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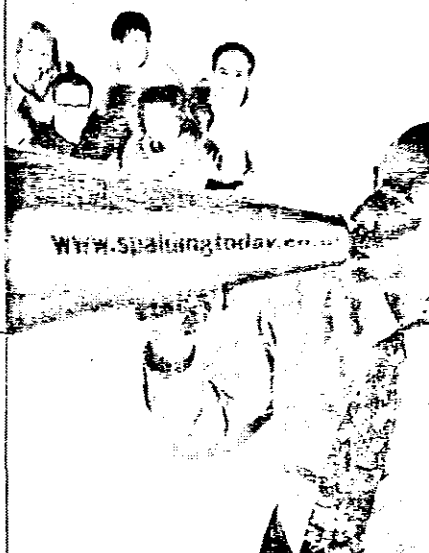
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Gerry plans first earth shelter field study centre

reports by KATE BARNEY
kate.barney@lfpag.co.uk

THE man behind pioneering plans for Europe's first earth shelter field study centre in Long Sutton said it is a wonderful opportunity for the town.

Gerry Harrall is hoping to gain planning permission for the £1.5million development in Gedney Road on a derelict garage site opposite his current earth sheltered offices.

The centre will be made entirely from green materials and energy sources.

Mr Harrall is excited about the plans, which he said are the largest and first of their kind in Europe.

He told the Spalding Guardian: "It's very exciting and a wonderful opportunity for Long Sutton to be at the forefront of something like this."

"This site has been disused for six years. It's contaminated but we can construct here without remediation, the use of fossil fuels and without concrete being used."

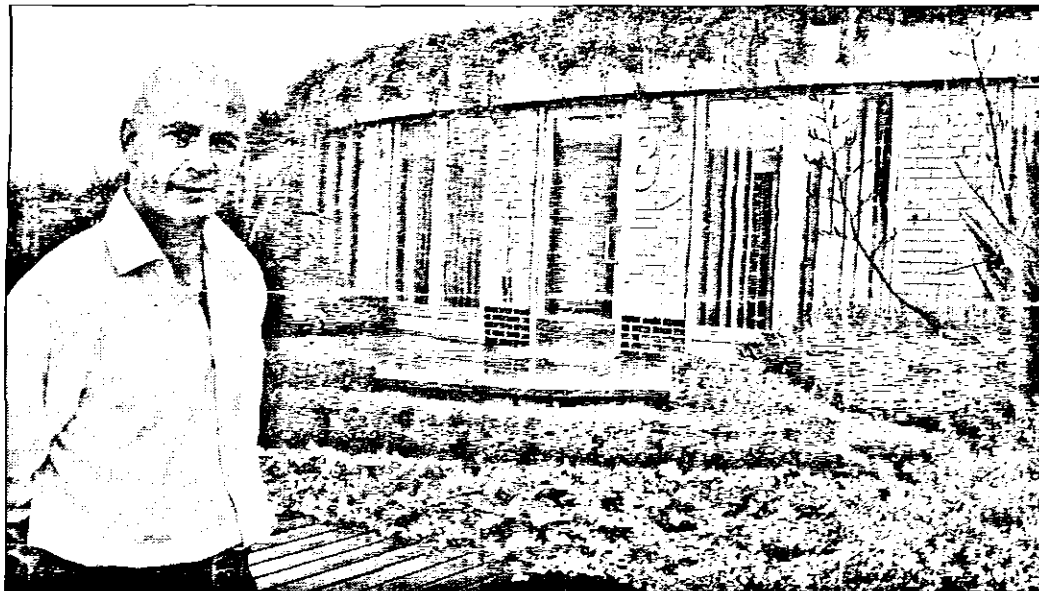
Mr Harrall, who lives in an earth sheltered house next to his office in Gedney Road, is looking to extend his current business and provide accommodation for others at the complex.

Plans include units for:

- SEArch (Sustainable Ecological Architecture)
- ARC (Architectural Research Consultancy)
- Incubator units for research and consultancy services

- Eco-pods - self-catering residential units
- An eco-café for staff
- Classroom for delivery of informal workshops, seminars and courses
- Information centre
- Public open space.

Mr Harrall is hoping similar businesses will take up the remaining units on site, which he would like to see operational by 2006.



▲ GERRY Harrall outside his earth shelter office which stands on the opposite side of the road to the derelict garage he plans to turn into Europe's first earth shelter field study centre. (2912y05)

He added "We are looking for like-minded businesses to have a field study centre operating from the same site."

"The idea is to have all five businesses located on the site which collaborate on commercially viable projects."

Joint facilities, including a café, will be available to all companies too.

Conceived as a living laboratory, Mr Harrall said the site will be embedded with an unprecedented number of performance monitors providing

unique data to the construction industry.

The centre will also provide workshops, seminars and courses and will have its own traffic management policy with staff being offered free 100 per cent bio diesel if they operate micro cars on site.

Mr Harrall said he has spoken to a number of neighbours and received mixed views.

He added: "I'm very happy to talk to anybody about any of the issues surrounding this."

● See below for residents' reaction.

Residents rally in protest at 'Tellytubby' offices

RESIDENTS have branded plans to transform a derelict garage site near their homes as something out of the 'Tellytubbies' and "Martian-like".

Long Sutton people are protesting against plans to build a commercial earth shelter in their street.

Gerry Harrall wants to transform a former garage in Gedney Road into Europe's largest earth shelter development to accommodate commercial businesses and research consultancies (see story above).

Sue Murfet, of Gedney Road, has written to South Holland District Council in protest.

She said: "We just do not want it."

"It's going to be an eyesore. People are going to come through Gedney and see these Tellytubby offices."

"This is a residential area and the plan is out of character."

Mrs Murfet said that Mr Harrall's earth sheltered home and office opposite the garage site is well hidden by a hedge but the commercial development would be open.

She is concerned that the project would lead to more accidents on a bend next to the garage site and is worried about a 12m wind turbine included in the plans.

Richard Greenacre, whose property is next to the site, said: "Long Sutton and Gedney



▲ PROTESTERS claim plans for an earth shelter field study centre on the derelict garage site in Gedney Road, Long Sutton, are inappropriate for the area. (2947y04)

should not be subjected to experimental architecture and do not warrant a Tellytubby, Martian-like development.

"It's out of character."

Mr Greenacre said he would rather see

more traditional buildings or properties for first time buyers on the site.

People have until Monday to send their views on the plans to the district council offices in Priory Road, Spalding.