into the Dedham Vale AONB. The total area is 117 acres. Visitor numbers are estimated at 760,000 in the first year.

The applicants, Bunting & Sons, are promoting the scheme, “A Celebration of the Countryside”, as a new tourist attraction and employment opportunity for Colchester. The plan is likely to come before the Colchester Borough Council Planning Committee sometime in March.

The National Trust is among many local and national organisations who have objected. Their response sums up the impact of the plan very well and concludes “The level and type of visit must not damage the resource the visitors have come to see” and: “It would also have the potential to irreparably damage the existing tourist locations within the Dedham Vale which the National Trust and partners have striven so long and hard to cherish.”

Eight local Parish Councils, including Hadleigh Town Council, have objected,

together with the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee, the Countryside Commission, Babergh District Council, English Heritage, CPRE Colchester Branch and Suffolk Preservation Society. All are united in their concerns regarding traffic congestion, the adverse impact on the countryside and AONB and are convinced there is no proven national need for this retail outlet and theme park dressed up as a Heritage Centre.

Local businesses and farmers have also written to object, raising concerns about the 98 local jobs which the EIA states will be “displaced” by the scheme. Traffic congestion on the local rural road network has also not been addressed by the applicants and Suffolk and Essex County Councils are preparing their own traffic survey.

Acceptable alternatives for the site would be to return the greenhouses to horticulture or small business use.

Richard Ward stated in his letter of objection to Colchester Borough Council that the Society “*is not against the redevelopment of the site provided that the principle of the use of the site is appropriate and the proposal is of appropriate scale and form having regard to the character of the area*”. This is clearly not the case here.

Editor’s Note: This case has attracted wide comment in the national press including the Financial Times, Guardian, Daily Telegraph, Mail on Sunday and from Marcus Binney, who visited the site, for The Times and Country Life. A short interview between Will Pavry, Chairman of the Stour Valley Action Group, and Stephen Bunting featured on BBC’s Today Programme on Saturday, 4th February.

Stop Press: This planning application was withdrawn in early April, 2006 for re-submission later in the year.

Town & Parish Council Comment

The Society's 'Whose Master's Voice?'

Campaign launched in the autumn, and endorsed by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, highlighted the position of local town and parish councils in regard to their *non-statutory* role in the planning process.

Whilst planning authorities have no statutory duty to consult with local councils on planning matters, all those in Suffolk at present do. However, with the Government favouring a national approach to issues as diverse as new housing numbers and their distribution, and sustainable energy generation, with targets embedded within the emerging Regional Plans, the weight of balance against the interests of communities is heavy. *Local Planning Authorities will be more likely to give greater consideration to delivering Government policy and less to the interests of a particular locality.*

In response to the Society's letter and questionnaire to all town and parish councils in Suffolk it is very heartening that 142 councils to date have supported the Society's viewpoint.

This letter from Monks Eleigh Parish Council demonstrates the point.

" ... As a small village within the terms of the Babergh District Council's (BDC) emerging Local Plan we are extremely concerned over this pressure from Central Government to prescribe the needs of our local communities with Directives and Planning Policy Statements which support country wide policies without any flexibility for local needs. We have recently been informed that as a result of a Government target any response to a planning application considered by our Parish Council will carry no weight with

the Council Officer in his consideration of the application. This is BDC's method of reducing the percentage of planning decisions referred to the democratically elected members of the Council by employed Officers regardless of the opinions of the local and democratically elected members of the Parish Council. We are writing separately to BDC on this matter.

The Government would appear to be paying lip service to the devolution of responsibility for local government to the local people whilst at the same time limiting the framework in which they can exercise that responsibility.

We, therefore, fully support Suffolk Preservation Society's position expressed in your communication of September 2005."

The Parishes Revolt?

In December the Society's Campaign, aforementioned, aimed at giving local parish and town councils a much greater voice in planning decisions, was launched with the backing of many local councils and all Suffolk MPs, but one. Community representatives, waving placards and brandishing megaphones, posed for the camera at the formal launch of 'Whose Master's Voice?' near to the site of the proposed **Parham Wind Farm** – where six 100 metre turbines were given the go-ahead by Suffolk Coastal District Council in October.

