



**Landscape and "community"**  
**public involvement in landscape projects in the United Kingdom**

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# *Landscape and »Community«*

*– Public involvement in Landscape projects  
in the United Kingdom*

*Richard Hare & Jens Balsby Nielsen*

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## Foreword

There is currently a great deal of activity in Denmark as International and Central Government Policy fostering public involvement in decision making is implemented at all levels of Government. Significantly for us it is impacting upon the work of landscape professionals; there are clear parallels with the situation in the UK.

The Danish tradition of public involvement is well established. Public housing in Denmark has historically been founded on democratic principles, a model of representative democracy has meant that discussions and decision making about neighbourhood environments have often been taken at a neighbourhood level. Particularly in larger urban areas urban renewal of older housing set around city courtyards has been undertaken with the involvement of residents. A tradition and a practice have been developed by organizations and landscape architects working with these projects. Over the last 25 years many of these projects have been presented in landscape magazines with more focus on the product than the process, and with no apparent foundation in the theory of public involvement. There have been planning regulations requiring public involvement in public planning since the 1970s. In recent years the Danish Government has made significant investment in “Kvartersløfts” projects. “Kvartersløfts” projects are based on a holistic approach to the improvement of urban areas including both the physical and social environment. To achieve this public and private organizations work together with a high degree of public involvement.

As a consequence of these and other initiatives many Danish landscape architects have undertaken projects where users and the public have been involved. However in Danish literature on landscape design and management and in the basic education of new landscape architects there is no significant knowledge of theory around this issue. The landscape architects skills are primary based on experience once in practice and on common sense.

This report is the first step in our attempts to improve the knowledge and understanding of such projects both theoretically and practically. The choice of the UK as target for our study was obvious for us. There has been an intensive focus in recent years from politicians, national organizations, profession based organizations, and private practice on both design and management of green spaces with public involvement. A tradition of public/ 'community' involvement in environmental design and management is developing. Furthermore researchers in landscape architecture have begun to reflect on practice and theory in the subject.

This report is written both for students and practicing landscape architects with the hope that it will give inspiration and ideas for more innovation in the process of involving the public in projects in Denmark. The report does not attempt to provide definitive solutions to what are often complex projects where site specific approaches are required. The diversity and dynamism of cultural life in the UK can provide inspiration, however we accept that differences in culture, politics, planning traditions and design procedu-

res make a direct application of many methods impractical or simply inappropriate. Furthermore we need to gain deeper knowledge of the nature and extent of Danish practice in public involvement in landscape projects before making more precise recommendations that capitalize on the best of both traditions. The nature of this study is such that the case studies are intended to typify the developing tradition of public involvement in the UK.

The authors of this report have backgrounds in the academic environment, but both have experience in public involvement in landscape issues both as practitioners and as member of the public.

The impetus for this report comes from the current emphasis of UK Government policy on 'community involvement' in decision-making. This is happening in almost all aspects of policy but for landscape architects it is significant in the areas of environmental protection, improvement and regeneration.

'Ecology, Community and Delight: sources of values in landscape architecture' by Ian Thompson (2000) also informed the background to this report. Thompson's analysis of the current values of UK landscape architects, through interviews, resulted in his 'trivalent' conception of the discipline his ecology, community and delight. '*Delight*' being the aesthetic and experiential while '*community*' takes us beyond the notion of meeting human needs into the realm of 'community' as an intrinsic element of landscape.

Another significant impetus came from the writing of Maggie H. Roe particularly her contributions to 'Landscape and Sustainability' Benson and Roe (2000) which focus on community involvement as a key aspect of sustainability.

The Dec. 2001-Jan. 2002 issue of Landscape Design, celebrating 21 years of the work of Groundwork highlighted the growing significance of 'community' in the work of landscape architects. Groundwork is the largest single employer of landscape architects in the UK and its strap line is '*to build sustainable communities through joint environmental action*'.

*Richard Hare, MA and Jens Balsby Nielsen, Lecturer PhD, Copenhagen, August 2002*

The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Section for Landscape.

## Summary

*This report sets out a concise review of the current role of public involvement in the work of landscape architects in the UK. This work is contextualised within the prevailing international and UK political and theoretical context. The most significant UK governmental and non-governmental structures, which promote public involvement in landscape/environmental work, are reviewed and of these the study focuses on Groundwork, BTCV and a Community Forest.*

*Organizations approaching the topic from the discreet professional stand points of architecture, planning and art are reviewed and a small number of private landscape practices are considered. Finally the impact of the topic on parks management is explored.*

*This report is not intended as a guide to public involvement practices in design, these can be found in the work of such authors as Sanoff (2000), Wates (2000) and Benson and Roe (2000), the latter being specific to landscape architecture in the UK. The report does however consider some of the key methods and practices within the organizations discussed.*

*We acknowledge that this report does not represent a comprehensive review of the subject and there are many organizations, worthy of further study. However we hope that from the range of organizations, institutions, groups, trusts, partnerships, teams, taskforces, networks, units, forums, panels, institutes, societies, associations, bodies, departments and foundations we have been able to highlight some of the key issues current in the UK. This might be regarded as a snapshot, because the organizations considered in this report may not all be ones that survive.*

## Acknowledgement

Thanks are due to all those who agreed to talk to us, invariably we were made welcome by all the organizations and individuals we met and more often than not they gave us more of their time than we had expected.

Special thanks must go to Ian Thompson from the University of Newcastle for expanding on the themes of his book 'Ecology, Community and Delight' and Nick Wates for contextualising some of the political nuances of the subject. Thanks also to Kevin Thwiates and Alistair Taylor who gave us an insight into the background of the Design and Community Programme of study at Leeds Metropolitan University, Department of Landscape Architecture.

Also many thanks to Paul Dennis at South Leeds Groundwork Trust for giving us an invaluable practitioners view of the work of the Trust with project site visits.

We would also like to thank Margaret Wilkinson from Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation for being so 'neighbourly' to us on our visit to Telford.

We are grateful for the financial assistance of the Danish Lottery Fund distributed through the Danish Outdoor Council, The Danish Garden Culture Fund and the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Section for Landscape.

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# 1. Introduction

*We have moved from a situation a decade ago where the involvement of the community was rare to one where it is obligatory.'*  
Drew Mackie <http://www.partnerships.org.uk/> (23-09-02)

While the power of local authorities was steadily diminished during the 1980s and 90s the demands for 'community involvement' as a criterion for Central Government spending steadily increased. Throughout public policy in the UK 'community involvement/participation' has become the orthodoxy. What Sanoff (2000) has called 'genuine participation' beyond mere consultation has even risen up the agenda as politicians have embraced ideas of 'civil society' and promoted the idea of 'an engaged citizenry'.

For landscape architects Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) has meant that increasingly local authority work has been undertaken by private practices. As the demand for community involvement/participation has risen, boosted since 1999 by Best Value requirements, private practices find themselves having to develop skills in this area to be able to compete for work.

Since the report of the government's Urban Taskforce in 2000, calling for an urban renaissance, urban design has been given a significant boost in the UK. A key component of urban design in this context is public involvement. The report of the Urban Green spaces Taskforce in 2002 reinforces the need for public involvement in the planning, design and management of urban green space.

The Urban Parks Forum, an independent body (recently renamed Green-space) produced 'Parks and Green space, Engaging the Community: A Local Authority Guide' (2002) and is currently undertaking a review of all community groups and their involvement with urban parks and green space in the UK. The Heritage Lottery Fund, Urban Parks Program, which is the significant source of funding for urban park regeneration, requires community involvement in the formulation of plans.

It is clear that in the UK landscape architecture has become a discipline that increasingly requires a significant commitment to public involvement and there is an increasing emphasis on participation, not just consultation.

## 1.1 Discussion of Terms

Public involvement is used in our title as it is a clear umbrella term for a topic beset with unclear and contestable terms. Public involvement embraces all those acting outside a professional role and predicts no depth or quality of activity in relation to a project.

### *Community*

We take Graham Day's advice that 'the term 'community' should be used only with enormous caution, although such caution is rarely exercised in practice. He goes on to say 'Community' all too readily lends itself to being understood as referring to comprehensive agreement, homogeneity and consensus, so that a given community appears to have only a single set of aims and preferences...' (Day, Knight and Morris, 1998).

A useful differentiation can be made between communities of place and communities of interest, faith or ethnicity. Within all these types of community there can be wide varieties of opinion, outlook and expectation.

We consequently use the term community only where it is in established use.

### *Stakeholder*

This term is broad enough in its scope to embrace all forms of interest and/or attachment to a site or project. While the term appears to be common usage in the political sphere we found that few practitioners use it.

### *Participation*

Participation is generally conceptualised through levels of participation, these are commonly derived from which Arnstein's 'ladder of citizen participation', which appeared in the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* in 1969.

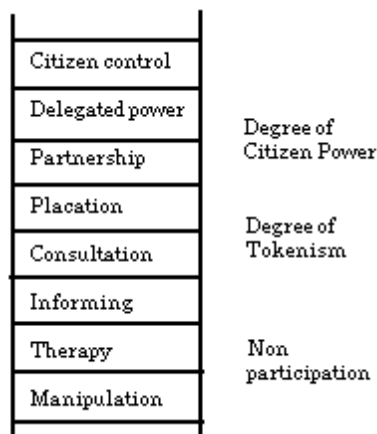


Fig.1 Arnstein's 'ladder of participation'

While the ladder does not represent a strictly linear model it clearly demonstrates that there are a variety of forms that participation can take. Though developed in an U.S. context the ladder is widely quoted within literature on 'community' involvement in the UK. Here there is an implicit assumption that participation is desirable and achievable and that people have a right and responsibility to participate in a way that a traditional model of representative democracy denies them. The 'ladder of participation' should not be accepted uncritically; however it does provide some useful measures against which to gauge the nature of participation.

**Manipulation/Therapy** is obviously cynical approaches to this form of working. Manipulation is probably extremely widespread, even within projects that foster a degree of Citizen Power. A very common form it can take is in the situation where professionals offer so called 'options' which are in fact no such thing because they are loaded to support a decision already made.

**Informing** is an essential ingredient of successful participation, but on its own it is not participative because people cannot respond to the information they are given.

**Consultation** is one step on from Informing as it gives people a chance to be heard, however it does not mean that they participate or even that their opinions are responded to.

**Placation** is typified by creating a forum for debate that ultimately has no real power.

**Partnerships** exist where decisions are made jointly by the public/'community' (often including local businesses) and the local authorities. This is increasingly common in the UK. It often represents an ad hoc neighbourhood democracy that can be questionable.

**Citizen Control** is rare in the UK in this situation the public/'community' has the real power and the funds to act without the need for local authority consent.

For further discussion of Arnstein see Wilcox 1994.

In 'Community Participation Methods in Designing and Planning' the American architect Henry Sanoff, referring to the work of Deschler and Soch, dismisses informing and consulting as 'pseudo participation' and considers 'genuine participation' to be about people being 'empowered to control the action taken.' (Sanoff, 2000).

In current usage in the UK the meaning of 'participation' is moving towards Sanoff's definition and we use the term distinct from informing and consulting.

### *Public Consultation*

As early as 1943 Max Lock at Hull School of Architecture was developing his Civic Diagnosis which required extensive surveys of public views and living conditions, schools and local clubs were involved in data collection and the resulting redevelopment plans were put out to public consultation. This early start was not capitalized on however and in fact the Byker redevelopment by Ralph Erskine in the 1970s was regarded as exceptional in that public consultation was a key element in the process. It is important to stress that in these cases the public was not vested with any responsibility, they were consulted. This cannot be regarded as participation.

### *Public Participation*

Certain aspects of public participation have grown from the notion of 'community development' originating in the 1950s Developing World context. This model of community is one in which development came to be seen as dependant on the consent of communities, particularly rural communities, it was soon realized that this was not enough and the active participation of those communities was necessary. By the 1970s 'under developed' rural and eventually urban communities in industrialized nations had become the focus of 'community development' requiring 'community participation'. (Day, 1998). Across the UK a number of independent groups have been established to promote community development including Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, the originators of Planning for Real™ (see case study 4.1.2 and 4.1.3)

### *Community Planning and Community Architecture*

These terms emerged from the counter culture of the 1960s and 70s. Community Planning has fostered by the Royal Town Planning Institute through Planning Aid, which with significant regional variation has been active in supporting communities to plan for themselves. Prominent amongst their methods is Planning for Real™. Community Architecture was fostered by Royal Institute of British Architects through the Community Architecture Group who were until recently active in encouraging community groups to engage architects directly to meet their needs (see 4.1)

### *Deliberative Democracy and Communicative or Collaborative Planning*

Deliberative democracy is an area of increasingly significant theory 'Democratic deliberation encourages mutual recognition and respect and is oriented toward the public negotiation of the common good.' Smith and Wales (2000). One key tenet is that through the process of decision making individuals develop an appreciation of the views of others and are thus transformed. The resulting decisions are therefore predicated on the process, which is regarded as significant almost in its own right. This approach is paralleled by the notion of Collaborative and Communicative Planning, which places similar significance on the deliberative process. The embodiment of this approach can be found in Planning for Real™ (see case study 4.1.2 and 4.1.3)

While these methods imply 'consensus building' Sanoff (2000) points to Nicholas Rescher's model of 'a recognition of interests' in which it is considered unrealistic to expect consensus. While Sanoff rejects this model, in favour of a communicative or collaborative model, it does offer an alternative to what Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998) have referred to as the 'fundamentalism and utopianism', which can typify communicative or collaborative planning.

