

THE WAREHOUSE TRUST LANGPORT

PROJECT SUMMARY

To create a centre that supports businesses in the Langport area through training, networking and support surgeries. The project is being delivered by the Ecos Trust (formerly Somerset Trust for Sustainable Development).

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The centre will be based in the restored warehouse at Great Bow Yard in Langport . Three types of support will be provided to business: 1. Formal training seminars provided by professional groups and support organisations, 2. Networking events for mutual support in association with the local chamber of commerce, 3 . Surgery sessions on a one to one basis provided by support organisations.

Background and history: Great Bow Wharf, Langport

Having stood derelict for over a decade, the historic warehouse at Great Bow Yard, Langport will open its doors to a sustainable future in September 2007. The Grade II listed building is being sustainably restored and rebuilt, to provide seven serviced offices, community space for workshops and events, and a bistro serving local and organic produce.

A catalyst for regenerating the town, the Great Bow Yard development is a prominent site at the western end of the main street of Langport, and as such presents a very important statement upon entering the town from Taunton.

Charles Couzens, Executive Director of Ecos Trust, comments: "We are very pleased to be re-opening the doors of such a prominent building, which has been in a state of dereliction for such a long time. The warehouse is of great historic value to the town and we have been sensitive to this throughout the project, during which we have preserved as much of the building's original character as possible.

"Our vision is that the building will become a valuable community resource that will encourage economic regeneration by offering space for fledgling or existing businesses, training, exhibitions and support facilities. Although there is still work to be done, we want to show visitors what has been achieved in the warehouse in the last year and they'll also get a glimpse of its idyllic surroundings beside the River Parrett and Somerset Levels."

The warehouse played an important role in the growth of Langport as a river port. It was formerly used by a firm of influential merchants, Stuckey and Bagehot, whose families individually and respectively went on to become founders of Stuckey's Bank, now part of Natwest Bank, and The Economist magazine.

Restored, the warehouse will complete the picture of Great Bow Yard as a mixed-use development - 12 eco-homes, built using state of the art design, and the multi-functional warehouse, brought back to life with sympathetic construction techniques. The warehouse will be opened officially in September when the building will be jointly owned the Langport Area Development Trust (LADT) and the Ecos Trust.

Gillam & Chivers, a local company specialising in sustainable building, is using existing local building materials to gradually restore the warehouse. All features have been carefully preserved or rebuilt, for example; existing timbers have been carefully restored in-situ and window frames have been made locally by Ian Pope from Timber Reuse

Community Enterprise (TRUCE) in Minehead, who has used reclaimed and recycled timber.

Reused floorboards are being utilised and it is estimated that over 80% of the original roof tiles will be placed back on the roof. Despite being a listed building, it has been possible to include several key sustainable features within the warehouse; solar panels have been placed discreetly on one of the roofs, high levels of Warmcell insulation have been used, and efficient sun pipes let in light without loss of heat in the main corridors. As a result of these energy efficient measures the warehouse will be carbon efficient.

Richard Coldicott, LADT Project Manager concludes: “Our vision is that the warehouse will become an integral part of the local community and be a valuable aid to the local economy. This project is a fantastic example of how an old, neglected building can be sustainably transformed into a community resource and we very much look forward to showing people around.”

For more information about plans or leasing details of the office space at the warehouse, please contact Charles Couzens on tel: 01458 259400, email: charles@sustainablehousing.org.uk or visit: www.ecoshomes.co.uk

The warehouse refurbishment project has been funded partly by a 'dowry' from the profits from the adjacent eco home development and partly from the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), Somerset Rural Renaissance and South Somerset District Council.

WEBLINKS:

www.ecoshomes.co.uk

Langport Area Development Trust: <http://www.langport-area.info/>