



Food Technology Centre

Redhills



Food Technology Centre, Redhills

New Food Technology Centre takes shape

Construction of the new Food Technology Centre (FTC) at Redhills near Penrith is running almost to schedule. The building contractors Team Northern Construction Limited of Milnthorpe, the architects, Unwin Jones Partnership, and the surveyors, Baker Mallett of Whitehaven are working with us to create a new, unique and exciting centre for food production for the county.



Bridging a gap

The FTC is being developed as part of Distinctly Cumbrian's support for local food and drink producers and it represents an investment of over £1.5 million in a sector that is of growing importance for the county. At the heart of the development are six commercial kitchen units, each one equipped to a professional standard. There will also be shared ambient, chiller and freezer storage areas, plus a packing area. In addition the centre may also act as a distribution hub for tenants and for other local food businesses.

The concept of the FTC has come about as a response to a specific lack of food/drink production facilities in the county for smaller artisan producers which also include: easy in easy out terms, central location with excellent road/rail links and of bespoke design.

Facilities

The units, which range in size from 21.9m² to 40.9m², will perhaps contain 6 ring gas burner and oven, stainless steel double sink, stainless steel worktops, knee-operated hand-basin, basic utensils and racking. Moreover on site will be a variety of other production equipment available to hire by tenants for the hour or the day. The precise mix is still to be determined (in consultation with interested parties) but will include other items of specialised catering equipment.

Unit	Sq Mtr (Sq Ft)
A	22 (236)
B	23 (247)
C	28 (301)
D	27 (290)
E	41 (441)
F	22(236)

In addition to the food preparation equipment being supplied by Catering Partnerships Ltd of Staveley day to day support for process and hygiene control will be provided by Kingmoor Technical Services of Carlisle.

The Centre is a novel project as producers will not have to make an investment in premises but can hire facilities as and when they are needed, even if just for a day.



Pauline Herbert of Distinctly Cumbrian

"The Food Technology Centre should provide facilities that bridge the gap between home kitchen and factory unit," explains Pauline Herbert, Programme Manager of Distinctly Cumbrian. "We are hoping that some businesses will relocate into the centre full time while other units will be available on a more flexible basis for seasonal production or to deal with peak orders."

Nigel Bamford of Distinctly Cumbrian is taking on the day-to-day management of the new facility: "We have already had over 20 expressions of interest from food and drink producers," he says, "so we are confident of getting growing businesses into the Food Technology Centre as soon as the construction is complete."



Reducing the impact

The FTC sits alongside CREA's Business Incubation and Conference Centre, renowned for its use of the latest environmental technology.

"The Food Technology Centre will have solar panelling for water heating, a ground source heat pump for air heating and facilities for grey water recycling," explains Nigel Bamford. "Three bore holes have been drilled down to about 100 metres on the site to accommodate the ground source heat extraction and the grey water recycling includes catchment of rain water that is then used in the sanitation systems."

With the benefit of high specification insulation, the FTC should minimise its energy use. Moreover it is intended that the FTC will provide a hub for local food distribution in an effort to minimise food miles and transport costs plus help facilitate sales growth.

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CREA also commissioned a wildlife and ecology survey of the site before construction work began. Alice Robinson of Edwin Thompson found relatively poor soil and no other significant mammal activity, "apart from the rabbits that we expected" said Pauline Herbert. "We are hoping that a small investment in planting and conservation work once the centre is completed will create greater biodiversity on the site for the future."



