

Taylor Wimpey public art commission

Artist Kay Aplin has been commissioned to create a new piece of site-specific public artwork for the new Taylor Wimpey housing development on Land off Bedford Road in Houghton Regis. This is a large greenfield site where several thousand houses will be constructed over the next 5 years.

Kay would like to involve the community in the process and has already started running workshops at Tithe Farm Primary School, which overlooks the site. Kay, who is based in Brighton, has been spending time in the surrounding area, researching and investigating, building up a knowledge base towards her design process.

The Chiltern Way, a national walking route, goes through the site, and the Icknield Way, the most ancient route in Britain, runs very close by. These two famous Ways will provide the theme for the artwork. Kay will design sculptures inspired by waymarkers in the form of standing stones. Both routes are marked with waymarkers, some of which are very old, and there are many prehistoric sites along the pathways.

The artwork will take the form of a pathway with structures positioned on either side in pairs. The pathway will be sited so that it provides a pleasant meander off the main tarmac path running through the site. The structures will be constructed out of local quarried stone with ceramic relief panels inserted into recesses cut into the stone.

The design of ceramic panels will be based on maps referencing the two Ways and sites of special interest - historical, natural, architectural, industrial, etc. Approaching from one direction, the ceramic reliefs will depict sections of the Chiltern Way closest to the site, referencing well-known local landmarks. From the other end, the Icknield Way will be depicted with important local sites and landmarks along the route.

Kay welcomes any suggestions and local knowledge about the area, particularly sites of interest along the Icknield Way from Ivinghoe Beacon – Pirton and along the Chiltern Way from Tring Park – Great Offley. Stories, pictures, archaeological finds, geological facts, buildings of historical interest, industries, monuments, flora and fauna, etc. Please send any information to ceramic.k@gmail.com or make a comment below.