## **2. Policy re 'community' involvement in environmental issues**

In this chapter the aim is to outline UK Government policy in relation to public/'community' involvement in environmental issues and explore the political philosophy that lies behind it.

### **2.1 Political Philosophy**

UK Central Government, both Conservative and New Labour since 1997, has actively promoted the roll of 'community' in the delivery of environmental improvements and regeneration. However the notion of 'community' has become a key political element at all levels of thinking and rhetoric.

Tony Blair's speech to the Global Ethics Foundation in June 2000 entitled 'Values and the power of Community' demonstrated the significance which 'community' has attained. He said 'Community is where they know your name; and where they miss you if you're not there. Community is society with a human face. When we know we are not alone, we can face the future without fear. It is community that allows us to do so. It is values that sustain communities. And it is in a new world, global values, reaching out beyond national frontiers and ideological horizons that will guide us to our destination: a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world for all.'  
(<http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1.asp> 12-09-02)

The philosophical background to this thinking can be found in communitarianism, which has been one of the ascendant political philosophies of the 1990s. 'As the twentieth century comes to a close a new political orthodoxy seems to be emerging on both sides of the Atlantic. The political philosophy of communitarianism, made popular on both sides of (sic) by Etzioni and the Communitarian Network in the USA, and by the Demos think tank in the UK is being taken up in sound-bites if not so clearly in policy, by politicians of Left and Right.' Smith (1996)

Communitarianism, or 'The Third Way', has been typified by some as an attempt to use 'community' to fill gaps left by institutions of the welfare state under increasing pressure (Day, Knight and Morris, 1998). However Etzioni asserts that 'The communitarian paradigm does not call for closing down the welfare state and replacing it with armies of volunteers. It envisages a triumvirate, in which the State, the private sector and various institutions of the community co-operate to shoulder social burdens.' Etzioni (1997).

### **2.2 International Policy**

While many groups and organizations internationally, nationally and locally have been promoting public/community involvement in environmental issues

es there was no internationally agreed obligation for national Government to engage the public in these issues until the advent of Agenda 21.

### *Agenda 21 1992*

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 'The Rio Earth Summit' 1992 Agenda 21 was adopted and the Rio Declaration, Article 10 states 'Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level'.

Agenda 21 requires action in support of this. It states that 'The broadest public participation and the active involvement of the non-governmental organizations and other groups should also be encouraged', and more specifically that 'By 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their populations and achieved a consensus on "a local Agenda 21" for the community'. With hindsight the time-scale was rather ambitious but it unequivocally stated the desire to link people more directly with decision making about their environment.

(<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21> 12-09-02)

(<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm> 12-09-02)

### *Aarhus Convention 1998*

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) took this notion further in 1998 with the Aarhus Convention. The convention requires public participation in decision making regarding activities which include all major infrastructure projects, industrial installations, nuclear and chemical installations, waste management and water treatment sites, water and mineral extraction operations and large scale farming units.

"Although regional in scope, the significance of the Aarhus Convention is global. It is by far the most impressive elaboration of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, which stresses the need for citizen's participation in environmental issues and for access to information on the environment held by public authorities. As such it is the most ambitious venture in the area of 'environmental democracy' so far undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations." Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(<http://www.unece.org/> 12-09-02)

### *European Landscape Convention 2000*

The Council of Europe took a similar approach to landscape issues through the European Landscape Convention at Florence in 2000. Concerned with 'landscape protection, management and planning' the convention requires signatories 'to establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of landscape policies...' (article 5).



NB. As of 05.09.02 the convention has still to come into force.  
(<http://www.coe.int/> 12-09-02)

## **2.3 Government Structures**

UK Central Government has a number of departments involved in issues of environmental improvement and public involvement. However the recently formed department The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is currently the key player in community and regeneration issues. The ODPM was formed from a large part of what were the Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) in June 2002.

### *ODPM and Urban White Paper*

The Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott has a particular interest in regeneration issues and commissioned the report 'Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance' from the Urban Taskforce headed by the architect Richard Rogers. The report formed the basis of the Urban White Paper. The Urban White Paper is a statement of Government policy and clearly identifies the need for community involvement in regeneration.

The ODPM has picked up on the design issues highlighted by the Urban White Paper through support for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) – which has the aim of 'improving people's lives through better buildings, spaces and places'. CABE is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Also closely associated with the ODPM is the Urban Parks Forum (UPF), it is 'a not for profit organization set up to help those committed to the planning, design, management and use of public parks and open spaces'. UPF has produced 'Parks and Green space, Engaging the Community, A Local Authority Guide' (2002). This guide responds to the Best Value, Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Strategy requirements now placed on Local Authorities.(see 2.3.1)

### *Government Units*

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) operates within the ODPM acting on the agenda of 'New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy Action Plan' (DTLR 2001). The NRU administer the New Deal for Communities Programmes which are partnership based regeneration initiatives aimed at the most deprived areas of the UK.

The Active Communities Unit operates within the Home Office fostering the 'civic society'. It operates to serve Home Office aim no.7 which is "To support strong and active communities in which people of all races and

backgrounds are valued and participate on equal terms by developing social policy to build a fair, prosperous and cohesive society in which everyone has a stake ... and to ensure that active citizenship contributes to the enhancement of democracy and the development of civil society." (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/cpg/acu2.htm> 12-09-02)

The Social Exclusion Unit operates across Government departments co-ordinating policies aimed at ending social exclusion.

A Community Forum now exists which acts as a sounding board for Government ministers, it is made up of 20 members of the public who are active in their communities from across the UK.

The NRU has set floor targets for Local Strategic Plans and New Deal for Communities to raise the level of the poorest, however the environmental floor targets are currently limited to air quality and waste disposal and there is a perceived need for more floor targets for the physical environment. It may be that Encams produces a Best Value Floor Target for cleanliness.

#### *Task Forces and Reports*

Urban Green Spaces Taskforce Report, 'Green Spaces, Better Places' (DTLR 2002) and the previously cited Urban White Paper both call for greater commitment to 'community' involvement in the urban environment.

The report 'Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces' produced by Sheffield University for the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR 2002) also identifies a key roll for 'community' involvement. (<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/> 12-09-02)

#### *National Lottery Funding*

The Lottery Commission though not in direct Government control has consistently directed its funds towards projects with 'local community' support. The Urban Parks Program of the Heritage Lottery Fund has been widely praised for its emphasis on 'community' involvement for schemes receiving funds.

Through its 'Countryside, parks and gardens' program The Heritage Lottery Fund declares that it 'is helping communities throughout the United Kingdom to protect and open up their countryside, parks and gardens and to make vital contributions to nature conservation.' and that they '...have already funded 882 projects for countryside, parks and gardens with grants totalling £667,600,024.' (<http://www.hlf.org.uk/> 12-09-02)

### 2.3.1 Government Policy for Local Authorities

**Best Value**, which forms part of the Local Government Bill 1999, demands that local authorities respond to Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for all the services they provide these indicators tie local authorities into consultation which is ‘active’ and ‘inclusive’, though stops short of demanding public participation.

Forming **Local Strategic Partnerships** (LSP) is a legal requirement for local authorities they bring together local communities, businesses and service providers to formulate a Community Strategy for service delivery.

The **Beacon Councils Scheme** was introduced in 1998 in response to the White Paper ‘Modernising Local Government: In Touch with the People’. By awarding councils Beacon Status annually in an evolving set for categories the scheme aims to help identify best practice. The categories relevant to the current study are Neighbourhood Renewal and Improving Urban Green Spaces, which featured in the last round of Beacon Awards and Community Cohesion, Street and Highway Work, Rethinking Construction and Quality of the Built Environment in the current round.

While Beacon status is awarded by the ODPM, the dissemination of best practice, training etc. is undertaken by the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA), which is an independent body, set up to assist local authorities.

<http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/beacon/> (12-09-02)

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/> (12-09-02)

### 2.3.2 Government Bodies

Alongside these newer developments pre existing Government bodies with a stake in landscape issues have been taking on the agenda of ‘community’ involvement.

The number and variety of organizations with landscape issues somewhere within their remit is sizeable, here it is only possible to outline the larger and/or most active of them, hence the omission of some data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In addition to the design and urban regeneration bodies outlined previously the key Government bodies with responsibility for landscape issues are:

- English Heritage, Historic Scotland and Cadw (Historic Monuments for Wales)
- English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales
- Forestry Commission (departmental UK)
- Countryside Agency (non departmental UK)

N.B. the organizations specific to Scotland and Wales are responsible respectively to the Scottish and Welsh Executives.

English Heritage manages over 400 sites of cultural importance and acts as advisory body to Central Government; it also has a public membership system. Its budget for 2000-2001 was £143 M this includes spending to support national registers, advisory work and grant awards for conservation projects. £18M of this was spent on community regeneration schemes. (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>)

English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales are responsible for the conservation of the 'natural' environment and have responsibility for the networks of National Nature Reserves. English Nature specifically states a commitment to 'community involvement' and engages volunteers to help with its work, it has budget for 2002-3 of £72M Scottish Natural Heritage is committed to 'public engagement' and 'community involvement' and had expenditure for 2001 of £46.6M (<http://www.english-nature.org.uk/>)(<http://www.snh.org.uk/>)

The Forestry Commission operates through its agency Forest Enterprise. There is significant spending on 'Community Forest' projects and a specific remit for 'community engagement'. Forest Enterprise holds 800,000 hectares of land and had expenditure in 2000-2001 of £127 M £4.2 M of which was spent on 'community engagement'. (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/>)

Countryside Agency has an overlapping remit with many Regional Development Agencies but has a specifically rural focus. It does not hold land and acts to promote, support and act as advocate for rural 'communities' and businesses. Its market towns initiative was the starting point for Yorkshire Forward's Renaissance Towns Initiative (see case study 2.3.4) The Countryside Agency had a budget for 2000-2001 of £64 M (<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/>)

All of the bodies described above are structured regionally with the exception of the Forestry Commission.

### **2.3.3 Regional policy**

The UK has still to establish a comprehensive system of regional Government, however regionally based organizations such as the Government Bodies described above and Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are active in formulating strategies and running initiatives at a regional level.

The RDA leading in issues of environmental improvement and community involvement is Yorkshire Forward the RDA for Yorkshire and the Humber.

### 2.3.4 Case Study: Yorkshire Forward, Urban Renaissance

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Helen Farrar, Urban Renaissance Manager, Yorkshire Forward, Leeds, (05-08-02)

**Secondary sources:**

Simpson, A and Lewis, B 2002, *Renaissance Barnsley*. Yorkshire Forward

Bolton, I 2002, *Renaissance Towns*. Yorkshire Forward. Notate, April 2002

<http://www.yorkshire-forward.com> (accessed 11-09-02)

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are charged with promoting regional economic development; however Yorkshire Forward has seen that this is integral to the connection between environment, 'community' and economics. It is therefore addressing all three together.

Yorkshire Forward has produced 'Active Partners, Benchmarking Community Participation in Regeneration' which promotes good practice through Benchmarks on four topics: Influence, Inclusively, Communication and Capacity. (Yorkshire Forward, 2000) This document is recognized as nationally significant.

In response to the Urban White Paper Yorkshire Forward has, under its Environment Director Heather Hancock, formed an urban design team under the title Urban Renaissance. Head of Urban Renaissance is Alan Simpson an architect with experience of community design initiatives in the U.S.A. working with Alan is Helen Farrar a landscape architect and urban designer with experience of working for Local Authorities, Groundwork and wider regeneration.

#### *Urban Renaissance*

Urban Renaissance has established an *Urban Renaissance Panel*, an Advisory 'Think Tank' and under its auspices it has now completed the pilot phase of its Renaissance Towns Initiative.

#### *The Urban Renaissance Panel*

This panel acts as a regional advisory body as well as draw down for specific projects in creative teams.

This panel of international, national and local consultants has been established to sit for a period of 2 years with monthly meetings. Consultants are referred to as panel members or panellists rather than consultants as the term is often politically loaded and can alienate local people.

The Panel includes, EDAW, LDA, West 8, Urban Initiatives, Latham Associates, John Thompson Partnership, Will Allsop, Derek Latham, David Lock

Associates and Camlin Lonsdale. The panellists were all selected for their commitment to public involvement, though only John Thompson is widely known as a specialist practice in the area of public involvement and Camlin Lonsdale is the only Yorkshire firm at present. The Panel is currently being expanded.

#### *The Advisory 'Think Tank'*

This group is a nationally constituted group drawn from the Urban Renaissance Panel, Yorkshire Forward and other national and regional champions of urban renaissance. The role of this group is to ensure the evaluation and widest possible dissemination of the work of Urban Renaissance at Yorkshire Forward. 'It is rare for such high calibre expertise to be proactively brokered alongside local knowledge;' (Bolton, 2002)

#### *Renaissance Towns Initiative*

The initiative is focused on the large numbers of medium sized towns, which lack the resources and skills for a comprehensive and strategic approach to develop their urban environment. For the pilot project 6 towns are involved, Huddersfield, Scarborough, Doncaster, Barnsley, Wakefield and Grimsby.

The project is designed to help create "vibrant urban economies, promote best practice and innovations in urban design, and delivery of accessible and attractive urban environments". At this stage work is at a strategic envisioning level, creating long-term vision. To do this pairs of panellists have been assigned to particular towns with one panellist taking a lead role. For example at Barnsley LDA, worked with Allsops as lead.

2 strands of participation have been adopted

- *Broad community involvement*, community planning and outreach etc.
- *Town Teams*

#### *Broad community involvement*

The broad community involvement has involved Planning Weeks, Planning Weekends, and workshops. The most intense example of this was at Barnsley where all the panellists took part in a 5-day community planning exercise.