This campaign is all about reminding government that the people are the real masters in a democracy and national issues should not automatically override local sustainability and carefully researched environmental objections. **It is hoped that MP's will raise the issue in Parliament.**



Planning 'Round-up' - the Society's Director writes

Snape Hill Farm Barns, Rickingham

The proposal involved the conversion to residential use of some buildings (principally barns) of this important complex. The Society was concerned about the impact on the character of the main house and the barns themselves. *Its request that the Council seek a specialist independent report on the architectural and historic significance of the buildings by involving English Heritage was ignored.* Therefore when the proposal was approved the Society circulated to all members of the Council's Development Committee a copy of its letter and comments: one member of the Council then invited the Society to commission English Heritage's advice on the importance of the complex. The application has been deferred and it is understood that some of the barns and out-buildings might be Listed. The failure of the Council to respond to the Society's sensible request is of concern and will be pursued at a later date.

Warren Barn Farm, Wetherden

The Society expressed its concern last October that a proposed change of use from Agricultural Storage Workshop to Haulage Yards, on such a prominent and exposed site sloping down towards Elmswell, would be visually dominant from some distance. Therefore, it would impact adversely on the appearance of the countryside, especially if containers were stacked on the site as appeared inevitable. In addition, traffic issues and concerns were raised, as was the potential to establish a precedent for similar proposals. It concluded that the proposal "*would completely desecrate the rural quality of the landscape on the north side of the A14.*" The application was subsequently withdrawn.

Ebdons Farm, Stradbroke

The site for the erection of four poultry sheds is within an area of defined open countryside. The sheds appeared to be sited to aid the operation of the business and without any attempt to minimise their visual impact. The Society concluded that the proposal would have more in common with the appearance of an industrial site rather than an

agricultural operation in the countryside. It was contrary to the government's stated intentions for the countryside as set out in PPS7 and Local Plan Policy CL1 which states "*The landscape quality and character of the countryside will be protected for its own sake. Proposals for development in the countryside should be sited and designed to have minimum adverse effect on the appearance of the landscape...*" As the proposal failed this requirement the Society asked for the application to be refused. The application was withdrawn; the Society understands that a similar scheme is now being drawn up for re-application.

7 Mill Lane, Southwold

This attractive open area which makes a positive contribution in its current form to the character and appearance of the conservation area was the subject of a proposal to construct an 'Eco-House' dwelling. The proposal needed to be considered against the *seven tests set out in Local Plan Policy ENV15*: conservation or enhancement of the appearance or setting of the conservation area; in scale and harmony with adjoining buildings and the area; the character of the area enhanced by architectural detailing; materials sympathetic with the area; preservation of natural features such as trees; retention of important open spaces; and protection of important views within, into and out of the area. The application failed all of the tests and the Society asked for it to be refused which it subsequently was.

Notcutt's Site, Woodbridge

Once the principle of development of this site had been agreed by Suffolk Coastal District Council, the Society wrote asking for a Master Plan or Development Brief to be prepared to ensure the various components (health centre, sheltered housing, landscaping, and affordable housing) formed a harmonious group with a clear overall design approach. With the initial application for the health centre the Society was cautiously optimistic of what might be achieved, but subsequent applications have shown a lack of co-ordination, harmony and grasp of the

importance of the site. The most recent, for the sheltered housing, was described by the Society as having the appearance of a modified Travel Lodge or Holiday Inn with “*more in common with the applicant’s corporate and national identity and design rather than being either respectful of or in harmony with Suffolk or Woodbridge*”. The Society asked for the application to be refused and that the applicants be asked to submit a more appropriate design, and joined the Woodbridge Society and the Woodbridge Town Centre Management Group in seeking a meeting with the Leader of the Council to discuss their concerns about the way this site is being developed.

South Sea Front, Felixstowe

In Edition 97 – Summer 2004 (page10), I reported on a proposal for developing this site. The highly unsatisfactory application was turned down. A similar application was submitted in late September which again involved the demolition of the Herman de Stern building. *Demolition is contrary to the Council’s own Local Plan Policy for the site which requires ‘the use of the Herman de Stern building for complementary activities such as an arts-based nature and/or catering/ dining use.’* Within days of the application being submitted the building was damaged by fire. The Society sought access to the building with an independent specialist to assess for itself the condition of the building. The Council, as land owner, refused the request at which point the Society indicated that it was unable to submit its comments on the proposal as it had been denied access to all material facts. The Council approved the application. *The Society has sought specialist legal opinion on the lawfulness of the Council’s decision and has indicated that it might request it be subject to judicial review.* It has appointed a local firm to prepare an alternative scheme to demonstrate that the Council’s Local Plan Policy can be delivered with a high quality scheme which will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of this part of the town, in contrast to the approved one which appears to deliver more to the developer than the local community.



