

**PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

25th September 2013

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**PLANNING APPLICATION 2013/130/RC3**

**PUBLIC ART PIECE TO CELEBRATE THE REDDITCH SPRINGS AND  
WIREFORM INDUSTRY**

**GRASSED AREA NEXT TO TOWN HALL, WALTER STRANZ SQUARE,  
REDDITCH**

**APPLICANT: LEISURE AND CULTURE, REDDITCH BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

**EXPIRY DATE: 18 JULY 2013**

**WARD: ABBEY**

**(See additional papers for Site Plan)**

The author of this report is Sharron Williams, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on extension 3372 (e-mail: sharron.williams@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk) for more information.

Members will be aware that this application was considered at Planning Committee on 3rd July 2013. The application was deferred to allow the Committee to receive further information on the size of the artwork in relation to the existing building. Officers would clarify that additional details have been provided showing the sculpture insitu. The details will be provided as part of the powerpoint presentation for the application. The details submitted demonstrate that the sculpture would be in scale with the surrounding features within the Square and would not be a dominant feature in this location.

It is anticipated that a bench that exists in front of the proposed sculpture would be relocated within the Square to enable a better view of the sculpture.

The following text is a combination of the main and update report that was provided for the 3rd July 2013 meeting.

**Site Description**

The site is a linear area of grassed land, outside the Town Hall, to the west of Walter Stranz Square. Young tree planting exists close to where the sculpture would be located. Benches and streetlighting are also close to the application site. The rest of the Square beyond the grassed area is predominantly hardsurfacing, although another linear area of grass exists opposite the application site and includes the traditional lamp post from Auxerre.

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## **Proposal description**

The proposal comprises of a sculpture that would be an open box turned upside down with springs cascading out of the box. Overall the sculpture would be approximately 2.5 x 2.5 metres by 2.5 metres in height. It would be built in mild steel but have a galvanised finish. The box would be distressed to imitate cardboard, and finer details such as crinkling on the lid of the box would be provided to create an authentic corrugated section. The springs would be made from mild steel and would be fully joined whilst still providing a random appearance. This will help form a structural support for the sculpture without the need for structural girders. The sculpture will be secured to the ground via a concrete base.

## **Relevant key policies:**

All planning applications must be considered in terms of the planning policy framework and all other relevant material considerations (as set out in the legislative framework). The planning policies noted below can be found on the following websites:

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

## ***National planning policy***

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Para. 58 of the NPPF encourages development to establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create an attractive place to live, work and visit. It also encourages development to respond to local character, history and reflect the identity of local surroundings.

## ***Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3***

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| R.1      | Primarily Open Space                      |
| E(TCR).1 | Vitality and Viability of the Town Centre |
| B(BE).13 | Qualities of Good Design                  |
| B(BE).20 | Public Art                                |

## ***Supplementary Planning Guidance / Supplementary Planning Documents***

Redditch Borough Council Supplementary Planning Document - Designing for Community Safety

## ***Other relevant corporate plans and strategies***

Town Centre Strategy (TCS)

## **Relevant site planning history**

None

## **Public Consultation responses**

No comments submitted.

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## **Consultee responses**

### ***Town Centre Co-ordinator***

No objections.

### ***Community Safety***

Would recommend that:

- 1) Consideration is given to protecting the artwork with a transparent anti-graffiti coating which will allow any graffiti to be more easily removed.
- 2) Further details of the spring sizes and arrangements, in particular the gaps within and between the coils are provided to assess these risks and the ease of removing wedged items.
- 3) Consideration be given to creating a boundary for the artwork.
- 4) The service hatch providing access to the electrical wiring is secured with a key lock.

Note that CCTV coverage of the artwork location from RBC camera 5 (mounted above the vacant former Poundstretcher unit) is obscured by two trees in RBC owned brick planted areas (outside former Barclays Bank building).

### ***Severn Trent Water***

No comments at the time of drafting the report.

## **Assessment of proposal**

The documentation that has been submitted with the application clarifies that this was an idea initiated by a local Councillor to celebrate the heritage of the springs and wireform industry in Redditch as it was felt at the time that public awareness of the significance of the industry was very low. A steering group was set up that included local spring businesses, NEW college representatives as well as RBC staff, and the then Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture. 35 students from the college entered a competition to create artistic concepts to celebrate the industry. Two concepts were shortlisted, and following press releases, and a public consultation that took place in Redditch Library, the public voted for the proposed sculpture that forms part of this application.