Bob Clark, CREA Chief Executive

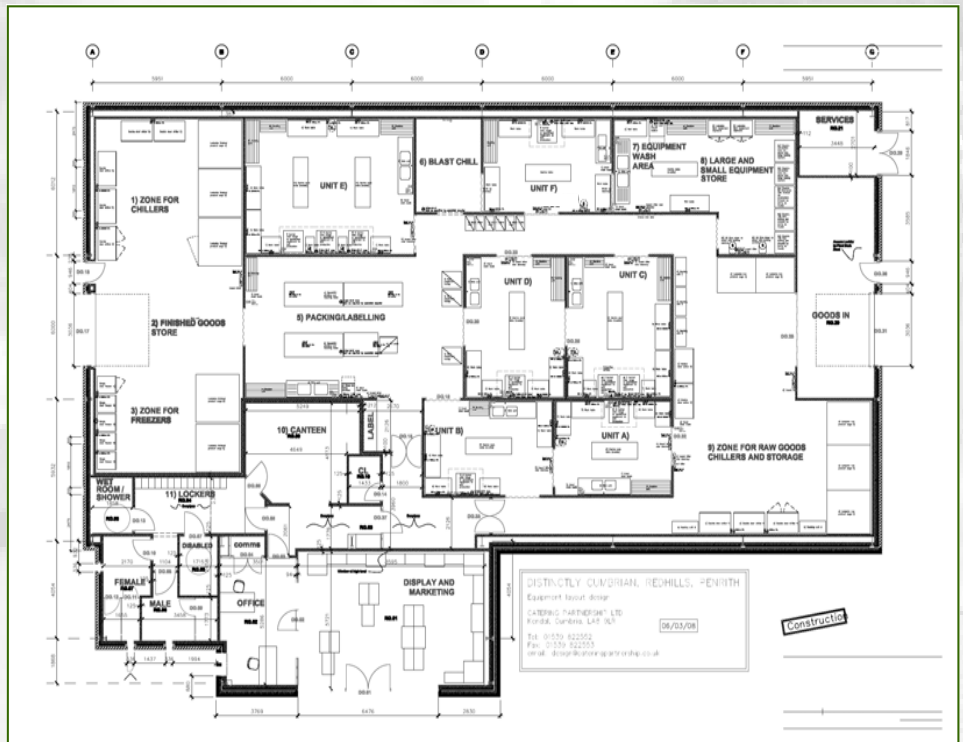
Investing for growth

CREA Chief Executive, Bob Clark has been involved in the project from the start:

"Northwest Regional Development Agency and the European Rural Development Fund have supported our work to develop this concept as part of their investment into our thriving food and drink sector," he said. "The Food Technology Centre will give growing businesses the opportunity to expand into new facilities, to share costs with others and to make the most of a prime location for distribution across Cumbria and beyond."

Peter White, Executive Director of Development at the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), said:

"Development of the food and drink sector through the Food Technology Centre will help..."



...drive forward Cumbria's economy and strengthen the position of local producers. There have already been a significant number of expressions of interest received, indicating the existing need... for a high-quality centre which will allow businesses to thrive and diversify. The Agency is delighted to support a facility which will complement our objectives to support businesses and create jobs in the region."



Construction of the Food Technology Centre is due for completion in early May 2008.

Businesses in the food and drink sector can contact Nigel Bamford on 01768 891555 or via nigel@crea.co.uk for further information about the project and the latest news on progress. Do you:

- Need a test kitchen for 1 day?
- Have a 2 day production back log?
- Have 3 days worth of seasonal produce to process?
- Need 4 days to build up stock levels for a Bank Holiday period?
- Need 5 days to fulfil a one off specific order?
- Require 6 days of production per month for an own-label contract?
- Produce 7 days per month but pay rent & business rates for 30 days?

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Unique Development

As we near the end of the construction phase of the first development of its kind in the whole of the North West, it is however worth mentioning that there are several food centres/parks/incubator units in other parts of the UK.

We have placed a particular Cumbrian slant on our project to take into account feedback from a cross section of our clients with regard to overall size, unit dimensions, location and regional infrastructure etc.

The FTC is at the forefront of utilising shared equipment and fostering collaborative work practices. Moreover, it has been specifically designed to act as a gateway project to assist those local producers who require support as they gain vital commercial experience.

Other similar food centres can be found at:

Malmö Food Innovation and Technology Park – Humberside

<http://www.malmopark.co.uk>

Ludlow Food Centre – Shropshire

<http://www.ludlowfoodcentre.co.uk>

Southglade Food Park – Nottingham

<http://www.southglade.co.uk>

Food Business Incubation Centre – Cookstown, Co Tyrone

<http://www.cafre.ac.uk/index/campus-information-2/loughry-campus/loughry-facilities/food-business-incubation-centre.htm>

Cross Hands Food Park – Ammanford, Carmarthenshire

<http://www.crosshandsfoodpark.com/>

Commercial Partners

Thanks to the expertise of several local businesses and their staff the FTC is developing into a great Cumbrian success story:

Equipment

Catering Partnerships Ltd – Staveley, Cumbria

www.cateringpartnership.co.uk

Food Technology

Kingmoor Technical Services – Carlisle, Cumbria

www.kingmoor.com

Builders

Team Northern Construction Ltd – Milnthorpe, Cumbria

www.teamnorthernconstruction.co.uk

Surveyors

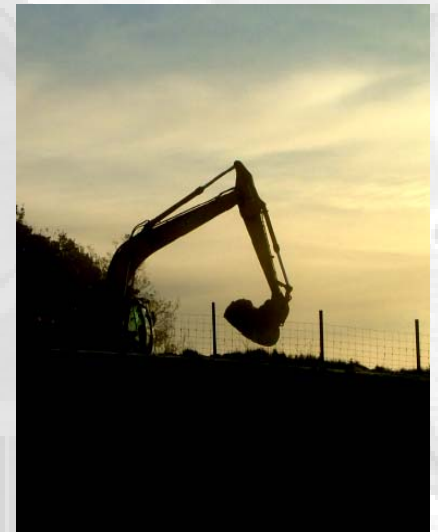
Baker Mallett – Whitehaven, Cumbria

www.bakermallett.com/branch.html?branch_id=9

Architects

Unwin Jones Partnerships – Carlisle, Cumbria

Tel: 01228 528266



Disclaimer:

Distinctly Cumbrian is part of CREA (Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency) based at Redhills, Penrith and is a regeneration initiative funded by the Northwest Development Agency.

Every effort is made to present accurate information. Should any of the information presented in this supplement be incorrect, please contact Distinctly Cumbrian immediately.

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