#### *Town Teams*

These Town Teams are made up of local people from all sectors, some from existing Local Strategic Partnerships, local authority representatives, business leaders and members of the local community, they have between 20

and 40 members. Through the 'project' Town Teams have been encouraged to form in each town, most towns now have teams that are becoming well established. In Doncaster the Town Team took part in training from Urban Initiatives and has now produced a Renaissance Town Charter, that is a 20-year plan, owned jointly by the Town Team and the Local Authority. Charters are now being developed in each of the pilot towns.

The Town Team in Barnsley was the host of the community planning exercise outlined below. The Town Teams represent a key way that local capacity is being built through the project, developing skills in dealing with urban design issues and raising the aspirations of civic leadership.

The initial phase of the pilot project is now complete and Yorkshire Forward will take a role in sustaining regeneration through projects, which grow from the long-term strategic visions so far created. The sustainability of the work is viewed as dependent on ensuring:

- long-term strategy
- design quality
- community (citizenship)

The Urban Renaissance Panel will now focus on other towns while maintaining an active interest in the initial 6.

### **Example: Renaissance Barnsley**

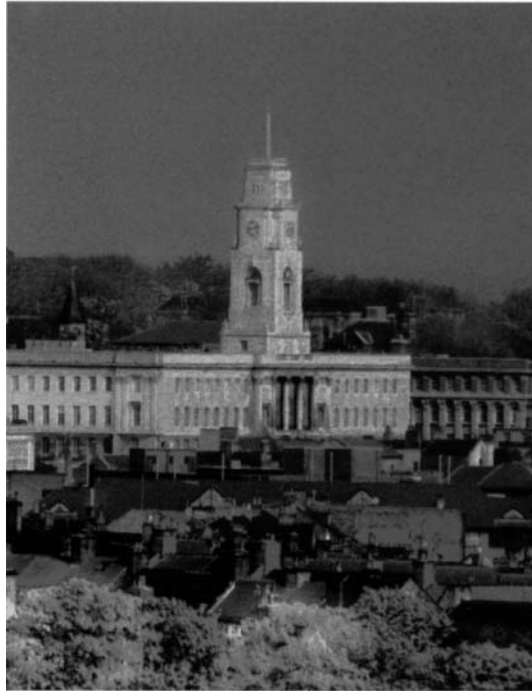
Barnsley has been the scene of the most intense and high profile work of the Renaissance Towns.

The book *Renaissance Barnsley* (Simpson and Lewis 2002) gives a comprehensive view of the workings of the process called Rethinking Barnsley, which focussed activity on a workshop weekend beginning on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2002. The context of the project is set out through the voices of local people and the need for local people to be in the driving seat of proposals, is stated repeatedly.

Urban Design Assistance Team or UDAT is the name given to the panellists who facilitated the process and they included all the Urban Renaissance Panel members.

Will Allsop was the driving force of vision and creativity within the project. However the marriage of local knowledge and aspiration with visionary thinking is key to the approach and the expertise of John Thompson and other panel members in operating in this environment is given particular emphasis.

# RENAISSANCE BARNSELEY



**Alan Simpson and Brian Lewis**

*Fig. 2 Cover Renaissance Barnsley (Simpson and Lewis 2002)*

The book also highlights the importance of local political support and leadership. Steve Houghton, the leader of Barnsley Borough Council, states that ‘We have to invest in new ideas and if this means taking skills and expertise from across the world – from Rotterdam and Boston as well as London, Derby, Milton Keynes and Exeter – then we shall do so.’

The panellists ran workshops aimed at raising awareness of urban design and encouraging debate. Beer mats were distributed to hundreds of local pubs asking for peoples’ thoughts and suggestions; there was a raffle prize as an incentive. The culmination of the week’s meetings and outreach work, on the streets and public places in the town, was a meeting of the Panel to report back their experiences and findings.

The book and an accompanying film are key elements in the dissemination of the project, primarily within Barnsley but also to a wider audience. Barnsley is something of a flagship for the work of Urban Renaissance at Yorkshire Forward and as such it has been presented on the national stage. Will Allsop repeated the much-reported analogy between Barnsley and a Tuscan hill town which attracted comment in the national media, the analogy was in fact first made by Ian MacMillan a local Barnsley poet.



The long-term benefits of the work at Barnsley will only become clear over time, but the momentum, which appears to have been created, indicates that results are possible. At present Barnsley represents perhaps the most impressive town-wide example of 'community' participation in urban design in the UK. Yorkshire Forward is clear that such exercises are expensive, require particular expertise and in the form this took at Barnsley may be impractical for every town or city. However it stands as a benchmark for future projects.

### *Project Evaluation*

In addition to the ongoing process of review and reflection, which is part of the remit of the Urban Renaissance Panel and the advisory 'Think Tank', an external evaluation and review is currently being undertaken by Leeds Metropolitan University. A conference to review and evaluate the project took place in Scarborough in Sept. 2002. Presentations to the conference were made from the participating towns themselves rather than just by Yorkshire Forward or panellists, an acknowledgement of the need for local ownership of the process.

Public Arts, a Yorkshire based art consultancy, have been involved in commissioning artists to contribute to the process this is discussed in Case Study 4.1.4.

### **3. Landscape related organizations**

In this chapter the aim is to illustrate how organizations whose work significantly involves landscape issues are integrating public involvement into policy and practice.

#### **3.1 Public contributions to landscape issues**

Trusts and charities concerned with aspects of the landscape are significant in the UK context and range from organizations which act solely as pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (not UK wide) to groups which manage landscapes such as the National Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and numerous wildlife and woodland trusts. At a smaller scale trusts, friends and user groups exist which are concerned with specific sites, these groups are discussed under Public Parks Management, Chapter 6. These organizations rely to a greater or lesser extent on volunteering and/or membership subscription.

The National Trust is worth considering briefly here due to its size and influence. It is a charity that works to preserve elements of the UK's physical heritage, landscape and buildings. The National Trust holds 248,000 hectares of land and over 600 miles of coastline and this includes many unique elements of cultural landscape. These holdings are primarily in rural areas.

The Trust has had an office of Volunteering and Community Involvement since 1998. It acts to pursue the aims of 'fostering links between properties and local people', 'providing social benefit', and 'building relationships with a broader constituency of people and under-represented groups' set out in the Trust's policy on volunteering.

For 2000-2001 the Trust had a budget of £247 M this comes primarily from the commercial activities of the Trust including property rental and sales, membership subscription and significantly legacies.

(<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/> )

The RSPB is a membership organization and owns 97,000 hectares of land in the form of nature reserve; it had a budget for 2000-2001 of £50.9 M (<http://www.rspb.org.uk/>)

Here we will consider further 3 key organizations Groundwork UK and a Community Forest, which fall outside the definition of governmental bodies outlined in 2.3.2 above, and British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) which is an independent organization.

Groundwork UK represents 48 individual Trusts which operate across the UK (ex Scotland) these Trusts do not own land but provide professional services in partnership with land owners, business, local authorities and local people to effect environmental improvements. Locally Trusts engage volunteers in all aspects of their work. Groundwork nationally spent £90 M 2000-2001.

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) operates through 150 offices across the UK and provides opportunities for people to work on environmental projects as volunteers. BTCV does not aim to own or manage specific sites and works on sites owned by a variety of trusts, groups and businesses. BTCV budget for 2000-2001 was over £23 M

Across the UK 10 Community Forests exist with the aim of increasing the area of woodland in areas of high population density, they are partnership organizations with the ability to purchase and manage land in the interests of the 'community'. These partnerships often involve the Forestry Commission and typically receive funding from various sources including Regional Development Agencies, the Countryside Agency and numerous central and European Government initiatives. The Red Rose Forest, one of the 10 community forests, had a budget of £8M for 2000-2001.

### 3.1.1 Case Study: Groundwork UK and South Leeds Groundwork Trust

**Primary sources:**

Interviews with Janet Johnson: Principal Landscape Architect, Julianne Tate : Senior Landscape Architect, Paul Dennis : Senior Landscape Architect, South Leeds Groundwork Trust (29-05-02)

Interview with Phil Barton, Head of Corporate Strategy, Groundwork UK, London (07-07-02)

Site visit Cottingley Estate, Leeds (29-05-02)

Dudley Street Estate, Bradford (06-07-02)

Interview (phone call) with Alison Lush, Groundwork Black Country (26.09.02)

**Secondary sources:**

Baker Associates, (1999). *Review of Groundwork*, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions

Walker P., Lewis J. Lingayah S. and Sommer F. (2000). *Prove it! Measuring the effect of neighbourhood renewal on local people*. New Economics Foundation

Various Authors (2001/2002). *Groundwork 21 years of rebuilding communities*. Special Issue, Landscape Design, No.306 Dec. 2001/Jan. 2002

The first Groundwork Trust was established through the 'Urban Fringe Management Experiment' of the Countryside Commission (now Countryside Agency) launched in 1979. This first trust was located on the urban fringe area of St. Helens and Knowsley's in the north west of England and under the title 'Operation Groundwork' it began in 1981.

The aim was to regenerate the neglected urban fringes of towns and cities by improving blighted areas of post-industrial and neglected land, working with landowners and the community. In 1990 the focus was widened by Government to include urban areas.

Since 1981 the number of local trusts has risen to 48 across the UK and Trusts have also been formed in Japan and the US. There are sister projects supported by Groundwork in the EU enlargement zone of Eastern Europe, where governments are required to develop civic society and active citizenship.

Groundwork has an emphasis on community development and sustainability issues in order to regenerate local neighbourhoods from the 'bottom up', an emphasis which has been reinforced since the election of 1997. The current strap line of Groundwork UK is "to build sustainable communities through joint environmental action". Groundwork UK's Head of Corporate Strategy Phil Barton explained the way in which Groundwork has both followed and helped to shape government policy. Groundwork's ethos of 'getting results' confirms Groundwork as a pragmatic rather than an ideological organization. The imperative of securing funding in order to deliver locally needed regeneration activities has seen Groundwork responding to shifts in policy

as funding priorities change. Thus, for example, the incoming Governments 'Environmental Task Force' saw Groundwork develop its training capability but also seeking to improve on Government policy by developing intermediate labour market programmes.

The status of the individual Groundwork Trusts is unique. They are charities owned by the local authorities within whose area they operate and Groundwork UK. They attract local private sector and community sector representatives onto their boards. Nationally, Groundwork UK is a non-departmental public body receiving a central Government grant for onward distribution to the trusts. This currently forms 10 % of Groundwork's total income of £90m. Thus the trusts are hybrids between charities, local authority controlled companies, consultancies and public bodies. This means that Trusts are answerable to a range of official bodies and to the communities they serve for the quality of what they do.

As a consequence of this arrangement the Trusts find themselves in an independent position but with a generally good relationship with both the local authorities and local business. They are also able to avoid the antagonism which people commonly have towards local authorities and to act as an 'honest broker' between the various local stakeholders. Recent independent research has confirmed the value placed on Groundwork's ability to act in this way, securing the trust of all involved by both local government and local communities. (Baker Associates 1999)

Phil Barton was clear that the role of Groundwork Trusts was fulfilled in other north European countries by government (Local Authorities) and/or business and in his search for transnational partner organizations he has found nothing comparable. He considers that 'practical community led environmental work is perhaps a particularly UK phenomenon'. Phil Barton accepts that Local Authorities in the UK have an important role to play but that in practice a combination of skills and cash shortages together with their wider responsibilities to meet legal and central government targets means that Groundwork is an important ingredient in the successful mix of community led environmental regeneration.

In its unique position Groundwork has pioneered many methods of engaging communities and a wide range of different agencies across policy areas. Particularly significant is their partnership structure, which provided the model for many of the current government initiatives in regeneration.

### *Landscape Architects*

Landscape architects are a significant component of Groundwork Trusts and collectively the Trusts are the largest single employer of landscape architects in the UK. Landscape architects have influenced the direction of Groundwork, through developing models of 'community' landscape practice but also through taking management roles within the organization. Phil Barton considered that Groundwork landscape architects had consequently

significantly influenced government thinking about ‘community engagement’.

Phil Barton went on to state that Groundwork has a strong ethos that ‘the community is always right’ and that this creates a tension within the organization between landscape design and community enabling. Some landscape architects within Groundwork were concerned that the work was too fragmented and vogueish, for example using community artists as enablers within projects but rarely taking a view of the wider context of the work through master planning. The lack of a strong design ethos has perhaps limited the influence on other design professionals.

One problem facing Groundwork now is the sheer number of Trusts and consequently the number of landscape architects, as a result, previous annual meetings of all the Trusts landscape architects lapsed for being logistically too difficult, although this meeting is about to be revived.

Opposition to Groundwork has come from the Landscape Institute in the past as it was seen to be out competing private practices, however this opposition has largely disappeared and formal support for Groundwork has come from the Institute. A recent issue of Landscape Design was devoted to Groundwork’s 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

#### *Project Evaluation*

Though Groundwork has performance indicators tailored to its work, these are generally output related and do not describe Groundwork’s added value. One attempt to develop an alternative, Prove It! Walker et al (2000), proved to be too complex and expensive to apply across the board.

Groundwork is reviewed every 5 years by central government the last time in 1999, Baker Associates 1999. This review is charged with assessing whether Groundwork offers value for money and concludes that it is. Certain points made in the review are worth stating. The review reiterates the views of the landscape architects we interviewed by stating the Groundwork ‘...are delivering things, which might not otherwise get done’.

