

Gazette COMMENT

Let's be proud of our rich heritage

COLCHESTER Castle instead of for Mayfair. First site in place of Luxury. Next How about Jumbo for Waterworks?

If Colchester becomes the newest town to get its streets and sites immortalised on a Monopoly board there will undoubtedly be a host of suggestions for what best fits the squares.

It is a bit of fun, but it should also be seen as an honour.

Colchester is the oldest recorded town and is deserving of its own board.

We should not be dismissive of such things, however gimmicky.

We need to be better at promoting what we have and being proud of our past and present.

It is easy when you walk past St Botolph's Priory, the steps of Colchester bullet holes, sections of Roman wall, Colchester Castle, Jumbo, to name but a few landmarks, every day, to forget what a rich history we have on our doorstep.

It might not be very British to brag, but we should.

Lots of people are ready to criticise the poor marketing of our town and the tourism opportunities being missed.

So here is a chance to spread the word about what we have here.

The reality is we could fill two Monopoly boards, but let's start with getting one first.

Get on board and give Colchester's heritage a vote of confidence.

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IT'S BYE BYE



Project - It is expected that the demolition work will take several weeks to complete. Right: A worker uses an angle grinder as part of the demolition process. Below: The shell of the factory which has been empty since the plant shut down in 2007



By TOM DALEY
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THE demolition of buildings which housed a century old Army uniform manufacturer has begun, paving the way for new housing.

Historical buildings, some dating back to the 1800s, will be replaced by 27 homes on the former Bernard Uniforms factory site, in Main Road, Harwich.

The factory has been out of use since it closed in 2007, but people reacted with 252 letters of objection when the plans were submitted to Tendring Council.

Objections pleaded for the factory to be saved because of its historical value, and a petition called for the site to be turned into a museum.

The housing plan was approved and the destruction of about a dozen buildings began on Friday with demolition work set to last several weeks.

Colne Housing Society plans to start laying foundations for the new homes in March, and says they will be let at an affordable rent with priority given to those who have lived in Tendring for the past three years.

Sara Thakkar, chief executive of Colne Housing Society, is asking for Harwich and Dovercourt residents to come forward with ideas for street names for the new development.

She said: "These new homes will be an attractive asset to the area and we are pleased the local community have welcomed the regeneration of the site."

It would be fantastic if people could use their local knowledge to put their stamp on this development

110 YEARS OF UNIFORMS

BERNARD Uniforms ran for 110 years in Harwich and tailored clothes for the Royal Family and the Ministry of Defence.

Opened in 1897 by Charles "Harry" Bernard, the factory had a rich history which included fashioning clothing for top designers such as Paul Smith and Katharine Hamnett.

Clothes were also tailored for the emergency services and Essex County Cricket Club.

In 1993, the Hobson Group acquired the business and by 1997 the company had won a £1.3million contract from the Ministry of Defence.

This was a turnaround for a company which had made 20 of its employees redundant the previous year, with the factory producing 27,000 Royal Navy uniforms under the three-year contract.

In July 2007 staff were devastated when they were told



Uniforms were their business - staff at the factory in 1985

TO BERNARDS

Wrecking crew starts to demolish old clothing firm in Harwich



Going, going, gone - the demolition crews at work on the former Bernards Uniform factory site in Main Road, Harwich. Inset: Sara Thakkar of Colne Housing Society, which is building 27 affordable homes on the site. Pictures: STEVE BRADING 0011477

"It would be fantastic if local people could get their thinking caps on and use their local knowledge to put their stamp on this new development."

Nathan Cole, of Colne's development partner Icenl Homes, added: "Since the work started, many passers-by have told us they are happy to see the derelict buildings come down."

"We have worked hard with Tendring Council to provide much-needed affordable homes to the area."

The developers aim to move new residents into the homes in the summer of 2017.

To suggest a street name for the development, email press@colne-housing.co.uk, including your name, address and phone number and why you have suggested the name.

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