



Hiltingbury Polish Dependants' Hostel Camp

Public Art proposal by Janetka Platun

Eastleigh Borough Council has allocated Developer's Contributions for Public Art in the Chandler's Ford and Hiltingbury local area and a National Lottery Project Grant from Arts Council England to the creation of public art by artist Janetka Platun, which celebrates diversity and memorialises the Hiltingbury Polish dependants' Hostel Camp.

A Steering Group of stakeholders have approved the artist's concept, and Chandler's Ford Parish Council as land owner have approved installation of the artwork in principle, subject to planning consent.

The proposal consists of an illuminated sign work, the symbolic planting of a Polish Silver Birch tree, and a permanent plaque about the artwork and history of the camp.

Further information about the proposal including drawings of the illuminated sign work are shared below.

Details of the planning application will be listed on Eastleigh Borough Council's planning portal for comment:
<https://planning.eastleigh.gov.uk/s/public-register>

Comments can also be sent to the Public Art Officer:
Vickie.Fear@eastleigh.gov.uk

Background

This public art project aims to celebrate the diversity of the local community and memorialise the Hiltingbury Polish Dependants' Hostel Camp, which stood on the site now known as Hiltingbury Recreation Ground from 1946 – 57 and housed more than 800 Polish refugees.

Following a national call out for applications, artist Janetka Platun whose Polish parents were also resettled in the UK was appointed to undertake the commission.

The artist has been delivering a community engagement programme of consultation and active participation which has included conversations with more than 25 surviving residents of the camp, a well-attended drop-in session at The Hilt and a workshop with Year 5 pupils at Hiltingbury Junior School.

The project is funded by £5151 of Developer's Contributions for public art in Chandler's Ford, a National Lottery Project Grant from Arts Council England of £14,700 and a grant of £1000 from the Chandler's Ford Parish Council, which will be ringfenced for maintenance.

The Proposal

Part 1: The Silver Birch

The artist is proposing to plant a Polish Silver Birch tree at Hiltingbury Recreation Ground, extending an existing row of Silver Birch; symbolic of the Polish people who were moved from their birthplace and integrated with the communities of Chandler's Ford, Hiltingbury and Eastleigh.

The tree will be an extra heavy standard size to mitigate against easy vandalism. All official certification will be completed by the artist prior to, during and following transportation from an established nursery in Krakow.

The tree nursery in Poland will transport the tree to the UK as part of a regular consignment via their sister company in Holland. It will therefore be part of a journey that would already be travelling, reducing the carbon footprint of the project.

This image shows the artist with the selected tree at the nursery.



Part 2: The Plaque

The artist is proposing to install a freestanding plaque alongside the tree with specific wording provided by members of the Polish Community as a permanent memorial to the camp. The following text will be presented bilingually in English and Polish:

Displaced by World War II, over 800 Polish army ex-servicemen, their families and civilians freed from Soviet gulags and German places of forced labour, lived at Polish Dependants Hostel, Hiltingbury between 1946 and 1957.

To symbolise the uprooting of these people from their homeland artist Janetka Platun sourced and relocated a silver birch from Poland to the site of the camp, to grow, flourish and begin a new 'Saeculum'. The tree is accompanied by a neon sign, handwritten by a surviving camp resident and quoting a line from Marian Sobieraj's book 'The Story of Polish Dependants Hostel, Hiltingbury'.

Dedicated to all the Polish people who lived here, and to all displaced people in the world.

Part 3: The Neon Sign work

The artist is proposing to install a bespoke illuminated white neon sign work on a north-west facing wall of Hiltingbury Sports (see Fig. 1) which says,

'There were people at Hiltingbury who had experienced these events'.

The phrase is taken from Marion Sobieraj's book 'The Story of the Polish Dependants' Hostel Hiltingbury' and formatted in the handwritten script of a camp resident; symbolic of Polish children learning to read and write within the camp, where Hiltingbury Junior School now stands.

Whilst the proposed artwork will require electricity to power the sign work, neon signs are equipped with a 230v transformer and use approximately the same energy as a single domestic lightbulb. The neon will be static (not flashing) and the output is expected as max. 350 lumens per metre (appears as less on brighter days).

It is proposed that to mitigate against vandalism the sign is installed at a height of 6 metres. This position has also been chosen to benefit from the deterrent of a CCTV camera at the corner of the building.

Other locations considered included higher positions on the green panelling facing west (Fig.3) or north (Fig.4) but both have been considered more vulnerable to damage, less agreeable to users of the neighbouring tennis courts and more challenging to install.