The unique structure and position of Groundwork Trusts is highlighted in that ‘...it is in the nature of Groundwork that it can operate in a flexible manner which is enabling the Government’s complex agenda for regeneration to be translated into practical outcomes.’

#### *Influence*

One aspect of the influence of Groundwork within government is illustrated by the fact that Phil Barton is currently on secondment to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit at the ODPM. He explained that politicians are easier to persuade of the benefits of Groundwork than government officials, this is because local Trusts often have very good links with local MPs and many

MPs have first hand constituency experience of the work of Groundwork Trusts.

### *Future development*

New Groundwork Trusts are forming almost continuously at present, the number having increased over the 5-month period of this study. The Baker review cited above concluded in 1999 that ‘Whilst the distribution of Trusts is very closely correlated with the distribution of need, (measured against an index of multiple deprivation and derelict land) there are nonetheless many areas with severe deprivation where there is no Groundwork Trust.’ This shortfall can be regarded as a failing of the Groundwork approach or obversely it could be seen to represents significant potential for expansion.

A new development for Groundwork may be the formal setting up of a Land Regeneration Trust. This Trust would take on exhausted/derelict land with no foreseeable hard after use with an endowment from the current owner that will cover future liabilities. The land would then be given community and ecological value through Groundwork and/or private practices. The potential of such Trusts to spread the risk of inherited liabilities and to recirculate land into constructive use is significant.

Groundwork are now looking to the future and considering their position, should they become mainstream delivers of services to local communities or concentrate on influencing the national agenda as ‘movers and shakers’?

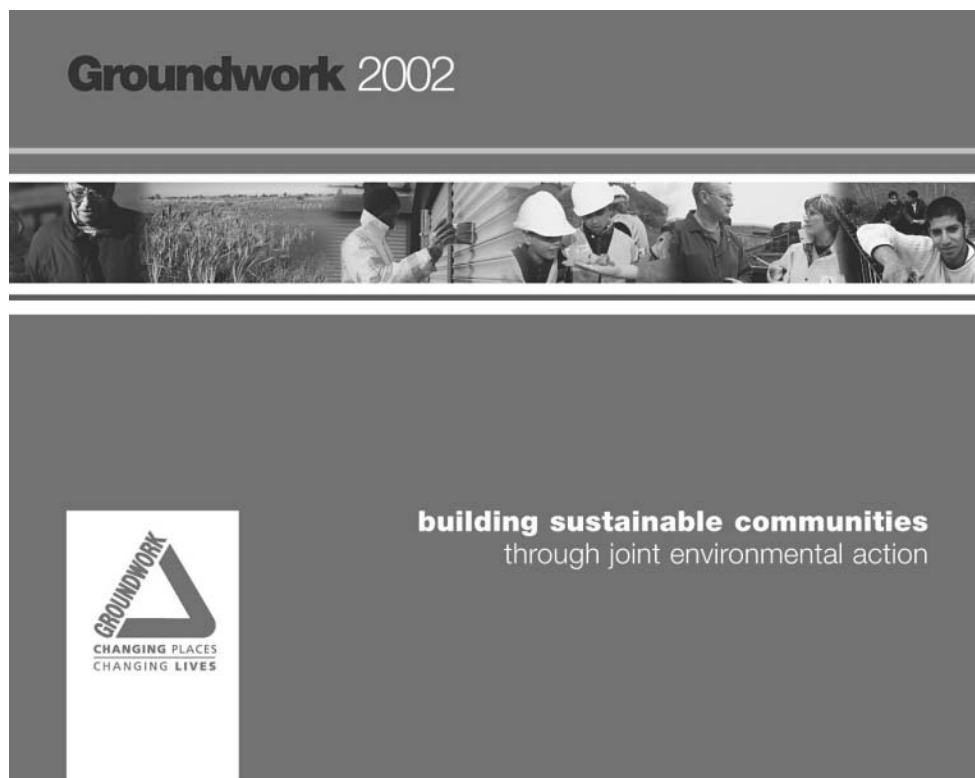


Fig.3 Introductory leaflet to Groundwork, produced by Groundwork UK

## **Example: South Leeds Groundwork Trust**

South Leeds Groundwork Trust was established in 1987. South Leeds Groundwork Trust is a partnership of Leeds City Council, private sector and Groundwork UK.

The Trust was initiated to address the environmental and social problems associated with the decline of the coal mining industry in South Leeds. The office has worked extensively in the area and is now looking to expand its sphere of activity to embrace some of the areas of deprivation in North Leeds. The Baker Review indicates that the majority of Trusts by 1999 were working outside their operational areas (21 of 26 responding Trusts) with 25 of the 26 of responding Trusts expressing the desire to expand beyond their operational areas.

### *Structure and operation*

South Leeds Groundwork Trust has around 50 staff, 5 landscape architects, 15 contracts staff, 3-6 community programme officers, 2 education officers, 2 youth leaders, 1 environmental business services manager, 5 admin. staff, 2 strategic funding workers, 3 New Deal training managers there are numerous volunteers who often move on to become paid employees.

Groundwork UK requires individual trusts to sign up to a network agreement and to use a specific Groundwork Project Management System. Consequently South Leeds Groundwork Trust has a Business Plan established by its board that is anticipated to reflect local needs. On the basis of the Business Plan the Principal Landscape Architect assesses the suitability of project proposals. These proposals come from various sources including the Trust itself. One of the key factors in the selection of projects is the perceived viability of community involvement and in certain cases this can be more important than the possible social and/or environmental need.

The Trust will produce a feasibility study for areas prioritised in the Business Plan. The feasibility study will result in a numbers of projects that The Trust aims to develop together with the local community. Each of the projects will then be described in a brief.

In the prioritised areas, it is considered important to concentrate resources on specific projects rather than loose the impact of work with too many minor projects.

It is considered a very fortunate consequence of the structure of the Trust that landscape architects are able to follow projects for many years; this is regarded as essential for regeneration of work. The Trust provides continuity and sustained commitment to support the communities involved, and helps to consolidate any capacity building.



The management and allocation of staff hours to each project is in the hands of the Principal Landscape Architect.

### *Funding*

In common with all Trusts, South Leeds Groundwork Trust has a degree of flexibility in the way that it meets the need to fund projects, depending on the nature of the project.

This means:

- small scale community projects can be funded directly by the Trust
- small and large scale community projects can be funded by Local Authority, Central Government through numerous initiatives, Lottery Grants, grants from trusts and/or sponsorship schemes
- projects for businesses or other organizations are funded on a commercial fee basis

Commercial work is undertaken by the business arm of the Trust, however landscape architects operate within both spheres and projects can move from one to the other as the nature of a project changes.

An example of this fluidity was given in the case of a church in South Leeds that wanted to develop an area of land as a car park. This had no particular community benefit and was therefore considered as a commercial job; however the local community was consulted and identified the site as a potential recreational space. With this aspect of the work running in parallel to the need for car parking funding for the project became available from other sources and the Trust is able to support the work without charging for its services.

## **Participatory Methods – Example: Middleton Pride**

### *Participatory Appraisal*

Middleton Pride is a project based on the Middleton Estate in South Leeds, a large council housing estate built in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Trust was asked by Leeds City Council to produce a strategy for prioritizing green space improvements on the estate in consultation with the local people.

Initially a feasibility study was produced which outlined the physical structure, the architecture, green spaces and landscape elements of the estate.

There next followed a consultation process to investigate the residents' needs and relationships with the green spaces of the estate. This took the form of a Participatory Appraisal exercise this involved direct consultation on the estate approaching people directly on the streets, in the shops, at bus stops and pubs of the estate.

Participatory Appraisal involved, in this form, an intensive day of canvassing opinions across the chosen area to provide the basic survey information on which to proceed. For this purpose a group of around 4 staff approaches people within the area. Responses are recorded onto H forms on which a plan of the area has been copied (a hand drawn plan is regarded as useful as it is less formal). The forms are set out in an H pattern where positives and negatives are written on either side of the H, a plan sits in the top of the H and suggestions are written below. The form asks for respondents to rate the area from 1-10 then list negative aspects of the area, then positive aspects and then make suggestions, people are asked for their approximate address and their sex and approximate age are noted. This information is constantly fed back to a central location often a community hall or a caravan where it is collated and gaps can be filled as the day progresses to create a set of responses reflective of the make up of the area. 200 responses have been found to be the statistically optimal.

Peoples' suggestions for the area are then written up onto large sheets of paper and displayed immediately and subsequently for a number of weeks.

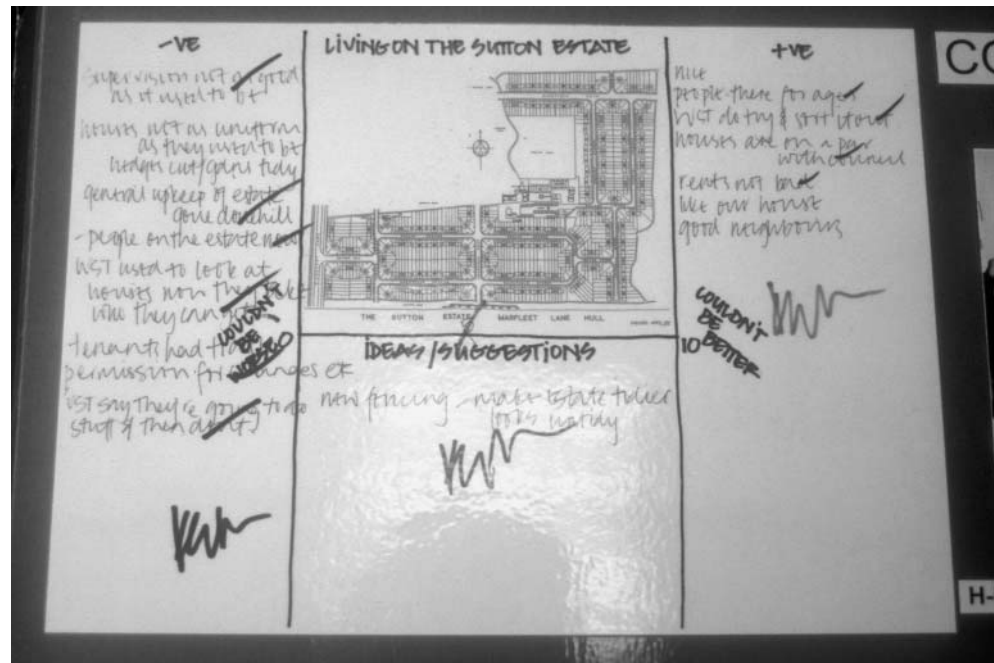


Fig. 4 H-form Example used by South Leeds Groundwork Trust

From this information the issues which people have highlighted which are within the remit of the project are collated and people are approached again this time to prioritize the issues.

Participatory Appraisal is seen to give the process the credibility of demonstrating that a representative cross section of the population of a given area has been engaged.

As a result of the feasibility study and the consultation process the Trust produced a report setting out the problems and potentials for the Middleton Estate. The City Council is now in a position to gain funding for the imple-

mentation of the plans for improvement to the green spaces identified in the report.

On an estate or area wide consultation direct contact often works best out in the public realm i.e. streets, shops, pubs etc. When a site-specific proposal has been formulated it can be useful to go door to door with it. In many cases this will be accompanied by giving individuals a choice of elements that relate directly to their homes, i.e. garden fences and gates etc.

### *Questionnaires*

At Middleton the Trust produced a leaflet that was sent to everyone on the estate; it provided the opportunity for people to respond with comments and ideas. The experience of such methods however is that they only stimulate responses from a self-selecting minority of people, obviously those, who are capable and willing to voice their opinions through writing.

### *Public meetings*

Public meetings are similarly flawed as Julianne Tate, Senior Landscape Architect at South Leeds Groundwork Trust, stated 'It is the loudest and most aggressive that will talk at meetings.'

### *Planning for Real™*

The Trust has used Planning for Real™ and their experiences are that it can be confusing and complicated for the participants to understand the process and idea behind it. Language problems have also occurred with it in some areas.

As part of their ongoing development of participatory methods The Trust aims to look at ways to increase the creativity of their approaches to public consultation.

