

Eco-building designed for community gardens in Marlpit

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A horse paddock will be transformed into a community garden, in west Norwich.

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Norwich architect Emily Barnston from Feilden+Mawson.

The seven-acre plot, at the junction of Marl Pit Lane and Hellesdon Road, will become a community garden with allotments, a greenhouse and a community building where people will learn how to grow fruit and vegetables.

At the heart of the plot is a community building with a main hall, kitchen, cold store, office and composting toilet.

Architect Emily Barnston a partner with Feilden+Mawson, based on Ferry Road, designed the building on Blake's Field.

She said: "The key feature of the building is its butterfly pitch roof, which has specifically been designed to accommodate solar panels.

"Being air tight and made of eco-materials there will be little need for additional heating."

The building is made of wood with large glass windows to the south to capture the sun's heat. It also had thick walls to keep in the warmth and it could be constructed using straw bales.

The proposal, which was approved unanimously by Norwich City Council in May, was put forward by the Sustainable Living Initiative, which already runs a Grow-Your-Own scheme in Bluebell Road South.

Mrs Barnston added: "It will be of enormous benefit to the gardeners.

"As well as serving as a meeting and socialising space, it will be used for events organised around growing fruit and vegetables."

One half of the gardens will be for growing fruit and vegetables with plots for schools and community groups as well as start-up plots for beginners.

An apple, pear and plum orchard is also planned together with a hazel and willow coppice.