

RECEIVED 08 JAN 2020

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7th January 2020

The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Dear Sir, Madam,

Appeal against refusal of planning permission for Construction of a publicly accessible landmark, commissioned to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II and the Commonwealth (Ref: 19/00247/FUL)

I am writing as a local resident of the project site to confirm my support for the proposed landmark at Cold Law on the Ray Estate in Northumberland.

I wish to express my belief that the original application for planning permission (ref: 19/00247) should have been granted on the basis that this so called 'Open Countryside' is working farmland bounded by stone wall, fences and roads on 3 sides, and is situated next to a working windfarm. Thus the argument that it is not within keeping of the aesthetic of the area is somewhat devolved of the fact that it is not directly connected to 'The Wannies' by open countryside, and on an artistic level the proposed monument would act as a conduit, if being viewed from the Wannies, reflecting the history, endeavour and industry of the land and people of the surrounding area and Northumberland.

Public art has enormous cultural and social benefits: and can contribute towards enabling and encouraging people to experience, enjoy and understand the natural landscape through providing a point for educational and experiential foci.

The Elizabeth Landmark is a carefully considered proposal which stems from a detailed understanding of the site, of the local area's history and of the role that artistic form has in creating space for conversation within social and public life. The site, Cold Law, is within the Ray Estate; and the exact location and form of the sculpture has responded specifically to the history of the estate and the surrounding area. There are several significant design drivers which informed the evolution of the sculpture that must be understood in order to grasp the significance of the proposals:

1. **Hepple Heugh:** a distinctive topographical form 750m south of the proposed sculpture, the summit of which is at a height of 336m AOD; which the tip of the blade would match exactly.
2. **Queen Victoria Cairn:** a stone formed monument located on the Northside of the Lisle Burn Valley, erected to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. The height of this cairn is identical to that of Hepple Heugh at 336m AOD.
3. **Astronomical Markers - Tri-radial Cairns:** archaeological stone artefacts found in Redesdale and on the Ray Estate, thought to be constructed in the Bronze Age as astronomical markers of the Winter Solstice. The 'Sundial' aspect of the sculpture echoes these heritage assets, with the tip of the blade also marking the zenith of the Summer Solstice, as well as The Queen's Birthday.
4. **Sir Charles Parsons:** a former owner of the Ray Estate, famed for inventing the multi-stage steam turbine with distinctive lateral fins, the structure of which are reinterpreted in the blade design.
5. **Lord Armstrong:** established his primary ironworks just West of the site; what remains of the engine house at Ridsdale indicates the area's industrial heritage and was recently funded a grant of £ 8600 for stabilisation works. This has informed the materiality of the designs.
6. **Landscape context:** the topography of Cold Law and the earthy, umber tones found in the landscape are directly referenced in the shape and colour of the Corten blade form.

The artist's work has responded to the above through creating a sculpture and viewing area that echo the designs of the area's industrial heritage whilst also functioning as a sundial (albeit with a purposely south-facing gnomon). This southerly direction points to the relationship of this area to the rest of the commonwealth, the capitals (and majority land mass and population) of which lie to the south of the landmark.

The sculpture, rock slot, viewing area and landscaping combine to interpret and reveal the above influences. It is fitting to create a monument to our current monarch which echoes that of the cairn erected in honour of Queen Victoria, and thus marking the reigns of the two women who have presided over so much of the past two centuries. Public art has enormous cultural and social benefits; and can contribute towards enabling and encouraging people to experience, enjoy and understand the natural landscape through providing a point for educational and experiential foci. The Elizabeth Landmark is an exceptional piece of sculpture which has been carefully considered and designed to respond to the exact landscape, geological and topographical context in which it sits. Its conception and design evolution have come out of careful study of the social and industrial heritage of the area: in short, this piece of art is designed specifically for the location in which it is proposed.

Of the statutory consultees referenced within the original application for planning permission, only one of fifteen raised an objection to the landmark; thus, the Committee decision did not demonstrate a full understanding of the proposals, which school children visiting the community displays embraced enthusiastically. The refusal to grant planning permission has taken a very simplistic, if not urban, reading of the nature of this countryside at the expense of procuring a bespoke piece of art designed to reflect and enhance its landscape context, thereby encouraging people to experience, understand and benefit from that landscape. The sensitivity and creativity with which the sculpture and its environs have been crafted demonstrate care for the nature and character of the countryside in which it sits. It is a visionary piece of future heritage which should be supported.