### *Design*

The landscape architects we interviewed at South Leeds Groundwork Trust considered their role was clearly to interpret the results of the consultation process and produce design work in response. Janet Johnson stated that producing a well conceived plan was better than providing a series of options and Julianne Tate added that giving people options was potentially disingenuous and could be 'just a public relations exercise' were the designer anticipates the choice people are most likely to make. At the scale of individual dwellings however where new boundary treatment is proposed genuine options are designed and presented to residents (see Fig.6 and 7)

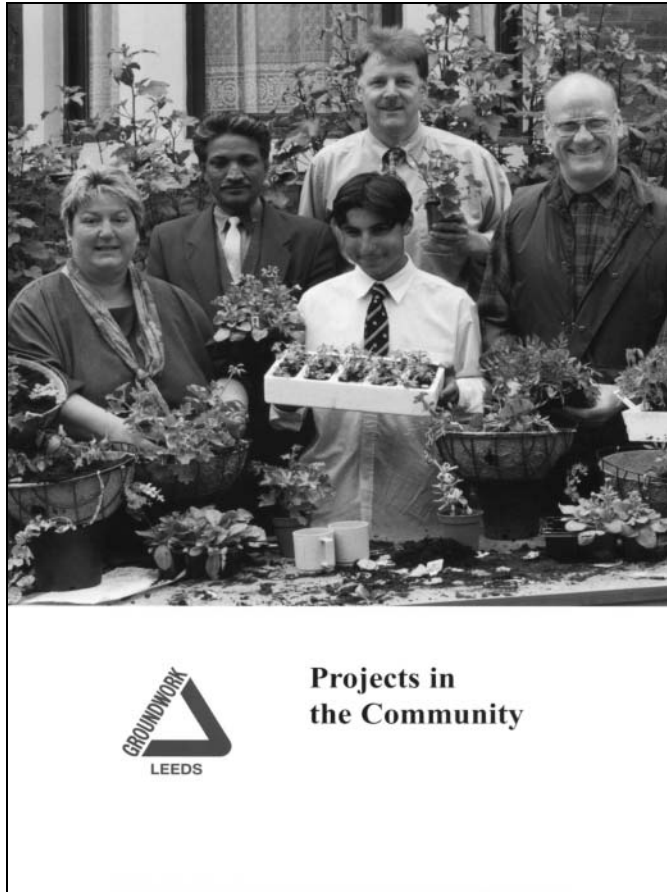


Fig. 5 Leaflet, *Projects in the Community*, outlining the work of South Leeds Groundwork Trust

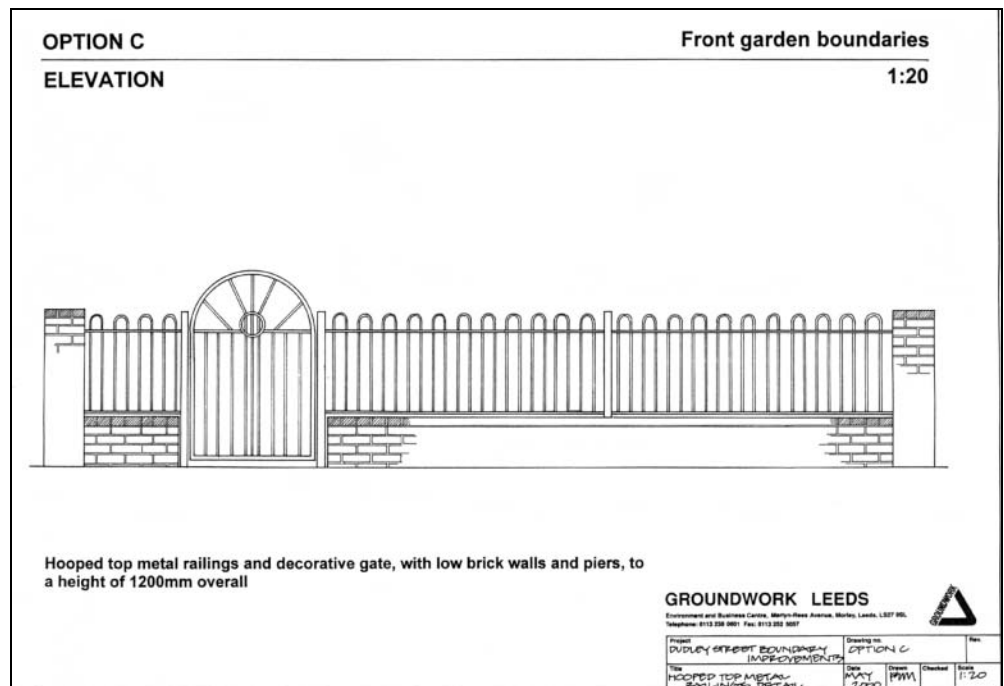


Fig. 6 Dudley Street Estate, Bradford, one of the choices of boundary treatment for residents



*Fig. 7 Dudley Street Estate, Bradford, boundary treatments as built.*

The landscape architects explicitly stated that the process of their work is as important as the aesthetics of the final design. Interestingly these landscape architects feel success has been achieved if local people overlook their role in a project, if this means that those people are developing their own sense of ownership of a site. At the same time the landscape architects often develop long term working relationships with local people making the work extremely rewarding.

South Leeds Groundwork Trust does not employ Quantity Surveyors or Clerks of Works so landscape architects have full responsibility for running projects. Often site work is undertaken by the Trust's own contracts section.

#### *Project Evaluation*

South Leeds Groundwork Trust does not formally evaluate projects other than in the form of reporting to funding bodies.

However as Groundwork Trusts are able to maintain involvement in projects over long periods and their operating areas can be relatively small, informal monitoring and feedback is usually ongoing.

#### *Sharing best practice*

Groundwork UK has a network email for sharing experiences amongst trusts and organizes courses and conferences. As well as regulating the project management system of all Trusts Groundwork UK also produces numerous publications of practical help to landscape architects and others working within the organization. A twice-yearly magazine is also produced to keep staff informed of work nationwide.

### 3.1.2 Case Study: **British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, BTCV**

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Richard Anderson, Officer, BTCV Hollybush Farm, Leeds (31-05-02)

Site Visit, BTCV Hollybush Farm, Leeds (31-05-02)

**Secondary sources:**

Agate, E. (2001). *The Urban Handbook, practical guide to community environmental work*, BTCV

<http://cgi.www.btcv.org>, (accessed 11-09-02)

<http://www.nof.org.uk/> (accessed 11-09-02)

The BTCV is a national network of independent, local conservation volunteer groups specializing in participation in practical nature conservation work. In the Review of Groundwork (DETR 1999) the authors, Baker Associates, conclude that while there is some overlap in terms of activity between the 2 organizations 'BTCV is valued for its environmental works and for its tradition of volunteering. Groundwork is seen as a more 'street wise' organization, adept at dealing with funders, with knotty community development problems, at partnership formation and at contract management in a professional manner.' The latter point is significant in that BTCV does not employ or engage landscape architects, limiting their roll to environmental project that can be accomplished by their volunteer teams.

#### *BTCV and 'communities'*

The BTCV is dependent on project funding and consequently must respond to the criteria of funding bodies. This has meant that emphasizing the 'community' element of their work has helped attract funds. Traditionally BTCV works with local community groups, however its primary focus has been on supporting its own body of volunteers.

In addition to charging for consultation the BTCV charges for the services of its volunteers. In consequence BTCV is very competitive regarding work that volunteers can accomplish easily. However specialist contractors are more competitive for skilled work such as dry stone walling and tree surgery. BTCV often provides, through its volunteers, the element of 'community involvement' required by specific projects being organized by other bodies including local authorities. In this sense it can be seen as a floating volunteer workforce.

The BTCV Community Network exists for community groups to become registered with the BTCV to gain 'access to all the specialist information and support that (the Group) will need to help improve (the) local environment.'

Crucially BTCV insurance allows them to draw in volunteers on site, on the day if necessary, which is very useful in community projects. This aspect of

insurance cover is not available to private landscape contractors putting them at a disadvantage when projects aim to stimulate local activism. Additionally the sensitivity to environmental issues, which the BTCV shows, is often an incentive for clients; as Richard Anderson from Holly bush Farm told us ‘They (the client) know I will tell people to keep off the bluebells.’ While there is no formal evaluation process for projects at a branch level BTCV regional offices provide officers who monitor quality control, working methods, health and safety and provide training.

BTCV now administers a scheme called ‘People Places’ under the ‘New Opportunities Fund’ from the National Lottery; this scheme addresses education, health and environment. Under this scheme ‘Applications are welcome from projects actively involving people from the local community, especially in disadvantaged areas with little or no access to green space. BTCV can offer support and guide groups through the application process and provide training to help groups plan projects that can improve the local environment.’ (<http://www.nof.org.uk/>, 11-09-02)

Nationally the BTCV produce a series of publications aimed at local groups and individuals covering a wide range of issues relating to practical conservation work. The most comprehensive of these is *The Urban Handbook*, Agate (1998). This volume covers many aspects of ‘community involvement’ and goes on to suggest ways of achieving environmental ‘improvements’. The Urban Handbook is extremely comprehensive and aims to encourage people to get involved with environmental work and as such sets out how people can do it for themselves.



Fig. 8 BTCV Holly bush Farm, stile not design.



Fig.9 Nationally produced leaflet.

## *Design*

Design or design quality is considered as unimportant in this context of BTCV's "doing it yourself" approach. Evidence from our interview with Richard Anderson at Holly bush Farm BTCV gave voice to this, he said 'We don't do much design, we encourage groups to design themselves. Our design tends to be low-key and cheap to do. We don't produce big plans. Lots of formal designs tend to be a lot more expensive than can be done.' he went on to say that they will often discard plans from landscape architects and advise clients on cheaper and more simple solutions on site. In the context of much of the work of the BTCV work is carried out to traditional designs or on a purely pragmatic basis.



*Fig. 10 Holly bush Farm, nature area.*



### 3.1.3 Case Study: Red Rose Forest

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Pete Stringer, Project Officer, Red Rose Forest, Salford (30-05-02)

Site Visit, Levenshulme, Greater Manchester (30-05-02)

Site Visit, Nutsford Vale, Greater Manchester (30-05-02)

**Secondary sources:**

Various leaflets and promotional material for Red Rose Forest and Green Streets project. Including Annual Report 2000/2001.

<http://www.redroseforest.co.uk/> (accessed 12-09-02)

Red Rose Forest is one of 10 community forests nation wide celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The forest is involved in a number of partnerships with the 6 local authorities, the BTCV (3.1.2), Groundwork Trusts (3.1.1) and various community groups and trusts within its area.

The Forest has a company arm (Red Rose Forest Trust) that is capable of commercial operation including land acquisition to safeguard sites that may be leased to Forest Enterprise (2.3.2).

Red Rose Forest runs a number of initiatives including ‘Woodland Wildflower’, ‘Healthy Walks’, ‘Christmas Tree Recycling’ and ‘Green Streets’.

#### **Example: Green Streets**

The Green Streets project represents an intervention in the urban environment with a high degree of involvement from local people in decision-making. The nature of this decision-making is predetermined through a steering group that represents the project partners that include Manchester City Council, Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council Community Technical Aid Centre, Marketing Manchester and United Utilities. Funding comes from Viridor Waste Management, Environmental Action Fund, Marketing Manchester, Northwest Development Agency, Groundwork Manchester (New Deal for east Manchester) and United Utilities.

The Green Streets project works specifically with the Greening Levenshulme Group, which is a community group, also represented on the Green Streets steering group. Greening Levenshulme Group acts as an agent within the community, leaflets are delivered to houses asking ‘Would you like a FREE street outside your home?’ The return address is always a local house that helps give the ‘community’ a sense of ownership of the project.

The leaflets are consciously not expensive full colour productions but simple photocopies.

The trees planted are at property partitions and this has the effect of requiring neighbours to discuss and agree firstly whether they want a tree and secondly the species. A species list with illustrations is delivered with the

initial leaflet and gives people a choice of Amelanchier, Robinia, Malus, Crataegus, Pyrus, Betula, Prunus or Sorbus. Trees species were selected for their high crowns, low maintenance, non sap dripping and low overall height; many have flowers and/or autumn colour.

The leaflet states that ‘We will provide the funds, expertise, maintenance and support but all the decisions lay in your hands.’ It does however explain the limitations imposed by underground services etc.

Levenshulme is an area of South Manchester, which has a distinct lack of urban green, and while the Green Street project’s main focus is on trees they also envisage supporting schemes including climbers, shrubs, tubs and hanging baskets.

The planting work is carried out by the householders under supervision or by local authority, and householders is given a watering guide. The local authority is responsible for arboriculture work but not watering. Pete Stringer from Red Rose Forest stated that ‘It is unrealistic to expect the council to water.’

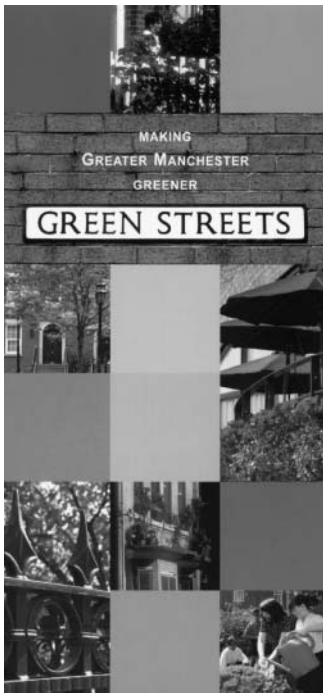
A software programme has been developed which allows people to add a variety of tree types to photographs of streets. This tool has been found to be very useful in convincing people of the benefits of street trees, but also gives people a sense of participation. This programme has proved to be very easy to use for people who are non-IT literate and children as young as 6 have enjoyed using it.

The high proportion of private landlords with no interest in environmental improvements has hampered the project in some of the areas most devoid of green but already the benefits of the scheme can be seen with some streets supporting numerous newly planted trees.

Green Streets takes its inspiration from Tree People in Los Angeles, which has been undertaking similar work through its Neighbourhood Tree Planting project. (<http://www.treepeople.org/> accessed 20-11-02)

In London the charity Trees for London has carried out localised community projects and runs a sponsor a tree scheme, however their work is significantly different to the Green Streets approach. Though some of their individual projects focus on street trees their community involvement focuses on small park/garden sites.

(<http://www.treesforlondon.org.uk/> accessed 20-11-02)



**NOW CHOOSE YOUR TREE...**

I live at

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Tel number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

These details will be kept confidential

**Pick your favourite tree!**

Now that you have seen pictures of the available street trees you can select your favourite one!

Below is a list of all the trees with a small box next to each one.

Please write a number 1 in the box next to your first choice, a number 2 next to your second choice and a number 3 next to your third.

Although all these trees are subject to availability, we will do our best to provide one of these choices.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>The Amelanchier <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The False Acacia <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The Hawthorn <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The Whitebeam <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>The Birch <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The Cherry <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The Crab Apple <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The Pear <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
|---|--|

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**Getting your hands dirty.....**

If you would like to be involved in the actual planting of the tree at a future date, please tick this box.

