

ARTIST BRIEF

Abbotswood & Romsey – Public Art Commission

Vision

Test Valley Borough Council wish to commission a series of public art works for the significant new housing development at Abbotswood and Romsey. The works of art will engage with and celebrate the community at Abbotswood, explore the identity and sense of place, and its connection and relationship to Romsey Extra and Romsey Town Centre.

Aims and Objectives

- To commission a series of quality artworks that enhance the sense of place at Abbotswood and explore the physical, psychological and emotional connections between Abbotswood and the existing communities of Romsey.
- To produce artworks which demonstrate good practice in terms of community engagement and appeal to a broad audience, inspiring interest across the new and existing communities.
- To deliver a strong and coherent body of work which is sensitive to the site, as well as engaging and relevant to the community.

Background

Abbotswood is a very old part of Romsey. It belonged to the nuns of Romsey Abbey in the Middle Ages, when it was known as Abbeis Wood, Abbas Wood or Abbeis Wood Common and covered 400 acres. The land was used for grazing by the tenants of the abbey and they were allowed to collect firewood and timber to repair their houses. The word 'common' meant common pasturage, not public open space. In the 18th century the name was changed to Abbots Wood or Abbotswood as it has been known ever since.

The Abbotswood development site is located 1.5km to the north east of Romsey. The development of 800 new residential units will be an extension of the existing residential neighbourhoods of Woodley, Cupernham and Abbotswood and will offer approximately 40% of affordable housing. The Abbotswood development includes a nature reserve that is used by residents of both Abbotswood and Romsey.

A programme of community consultation was undertaken by SPUD (Space, Placemaking and Urban Design) between June and September 2014. The report '*Abbotswood Public Art Consultation*,' is attached to this artist brief.

The aim of the consultation process was to explore the nature of Abbotswood as a developing place and its impact on, links with, and potential contribution to the neighbouring Woodley Estate and Romsey as a whole.

One of the key findings from the consultation process was that rather than one or two signature pieces of public art, an approach that celebrates and links the

communities of Abbotswood and Romsey through a series of small scale interventions would be welcome.

Artist's Roles and Responsibilities

For this first commission for Abbotswood and Romsey, the artist will be responsible for the design, fabrication and installation of public art works 'off-site' in Romsey extra and town centre. The artworks should be developed and sites selected in consultation with community interest while maintaining creative integrity, quality and impact.

The artist will be responsible for finalising the locations for artworks in consultation with TVBC. At this stage there are no predetermined sites for the artworks however preferences have been identified in the *Abbotswood Public Art Consultation* report which include: roundabouts, bus stops, ponds and nature reserve, canal path, walkways and green areas.

The artist will be expected to assess the most appropriate sites for their work, demonstrate why they have made this decision and show that they have considered the practicalities of installation and that potential risks/health and safety issues have been considered.

The artist will be responsible for supplying the relevant information and drawings required for appropriate planning permissions in partnership with TVBC.

Themes

There are no predetermined themes, however a number of areas of community interest have been clearly expressed and identified in the *Abbotswood Public Art Consultation* report. Some examples are shared below and could form the focus of further community consultation.

- Small scale, creating impact through multiple sites
- Site sensitive considering nature and wildlife
- To create and connect routes, and utilise focal points
- To use contemporary, robust, natural and recycled materials
- To incorporate bright colours, touch and interactivity with the elements
- To consider humour and how they are intellectually and conceptually accessible

Community Engagement

The development of the artworks must include further engagement with the communities of Abbotswood and Romsey. A number of interested groups have been identified in the *Abbotswood Public Art Consultation* report. The forms of engagement that take place will be determined by the artist, and the outcomes of the engagement process should feed in some way into the final artwork.

Along with the element of community work at Abbotswood the artist should consider the themes and priorities from the working groups of Romsey Futures, a project that aims to ensure the town's future as a vibrant and thriving market town, interacting with its surrounding communities. The chosen artist will be supported by the Community Development Officer and Arts Officer to connect to the community.

Budget

The budget for the commission, to include design, participatory workshops/consultation, planning fees, fabrication and all installation costs is £44,000.

Maintenance

A budget of approx. 10% has been set aside for maintenance. The chosen artist will be expected to provide a full maintenance manual on completion of installation with clear guidelines as to the best way to maintain the artwork and any specialist treatment/knowledge that is necessary. The artist should also indicate the anticipated life span of the work and any decommissioning procedures that should be applied.

Selection Procedure and Criteria

Your expression of interest should be submitted by **5pm on Friday 29 May 2015** to include:

- A proposal outlining your approach to the commission and initial responses to the brief. Max 2 A4 pages
- A current CV
- 6 examples of previous relevant projects, including images Max 2 A4 pages
- Artist's statement

Artists must demonstrate the following in their expression of interest:

- A track record in commissions for the public realm
- Experience of community engagement within public art projects
- Evidence of the ability to produce high quality works of art
- A clear understanding of the challenges and sensitivities of the project

Timetable

Expressions of interest should be sent by email to: Faye Perkins, Arts Officer, fperkins@testvalley.gov.uk. For enquiries please call 01264 368833

Deadline for expressions of interest	Friday 29 May 2015
Shortlisted artists invited to interview	June 2015
Award commission	June 2015
Commission installed	October 2015

Equal Opportunities

Test Valley Borough Council is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities in employment and service provision, eliminating discrimination, and encouraging diversity amongst the workforce. A full copy of our equal opportunities policy is attached.

Attached documents:

1. Abbotswood Public Art Consultation report
2. Map of Romsey and the Abbotswood development