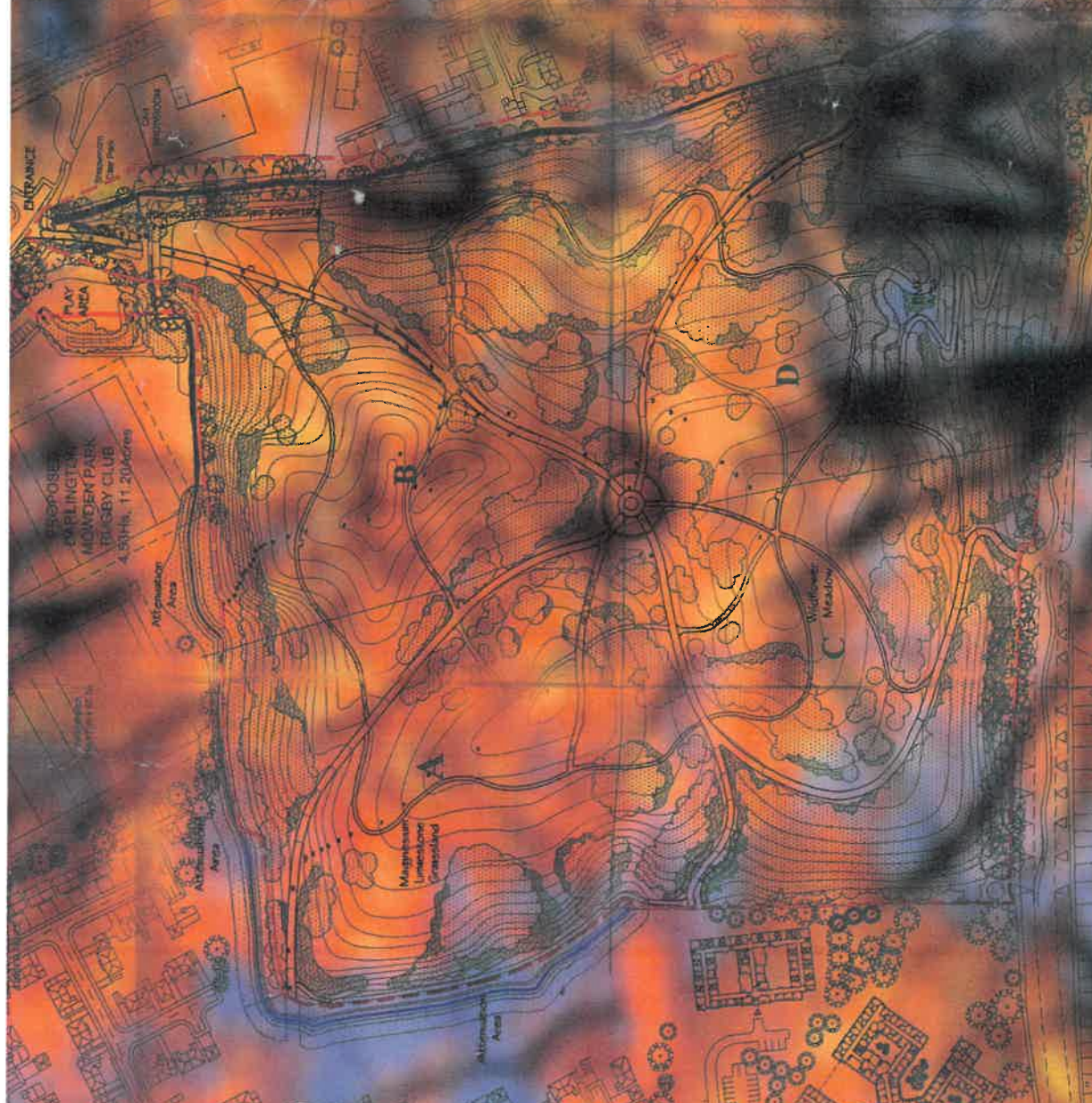


westpark

At the heart of a new community



Bussey & Armstrong Projects

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WESTPARK COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

Welcome to the first issue of 'West Park', a new community magazine which will keep you informed on the exciting developments at Faverdale, Darlington.