CPRE in focus

Eight decades of Countryside Campaigning

Congratulations to CPRE which in February of this year marked 80 years of hard work in persuading government and public alike to care for our countryside, promoting its beauty, tranquillity and diversity, and advocating positive solutions, through the planning system, for the long-term future of the countryside. Well done on all that has been achieved. May you also attract much support in the huge challenges yet to come!

Draft East of England Plan Examination in Public

Regional Director, Corrine Meakins, writes

The four month hard slog of the EiP has come and gone, well almost! At the time of writing we still have to input on the new household projections. So what have been the main issues? Some we predicted two years ago such as *the water issue, Stansted Airport expansion, and the opposing ‘poles’ of the developers and environmental groups over housing numbers, sustainability and climate change.* There has been the predictable call for larger and even more urban extensions than in the Draft Plan. Then there have been the major challenges – about defining what is meant by and what are environmental limits? The environment sector was asked to come up with what was meant by *‘development must be within environmental limits’*, *should we really be building in the commuter belt?* Affordable housing and its delivery was another major issue, as was development in the Green Belt. All this and a changing policy context for the Plan, much to the frustration of the Panel, as the Government produced new planning policy *during the EiP*, for example Draft PPS3, and yet failed to provide other information in good time for debate, such as the household projections. Even the Felixstowe Port expansion proposals arrived well into the EiP, *unavoidable no doubt?* The Panel report sometime in June, so now we wait. *Needless to say we have all done our best.*

News from the Districts

SPS Waveney District Report

District Chairman, Mike Coleman, writes

Three particular planning applications have exercised the committee - the construction of a new principal dwelling on land at the Benacre Estate, renewal of the outline application for a new Hall at the Henham Estate, and the eco-dwelling proposed at 7 Mill Lane, Southwold – see *Planning Round-up for details*.

A major consideration for the committee is the decommissioning proposal, to take place over a one hundred year period, of Sizewell A. The new owners served a traditional body blow to the nuclear industry when the environmental statement was all but completed last year by requiring decommissioning to be completed in 25 years not 100. Thus, though the documentation is not entirely pertinent, the principles are correct. The only real difference will be higher doses of radiation for the demolition team unless commensurate radiation protection costs are taken into account. Given the likelihood of oil running out well before the 100 year deadline, it strikes us that the sooner the station is cleared away the better.

Late last year the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Urban Regeneration quango was established and held meetings in both towns to ascertain stakeholders' views on what were the local options. In Lowestoft's case the intention was to redevelop the now largely derelict area, mainly on the south bank of the Waveney, between the town centre and Oulton Broad. Their initial proposals, which are far from complete, show signs of meeting the real needs of Lowestoft with several options for each part of the site, including

five locations for a third or, dare I say it, even a fourth crossing of the river Waveney!

There are many acres of land involved that could be converted into a fine river frontage. We are hoping for an inspiring and imaginative brief for this site. After all, we need to persuade our young people that Lowestoft is not the depressed town as portrayed on TVs "*Rock School*", but one in which they will want to live, work and play!

The District Committee also considered the new printing works at Ellough, just outside Beccles, on a very large industrial estate. The District Committee thought it appropriate to suggest to Waveney District Council that the waste, which has all the necessary ingredients, could be harnessed to power the site. It was also agreed that this huge site should be well screened by trees to soften its impact (it is unfortunate that the visual damage to this area has already been done in creating the industrial estate.)

The District Chairman can be contacted at The Grange, Nightingale Road, Lowestoft, NR33 7AX, telephone number 01502 518708, mobile number 07747 623276, email address mikecoleman@supanet.com

SPS Mid Suffolk District Report

District Chairman, Douglas Evans, writes

As the new Chairman of Mid Suffolk District since last summer I have been assessing the planning workload, and the help which is still needed to give this District the support it needs to assess the very large number of applications going through the system. To this end, at a meeting at Haughley Park Barn on 24th March we debated successes and failures in local planning in an

illustrated slide discussion on retaining local distinctiveness over bland uniformity, and the spread of ‘subtopia’. This event attracted forty supporters, some of whom it is hoped will be able to assist us in our valuable work going forward.

