Wilderness House: a creation that will be the last stately pile

A MODERNIST country home will shortly be built it 40 acres of private parklan near the 17th century

Darsham Hall in Suffall And it's likely to become famous, not necessarily for its architectural qualities but because it may become

the last sizeable country home to be built on a greenfield site in Britain under a Labour Suffolk Coastal District Council has given planning permission for Wilderness

building of private country

Suffolk Coastal's northern area development committee voted 7-1 against its planning officer's House, designed by London recommendation to spike architects Paul + O. just as the planning application the Government preparer and did so after canvassing to block any further

Architecture Corresponden piles on greenfield sites. Wilderness House joins an eclectic mix of houses which have been built recently, including Grafton Hall in Cheshire and Nyn Park in Hertfordshire The local authority's

decision reveals a chink in

the Government's position

architectural consultant

divisive and complicated administer, Lord Rooker, it the Deputy Prime Minister's office, has produced a revised draft of PPG7 which will make it much harder to build country houses

Lord Rooker's planned excision of the so-called "Gummer clause" from

architectural experience. The Government claims the clause in Planning Policy Guideline 7, created

inclinated arriviates with monkey.on-a-stick in 1997 by the Tory architectural lackeys. In fact, only 15 substantial new environment minister John Gummer, to encourage the country homes have been building of "truly built in the past six years outstanding" homes on and only five of those have had anything to do with the greenfield sites, is socially 20th or 21st century in terms of design. Meanwhile, in Suffolk alone, more than

PPG7 might suggest that

greenhelt land has been

blitzkrieged by rich.

been lost in the past century due to death duties disrepair or redevelopmen The fact that Wilderness House squeezed through

the planning net may have

had something to do with

50 country houses have

the interventions of Mr. Gummer, MP for Suffolk Coastal, and Sir Michael Honkins, one of Britain's best and most influential

architects Sir Michael said

Britain's country house

New Grafton Hall Cheshire

tradition went back to the Roman villa, "The smaller country house or villa, almost more than any other building form except perhaps, the medieval church, has reflected the

THE INDEPENDENT

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GRAND DESIGNS FOR COUNTRY LIFE

A 114-acre estate is an unexpected place to find a giant

starfish. Ushida Finley's design was the winner of a 1999

pattern of daily activity follows the movement of the sun. It

was granted planning permission in July 2002

competition. With a budget of about £2m, the design is both distinctive and modern. The building is arranged so that the

British tradition of the country house" architectural and cultural asnirations of its period." The Government's idea of cultural aspiration excludes the country house for two clause is opposed by the Architects Journal. reasons: because it is supposedly socially divisive

and because planners' on affordable housing The loss of the Gumme

architects such as the

country house specialist Robert Adam, and by the Government's Commission for Architecture and the **Ruilt Environment (Cahe)** The Royal Institute of

British Architects has also

waded in. There is a more salient point. Since the Thatcher government stripped away many of the authorities, there remains

shortage of the skills

destroy a that has produced an extraordinary range of great architecture

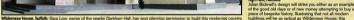
It seems the third

Nun Park, Hatfield

millennium equivalents of Moulton Hall in Vorkshire Coleshill in Berkshire, and



house. It is described by John Gummer as "precisely the land of house we had in mind when providing for a continuation of the crea



proposed Hertfordshire mansion would not look out o place in a Jane Austen television drama needed to assess significant planning applications. This is what actually threatens to

Edwin Lutvens' Little foreseeable future

Thakeham in Sussey will not be built in the