MAJOR PLANS FOR ACADEMY

By REBECCA GOUGH
rebecca.gough@archant.co.uk

A biomass plant, amphitheatre, solar panels and numerous other facilities are just some of the ideas proposed for the upgrade of a recently-opened academy.

Unveiled to the public yesterday, the plans show the environment in which pupils at the Thetford Academy could be taught when amalgamated from two sites to one in 2013.

Facilities could include three new football/rugby pitches, four tennis and three netball courts, and a sports hall which will be open to the public, a new sixth-form centre, which will give youngsters something to aspire to, new science and design and technology classrooms, which will open on to outdoor learning areas, and a new reception area, complete with a café, which, it is hoped will give the public something to be proud of.

The scheme, a mix of two and three-storey buildings designed by the London-based Jestico and Whiles architects, aims to make the most of outdoor space while equipping pupils and staff with modern classrooms and communal areas.

Jestico and Whiles associate, Alex Gordon, said the designs centred around existing buildings which would be spruced up to become part of a lower school for years seven, eight and nine, with new buildings incorporating older years and the sixth form.

He added: “The brief from the academy was to provide a brand new facility for Thetford both for the pupils and the community. It’s not just there to be used within

Continued on page 4

Thetford Academy plans unveiled

Continued from page 1

school hours; it’s there very much to be used at evenings and weekends and out of hours for things like a breakfast club.”

The work will be be funded with £18.2m of government money which will be used to transform the North Site on Croxton Road, ready for pupils currently taught on the school’s South Site on Staniforth Road, to permanently transfer by 2013.

If granted planning permission, which is due to be submitted in November, some 75% of the site would be new-build with the aim of eventually accommodating up to 2,000 pupils. The site would also include dance and drama facilities which would be next to an outdoor amphitheatre which could accommodate performances, a biomass plant which would run on woodchip and 150 linear metres of photovoltaic panels which would convert sunlight into electricity.

Parking could accommodate 252 cars.

If given the go-ahead, work could start as early as March next year, with completion by September, 2013.