We have had some success with the planning process, which has led to either modification or refusal of inappropriate planning applications, and this is very encouraging. One application to extend a factory in a rural location was rejected and one for a large lorry park within close proximity of a village was withdrawn.

Proposals which appear to have significant environmental consequences are examined in detail. These have included the conversion of a small barn at *Drinkstone Mills* and a large workshop/showroom at *Stowupland*; developments adjacent to a relocated mediaeval house in *Rickinghall* and also to an old manorial farmstead outside that village; over-dense housing provision on an infill site in *Norton Little Green*; a grossly oversized roof extension in the main street of *Walsham le Willows*; a proposed house adjacent to a thatched cottage in *Earl Stonham*; and excessively dense housing in *Badwell Ash*. *We have noted that high density housing on small plots of land in rural villages is very damaging to their character.*

One particular concern is the *large number of farm buildings* which have a factory-like character and are frequently of obtrusive colouring. We are doing further investigations into this problem as we consider that unchecked proliferation of this type of structure in the countryside can only reduce the quality of the Suffolk landscape.

I had pleasure in attending the adjudication of the Elmswell Affordable Housing Project, and was very happy with the proposal finally accepted.

The District Chairman can be contacted at Oak Cottage, Daisy Green, Great Ashfield, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 3HS, telephone number 01359 242643, email address douglasevans@waitrose.com

SPS St. Edmundsbury District Report

District Chairman, Dan Pillar, writes

If it seems that our District has for some time been concerned, not to say obsessed, with the development of the Cattle Market Site in Bury St. Edmunds that is a fair reflection on the actuality.

All our observations and constructive suggestions have had no influence on St. Edmundsbury Borough Council, and we fear for the future of the town. Instead of initially taking control of the way in which the new centre of Bury St. Edmunds should evolve, the Authority chose a developer and handed the reins over. The new centre has, therefore, been ‘development led’, which this District had hoped would not be the case.

Our main concerns have been:-

- *refusal to provide the generous underground parking for which the subsoil and topography was eminently suitable.*
- *the proposed increase by one third of the town’s retail floor space in one fell swoop.*
- *the construction of a “public venue” at an estimated cost which has now reached £10 million, but which is likely in our view, to end up costing more than that, and for which the Borough has been trying to find more and more unusual uses in justification.*

One of our committee members has produced a carefully researched report demonstrating that Bury St. Edmunds will end up with totally inadequate parking to meet the town's future needs.

Most recently the Borough has announced its intention to disperse the contents of the Manor House Museum (which houses the Gershom Parkinson Clock Collection, one of the finest outside London) to a new building at West Stow where they will, apparently, be more accessible. The economic reasons for doing this are incomprehensible, mainly because of the way that overhead costs have been used to enhance the case for closure.

Bury St. Edmunds Town Council has proposed the sale of the Manor House, for a nominal sum, to a Trust which would then have the responsibility for its management. The District Committee supports this sensible approach.

The Local Plan Public Inquiry

ended on 9th December, 2005. It seems clear to us that, under the guidance of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, priority will be given to housing on sites designated in the Draft Deposit Local Plan, so look out for more houses in the garden next door – there are an increasing number of planning applications by developers to buy modest buildings for demolition to make way for several new houses. Tunbridge Wells has been highlighted in the news as a case in point, but it is happening everywhere and pressure has grown to stop gardens being treated as “previously developed land”.

This issue was highlighted in Newsletter 92: Winter 2002-3.

The District Chairman can be contacted at The Old Vicarage, Clare, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 8PX, telephone number 01787 277437, email address Val.pillar@clara.co.uk

SPS Forest Heath District

District Chairman, John Howell, writes

Planning Matters

The attention and work of the committee has continued to be centred on the Kentford Heath ‘Watermark’ project and, a revised proposal for a major extension to the already agreed expansion at Red Lodge. *This could increase the build of new houses on both these adjacent sites to 14,500.* This situation has been made more worrying by the re-submission for the new township of Cambridge Heath at Six Mile Bottom with a potential of *14,000 new homes* on the south side of Newmarket.