West Park is an exciting new development of around 700 homes which will also provide a range of community facilities. Located on the north west fringe of Darlington and based around the first new park to be completed in the last 100 years, the new community has potential to include a variety of facilities including a new sports club, leisure, health care and community hall as well as the home for a new NHS Priority Services Hospital.

The scheme is being master planned by Bussey & Armstrong Projects, a subsidiary of the long established Darlington house builder and who have built homes for local people over the past 90 years.

The site formerly comprised the Darlington Chemical company which, for many years made 'pharmaceutical chemical base' - pills to you and me!

A legacy of structures and waste heaps, principally comprising calcium carbonate, a chalky material, is presently being transformed into the new park land and landscaping works will be completed later this year. Roadworks and roundabouts to serve the development have now started and will pave the way for the hospital and new housing in 2003.

Further issues of 'West Park' will keep you informed of progress.

For more information telephone us on 01325 365785 or you can email us at: info@busseyarmstrong.co.uk, or visit the following website www.busseyarmstrong.co.uk.



Darlington is about to receive a new and exciting addition to its growing number of highly accessible countryside sites. For many years the town has been a poor second to its neighbouring towns in providing wildspaces where biodiversity and recreation walk hand in hand. But this is no longer the case with a whole host of sites being developed at the moment. Darlington West Park will be a big boost to this process with lime rich soils providing a wide range of habitats for species to colonise in the next few years combined with a network of paths for making visits easy and relaxing.

The habitat potential for this new nature park will be considerable with species that are in decline elsewhere such as sky lark and song thrush likely to be present in large numbers. In addition to a diverse bird population the habitats for butterflies, water voles and invertebrates are all being established that will make the park a delight to visit in the

not too distant future.

In order to ensure that the biodiversity of the park develops to its full potential, funding is being sought to establish a countryside Facilities Centre where an on site management team will be based. Their presence will go a long way to making people feel comfortable and informed when visiting the park. The centre will provide information for visitors to the park and serve as a base for carrying out maintenance. It is



important for sites such as these to receive a good deal of tender loving care to ensure visitors appreciate the high value that is being placed on wildlife conservation issues.

As well as providing for some very pleasant wildlife walks, the park will also be there for those seeking a bigger thrill. Funding is being sought for both an off road cycling facility and a bouldering wall. These two outdoor countryside sports are massively popular these days, giving people a taster close to their homes of what is

possible in the wider countryside.

Such a feature is an important aspect of this kind of "on your doorstep" countryside facility.

The park, once open, will itself be highly accessible to the public with the old railway trackbed reinstated as a fully fledged cycle route linking to the town centre and on into the wider countryside.

It is envisaged that the newest addition to Darlington's publicly available countryside sites will be fully up and running in about three years time. In the mean time an enormous amount of help and involvement will be sought from the local community to find what it is people actually want. For more information please feel free to contact Rob George, Countryside and Rights of Way Officer on 01325 388648.



New hospital to be built at West Park



A NEW patient focused in-patient facility for people with mental health problems is one of the key developments of West Park.

The facility, which is being funded by the Government's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and will cost in the region of £20m, will be run by County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust which provides services for people with mental health problems, substance misuse and learning difficulties.

The private sector partner will have responsibility for building and maintaining the new unit in a contract that will span the next 30 years.

But the hospital will operate as an NHS hospital, with NHS staff on NHS principles.

The new unit will replace the Pierremont Unit, Beaumont Ward and Faverdale Unit at Darlington Memorial Hospital and the Gables Clinic at Sedgfield and will provide:

- 60 adult acute in-patient rooms (including mother and baby unit)
- 24 single bedrooms for older people with mental health problems
- 15 complex needs rooms
- 10 intensive care rooms
- 7 recovery rooms

There will also be out patient and day hospital facilities together with a range of support services including a public dining room, coffee lounge, prayer room and a shop.