Redditch has a long history of mass producing springs (100 years approx.). The spring industry was an off shoot of the needle industry which was a major consumer of wire. Whilst the needle industry has diminished in Redditch, spring manufacturing remains in this area with 80 local businesses dedicated to the manufacture of springs and wireform in one form or another. It is important to note that the first spring ever made was in premises in Peakman Street, hence the intention of providing the sculpture close to this street and within the Town Centre.

The key issues for consideration in this case are:-

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## Principle

The site is within an area that is designated as Primarily Open Space in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3 and comprises of a small area of grass that is surrounded by a hard landscaped pedestrianised area. Policy R.1 of the Local Plan would apply which discourages the total or partial loss of Primarily Open Space. However, it also states that proposals for development that contributes to the nature and purpose of the open space may be deemed acceptable. It is considered that the provision of public art in this open space area would visually enhance this civic location and as such would comply with this policy.

B(BE).20 of Local Plan No. 3 would also apply and seeks the provision of public art that contributes to the improvement of public outdoor space, legibility and the creation of landmarks. Any proposals should be sited and designed to improve the quality of public outdoor space, and enhance local distinctiveness. The proposed sculpture would comply with this policy as it would enhance the quality and visual appearance of this open space location. Also, the location for the sculpture is close to where the first spring was made in Redditch, therefore, there would be historical links to providing the sculpture outside the Town Hall and as such would enhance local distinctiveness and raise awareness of local history in this location.

## Design and layout

The design has been shortlisted by the steering group and the final option was voted for by members of the public as a result of a public consultation that took place in Redditch Library. The sculpture would be a sufficient size to provide a presence without being overbearing on the rest of the open space area. In addition the proposal would not detract from other features that exist within this area such as the traditional lamp post from Auxerre, and other hard / soft landscaping features nearby. The design of the sculpture is considered to be acceptable in this location and would generally enhance the streetscene.

## Trees

Whilst there are young trees close to the application site, the sculpture would not have a detrimental impact on the health and safety or longevity of these trees.

## Other issues

In respect to comments submitted by Community Safety, additional information has been submitted by the applicant.

Regarding the galvanized finish and whether this would need any further treatment with regard to resisting graffiti or making its removal easier. The zinc surface, which coats the steel as part of the galvanizing process, is slightly 'greasy' by its very nature, so very resistant to the permanent bonding of paints and other decorative surface treatments. If paint is applied directly

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to the new and untreated zinc surface this will often lift off over the following weeks and months on its own through weathering. Or, if it has been applied accidentally, it can be removed with an appropriate solvent cleaner or a mild scourer used. Therefore, it is considered in this case that any additional barrier preparations or anti-graffiti paints are not necessary on this occasion.

With regard to the physical structure of the springs, the artist will be gauging the density and gaps as he constructs the piece to minimise any inclinations to climb the piece through the look and shape of the trunk of the sculpture. In addition, the density of the metalwork at the base should be such that the removal of any litter should become part of a normal litter picking process. However, the artist will be paying a lot of attention to these factors to reduce any undue problems.

A light will be fixed inside the solid steel box and so would be impossible to reach from below. The back of the box (in the folds of the pretend cardboard box) is where maintenance can attend to changing bulbs or working on the light. A particular key will be required but at 2.5 metres high we do not anticipate a problem in any case. The look of the box will not be affected.

In respect to CCTV coverage, one of the trees that is blocking the view of the proposed art work from the nearest CCTV camera, is intended to be trimmed back. If it is considered that the work is not sufficient to enable suitable coverage, the Council's Landscape Section are agreeable to removing the tree and replacing with a large plant instead.

Officers consider that these details address the issues raised by Community Safety. However, in respect to the camera coverage, it is considered appropriate to add an informative regarding possible tree removal if needed.

**Conclusion**

The proposal would be in keeping with the area and this would be a suitable location for this piece of art that would enhance local distinctiveness and raise awareness of the local history in this location. The proposal would also comply with policies in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3 and guidance set out in the NPPF.

**Recommendation**

**That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations it is recommended that permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 Development to commence within 3 years.
- 2 Materials to be as indicated in the application details submitted.
- 3 Plans approved defined.

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Informatives

- 1 Reason for approval.
- 2 Positive and proactive informative
- 3 The applicant is recommended to contact RBC Community Safety when initial tree work has taken place on the tree obscuring CCTV coverage, to ascertain if further work is required. If so, the applicant is required to contact RBC Landscape Services to organise the removal of the tree and replacement planting.

**Procedural matters**

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the applicant is Redditch Borough Council. As such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to officers.