Whilst there is little possibility of all three specific sites gaining acceptance at the Examination in Public into the East of England Plan, it must be recognised that these proposed sites lie within the Cambridgeshire Regional Housing Strategy Sub-Region, which incorporates not only the housing needs of all the Cambridgeshire District and City Councils but also the Suffolk District Council areas of both Forest Heath and St. Edmundsbury. It is the long term housing requirements of this region that the East of England Plan will aim to satisfy, and not just the increase in housing required by individual Local District Councils.

Vigorous submissions of rejection of these proposals have been lodged by Richard Ward and the local villages’ protection trust to the EiP at Ely, and the separate issue of the Cambridge Heath proposal was taken up by the Cambridgeshire Branch of the CPRE in February.

The flood of development proposals for the commercial use of farmland illustrates the present-day plight of many land-owning farmers, particularly those with marginal land. Little criticism can be levelled at a landowner who, despite ‘set aside’ and other subsidies, cannot get a fair return on capital.

Many have no alternative than to sell up at the best market value, and it is in this area that the preservation of our countryside would appear to be most threatened.

District Meetings

Unfortunately, the Annual General Meeting, to have been held in December, had to be postponed because of the ill health of the Chairman and, latterly, the EiP meetings. This meeting was subsequently held in February when Forest Heath members gave their views on how the District Committee could make the Society a more vibrant body providing greater and wider interest and participation for members. Several ideas were tabled: amongst these was the abolition of routine 'business' meetings, a programme of guest speakers to cover specific areas of member interests, visits to sites and places of historical, topographical and geographic interest. If Forest Heath members have further ideas perhaps they would contact me.

The District Chairman can be contacted at 29 The Avenue, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 9AY, telephone number 01638 662582, email: john@howell-newmarket.fsbusiness.co.uk

Editor's note: District social events, organised throughout the year, are an important aspect of the Society's contact with its members and their friends, and attract new memberships. If members have any specific requests or ideas for visits or talks would they kindly give the details to their District Chairman, who will forward them to the Hon. Membership Secretary for possible inclusion in the Society's annual events calendar.

New Members of the Society

(From 1st June, 2005 – 31st March, 2006)

(CPRE)

Mr. J. Rothschild, London
Mr. T. Chapman, Ipswich
Mr. A. Tibbles, Billingham
Mr. & Mrs. G. Haines, Falkenham
Mrs. S. Brinkley, Ipswich
Mr. & Mrs. M. Woods, Ilketshall St. Andrew
(SPS Friends)

Mr. C. Cooper, Brentwood
Mrs. K. Coe, Earl Soham
Mrs. R. Hayward, Pettistree
Mrs. O. Gibb, Framlingham
Mr. M. Phillips, Mold, Wales
Mr. C. Machin-Goodall, Bath
Dr. B. Pamplin, Bury St. Edmunds
Mr. J. Garbutt, Great Barton
Mr. A. Masters, Holbrook PC
Mrs. S. Day, Denham PC
Mrs. E. Poulter, Tuddenham St. Mary PC
Mrs. J. Richold, Bromeswell PC
Dr. A. Marchington, Herringwell
Mr. M. Cook, Ipswich Society
Mrs. S. Hyland, Raydon
Mr. & Mrs. F. Hatherall, Brettenham
Mr. & Mrs. D. Walters, Great Waldingfield
Mrs. K. Buckle, Bures

An important questionnaire

In the very near future the Membership Department will be sending out a questionnaire which they would ask you to kindly complete. This concerns newspaper coverage of environmental and planning issues where the Society is quoted or where an article may be of interest to the Society.

In addition, on the reverse of the sheet, will be your details the Society holds on its database. Would you please check that they are correct, amending where necessary and returning the form to Little Hall using the enclosed envelope.

Suffolk newspaper articles of interest!

Please do not assume that we know it all!

The Society needs feedback on the important issues which affect its work. Information from parts of the county can be missed. There are many Suffolk newspapers and some of them we do not see, so we would very much appreciate receiving newspaper cuttings which Members consider are of interest to the Society's work, or where it is quoted.

Please forward relevant cuttings to the Office Manager at Little Hall, for our PR Consultant.

Technical Tack

Original Boundary Ironwork –
Re-instatement using traditional techniques and materials.