At the moment, the Trust is in the process of choosing which of three potential partners will be

given the task of designing and building the new unit and is hoping to make an announcement on that in November of this year.

In the past few weeks, the Trust has completed the purchase of the land for the new facility.

It is anticipated that work will start on the new hospital in the middle of next year with the first patients and staff occupying the facilities in late 2004.

As well as offering people in Darlington and South Durham a new facility, the development will also be introducing a new style of care for patients.

The new model of care has been devised by specialist staff at the Trust and aims to exceed latest Government initiatives.

The model of care will be focused on working in the community, looking after patients in the comfort and security of familiar surroundings, with back up support from the in-patient facilities as and when that is needed.

This will involve the development of a range of community based mental health services including crisis assessment, home treatment, and assertive outreach so that people who are suffering can reach professionals who can help 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Jo Turnbull, chairman of the Trust, said: "We are extremely excited about the NHS development in the wider West Park project. We feel this new facility will offer the very best care in fantastic surroundings and we look forward to seeing work progress on the site over the next two years."

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We are delighted to be acting as sole legal advisers to Bussey & Armstrong Ltd in relation to the Darlington West Park development.

For further details of how we can help you in any of the areas opposite, please call us on the telephone number below or visit our website at www.b-h-p.com.

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Community Vision

westpark is to be an area of homes for a large number of people by the end of the next decade. As the house building begins, so other plans are also being made. A large expanse of housing such as this has other needs. All too often in the past no active steps have been taken to prevent areas like this from becoming places with no identifiable heart, where residents come and go in their cars with little or no contact with each other. This can lead to isolation, wariness, suspicion and vandalism - an area with little sense of community spirit.

The developers, Bussey & Armstrong, are very keen to ensure that the needs of the newly created homes are fully met. This new community, and its near neighbour, High Grange, needs a beating heart. Here is an opportunity to help to develop it.

Four of the major church denominations (Baptists, Church of England, Methodists and United Reformed Church) are combining forces to propose the building of a community centre on the site. They are investigating the possi-

bility of providing facilities and activities which will serve and reflect the needs of the whole area of Westpark and High Grange nearby. There are already nearly 400 similar successful schemes up and down the country.

Some amenities which could be included in the community centre are a full-day nursery, a coffee bar and lounge as a meeting area, a large multi-functional hall (doubling as a worship space) and other meeting rooms. The number of possibilities is unlimited and the Steering Group are open to as many ideas as anyone suggests for consideration. Concern for the future health and well-being of this new community are paramount among those who are monitoring its birth.

There will be a thorough consultation exercise. So if you have anything to discuss or offer, contact Dai Hayward on 465832 or email dhayward@twixtus.com.

Careful consideration combined with creativity can turn the vision of this beating heart into an exciting reality within the new community, serving its needs and contributing richly to its culture.

Law firm relocates opposite West Park development



Blackett Hart & Pratt, Solicitors, have recently relocated their main Darlington office to new premises in Faverdale.

Westgate House, formally the office of Darchem Ltd, has been completely rebuilt and refurbished to provide 8,500 sq. feet of modern office space with ample free parking for visitors and good facilities for the disabled. The refurbishment has been welcomed by residents and businesses alike and has contributed to the new Westpark Development, which is now underway.

John Pratt, Managing Partner of

Blackett Hart & Pratt commented, "It is an exciting time for all concerned. Our relocation to Westgate House, is further evidence of our commitment to invest in Darlington and local people. Recent growth and expansion has required us to move to larger premises and this move has also enabled us to provide improved facilities both for clients and for our staff. Our Professional Services are increasingly in demand in Darlington and throughout the North East, and we now have the space to actively recruit new staff to meet this demand".

