



Patrons: Professor Kelvin Everest
Barry Smith

Address

10 Clarence Road
Horsham RH13 5SQ

28th January 2026

Lucy Green
Validation and Registration Officer (Planning)
Planning Department
Horsham District Council

Dear Lucy,

Planning Statement re Shelley Memorial Project's Planning Application for a Public Artwork to be located within Horsham Park.

1. Proposal, Explanation and Justification in respect of above application.

Proposal and explanation

The Shelley Memorial Project (SMP) and Horsham District Council (HDC) have been working in partnership for a number of years with the aim of delivering a public artwork which would memorialise the great Romantic and radical poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was born within Horsham district, just two miles from the town centre. Shelley spent much of his formative years growing up here in Horsham.

With the change of authority, following the Horsham District Council elections of 2023, our working relationship with Horsham District Council was formalised with a signed Memorandum of Understanding. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was updated following the agreement between SMP and HDC to change the originally agreed location for the artwork. The current MOU was signed off on August 8th 2025 by SMP Chair, David Hide and HDC cabinet member for Leisure, Culture and Wellbeing, Cllr. David Skipp.

Justification

The introduction to the MOU contains the following justification for the installation in paragraph 1.1. This is set out below to address the justification requirement within the planning application process.

- ‘1.1 Horsham District Council (The Council) and the Shelley Memorial Project Community Interest Company (SMP) have formed this partnership to jointly deliver a lasting public memorial sculpture to the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. The memorial will celebrate and commemorate ‘the most eminent person to whom Horsham can lay claim’, and his works. The intention in delivering this memorial is not only to celebrate the achievement of a major literary figure from the Horsham community, but also to:
- Provide literary, historical and philosophical inspiration to Horsham residents and visitors,
 - Highlight Horsham’s place in our country’s cultural and historical heritage,

- Represent and inspire the talent within our community, with a particular emphasis on young talent as represented by Shelley's phenomenal body of work, achieved in his young life.'

2. Details of how the proposed Installation accords with relevant national, regional and local planning policies.

National

The planning application complies with the national planning policies as set out in the HDC website.

Regional

There are no regional policies, as far as we are aware, that are relevant to this application

Local

Horsham District Council Pre-planning Application PE/24/024 Feedback

The pre-planning application for the artwork was submitted to HDC in November 2024 and received the following feedback relating to national, regional and local planning policies.

For ease of reference, the quotes from the preplanning feedback are highlighted in blue, with SMP's responses to the feedback in black where appropriate.

Principle of Development

Policy 11 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF)

'Policy 11 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that measures which promote tourism and enhance local cultural facilities will be encouraged. Any development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the local and should increase the range, or improve the quality of accommodation, attraction, or experiences for tourists, day visitors, business visitors, and residents in the District. Support will particularly be given to proposals which, among other things, reinforce the local distinctiveness and improve existing facilities; focuses major tourism and cultural facilities in Horsham Town Centre; and do not result in the loss of a cultural resource.'

The proposal to install a public artwork commemorating a key cultural figure related to Horsham clearly addresses the above policy

Policy HB7 of the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan

'In particular, proposals should seek to: reinforce the concept of legible "character areas"/"quarters" with distinct identities, as described in the Town Centre vision; ... including through the use of planting and installation of public art, considering the heritage and history of the urban area. Policy HB7 continues that the provision of public art will be sought on the development of sites in the Town Centre. The proposed development would provide a public art installation within Horsham Park. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to all other material considerations'

Character and Appearance

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF

'No concerns are raised with regard to the design and appearance of the proposal at this stage. This would, however, be subject of further consideration and wider public consultation should an application be submitted.'

Amenity Impact

Policy 32 of the HDPF

Policy 33 of the HDPF

Policy HB7

'It is advised that further consideration be given to the position of the sculpture to ensure the least impact on users of the site as a whole.'

In respect to the above comments on the position of the artwork, which relate to a location in the 'Circus' area of the park, at a junction of pathways, it is now proposed, in order to address these comments, under agreement with HDC and SMP that the artwork be located in an area that overcomes the issues raised. The planning application refers to this agreed location. See below further comments relating to this.

