

15. Suffolk County Farm and Education Center

15.1. Existing Conditions

The Suffolk County Farm and Education Center is owned by Suffolk County and has been operated by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County since 1974. The facility is located on the west side of Yaphank Avenue, generally west of Area A and north of Area B. According to the website, the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center is a model farm education facility and also a real working farm, where both operations of a century old working farm and present-day agriculture can be viewed. The farm is open seven days a week from 9am - 3pm except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter with no admission charge. The following description of the programs offered is provided from the website:

- *The Suffolk County Farm and Education Center offers a variety of unique programs that celebrate the rich agricultural, cultural, and natural history of Long Island. Whether you're learning about llamas, calculating your ecological footprint, or discovering daily life on the Farm on our tractor-drawn wagon ride, our wide selection of programs are sure to fit any curriculum or interest. Our educational classes can accommodate groups of ten or more, children in grades Pre-K through 12, and can be done here on the Farm or right in your classroom.*
- *The Suffolk County Farm also offers a collection of seasonal group programs throughout the year including our annual Pumpkin Fling and Sunset Wagon Rides in the Fall.*
- *Mornings and afternoons at Cornell Cooperative Extension's Suffolk County Farm are full of unique choices for families! All of our Learn and Play programs have been designed to accentuate the child/parent learning experience. Participants will learn new ways of positive interaction in a safe and sociable environment. Children and adults alike will enjoy meeting new people, and making new friends! Programs are offered on different days and for different ages so there's something to meet everyone's interests.*
- *The Showgrounds (for equestrian and livestock competitions) at the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center were established in 1994. We host many different events during the show season. They've become so popular that in 2008 we added*

the Show Field (for dog shows, car shows, flea markets and displays). We can accommodate almost any event you would like to hold at our site.

- Tucked away on our 250 acre working historic farm, you will find our Nature Explore Classroom, lined with 50 feet tall arborvitaes on one side and flowering cherry trees on the other. Hoping to open in the spring of 2010, our classroom will allow plenty of messy play, building, and interactive art exploration while maintaining a true farm feeling. The herb garden stands adjacent to the 138-year-old hay barn and the sounds of bleating sheep and a braying donkey are never too far off. We hope our visitors will add to the music while adventuring in the music and movement area or simply enjoy the tranquility under our 25-year-old weeping mulberry tree. The climbing area will make guests truly feel like they are in the trees and the gardens will offer a bounty of tasty and nutritious treats. Or visitors can pack their own treats and have lunch in our covered arbor house, as appetites are sure to grow with so much activity!*
- Let the Suffolk County Farm & Education Center host your child's birthday party in a fun, educational environment!! Guests will enjoy a tractor-drawn wagon ride around our historical farm, meeting and feeding our farm animal friends along the way! Parties are available year round and can be held indoors or out depending on the weather.*

15.2. Potential Impacts of Proposed Project

As described in Section 16, Cultural Resources, the original farm, has been determined to be a State and National Register of Historic Places Eligible (S/NRE) Historic District by the NYSOPRHP (see footnote 10), and within this parcel were built the first county almshouse and its associated barn, now listed on the S/NRHP, as well as various ancillary buildings, most of which have been replaced by twentieth-century structures. Residents of the almshouse tended the farm, which was designed to be self-supporting. The Cultural Resources Assessment identified possible visual impacts to the farm from the proposed development in Areas A and B. Section 12, Visual Quality provides an analysis of this potential impact.

Additional concerns raised during scoping of the DGEIS were potential conflicts related to accepted agricultural practices such as plowing and cultivating, spreading of manure,

application of fertilizer, irrigation, crop harvest, and the potential for trespass and vandalism. These concerns appear unfounded as people have been living on and near farms for centuries. Anyone moving to the proposed development would be aware that a working farm was nearby, and for some, it is anticipated that proximity to a farm would be considered an attraction, not a detriment. As the residences would be separated from the farm by Yaphank Avenue to the east and the Long Island Railroad tracks to the south, the likelihood of increased trespass and vandalism is limited.

15.3. Proposed Mitigation

Mitigation measures related to visual resources are provided in Section 12.