

# VINEYARD FARMS LTD.

The Kentish Wine Vault



Ref: MC/21/2328

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**Medway Planning Committee**

Wednesday 8th December



## At a glance

- A new world class winery building to deliver a multi-million-pound investment in the economy, boost tourism and put Medway at the heart of the English wine market.
- The plans will create 50 new jobs, in addition to supporting construction roles. Once operational, the estate will support 75–100 jobs in total and many more in the supply chain.
- The project has been designed to the highest environmental standards and will be operationally carbon neutral.
- We've agreed a sustainable transport plan, including an electric shuttle bus service from local stations to minimise the impact on local roads.
- The plans have been designed by leading architects, Foster + Partners, to sit within the existing landscape – with over 85% of the building underground.



Over 70% of the building is dedicated to wine making, including the processing facility on the lower ground floor

### The plans are recommended for approval by your officers:

“The proposal would create educational opportunities including apprenticeships across agriculture, viticulture, and commercial operations and would engage with local schools and colleges and provide programmes on sustainability, viticulture, and agriculture.”

“The proposal has the potential to heighten the public image of Medway and help promote future commercial and cultural investment attracting industries into the area.”

“In terms of ecology and trees, the precautionary and protection measures for protected species and the ancient woodland have been appropriately considered. The indirect impacts to protected species and habitats would be minimal, subject to appropriate conditions. The proposal would result in habitats unit net gain of 14.34% and a hedgerow unit net gain of 864.47%”

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## Our vision

### About Vineyard Farms

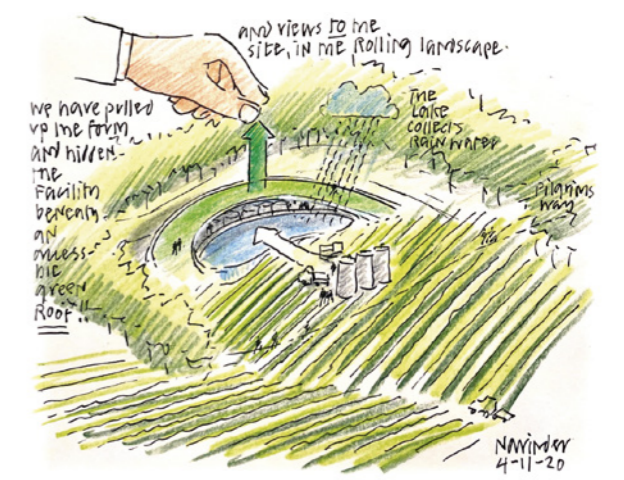
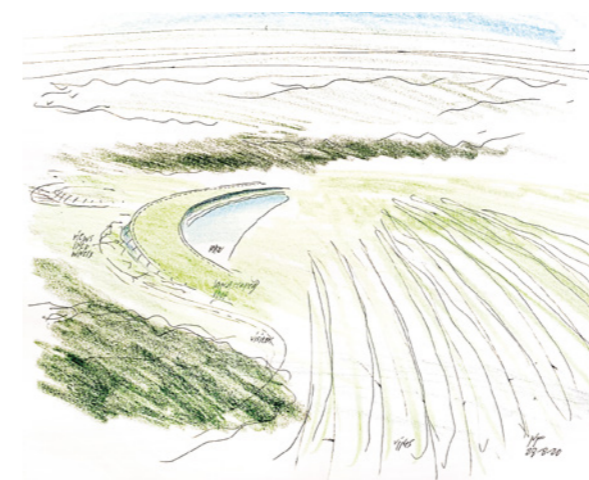
Our 1,200-acre farm is a family-owned operation. We have a growth plan to invest up to £60m in infrastructure and vineyards, creating over 100 permanent new jobs for local people. We want to kick start a wine revolution in England – with Medway at the centre.

Our vision is to produce English sparkling wine which is accessible to everyone, whilst matching the high-quality standards of European alternatives. Traditionally, over 90% of sparkling wine consumed in the UK comes from France, Italy or Spain. We want to transform the market by creating a buzz around homegrown English wine.