Heritage Impacts

Policy 34 of the HDPF

'it is suggested that the sculpture be placed in one of the outdoor "rooms" where it can be appreciated in a more intimate context, enabling contemplation and awareness away from the confluence of activity within the proposed location.'

As mentioned above, further consideration of this point has taken place and a location has been agreed that addresses the above feedback from the pre-planning stage.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

'The proposal in its current form would therefore comply with the 'de minimis' exception. However, should the location of the sculpture change, this position would need to be reviewed.'

The new location will be on a reduced footprint within a grassed triangle close to the North Street entrance, opposite the railway station. The small amount of hardstanding will be created which HDC have already agreed within the MOU that the council will complete. The proposal, therefore, still falls within the 'de minimis' exception.

3. Consultation

As a Community Interest Company, a key objective of the SMP is to gain public and local authority support at every stage of our project.

We have a written agreement with HDC, as contained within the MOU, and together we undertook a long and thorough public consultation, prior to selecting the design for the memorial artwork.

The initial process included inviting artists to submit concept designs from which a selection panel of HDC and SMP members produced a long list of ten artists, with a shortlist of four achieved at a second meeting.

A six-week exhibition formed the central part of the public consultation and included model designs and interpretation of the four shortlisted artworks. This took place within Horsham Museum and provided an opportunity for the public to engage with the designs and to comment on and vote for their favourite concept design. There was also an on-line exhibition hosted by HDC and a similar opportunity to vote. The Museum also hosted an evening event where all key stakeholders were invited to look at the artworks and provide feedback to members of the SMP on the night.

During this period the exhibits were also displayed at a local school and in the Capitol where members of the Art Society Horsham provided feedback and took the opportunity to vote.

Throughout this period, to support the public consultation, the SMP produced social media items and press releases which achieved tens of thousands of views, and hundreds of comments, including comments of the proposed location of the artwork. All of the comments were noted and informed the decision-making process on both the final design for the artwork and the location. The SMP's consultation at this stage also received coverage on South Today and Radio Sussex, which helped to drive the numbers up of those who both took time to review the artworks and then vote for their preferred design.

In total, just short of 1700 votes were cast with the winning design achieving 38% of the popular vote. This figure was similar both on- line and voting in person. Many hundreds of comments were received and collated. The selection panel reviewed all of them in line with the requirements of the MOU.

Following the consultation, two meetings took place between the selection panel that was made up of SMP, HDC and a representative from the Friends of Horsham Park. (FoHP) The chair of Denne Neighbourhood Council was invited to the first meeting to provide their feedback on the proposed project.

Following the selection of the artwork design, the HDC / SMP partnership team meets formally every three months and maintains regular discussion to agree progress towards the installation. This discussion has most recently focussed on agreeing on an appropriate location. FoHP and Denne Neighbourhood Council have also been consulted on the new location and a favourable response has been achieved. There is on-going consultation with the wider public on the new site and on all aspects of the project in line with the agreement.

All subsequent feedback from numerous public engagements is considered and assessed and, where possible, incorporated into the plans for the installation. The leader of the Council, Martin Boffey, who attends the partnership meetings, has made several helpful suggestions in relation to the artwork including the orientation of the design.

The maquette (model artwork) was shown at the 2024 Sunday Funday and also, more recently, was on display in the foyer of John Lewis and at the Brighton Road Baptist Church where the Art Society meet. On all occasions, we continue to receive invaluable feedback.

The SMP continues to engage with all of its stakeholders via social media, regular newsletters, and through an events programme and with talks to local and international societies. Our social media reach continues to grow and we are active on X, Facebook , Instagram and Bsky, where a single post regularly receives more than ten thousand views. Sounding Out Horsham has produced an excellent podcast with two SMP directors which explains the project in detail and both the SMP and Sounding Out Horsham regularly promote this podcast.

Key stakeholder engagement is critical, and we have support from across all political parties in Horsham including from the current and previous Members of Parliament. We engage and update the neighbourhood councils, Horsham Society, Horsham Blueprint, the Friends of Horsham Park,

Arts Society Horsham and the South Downs Poetry Festival. The SMP has hundreds of registered supporters listed on our website – the link below takes you to this page.

[General 1 — Shelley Memorial Project](#)

David Hide Chair SMP

The Shelley Memorial Project

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