Part 1

As you journey through the villages of Suffolk it is noticeable that there remain remnants of attractive ironwork, mostly gates and railings, in their original position in the boundary walls of old houses and cottages.

Increasingly, home owners would like to re-instate ironwork when it has become damaged, has deteriorated, or has been totally lost, to enhance the appearance and value of their property. Sometimes only railing stubs in masonry walls, or hinges left in stone piers at gateways show where they had once existed.

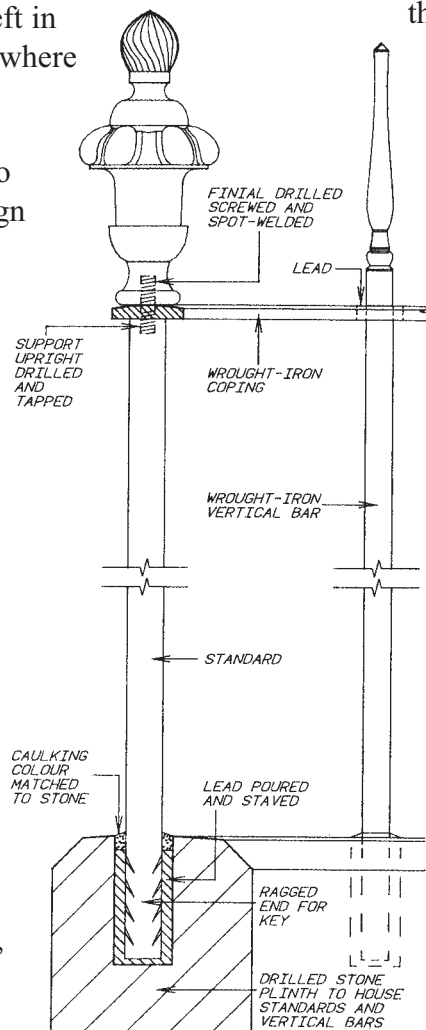
There are a number of ways to identify which particular design was originally used in the boundary ironwork. Those removing the ironwork during the war sometimes left an original example for future reference, or there are often similar examples nearby. Frequently, one craftsman worked in a particular area and had his own style – a bit like thatchers. Old photographs can be a particularly useful record. Some historical ironwork pattern books are available and are a good reference point. Where existing ironwork is evident, look out for a founder's mark, pattern number or date stamp which can identify original

manufacturers. Set in lead, the stubs in the boundary wall may provide a clue in terms of the cross-section dimensions of the uprights, spacing (regular centres may indicate railing spears, grouped stubs possibly baluster panels), and the original shape, if it was round, square or fluted.

Combinations of cast and wrought iron are not unusual. Much 'replica' ironwork, which uses steel bars and cast steel or cast iron heads welded together, is poorly executed, as it employs modern fabrication techniques and modern materials often with inappropriate designs. Whilst this approach might be cheaper in the short term, traditional materials and techniques using cast iron give the aesthetics and longevity which have no comparison.

Original castings were moulded in sand by hand and were made from stock wooden patterns in grey iron. Molten iron was poured into the mould to create a standard casting. Wrought iron was manufactured from cast iron through a 'puddling' process (heated and hammered to create an iron-rich fibrous material). Unlike cast iron with its rigid structure, wrought iron is a wonderfully workable material in skilled hands at the forge.

There are good contemporary works undertaken in mild steel, but for conservation or restoration work it is often not appropriate. Mild steel is also liable to corrode to a greater degree than both wrought and cast iron.



Next time we will look further at cast ironwork and its paint finish.

New Faces at Little Hall

New Full-time Office Manager/ Personal Assistant



The Society has appointed Mrs. Adrienne Jackson as its full-time Office Manager/ Personal Assistant and we are pleased to welcome her. Adrienne comes with enthusiasm, and considerable knowledge and experience, and the Society considers she will make a significant contribution towards achieving its aims and ambitions. We look forward to working with her.

New Financial Assistant



We are sorry to say good-bye to Rachel Stokes after so short a time, but she has been 'poached' from us by a previous employer offering her more hours of employment to suit her time commitment. Good luck Rachel and thank you for all your hard work for us.

However, we are fortunate to now have Judith Chilton who has effortlessly slipped into the place left by Rachel, and will be working at Little Hall for one morning a week, and we are very pleased to welcome her to the office team.