Poetry plan gets the go ahead



Over the last decade the North of England has established international reputation for Public Art and culturally driven regeneration. Major commissions such as Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* in Gateshead (bottom left), and *Train* by David Mach in Darlington (right) have highlighted the North's aspirations to develop and promote its image as a creative and ambitious region.



At Westpark the process of working with artists has been driven by the vision of the private sector developer Bussey and Armstrong who recognised early the added value and unique qualities the arts can bring within major projects.

Following consultation with Northern Arts, poet WN Herbert was engaged at the very earliest stages of project planning to develop an overarching "poetry plan" which will be delivered across all aspects of the 10 year regeneration project.

The poetry plan has been presented to the local authority, NHS Health Trust and other partners and is now being implemented in partnership with two sculptors - David Patton and David Edwick. The artists will produce stone sculpture, seating, entrance features and bridges for the park and new NHS facility and the poetry will be carved and cast into all the new commissioned features to

enable the public to engage with the work across the entire Westpark site.

The commitment to involve artists in regeneration and new building projects has its roots in numerous community arts projects, increasingly this involvement has led to larger scale opportunities and this growing creative profile has now led to the region securing significant inward investment in projects such as The National Glass Centre, Sunderland, Baltic and the Sage Gateshead (main left). Already the Westpark poetry plan has engaged with local schools and it is hoped that there will be numerous opportunities for creative partnerships with the local community as the Westpark site develops and the "poetry" spreads across the site!

MATTHEW JARRATT
COMMISSIONS OFFICER
NORTHERN ARTS

Developing creative writing in schools

New Writing North is the literary development agency for the Northern Arts region. The company was formed in 1996 to help develop the literary scene in the north of England and to create new opportunities for writers based in the region. We are a small company with two full-time members of staff. We work closely with a network of writers and project managers to develop new initiatives.

We work across a vast range of genres and forms of writing: from film, theatre, fiction and poetry, to public art and new media projects. We work with a wide range of people: from young children in schools to professional writers. We have developed contacts with writers from all over the UK, but work primarily with northern writers, with whom we work on many projects and residencies each year.

New Writing North acts as a

link between writers and projects and we often work directly with writers to develop ideas, as well as employing them to deliver projects that we have devised. We are committed to developing young writers via bursaries, mentoring, awards and personal support, and we also work with established writers on training and on commissioning projects.

In June 2002 we spent a week at the Westpark development in Darlington with pupils and staff from the nearby Mount Pleasant Primary School. A poet and a visual artist worked with Year 6 pupils and site visits to Westpark were the inspiration for a wide range of creative writing and artistic activities. The week culminated in a presentation event at the end of the week which was enjoyed by the teaching staff, pupils, parents and members of the local community alike.

NWN would like to extend this

pilot project by working with local schools and communities in response to the innovative Westpark development. Ideas that we would like to explore with



Pictured above is the artwork and Helku poetry produced by Mount Pleasant School printed on lab coats as part of the Visual Arts Workshop week

- schools include:
- Making a film - written by and starring pupils and staff.
 - Running a literature festival for the local community, based in local schools.
 - Working with teachers on creative writing courses.
 - Producing a magazine featuring pupils' work.
 - Setting up long-term residencies in schools.
 - Setting up and devising work for a time-limited school radio station.

If you would like to work with New Writing North on any of the above, or have another idea for a project involving NWN, please contact Anna Somerford at: New Writing North, 7-8 Trinity Chare, Quayside, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3DF. Tel. 0191 232 9991 Fax. 0191 230 1883 email: mail@newwritingnorth.com

THE tees forest

helping to green West Park

The Tees Forest is the largest environmental initiative in the Tees Valley. It covers over 350km² of land surrounding the principal towns of the area and is accessible to a local population approaching one million people.

The Tees Forest is engaged in the creation of new woodlands and their development for sport, leisure, recreation and community events. There are many ways that we create new woodlands. For example local farmers and landowners can secure grant aid through the Forest Team for planting new trees. Other woodlands are planted on land specially purchased by organisa-

tions such as Forest Enterprise.