Fig. 1: View of proposed sign work on Hiltingbury Sports from the path leading to The Hilt.

Hillingbury Sports North West Facing Brick Elevation

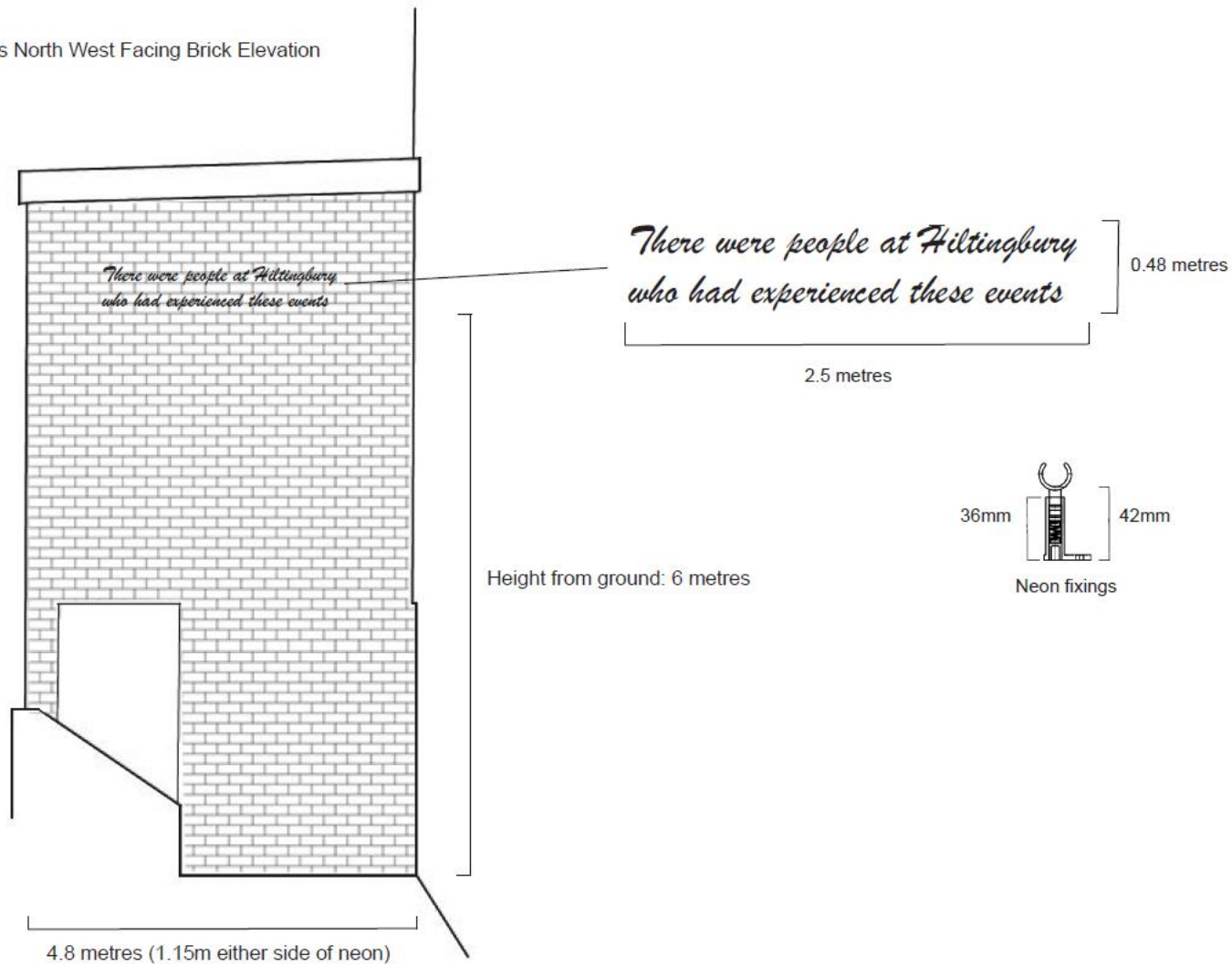


Fig. 2: Drawn elevation showing position of sign work.



Fig. 3: Alternative west-facing position on green panelling (not preferred). Original photo courtesy of Stuart Allen.



Fig. 4: Alternative north facing location on green panelling (not preferred).



Fig. 5: Alternative position (not preferred) as viewed from north of tennis courts.