

# LIGHT SCULPTURE GIVES ESTATE AGENT THAT RING OF CONFIDENCE

*Where else but bohemian Notting Hill would you find people so enthusiastic about illuminated public art? Tim Harrison looks up to see the area's new 'wow' factor*



TIM HARRISON

Oh to have been a fly on the wall when Tim Burke of the Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group knocked on the door of Marsh & Parsons director Keith Gorny.

"It was a potentially difficult meeting," Tim told MoveTo. "I asked: 'Can I put a ton of steel on your roof?' Thank goodness he got the idea and said 'Yes!'"

Ringstack is an eye-catching tower of circular aluminium plates, with a beam of light channelled up the central core to create the illusion of discs of white light floating in the night air.

It's Notting Hill's contribution to diamond jubilee year; the creation of local artist Adam Barker-Mill, whose CV includes being lighting man on the 1978 film *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, the mockumentary about the Sex Pistols, whose single *God Save The Queen* caused a stir in Her Majesty's silver jubilee year.

When Kensington & Chelsea mayor Cllr Christopher Buckmaster threw the switch last month, it marked the culmination of months of planning and fund-raising.

The illuminated public art piece cost £22,000, with Marsh & Parsons chipping in £3,000, and donating the roof of the Notting Hill branch at Kensington Park Road as a plinth.

Initially, planning permission lasts until the end of February... but it's not impossible that this elegant landmark artwork may earn a longer lifespan.

The challenge for Notting Hill is now to come up with an apt nickname for the Ringstack artwork. Some have already dubbed it the Notting Hill Skylon, after the Festival of Britain spike which appeared on the South Bank in the early 1950s.

It has been likened to a pile of luminous doughnuts, a lit-up cake rack, a glowing spire, and a 'Mars Attacks' series of flying saucers trying a synchronised landing manoeuvre.

"I'm sure nicknames will happen in time; Ringstack is just a working title," Adam the artist told MoveTo. "I hope it will lift people's spirits in the dark winter months; it has an upward aspiration. There is a need for more public art in London. I'm open to Ringstack 2! Public art gives focus to an area."

Adam moved to Notting Hill in 1965, when he rented a three-bedroom flat in St Stephen's Gardens. He now lives a five-minute stroll from the sculpture.

He is taking part an exhibition (*Now & Then II*) on until October 26 at the Harris Lindsay gallery, 67 Jermyn Street, SW1.

Ringstack has 10 lit-up rings, reduced from the original 12 to improve stability... although the artwork is capable of withstanding force nine gales.

Project director Tim Burke said of the Marsh & Parsons building: "I saw it as a natural plinth. I had a vision; like in the early Christian church. I thought, the building's round, and the sculpture is round. It's something for Notting Hill, which is such a creative and innovative place."

Arguably the best sightline is from Notting Hill tube, looking down Pembridge Road. Stand outside *Le Pain Quotidien* at dusk, and admire the spectacle. It's also the perfect direction-finder to Notting Hill's Marsh & Parsons office.

