

NEWS

Asda creates 200 new jobs in Ipswich

MORE than 200 jobs have been created at Asda's new store in Ipswich, which opens its doors for trading this month.

The Stoke Park development is just one of a number of boosts for the Ipswich economy, which is bucking the recession being felt elsewhere in the country. The town is benefiting from a vote of confidence by the hotel industry. Premier Inn has just opened its 75-bedroom complex at The Beagle, Chantry Park, and earlier in the summer, the Ramada group's Encore hotel started trading in Ranelagh Road.

Meanwhile, the £4million extension to the four-star Salthouse Harbour Hotel on the Waterfront is nearing completion. Designed by architects Barefoot & Gilles and built by ISG Jackson, the extension will provide the Salthouse Harbour with 27 additional bedrooms, an extended restaurant, dining area and reception, opening in October.

The transfer of DanceEast staff from cramped town centre accommodation to the new £9 million Jerwood DanceHouse on the Waterfront has started, which will establish Ipswich as a national centre for excellence.

Nearby, work has started on the construction of 220-seat Witchbottle Theatre for Red Rose Chain Film and Theatre Company, which has received a donation of £75,000 from the borough council.

Richard Atkins, planning and economic development portfolio holder at Ipswich council, said the scale of development showed the town was playing a major part in leading the region out of recession.

"We are one of the fastest growing urban centres in the UK and can see much evidence of an economic fight-back. These are not goals or aspirations; they are actual developments and is evidence of the progress we are making. This is good news for business, for jobs and for the local economy in general."

Consultation on new homes

A PUBLIC consultation exercise will be launched next month to help regional planners decide how many new homes must be provided in Suffolk and Essex over the next 20 years.

"Have your say" meetings will be held in Ipswich and Chelmsford to listen to local concerns and to explain how the East of England must meet government demands to build 500,000 properties by 2031. The East of England Regional Assembly chairman John Reynolds said the consultation had been designed to promote public debate on planning for the region's future and specifically the issue of new homes.

"The assembly has already rejected the highest end of the range of new homes being proposed by the Government," said Mr Reynolds. But we do need to plan ahead to ensure that people can gain access to homes they can afford and that new homes are close to jobs, transport and other public services."

The government has asked the assembly to revise the East of England Plan which sets out how many new homes should be built each year. It has set a deadline of 2011 for the revision, and it is responsibility of local councils to determine the exact locations of where the housing should be built through their local development frameworks.

The public meetings will be held in Chelmsford on September 3 and Ipswich on September 16. Residents can book a place online at: <http://events.eera.gov.uk/conferences/> or contact Jayne Cole, EERA's conference organiser on 01284 729405 or email jayne.cole@eera.gov.uk

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EXHIBITING HIS WORK: Artist Reg Siger is opening up his home in Gisligham

Simply pic

EXHIBITION: Work captures Suffolk's

By Elliot Furniss

AN ESTABLISHED Suffolk artist is preparing to welcome the public into his own private gallery for an exclusive viewing of his latest works.

Reg Siger was born in Brussels but moved to the UK in the early 1960s where he has lived and worked ever since.

He moved to Suffolk in 1980 and spends his time painting some of its most unique and treasured sights, exhibiting his work in galleries across the region.

He now lives in Gisligham, near Eye, where he has a private gallery that will host two special open days this weekend.

He said the open days, held every year, were a great way to meet new people, find new customers and show off his latest efforts.

Mr Siger said: "I've got a home gallery where I put all my pictures and normally people come and have a look by appointment only, but a couple of days a year we open it up.

"It's the biggest concentration of

my work in one place and we have a little background music and some refreshments and people get to see the face behind the brush.

"It's a nice, friendly affair and I get to meet people – and hopefully get some sales as well."

Mr Siger, 65, said he liked to replicate unusual parts of well-known places – a corner of a town or village that people might not recognise at first but would still find familiar.

He said: "The challenge for me and the thing I most enjoy is to look for places – and not just obvious places – but the nooks and crannies that people don't always really notice.

"I like anything old – and if it's not old enough I make it look older. My style is very dark and not everybody's cup of tea, but the ones that like it really do like it."

The gallery is at Stanwell House in Gisligham High Street and Mr Siger's wife Carola, a professional framer, will be on hand to frame pictures over the two days.

For more details about the open days or Mr Siger's work, call 01377 783415 or visit www.regsiger.com

elliott.furniss@eadt.co.uk