In order to do this, we will invest £50m to deliver a world-class winemaking facility in Medway. At the heart of this is a commitment to the highest environmental standards, innovative design and cutting-edge sustainability solutions.

### Our team

Foster + Partners is the project architect for the site and is the largest architecture firm in the UK. The company is a British international studio for architecture and integrated design, with headquarters in London. The practice is led by its Founder and Chairman, Lord Norman Foster, who has been responsible for projects such as the Great Court at the British Museum and wineries including Faustino Winery, Château Margaux and Le Dôme Winery.



Lord Norman Foster has led the design process and was inspired by the rolling landscape and local prevalence of chalk



## Investing in Medway's economy

### Investment

The Kentish Wine Vault represents a £50m investment in the local economy and will generate over £2.5m in Business Rates for Medway over the next decade.

### Jobs and skills

The winery building will create 50 new jobs, as part of a total 75-100 jobs across the wider estate. We currently operate an apprenticeship scheme with Plumpton College – the UK's centre of excellence for wine – and are keen to expand this programme in partnership with Medway Council.

### Tourism

The proposals will deliver a multi-million-pound investment in Medway's economy over the next decade and provide a significant boost for tourism. The winery will also create wider supply chain opportunities for local businesses and suppliers.



*The proposed development as viewed from Pilgrim's Way*

#### What your officers say:

"The proposal would provide social and economic benefits associated with the construction and operation of the winery including the provision of 75-100 permanent and seasonal jobs once operational and more throughout the supply chain."

"There would also be training opportunities as set out in the Skills & Employment Plan submitted with the application, which will improve employability, along with supporting rural tourism."

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## Environment and sustainability

### Sustainability

Sustainability is at the heart of our vision for The Kentish Wine Vault. The development will be operationally net zero carbon and is aiming to be BREEAM Outstanding. The plans include the latest sustainability features including onsite renewable energy generation and heat pumps.

### Electric shuttle buses

We have agreed a sustainable travel plan that will limit car journeys and ensure safe travel to and from the facility. Our customers will be encouraged to travel by rail and use our electric shuttle bus, which will serve local stations including Meopham, Cuxton, Ebbsfleet and Higham.

### Design, landscaping and materials

The plans have been designed to sit within the landscape, with over 85% of the building underground. We will use traditional materials including flint to reflect the local design character. The winery building features a signature green roof to support biodiversity and local wildlife.



*The proposed car park area and woodland path to the winery*

"In response to the sensitivity of the Kent Downs AONB and the greenbelt designation, a well-considered and elegant design has been developed. It utilises materials that are appropriate to the Kent Downs and it is considered that the building responds appropriately to its location. The building design and landscape integration have been carefully considered to mitigate impacts on the AONB as far as possible."

"The proposed access road and car park would be screened with significant hedgerow and tree planting along the entirety of the north-western side, which are considered to significantly reduce the visual impact of the road and associated vehicle movements."

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## Supporting the local community

### Community engagement

Prior to submitting a planning application, we undertook a programme of community consultation to ensure residents could find out about the plans, ask questions and provide feedback. We were delighted that over 100 people took part in the consultation process and will continue to work with the community to involve them in all aspects of our plans.

### Local investment

During the public consultation, the local community identified a number of potential highway improvements for Bush Road. We have worked with your officers to address these matters and have agreed a comprehensive s106 agreement package to improve local infrastructure. This includes contributions of over £100k towards future improvement works, which could fund a new pedestrian crossing, road resurfacing works and the upgrade of local footpaths/public rights of way (PRoW).



*The winery is approached by foot through a clearing in the woodland.*

### What your officers say:

“The proposal would bring significant economic and social benefits both locally and nationally. This would be through the creation of jobs and additional spend in the local area through linked trips and associated tourism as well as providing apprenticeship and educational opportunities.”

“Given the benefits identified above, along with the proposed mitigation measures, the proposed development would result in a sustainable form of development that would outweigh any residual harm and as such planning permission should be granted.”

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