If you would like to be involved in any training that may be available, please tick this box.

Fig. 11 Green Streets, promotional leaflet and form for participating residents.



Fig. 12 Green Streets, one of Levenshulme's previously treeless streets.

### Example: Nutsford Vale

Nutsford Vale is a project that demonstrates the extent to which Red Rose Forest is working with management of habitats beyond those of urban forestry. Here a 25ha site was used for trial tree planting on contaminated land 5 years ago. The tree planting has thrived amongst large areas of open

grassland. Pete Stringer helped to establish a steering committee to facilitate 'community involvement' during his previous employment at the local Groundwork Trust. This group includes the Friends of Nutsford Vale, BTCV, Groundwork, Community Technical Aid Centre (CTAC) and Red Rose Forest. The aspiration for the site is not to necessarily increase tree cover but to maintain the habitat diversity of the site.



*Fig. 13 Nutsford Vale*

### *Project Evaluation*

Green Streets and Red Rose Forest generally have no formal project evaluation process as yet, however a degree of evaluation is required through reports to funding bodies.

## 4. Profession based organizations

In this chapter the aim is to illustrate how different organizations which represent professional groups or activities approach public involvement in landscape issues, The Architecture Foundation, Planning Aid and Neighbourhoods Initiative Foundation.

### 4.1 Professions fostering public involvement

While both the Royal Institute for British Architects (RIBA) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) have fostered community architecture and community planning respectively, in both cases the bodies currently supporting such initiatives are now in part or wholly independent of them.

The Landscape Institute is by its nature a small professional body, it has no specific policy with regard to public/community involvement in landscape issues.

**The Community Architecture Group** was active from 1984 to 1999 as a grant giving body working through the RIBA. Its roll was to empower community groups through providing funding for them to commission feasibility studies from architects, commonly £1000.00. These studies would form the basis for applications for further funding from other sources. The Group was operated by architects giving their time voluntarily and though based at the RIBA local group members acted as field officers, visiting and supporting communities.

The withdrawal of support from the RIBA in 1999 coincided with the increased availability of small sums for such projects coming on line from the Lottery Fund and other bodies.

#### 4.1.1 Case Study: The Architecture Foundation, Creative Spaces Project

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Paul Grover, Project Manager, Architecture Foundation, London (27-05-02)

**Secondary sources:**

The Architecture Foundation (2000). *Creative Spaces / a toolkit for participatory urban design*. The Architecture Foundation, London

The Architecture Foundation (2000). *Creative Spaces/principles for participatory urban design, An evaluation of the Architecture Foundation Roadshow, 1998-2000*. The Architecture Foundation, London

<http://www.architecturefoundation.org.uk/> (accessed 11-09-02)

[www.theglasshouse.org.uk](http://www.theglasshouse.org.uk) (accessed 11-09-02)

The Architecture Foundation is an independent architecture centre established in 1991 with the objectives:

- to encourage public participation, education and debate on the design, planning and sustainability of our cities.
- to emphasize the importance of and to explore ways of humanizing the public domain
- to celebrate the work of emerging talent and established practices

The foundation has hosted exhibitions and debates and in 1998 began the Roadshow program, which ran for 2 years and was perhaps the most widely publicised attempt to link public participation to high quality and creative design.

### *The Roadshow*

The Roadshow was a discrete project through which the Architecture Foundation (AF) together with 3 London Boroughs developed small projects for specific urban sites between 1998 and 2000.

The Roadshow was initiated following a series of forum debates in 1997, which considered the future development of London. Through the seven debates, which tackled issues such as housing, ecology and green areas, governance and transport more than 25,000 people participated. The then leader of the opposition Tony Blair was among those who participated. As a result of the success of these debates in raising awareness the AF decided to take the debate out on the road to engage the wider community.

It was felt that there was a demand for action to support the debate and this led to the idea of the live projects through the Roadshow. 3 London boroughs volunteered to participate and committed themselves to following projects through to completion.

The aim was to engage local people in effecting improvements within specific spaces between buildings. The focus was on urban design projects partly because the improvement of buildings was considered too problematic for a pilot project. The sites selected were open spaces which had no clearly defined sense of ownership, places which felt leftover, though in fact they were all in local authority ownership. Over the 2-year period the AF developed a series of projects together with the 3 boroughs using The Roadshow model.

A question for the Architecture Foundation was how architects could make public participation a key element of their practice. It was felt that the architecture profession had an image problem arising from the many failed housing projects from the 1950's 1960's and 1970's. This meant that the question about public participation should not only be discussed between authorities but also be debated between architects organizations and architects themselves.

In choosing architects for the project, architect firms were asked to send in applications with references and ideas for public participation.

The architect firms were selected on the basis of the creativity of their approach and their commitment to public participation. This therefore predicted that selected firms would have a particularly positive attitude to involvement of the local users in the planning and decision making process, though not necessarily a track record.

The architects' role during the Roadshow was to stimulate local interest in possible improvements to sites with the notion of engendering a sense of ownership. Crucially the architects worked between the local authority and the local community.

Furthermore the Architecture Foundation participated in an educational programme through which local schools were involved in the project, with architects participating in the curriculum giving the children the opportunity to come forward with their ideas and experiences of local problems.

Site selection was based on recommendations from the Local Authorities. The result was that 9 sites in Hammersmith were chosen. In the 2 other boroughs only 4-5 sites were chosen. In Hammersmith one site chosen was the linking space between the high street and the river Thames under a wide road bridge, another site was Wormwood Scrubs, London's third largest open space unfortunately synonymous with the prison and perceived as little appreciated beyond its use for football in Saturdays. Other sites were smaller spaces within the city, some of which warranted traffic calming, as in Home-Zones, improvements of living spaces and proposal for a bridge over a regional canal connecting a large housing estate with nearby Public Park.

The Roadshows based their approach on the premise that local people participating in the process have a lot of ideas and importantly they know where the problems are. Importantly participation was also seen as an important aspect of sustainability, specifically addressing social sustainability.

One aspect of public involvement, which the Roadshows encountered, was the question of ownership of public open spaces where local residents feel strongly about "their" place, but lack trust in their local authorities but also in professionals (including architects). Even when local people felt a sense of ownership towards a place it was identified that it can be difficult for them to take responsibility of the area because of the lack of resources and budget for improvement and maintenance.

Despite initial commitments from the local authorities involved finance has been inadequate to complete projects in some cases and maintenance has proved problematic.

## *Participation*

It was considered important to make public participation fun. In the traditional model of public participation, meetings in the local library with presentations of analysis of the problems and discussions of solutions, it was discovered that these meetings tended to attract a limited group often middle class people and the most enthusiastic people in the area. The Architecture Foundation discovered this at their first Roadshow exercise and subsequently abandoned this model.

Crucially it had to be an open process, where it was important that all ideas came forward. That meant it was important to attract all types of residents including different ages, cultural backgrounds and sexes. And to get interest from kids and women with certain ethnic/cultural backgrounds required specific methods. The Roadshows tried using theatre groups and street performance to stimulate interest from local people in the problems, possibilities and history of specific sites.

For example using the performance artist Tom Geoghagen, who spent 24 hours suspended horizontally from buildings at 5 Roadshow sites, the architects found themselves coming in contact with groups and individuals who would not have normally participated in a formal public participation meeting.

Art was also used as way to give people a new perspective on their day to day environment engendering a sense that 'If you can do this to a place what else can you do?' The foundation is aware however that care must be taken not to use artists as agitprop but to respect their integrity as artists.

It was possible through this process to create a sense of delight and pride in the specific sites that allowed local people to see their area in a new light. Creating a positive atmosphere around the projects began to raise peoples' expectations and encouraged participating architects to see the possibilities of giving people more than they had imagined possible.

In this open process, the Architecture Foundation have tried to use groups of architects to talk with the people and in specific instances to illustrate their ideas in drawings or on video with the help of blue screen technique. The latter makes for an instant and accessible form of visualisation with obvious appeal to media literate young people.

During the meetings with the local people the Architecture Foundation collected names and address from the participants. The idea was to create the possibility to follow up with newsletters from the project to each of the participants, however on the whole the local authorities have failed to make use of this resource. This shortfall reflects the lack of an exit strategy that could have been helpful to guarantee continuity of involvement at the end of the projects.



## *Inclusion*

The foundation gave particular attention to hard to reach groups. Securing the involvement of women of varied ethnic/cultural backgrounds required particular strategies. The Architecture Foundation has used translators where appropriate and has looked for suitable venues in one case installing a video box in a sari shop.

Special design workshops were held in the street to access young people. Paul stressed the difficulties for organizations in making informal approaches to young people who are only easily accessible on the street.

## *Project Evaluation*

Architecture Foundation does not have a high level of core funding; this means that activities are increasingly dependent on project funding. With the Roadshow it meant that there was no funding to continue to systematically evaluate the projects or offer ongoing support Paul considers it the problem of 'raising expectations with communities that one cannot deliver on' and stresses that this is an important lesson for anyone else trying to do the same thing.

However as well as publication of the book *Creative Spaces/ a toolkit for participatory urban design*, which catalogues the Roadshow a formal evaluation has been carried out entitled *Creative Spaces/principles for participatory urban design, An evaluation of the Architecture Foundation Roadshow* Architecture Foundation (2000).

This latter document points to the key findings of the project in particular using a questionnaire completed through interviews to gauge the responses of 129 participants, school teachers, local authority officers, architects and artists. The results suggest that while all those involved generally enjoyed participating and felt the design solutions were representative of peoples' 'opinions, visions and concerns' 79 % of participants did not subsequently know what was happening about the project. This lack of ongoing involvement is highlighted in the evaluation that raises questions for future projects;

- How can participatory urban design continue to benefit the wider community?
- How can widespread and regular communication help keep involvement alive?
- How can local community development needs and other learning opportunities best be resourced?

## *New Projects*

In response to the issues raised above, the Architecture Foundation has, at the request of the Glasshouse Trust, started a new project called 'Glass-

House: empowering residents and communities through design' working in partnership with the National Tenants Resource Centre, it provides a nation wide service of training, advice and support to tenants and residents of neighbourhoods and areas undergoing major changes as a part of government regeneration programmes. The government is funding numerous large programmes of redevelopment of specific areas that have been overlooked. Glass-House aims to educate local people about participation in the decision making process. They offer courses in involvement, negotiation techniques and URBED have been working with A Sense of Place to develop and run a three-day residential course in urban design.

The project Futuropa is a European network of Architecture centres, with participants from London, Finland, Paris, Belgium, and Lighthouse in Glasgow the project is centred on public participation in 5 cities. In London they will run a series of workshops in connection to an urban summit in Oct. 2002, and start a series of projects in which 5 design teams from different countries will work on sites in London.

# Creative Spaces/ a toolkit for participatory urban design

The Architecture Foundation

[www.creativespaces.org.uk](http://www.creativespaces.org.uk)



Fig. 14 Cover Creative Spaces Architecture Foundation 2000

#### 4.1.2 Case Study: Planning Aid, Planning for Real™

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Tony Ray and Harvey Pritchard, Yorkshire Planning Aid, Leeds (28-05-02)

**Secondary sources:**

The Royal Town Planning Institute. (2001). *Planning Aid Portfolio* Edition no.1 August 2001. The Royal Town Planning Institute  
The Royal Town Planning Institute. *Making Planning Work*, Planning Aid. Leaflet. The Royal Town Planning Institute  
West Midlands Planning Aid Service and Yorkshire Planning Aid. (2001). *Rural Planning Pack* The Royal Town Planning Institute  
<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/> (accessed 12-09-02)

Planning Aid was conceived to offer free advice to those who would not be able to afford a planning consultant, however in branches of Planning Aid where individuals have been able and willing to extend this brief Planning Aid has become involved with community planning.

Planning Aid branches regionally correspond to branches of the RTPI. The branches vary in size and the scope of their work for example London, West Midlands, Yorkshire, Scotland and Wales are all well developed, some are now independent of the corresponding RTPI branch. However some branches operate at a very low level, being little more than a telephone advice line. Yorkshire's Planning Aid is still part of the RTPI branch but is well-developed and active in community planning.

Planning Aid makes use of volunteers, both qualified planners who can give advice and planning students who can assist in facilitating planning events and processing information.



Fig. 15 Leaflet outlining the work of Planning Aid nationally, produced by the RTPI.

Planning Aid in Yorkshire is increasingly being drawn into projects as a consultant with a role facilitating community involvement. This is because increasingly funding stipulations for regeneration and development projects demand community involvement at a planning stage. At the same time communities are able to attract funding to support their aspirations for community planning.

Community planning involves a number of techniques but perhaps the most widely used and commonly known is Planning for Real™, which is a technique Trademarked to The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (4.1.3). The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation runs courses in facilitating Planning for Real™, which lead to accreditation for practitioners.

### *Planning for Real™*

Planning for Real™ aims to engage a community in formulating its own plans; it is not limited to physical planning and can be used to look at social provision too. This is done through event based planning days or community planning days. A 3d model of the area concerned is created; most usually by local school children (this helps to spread the word through the community and engage parents) it helps to have a model which is not too flashy. On the day, which usually piggybacks a local festival or show, people are invited to place cards on the model identifying issues in particular locations. At the Penistone Show, in South Yorkshire, recently 1,550 people took part in this stage.

From this initial stage a steering group is formed to work out priorities and to determine how to act on these. The method aims to empower local people so the first choice of action is 'We can do it with a little money'.

The initial process importantly engages people in an action role, informal exchanges begin around the model; it has been found that people can understand a model more easily than a plan. It has been found that certain groups may need separate sessions as they can be reticent to be involved in more inclusive groups, these include teenagers and women from certain cultural backgrounds.

