

Horsham District Council
Planning Department
Parkside,
Chart Way,
Horsham,
RH12 1RL

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: SWAN WALK, HORSHAM, RH12 1HQ (WEST STREET)

RE: SUBMISSION OF A FULL PLANNING AND ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT APPLICATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A WAY FINDING TOTEM ON WEST STREET, HORSHAM.

On behalf of our client, Hathaway Opportunity Fund General Partner Ltd (c/o Cube Advisers Ltd), we are pleased to submit a full planning and advertisement consent application for the installation of a new wayfinding totem at the West Street entrance to Swan Walk Shopping Centre, Horsham.

Application Documents

This application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (PP-14241877) and comprises the following information:

- Duly signed and dated application form.
- CIL form.
- Drawings:
 - Site Location Plan (Drawing No. 2878-URB-WS-00-DR-A-208900-P00)
 - Existing Plan (Drawing No. 2878-URB-WS-00-DR-A-208100-P00)
 - Existing Elevations (Drawing No. 2878-URB-WS-ZZ-DR-A-208200-P00)
 - Proposed Plan (Drawing No. 2878-URB-WS-00-DR-A-208150-P00)
 - Proposed Elevations (Drawing No. 2878-URB-WS-ZZ-DR-A-208250-P00)
 - Proposed Elevations (Drawing No. 2878-URB-WS-ZZ-DR-A-208251-P00)

The requisite planning fee has been paid via the Planning Portal.

The Site

The application site is located at the entrance to Swan Walk Shopping Centre, fronting West Street, within Horsham town centre. This location forms a key pedestrian gateway, linking West Street to the Swan Walk retail environment and onward to Carfax, Market Square, and The Forum.

Pre Application

Pre-application advice has been sought in respect of the proposed wayfinding totem at West Street, Horsham. The advice confirmed that the site serves as a key pedestrian link for retail and leisure within the town centre. While Swan Walk benefits from the footfall of West Street, it was acknowledged that the existing West Street entrance currently lacks presence along the axis between Bishopric and East Street. Accordingly, there is considered to be an opportunity to strengthen the visibility of this entrance and better welcome visitors to the centre through the introduction of a wayfinding totem.

The proposed totem, featuring an antique brass-effect finish in light and dark tones with indicative signage and an illuminated stripe, was considered to provide a clear marker to the Swan Walk entrance. It was noted that the scale and siting would not adversely impact pedestrian flow along West Street and would be sufficiently prominent to serve its wayfinding function. Advertisement consent would be required for the installation.

It was advised that, given the location within the Horsham Conservation Area and its prominence along a key pedestrian axis, the design quality and contribution of the totem should be of the highest standard. The Conservation Officer commented that the current design reads predominantly as a commercial advertisement and does not take the opportunity to contribute positively to the public realm. It was therefore suggested that a revised approach should position the totem as more than signage, potentially as a sculptural landmark or gateway feature, incorporating artistic or contextual references that reflect Horsham's identity and enhance the streetscape.

The Proposals

The proposals seek planning permission for the installation of a new freestanding wayfinding totem, designed to improve pedestrian orientation, enhance legibility, and strengthen connectivity between West Street, Swan Walk Shopping Centre, and the wider town centre. Following the pre application advice received the wayfinding totem design has been re-designed so that it makes specific reference to the local area and the conservation area in particular.

The totem will incorporate:

- High-quality finishes including light and dark antique brass and gunmetal detailing.

- Illuminated features, including strip lighting and cut-out wayfinding text/arrows to ensure visibility in both day and night-time conditions.
- Heritage-sensitive design, with indicative zones for Swan Walk retailers and Horsham heritage interpretation (e.g. reference to the Swan Inn).
- A robust steel internal structure to ensure durability and long-term use.

The totem has been carefully designed to sit comfortably within the urban environment, respecting the surrounding character of Horsham town centre while providing an improved visitor experience.

Planning Policy Considerations

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning decisions be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For Horsham, the development plan comprises:

- Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015); and
- The Horsham District Policies Map.

National policy is also a material consideration, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) and the associated National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

National Policy

The NPPF emphasises the importance of sustainable development (para. 11), good design (Chapter 12), and conserving the historic environment (Chapter 16). The Framework encourages proposals that contribute positively to town centres, support vitality and viability, and enhance the legibility and attractiveness of place through high-quality design.

The proposed totem will strengthen wayfinding within Horsham town centre, enhance the presence of Swan Walk, and provide heritage interpretation for visitors, aligning with the NPPF's emphasis on promoting sustainable, attractive, and inclusive places.

Horsham District Planning Framework

Several HDPF policies are of direct relevance to this application:

- Policy 1 (Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development) – supports proposals that contribute to social, economic and environmental sustainability. The totem will improve town centre accessibility and legibility, supporting vitality and sustainable growth.

- Policy 12 (Strategic Policy: Vitality of Existing Retail Centres) – seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Horsham town centre. The totem will help direct footfall towards key retail and leisure destinations, supporting this policy.
- Policy 32 (Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development) and Policy 33 (Development Principles) require that new development is of high design quality, respects local character, and contributes positively to public realm. The totem has been carefully designed in consultation with Horsham District Council to use appropriate materials (antique brass finishes) and form, referencing the heritage of the former Swan Inn, ensuring sensitivity to the surrounding Conservation Area.
- Policy 34 (Cultural and Heritage Assets) requires development to conserve and enhance heritage assets. The proposal incorporates heritage interpretation, including reference to the Swan Inn and a Horsham heritage trail map, thereby providing public benefit and supporting the understanding of local history.
- Policy 40 (Sustainable Transport) – supports improvements to pedestrian movement and legibility. The wayfinding elements of the totem will enhance sustainable travel by encouraging pedestrian navigation between key town centre destinations.

Conservation Area Context

The site lies within the Horsham Conservation Area, where there is a statutory duty to preserve or enhance the area's character and appearance. The totem has been designed in response to advice from Horsham District Council's Conservation Officer, evolving into a sculptural landmark that references Horsham's heritage while remaining proportionate and sympathetic to the surrounding historic environment.

The proposal has been developed in close consultation with Horsham District Council and aligns with national and local planning policy. The totem will:

- Enhance the legibility and accessibility of Horsham town centre;
- Support the vitality and viability of Swan Walk and surrounding retail and leisure destinations;
- Deliver a high-quality, context-sensitive design that preserves and enhances the character of the Conservation Area; and
- Provide cultural and heritage interpretation, adding to the town's distinctiveness.

The proposal is therefore considered fully in accordance with the Horsham District Planning Framework and the NPPF, and represents a sustainable and positive enhancement to Horsham town centre.

Summary

The proposed wayfinding totem represents a modest but valuable enhancement to the public realm, supporting the ongoing vitality of Horsham town centre. By improving legibility and pedestrian flow, the installation will benefit visitors, shoppers, and businesses alike.

We trust that the enclosed information is sufficient to enable validation and look forward to receiving confirmation of this in due course. Should you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Worthington

Director

DARA Planning