It is through the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme, that The Tees Forest has enabled Bussey and Armstrong to access grant funding for a new 8.6 ha woodland at Westpark. Westpark's location on the Darlington urban fringe will provide a prime informal recreational area for people from existing communities and the new community that will be created by the new housing development. A disused railway corridor on the southern edge of the site will be developed as a sustainable green transport route creating links to all parts of

Darlington as well as routes out into the wider countryside. The Tees Forest has also been involved in the creation of these green transport routes. Project Director, Glenn McGill points out the importance of the development for the borough. "Darlington Westpark will create a new woodland with recreational access for the local community. In addition, provision of new access and green transport routes will create the linkages to other urban fringe sites in and around the town."

The Tees Forest team has provided advice on the design of the landscaping plan in which other habitats, including Magnesium Limestone Grassland and wildflower meadows will be created. The watercourse is being re-profiled into a more attractive and wider stream. These improvements will provide valuable habi-

tats for locally rare indigenous species of wildlife, contributing to the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan. The green transport route will also provide a valuable wildlife corridor to link into the surrounding landscape.

It is hoped that as the diverse habitats develop they will provide an invaluable educational opportunity for local schools. Hazel Souter, who is The Tees Forest's Lifelong Learning Project Officer, is already working with Darlington schools, using both school grounds and established countryside sites to deliver environmental aspects of the National Curriculum. Hazel says, "I am looking forward to the time when I can use Westpark as a location for school visits in Darlington. It will be an important educational resource for Darlington schools and a wonderful recreational area for local people."

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West Park Darlington is on target

The first housing at Westpark Darlington, will be completed in two phases by north east builder Bellway.

It will be built to include a wide variety of property designs, including apartments, three storey town houses, three bedroom village mews property designs and four bedroom detached houses.

The first phase of the development - installing the off-site roadworks - will be starting any time now and all access roads should be completed by March next year.

The first housing phase 'A,' is being built on a brownfield site and will accommodate 80 homes. The other phase, 'B,' is a larger greenfield area which will carry 230 homes.

This development is subject to the latest Government's Public Planning Guidelines,

which require planners to build new homes close together in higher densities to preserve existing green spaces. It also means that potential home buyers will have a wider choice of homes and prices. Visit Bellway on www.bellway.co.uk



Anyone for a game of

RUGBY

Darlington Mowden Park's major achievement in recent years has been to bring National League rugby to the town for the first time in its history. This has certainly raised Darlington's profile in sporting terms and the Club is justifiably proud of its success.

On the field the Club has progressed dramatically and off it, there is tremendous activity. The planned move from its current home at Yiewsley Drive to its marvellous new site at Westpark, Faverdale is scheduled to occur within the next two years. Our new home will form part of an unique master plan development extending to over 100 acres and our designated site of around 11 acres will enable us to deliver outstanding facilities and rugby opportunities for the community in general.

In addition to its league success, Darlington Mowden Park has also enjoyed some memorable success in the National Knock Out Cup in recent years. In 2000, under the spotlight of the media nationwide, we reached the last 16 of the Tetley Bitter

Cup and were narrowly beaten away by the mighty NEC Harlequins of the premiership. The year after we lost to National One side Birmingham/Solihull in the last 32 and last year we were again edged out by National One team Manchester in the same round. Again our exploits were closely followed by the people of Darlington and the club emerged from the competition each season with tremendous credit and distinction, earning the Club a civic reception at the Town Hall in 2000.

Spirit, drive and commitment are characteristics which typify Darlington Mowden Park people. The Club benefits from dynamic leadership and management, first rate coaching staff and so importantly, a welcoming friendly ambience supported by a programme of regular social events to suit all tastes and age groups. Darlington Mowden Park is very much a 'family' club and newcomers can be assured of a warm welcome, both at our existing home and, in the future at our new site at Westpark, Faverdale.



parklife

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