A non-English version is being developed and computer software to process information.

The model can also be used for emotional mapping to deal with issues of personal safety.

There is an awareness of other techniques within Yorkshire's Planning Aid, particularly through the work of Nick Wates and Reflect and a project run by Yorkshire's Planning Aid with Hull School of Architecture used a map on the floor technique recently.

Rural diversification is increasingly important for Planning Aid.

### *Project Evaluation*

Evaluation of projects is most common through the need for reports to funders. There is not yet a systematic evaluation of projects over the long term.

#### **4.1.3 Case Study: The Neighbourhood Initiative Foundation (NIF), Planning for Real™**

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Margaret Wilkinson, The Neighbourhood Initiative Foundation, Telford (02-08-02)

**Secondary sources:**

Potter, T. (1998). *Community Participation and Capacity Building*. NIF.Telford

Saunders, R (2000). *Local Agenda 21*. NIF.Telford

Wates, N. (2000). *The Community Planning Handbook*. Earthscan. London

<http://www.nifonline.org.uk/> (accessed 11-09-02)

The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF) is a national charity specialising in community participation, training and development. NIF is working with local authorities, regeneration agencies, voluntary agencies and community groups, offering an independent service to improve the well being of communities.

NIF acts to help with the initiation and planning of projects and their role rarely extends to following the implementation of projects.

Whilst NIF's Project Development Workers and Consultants are professionals in community development and capacity building, the Foundation does not have a staff of "specialists" (e.g. architects, planners, health workers). For example NIF have done projects focusing on improvements in health, traffic and town renewal where they identify and invite relevant experts to the specific projects. The experts can be landscape architects, engineers and town planners from local authority, or experts coming from outside with relevant knowledge.

NIF believe that local people understand their own area and its issues best and that NIF's role is to facilitate action by those people. Often the work of NIF acts to allow local authorities and local communities to communicate more effectively.

While believing in the importance of community self determination, NIF is very aware of the need to foster relations with professionals and to look for examples and precedents outside the UK. One case cited is that of Home

Zones where communities in the UK are being encouraged to look at experiences of communities abroad.

### *Planning for Real™*

This technique was developed by NIF and is now a registered trademark of the Foundation. It is a technique that aims to allow people to articulate and develop their views on a specific issue and in response to formulate strategies for self help. The tenets of Planning for Real™ are:

|                                 |   |                  |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------|
| <i>Understanding</i>            | - | <i>trust</i>     |
| <i>Common information based</i> | - | <i>decision</i>  |
| <i>Sharing the outcome</i>      | - | <i>ownership</i> |

These ideas are often lacking in the culture of many local authorities in the UK.

However Planning for Real™ is increasingly being used as a tool in situations where funding is predicated on Public Involvement and ever more local authorities are training staff in the technique. NIF see that this is helping local authorities to affect the culture shift needed to seriously engage communities in decision-making.

While most Planning for Real™ exercises have had a broad planning agenda certain projects have had a particular landscape focus i.e. those at Telford Town Park, Cannock Chase, Abbey Park, Leicester and at Kings Cross: Regent Square, St. Georges Gardens, Brunswick Gardens, St. Andrews Gardens and Wicklow Street.

### **Example, William Fosters Playing Fields, Wigan**

This project resulted in a regeneration of the park including improvement of path system, play areas, and canal crossings. NIF used a pin board questionnaire, where people can place pins as answers to precise and unambiguous questions. This technique was used to give a snapshot view of the people's general views of the site. This pin board questionnaire exercise ran alongside a Planning for Real™ event involving a landscape architect who, following further meetings with the community and other key stakeholders created the final master plan.



Fig. 16 William Foster's Playing Fields, local children, too young to remember the Planning for Real™ exercise of 1995.

After the process NIF produced a report with the results from the Planning for Real™ and the pin board questionnaire with a their recommendations and a master plan for the local authority. While the local authority has undertaken improvements based on the master plan, community involvement has not been sustained and maintenance of the site is inadequate in common with many sites under local authority management in the UK.

The success of Planning for Real™ seems to lie with continuing commitment from local authorities and/or funding bodies to engage with local people after the initial planning exercise.

#### 4.1.4 Case Study: Public Arts

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Paul Swales and Karen Durham, Public Arts, Wakefield (29-05-02)

**Secondary sources:**

Public Arts. (2001). *People Making Places*. Public Arts. Wakefield  
[www.public-arts.co.uk](http://www.public-arts.co.uk) (accessed 11-09-02)

Public Arts is a leading organization in the field of commissioning and implementing art in the public realm. Though regionally based it has a national profile and through its consultancy activities has worked outside the region.

Public Arts is an independent company and registered charity, its aim is stated as 'We believe that art is integral to a healthy society, and that artists ha-



ve an important role in the sustainable development and improvement of our environment.’

The emphasis Public Arts has placed on community consultation and involvement has been constantly reviewed and developed since the organisation was set up in 1986. Over this period various models of engaging communities have evolved but emphasis is always placed firmly on the final work being of a high artistic and professional standard.

### *Safeguarding quality*

Public Arts find itself now in the position of often advising against permanent artworks and even considering the issue of decommissioning previously installed work. This is in a sense regarded as a success in having won the argument for more public art but at the same time the poor quality of much public art is increasingly a concern.

Temporary, transient and digital projects are beginning to become more important. For example at Beeston, in South Leeds, Public Arts has been approached and has identified the need for events and projects such as a temporary radio station, video work etc. rather than traditional fixed pieces of public art.

Local authorities are seen as key players in this and many have arts officers however Public Arts finds that there is a persistent conservatism and an unwillingness to take risks from many councils.

Traditionally landscape architects, both within and outside local authorities, have been very interested in working with artists, more so than architects. Increasingly artists are becoming involved with landscape architects at the early stages of projects and this is seen as one way of improving the working process.

### *A two stage approach*

Public Arts is interested to work with certain artists with a high profile in the art world who may not feel happy about being involved in ‘community art’. In response to this Public Arts have developed a strategy which engages an experienced ‘community artist’ to work with a community to create a pack of information/images which will form part of the brief for another artist who will create a final work.

This process can be ongoing during the commission and installation period of the final work and can act both to inform and involve the community in the process and give an understanding of the final work.

Anthony Gormley’s Angel of the North is often used as an example of a major piece of work being accompanied by extensive community involvement running parallel to the commissioning and implementation process.

## *Urban Design*

In 2002 Public Arts has launched a joint regional programme 'People Making Places' which aims at taking an integrated approach to urban design. Partners in this programme include Yorkshire Forward (2.3.4), CABA (2.3), RIBA Yorkshire (4.1), and Yorkshire RTPI (4.1.2).

With its experience of working with communities and professionals Public Arts aims to use this programme to 'improve regional demand and capacity for high quality urban design by linking communities and professionals'. The programme will run until 2004 and includes seminars, workshops, community events, lectures, exhibitions and research. It will run alongside ongoing regeneration projects and aims to share best practice and encourage debate.

This programme follows on from their Training, Education and Advocacy Initiative (TEA), which ran from 1999 to 2001. This aimed at improving the quality of public art and design in peoples' 'everyday' environment. The target group for this initiative was very broad, from artists to health professionals, developers to community workers, and involved over 2000 people.

As part of the People Making Places programme in August 2002 Public Arts hosted a summer school entitled 'Challenging Architects', which featured Will Allsop, and took a mixed group of professionals, including local authority officers through an intensive creative urban design project. This process was a no holes barred collaborative project that aimed at 'thinking outside the loop'.

Public Arts are also involved in the Renaissance Towns initiative from Yorkshire Forward (2.3.4).

**Example; Incline, Renaissance Towns, Barnsley and Scarborough**



*Fig. 17 Incline, a temporary turf and steel sculpture by artist Trudi Entwistle commissioned by Public Arts for Yorkshire Forward's Renaissance Towns initiative. Shown here in Scarborough the sculpture had previously been installed in Barnsley. The sculpture acted as a catalyst for local debate and suggested the possibility of unexpected urban design developments within the towns. Photo T. Entwistle*



*Fig. 18 Incline, in Scarborough early morning. Photo T. Entwistle  
trudi@trudientwistle.com*

## 5. Private Landscape Architecture Practice

In this chapter the aim is to illustrate how public involvement is influencing the work of private landscape architecture consultancies.

### 5.1 Public Realm - Private Practice

As previously stated the opportunities for private practices to work for local authorities have increased as a result of Compulsory Competitive Tendering and a willingness on the part of some authorities to engage private consultants. As local authorities are increasingly obliged to involve/consult and even engage local 'communities' this has had an obvious knock on effect for landscape architects working in this sector.

While John Thompson and Partners exists as an architecture practice specializing in 'Community Planning' (<http://www.jtp.co.uk/23-09-02>) no similarly specialist practice exists within landscape architecture. The practices covered below work across a range of projects, they all however recognize 'community' involvement as desirable and expedient.

Ian Thompson at Newcastle University told us of a degree of lip service to the issue of community involvement, from some of the practitioners he had contact with while researching his book *Ecology, community and delight* (Thompson 2000). This was most common amongst practitioners with a focus on work in the commercial sector. Indeed a number of the landscape architects we talked to considered that there is scepticism within the profession over the validity of community involvement in landscape projects.

### 5.1.1 Case study: J&L Gibbons, Edward Square and St. John's Churchyard Projects

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Johanna Gibbons, Charlie Voss and Neil Davidson, J&L Gibbons, London (27-05-02)

Site visits, Edward Square, Islington (28-05-02) and (01-08-02)

**Secondary sources:**

Gibbons J. (2000). Article *London: Bricks and coloured surfaces*. *Topos* 32, 2000

J & L Gibbons (2001a). Submission for the Landscape Institute Awards, Community Design and Conservation Section (unpublished)

J & L Gibbons (2001b). Submission for the Civic Trust & Special Award for Landscape (unpublished)

<http://www.jlg-london.com/maciehome.html> (accessed 22-11-02)

J and L Gibbons are a small practice based in East London they have a history of involvement in projects with the element of 'community involvement'. It is considered by the practice as vital to the process and sustainability of many urban environmental improvements. The work is often time-consuming and under remunerated, the practice finds that its own commitment to 'community involvement' creates self-imposed demands.

In the context of urban London the issues of multicultural viewpoints and aspirations combine with a raft of more general urban issues. This makes the work at times both challenging and complex.

In practice 'community involvement' regularly concentrates on consultation, though through certain projects Gibbons have been able to engage people more actively.

#### *Consultation*

As a starting point Gibbons use basic statistical information about the neighbourhood of a site to explore the distribution in age, language and cultural background of local people.

According to Johanna it is usually possible to predict the concerns that a given group have about a particular site, what is hard to predict however are the priority that a community will give to specific concerns.

To overcome some of the barriers to participation Gibbons consider it vital that problems and issues are presented in an accessible and easily understood manner. It is also stressed that the process must be credible. There must be an implementation plan to demonstrate that the means to achieve proposals are realistic. Also a structure must be created to ensure that the information which is gathered through consultation to be fed into the design process.

## **Example; Edward Square, Camden, London**

The design sought to translate the desires and aspirations of a diverse and fractured inner city community into a plan demonstrating design cohesion and richness. The plan also needed to instil a sense of place and a sense of the community it served, offering non-prescriptive multi functional spaces of clarity and quality exceeding community aspiration. J & L Gibbons (2001a).

The initial approach to the practice was made by a community group, members of a local forum and the local authority, the aim was to develop a design for an under used back lot space. His design was to form the basis of a funding bid.

As always in such circumstances the first task for the practice was to identify what have been called the ‘moving spirits’ in the ‘community’, those people who are active and instrumental in the local area.

The site near Kings Cross has a large surrounding population of young and elderly people. In the process of marrying differing concerns the practice often found itself advocating the needs of younger users.

While it proved straightforward to engage a significant number of older people in the process to adequately engage the younger users Gibbons adopted a number of techniques.

On the instigation of the practice a Schools Education Liaison Officer post was created to take the project into the local schools, weaving elements of the project into the schools curriculum. The Schools Education Liaison Officer, Patsy Hans, also worked with school groups on projects to record the site and design new elements. The site contractor was asked to allow school children to visit the construction site during construction, as a part of their schoolwork.

The office had a film director make a film in support of the initial funding bid for the project. In the film they had a young local girl interview the kids in the park, in a youth club and at a Planning for Real™ session.

Community leaders of local ethnic groups were specifically approached and in order to get a proper mix of age and gender attempts were made to gain direct contact with under represented groups particularly women.

The interface between the practice and the ‘community’ during the design and implementation phase was mainly through a steering group, of local people. In parallel a series of events/parties was held on site at key stages of the project to involve more local people in marking the development of the project. These parties happened when the contractor was hired, at Christmas, a goodbye party to the old park in May and the opening of the new

park in the summer. With the parties local people were kept informed about the progress of the project and had the chance to feed back to the design team. Johanna Gibbons considers these parties/events to be good value for the money. Informal contact with the users about the project is an important aspect of the communication process.

To encourage people who were involved to register their names and addresses for further contact a raffle was held which required names and addresses, importantly prizes were good quality items donated by local businesses.

The project was given significant boost when the newly appointed Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion accepted an invitation from Gibbons to become involved. He worked with local children and based on this experience wrote a poem which was translated into lettering along a concrete wall which forms a key structural element of the site. The poem was projected onto the concrete wall in lettering of varying sizes by artist Gary Breeze in collaboration with Andrew Motion.