Obituary

The Rt. Hon. Lord Belstead

John Belstead, who died in December last year after a long illness, was Patron of the Suffolk Preservation Society from 1994 to 2002, the years that he was Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk. He was an excellent Patron, regularly attending our AGM and always taking a great interest in our endeavours. He was passionate about retaining the beauty of Suffolk's towns and villages and above all its countryside.

He was very much a Suffolk man having lived in the county all his life. He was well known to me from boyhood, as we were almost exactly the same age. He had been a keen tennis player in his youth, competing successfully in the Framlingham tournament, and after graduating from Oxford was, for some years, a school master.

After he inherited his father's peerage in 1958 he took a prominent role in the House of Lords serving as a minister in the Home Office, Foreign Office and in Northern Ireland. He was made a Privy Councillor in 1983 and a member of Mrs. Thatcher's Cabinet in 1988.

After he retired from active politics he was, for five years, Chairman of the Parole Board. He then returned to Suffolk where he served the community in many different ways for the rest of his life.

John was the epitome of an English gentleman: wise, considerate, moderate in his views, an infinitely courteous listener, exceptionally modest and with no ambitions for himself. He will be greatly missed.

Lord Marlesford

'Through the Portal'

The Office

There have been a few staff changes since we last communicated, *see New Faces*, but not many employees clock-up over 25 years – *read on!*



Marilyn Roper Retires

At the end of March a lunch was given in honour of Marilyn's long association with the Society. She could not leave us without flowers, champagne and chocolates – small recompense for all her hard and dedicated work over 25 years. We wish her well in her retirement – and hope she knows she will be busier than ever!

Thank you Marilyn, you will be missed.



More 'cake' for the Director? Someone, with a penchant for chocolate cake, had a special birthday just after the publication of our last Newsletter!

The House

Little Hall is in the process of receiving some 'tlc'. Renee Attew, the Acting Chairman of the Little Hall Management Committee, and her hard-working team, are ensuring that the

building's 'services' are fit for use for the coming year, and in the autumn the museum rooms will receive a lick of paint. All the artefacts will be removed for safe storage during that period, so the building should be in good order going forward. (*Volunteers required – see page 9.*)

The Garden



Here is Anna Kettle, local pargetter, in the garden with the finished traditional Suffolk decorative plaster work plaque, deftly worked on by Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, when they visited Little Hall's garden last summer. The plaque will be sent to Their Royal Highnesses as a memento of the occasion.

It is always a lovely signal when the volunteer gardeners arrive, armed with garden tools and hot flasks, and set about 'lifting the winter cover' and displaying the lovely spring garden which is just underneath. Thank you all for your contributions.

Incidentally, I believe the gardeners are also delighted that the interesting garden structure which materialised in their midst for the Royal Visit, has finally been removed! (*See photograph on page 8 .*)

Views, News and Reviews - *your letters – stop press news – book reviews*

Your Letters

SPS Members, Michael and Sheila Gooch from Halesworth, write

“... The nearest major wind farm to Suffolk is at Scroby Sands, off Great Yarmouth, with 30 generators. Here it was claimed that they “will power 41,000 homes”. Some simple arithmetic then told us that each home would get 1½ kw at most – enough to power one small fan-heater plus four or five light bulbs – and that only when the wind was blowing strongly enough but not too strongly. The time during which these conditions prevail has been variously estimated at between 50 and 15 per cent, moreover ‘homes’ only account for some 40 per cent of total demand.

We conclude, therefore, that wind power could never make more than a marginal impact on the problem, and that in the short term we must rely on nuclear generators for our main source of emission-free power. Meanwhile, it is to be hoped that urgent research will continue into more effective alternatives, such as hydro, wave-power, and nuclear fusion, and perhaps most importantly, into reduction of demand, especially by the worst fuel-waster and polluter of all – air transport.”

Editor's note: see Planning Round-up – Former WWII Airfield, Parham - Suffolk View, Summer 2005, Issue No. 100. The Society objected to this planning application which was subsequently approved by Suffolk Coastal District Council in the face of much local opposition.

SPS Wind Farm/Turbine Policy

The Society commission a site-specific landscape assessment from independent consultants before commenting on wind farm/turbine proposals, and they are individually assessed and their environmental impact weighed against other factors.

