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Mr. John Davies,  
Colchester Borough Council,  
Town Hall,  
Colchester, CO1 1FL.

19th March, 2009.

Dear Mr. Davies,

HORKESLEY PARK HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION CENTRE

APPLICATION NUMBER COL/09/090231

I clearly remember the sale of Laurel Farm, Great Horkesley. It had a fundamental impact on my life, as it was as a result of the sale, when the farm was bought by a friend, leaving myself as the under-bidder, that I bought Valley Farm, near Woodbridge.

I was extremely interested in the details of this sale, which included an agreement that had previously been made by the vendor and Mr. Bunting, for the sale of 10 acres for the production of tomatoes under glass houses, subject to an agricultural consent for glass houses. This was granted on the basis that the siting of the glass houses was such that they would have the maximum sunshine for the production of tomatoes, with the minimum use of oil based fuels. This was thought to be beneficial because the glass houses would be competitive with the Dutch glass houses, which had large supplies of subsidised heating systems. The field chosen was on the edge of the Great Horkesley plateau, which is supported on water from a bygone age and is subject to mists. On the edge of this plateau is a small area where the mist runs off rapidly and then re-collects in the bottom of the valley, giving the valley mist.

These agricultural considerations led to a most unusual and extraordinary planning consent, to allow glass houses to be built over-looking the Stour Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Mr. Bunting made a covenant that, should tomato/vegetable growing become unprofitable, he would clear the site and restore it to agriculture. If his successors are not prepared to be bound by the word of their father, how likely are they to be bound by any planning consent, in view of the erection of a phallic symbol in front of Great Horkesley church, a very ancient building? It hardly gives one confidence that they will take any notice of any future planning constraints.

I would request your support for any organisation desiring to take over the glass houses for the production of unheated vegetables for sale in a farmers market, which could conceivably be included in any planning consent. Farmers Markets have been a great success in the many local communities where they have successfully brought fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs and other produce for sale. A condition of this change could be that no building higher than the glass houses should be allowed and that any building higher than the glass houses should be levelled and cleared for outside vegetable growing. Thus the site would convert to its original intention of being a green, farming enterprise, minimising the use of oil and other forms of heating.

Yours sincerely,



F.G. STOREY, M.A.