Book Reviews -

Sandlands: The Suffolk Coast and Heaths by Tom Williamson
Windgather Press
priced at £16.99



SPS Editorial Group Member, Jane Allen, writes

SPS members who struggle to garden on the clay of central Suffolk or the chalk of the south-west must envy those living to the east of the A12 in Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Districts. Here are the Sandlands, a remarkable and distinctive region of well-drained and easily-cultivated soil.

In this excellent new book the landscape historian Tom Williamson describes how the area, now designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, evolved. The characteristics which attract today's gardeners are those which have made the Sandlands a magnet for human settlement for thousands of years. As a consequence it is a real example of a man-made landscape, although paradoxically it is admired by many for its wild and 'natural' character.

There are chapters on the history and environment, the coastal wetlands, the heaths, the settlements, the fields and boundaries, the woods, parks and plantations and the ever-changing coastline. This is a thoughtful and thought-provoking book with many maps and fine photographs.

All those who have enjoyed a trip to Southwold, Aldeburgh, Snape Maltings or Sutton Hoo will find their next visit much more rewarding if they first read this book.

Stop Press News –

On 31st March, at short notice, a small party of Members had a very informative and illuminating tour of Sizewell A, which will be decommissioned at the end of the year. Our thanks goes to Dr. Chris Marchese and his staff for a remarkable afternoon.



Is this the way to Haughley Park Barn for the Away-Day Conference mate?
We're gonna tell'em how it is up here!

Diary Dates

SPS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Haughley Park Barn, Haughley, Stowmarket Thursday, 22nd June, 2006 at 6.30 pm

Historic Building Specialist, Brian Morton, will be this year's speaker. Brian is a structural engineer with a difference, he doesn't necessarily believe only in 'rigid straight lines', and his philosophy of 'helping a building along or leaving it well alone' is a sound one – he is not to be missed. The AGM is free, as is the convivial company, and an excellent supper will be available for £12.50. Details and a booking form will follow in our AGM Programme, to be sent out separately, but please do get in touch to book your place now if you would like to – 01787 247179.

SPS SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT GARDEN VISIT AND COCKTAIL PARTY

The Barn, Westleton Saturday, 8th July, 2006 at 4.30 pm - garden visit with cocktails at about 6.00 pm.

SPS Coastal District is throwing a cocktail party in Suffolk's most extraordinary garden, by kind invitation of Debby and Amédée Turner (Suffolk's first MEP). The garden at The Barn, Westleton draws inspiration - sacred and profane - from Ancient Greece, Celtic history, Africa, Rome, Art Deco and unswerving eclecticism. The latest Turner project is a Cocktail Garden. Of what this will consist is as yet a secret, but the SPS outing will mark the new garden's official opening. Everyone is welcome to another not to be missed social event. Tickets, priced at £15.00 from **Victor Gordon, 10 St. John's Street, Woodbridge IP12 1EB**. Cheques payable to SPS Coastal District. A Red Cross donation will be made out of the proceeds.

SPS AUTUMN CONFERENCE

'Climate Change – What Can You Do'? Haughley Park Barn, Haughley, near Stowmarket Thursday, 12th October, 2006



This important conference will focus on the facts and trends of Climate Change, and how this change will affect our landscape and farming; the way buildings will evolve; how our energy will be supplied; and how we deal with water resources; transportation difficulties, and a whole range of factors which will effect our daily lives if we are to live within a sustainable footprint to ensure the future of our planet, which we surely must. Full details will be available in our Summer Newsletter. Our excellent speakers are ready - are you?

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Suffolk View is the Newsletter of the Suffolk Preservation Society and is published three times a year.

The Society works to protect and enhance the countryside, towns and villages of Suffolk. Its volunteers in the Districts, with a Chartered Planner at Little Hall in Lavenham, combine effective local action through the planning system with the promotion of building conservation projects, encouragement for sustainable planning, and campaigns and awards which support this ethos.

Help us to protect the rich diversity of the County – its countryside and coastline beauty; its tranquil places; its rich complexity of buildings and architecture; its historic market towns, country villages and farm hamlets – its special character.

If you are not already a Member consider joining us today and become part of the campaign to protect Suffolk and ensure changes value its natural and built heritage and promote sustainable planning for a better future.



Architects: Fraser Brown Mackenna



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SUFFOLK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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