There were other aspects of art integrated into the project. School children's drawings of plants were collated by the artist Kate Blee and transformed into panels on the entrance gates. This was done with a carefully chosen colour pallet that was connected to the colours of spring and summer. Kate Blee was also responsible for the abstract wall painting in the ball playing area. This wall is regarded by the practice as an element which raised the aspirations of local people, one member of the steering committee after initial scepticism said "Art in the park? Why not!" "It's a sort of cultural park". Charlie Voss stressed that the roll of the artist is to take the process of 'community involvement' and transform this into work that contributes to the whole design. It is also regarded as essential within the process to give scope to the artist's own aspirations.

Since completion local people seem to have taken a sense of ownership of the site. Recently hand sprayed lines appeared on the asphalt below the basketball net, the local authority formalized the lines without erasing the informal ones. The lines were not a part of the original project because the area was intended to flexibly accommodate different functions however Gibbons consider the development as a positive evolution of the site, demonstrating that members of the community have taken ownership of the site.

For their 2001 Landscape Institute Awards, Community Design and Conservation Section, submission Gibbons stated their roles throughout the project as 'Inception and implementation of public consultation strategy and co-production of youth video, all key stages of design, implementation and landscape contract management, liaison between all partners.'

### *Management and Maintenance*

Though the current level of maintenance at Edward Square is not high by standards of other countries in Northern Europe. By the standards of equivalent urban sites in the UK it is remarkably free of vandalism, graffiti and litter. The site is locked at night and dog grills protect each gateway to keep stray dogs out of the park.

The problems of securing appropriate management and maintenance are ongoing concerns for Gibbons. This is true of their work with local authorities generally. Charlie Voss made the point that local authorities have no statutory obligation to maintain landscape in their care. This fact has a direct and detrimental effect on the design of sites in that design often has to withstand significant neglect.



Fig. 19 Edward Square, Plan. J and L Gibbons. Not to scale.





*Fig. 20 Edward Square, social housing initiated through the projects.*



*Fig. 21 Edward Square, seating placed by Steering Committee members.*



*Fig. 22 Edward Square, Copenhagen Street entrance, coloured panels created by artist Kate Blee from images generated through workshops with local school children.*

### **Example: St. Johns Churchyard, Pool of London**

St. Johns church which contains the London City Mission lies within the Pool of London, an area that Gibbons had previously been working on at a master planning level. The churchyard is 950 years old and still contains graves, the project aims to enhance the churchyard for use as a public park. Gibbons commission came from the Pool of London Partnership through a competitive tendering process.

For this project Gibbons again used film making as a tool. They interviewed and filmed children in a nearby school to understand their needs for the renewal of the old rundown park around the church.

Aspirations to establish a ‘community garden’ have raised many issues of management and maintenance in relation to ‘community involvement’. Negotiating the balance of maintenance responsibility between the local autho-

city and local people will be one of the challenges for the project. Insurance cover for local people engaging in maintenance work is also proving to be an obstacle to the project.

### *Community Development*

The practice is very aware of the potential for capacity building and community development in such projects. The public realm is obviously a good place to start the development of a whole neighbourhood, however Gibbons modus operandi as a landscape architectural practice limits their roll in this respect, limiting their involvement to the lifespan of a particular project.

### *Project Evaluation*

Gibbons do not formally evaluate projects over time, though Edward Square has received a great deal of appraisal in the form of publicity. Though not formally recorded, feedback from local people is regarded as a key aspect of the informal evaluation of projects.

### *Design and consultancy*

Johanna Gibbons states ‘Good design has to survive the consultancy process. The design is the result of a lot of work and maintaining the essential qualities of the design during the dialogue with the users can be hard.’ She went on to say that the defining character of a community project should be the level of care which local people obviously lavish on it and not the style or character of the design its self.

As designers Gibbons certainly do not see public involvement as a seriously restriction, the design of the involvement process is such that the site design itself remains solidly the responsibility of the landscape architect. An example of the extent to which the landscape architect is auteur in this process is the placement of fixed seats at the Copenhagen Road entrance. The chairs at the entrance were actually placed by the steering group as their last task in the project before completion. Each of the members was asked to place a chair in a way they preferred and after that, they were fixed in place (see Fig.21).

### 5.1.2 Case Study: Landscape Projects, Hulme Park Project

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Neil Swanson, Landscape Projects, Manchester (30-05-02)

Site Visit, Hulme Park, Manchester (30-05-02)

**Secondary sources:**

The Design Council. *Evidence-design against crime*.

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/> (accessed 25-11-02)

<http://www.landscapeprojects.co.uk/> (accessed 01-11-02)

Landscape Projects is a landscape and urban design practice based in Manchester but working nationwide. Neil Swanson is principal of the practice and also teaches landscape architecture at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Neil's experience of public consultation is wide ranging and he considers it offers both social and commercial benefits. He told us 'I can't think of a project brief which hasn't required some form of consultation. Our projects involve consultation, often beyond just the stakeholders. Early consultation helps us with the accuracy of fee charging, it helps predict changes which can occur as a result of late consultation.'

#### **Example; Hulme Park, Manchester**

Hulme is an area of Manchester separated from the city centre by an urban freeway; it was built post war and planned with an encircling road system. During the 1980s and 90s it developed a fragmented community of long-term residents, students and single people which created many social problems. It was described at the time as a kind of 'living hell' of endemic crime and consequent insecurity.

In 1992-3 Hulme won a City Challenge bid for the wholesale renewal of the area that required extensive community consultation, this process eventually led to the formulation of a competition brief for Hulme Park to form a key element of the regeneration of the area. Neil says 'It was best brief I'd read because it came from a background of community consultation.' This consultation had included community planning exercises.

#### *Framework*

In response to the brief Landscape Projects delivered a flexible framework for delivering a park with community involvement. The approach was to gain tangible results rapidly while engaging the community at a number of levels. Landscape Projects won the competition and were able to use the background provided by the community consultation to keep up the momentum.

The major infra structure of the park therefore went on site in the first phase of the project, this structure was intended as a frame for community involvement.

A simplified reading of the physical structure of the plan identified 3 zones of use/activity:

a civic/park area geared for events

a play oriented zone adjacent to a school site

a sports and active zone adjacent to the youth club and school site

The key design decisions lay firmly with the landscape architect while a working structure was created which engaged local people through the life-span of the project.



The coordinating group had a role between the 4 groups and the designer.

The four groups worked on specific areas and/or sites designated within the physical structure of the park, deemed appropriate by the landscape architect.

*The Artwork Group* was active in commissioning artists to work within the project and had a dedicated budget. The work of artists is distributed in a number of locations through the park including the playground, a garden area and the 'civic' space.

*The Sports Group* was active in determining the need for sports and other active leisure in the Sports Zone. Members of sports teams collaborated initially on the placement and later on the design of the skateboard, football, netball and basketball facilities.

*The Playgroup* concentrated its efforts on the playground. A project involving 4 local schools developed the concept for the playground and the specific elements of it.

*The Permaculture Group* and overlooking neighbours collaborated on the design of the sensory garden. The group suggested plants for the garden, primarily edible ones, and has now set up a community nursery on another site.

### *Management and Maintenance*

To secure a high level of maintenance Landscape Projects were prepared to use £350,000 as a commuted sum from the project budget. The interest generated by this sum would have been used for maintenance and been administered by a Park Trust. In this case the money could not be used on non-capital expenditure though the Park Trust model is however being used elsewhere in Manchester now.

On the evidence of our visit the standard of maintenance by Manchester City Council is currently poor, though there is little vandalism, graffiti or litter.

The park is heavily used by a wide variety of individuals and groups. The number of families, which have been attracted to the area is considered to be a significant measure of the park's success. The desirability of the area in housing terms has created a much more varied community profile, while the increase in property prices has excluded some individuals and groups.

Hulme Park has won a Civic Trust award in 2000 and Manchester Civic Society Award in 2001; it also features as an example of design in the Design Council's publication "Design against Crime".



*Fig. 23 Hulme Park, skateboard area. Photo. Landscape Projects*



*Fig. 24 Hulme Park, shelter designed in collaboration with members of the adjacent Youth Club and the Sports Group.*

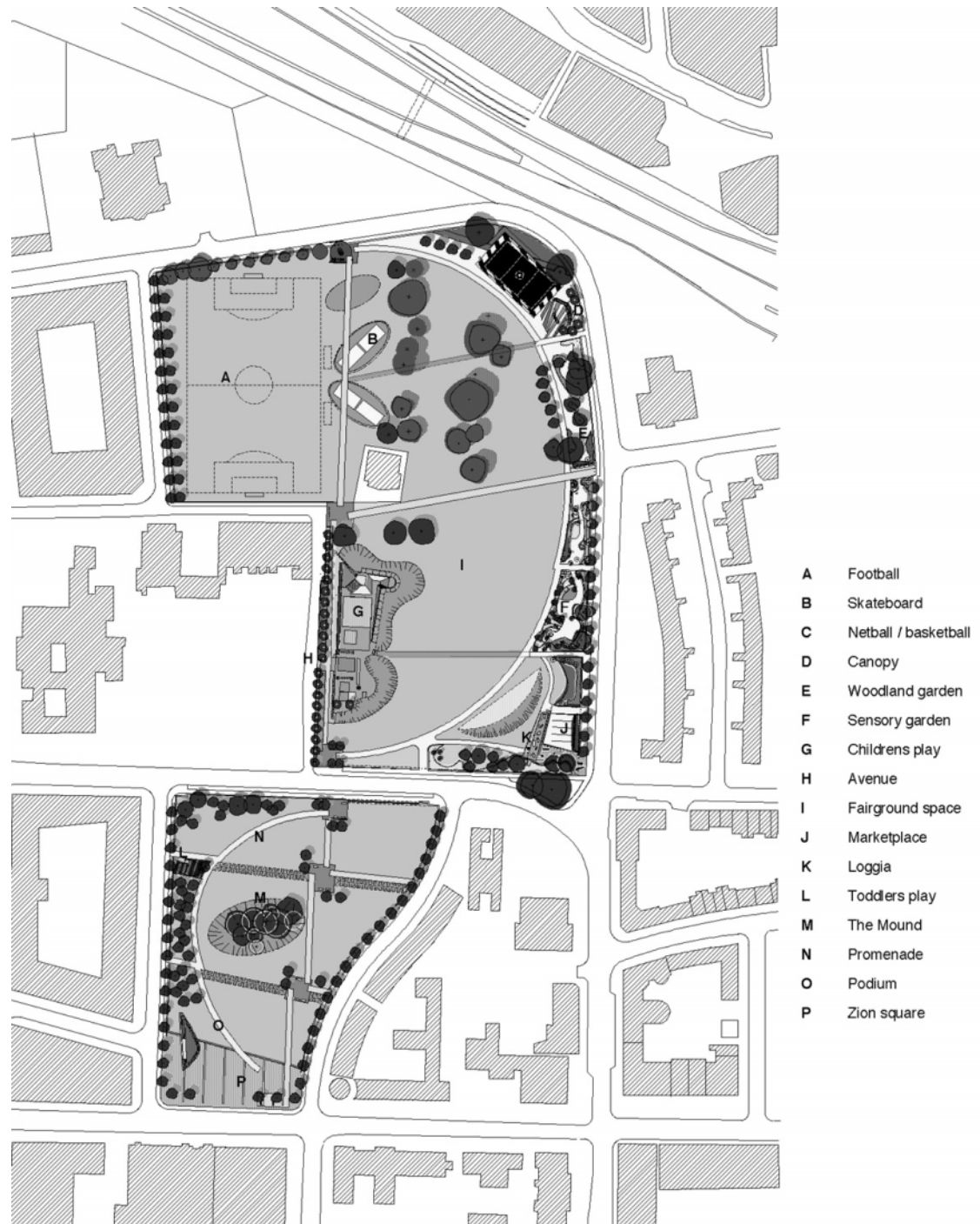


Fig. 25 Hulme Park, Landscape Projects' plan. Not to scale.



## *Reflections*

Neil Swanson considers that a model for such projects should involve a Feasibility Study to identify the extent of consultation required which will aid fee estimating. In the case of Hulme the community consultation was already well developed and capacity building was taking place, this meant that capacity building was not considered as part of the process.

Neil is extremely sceptical about the notion of ownership. He sees a real danger in fostering the idea that 'communities', or more significantly sections of 'communities' take ownership of areas and points to the recent racially charged riots in Oldham as an example of the dangers of conflicting senses of ownership. An exclusive definition of ownership can all too easily develop and Neil typifies this by the notion of 'that's ours, not yours'. At Hulme Neil has experienced numerous conflicts arising from this issue and particularly, where under represented people are out shouted by more vociferous individuals and/or groups.

## *Project Evaluation*

While Landscape Projects has no formal project evaluation process it is currently writing a detailed account of the project and Hulme Park is constantly under review. The proximity of the site to the practice office allows regular and frequent follow up visits.

### **5.1.3 Case Study: Land Use Consultants, Red Cross Gardens Project**

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Jennette Emery-Wallace, Land Use Consultants (LUC), London (01-08-02)

**Secondary sources:**

<http://www.landuse.co.uk/> (accessed 20-11-02)

Land Use Consultants (LUC) have multidisciplinary offices in London, Bristol and Glasgow, many of their projects involve some form of public consultation, as part of the design process. With the advent of Heritage Lottery Funded projects, public consultation exercises have formed a key component and criteria of the scheme's design development. LUC have been involved in a number of HLF schemes, and are currently working with Leeds City Council and lead consultants Purcell Miller Tritton on the restoration of Roundhay Park, Leeds, and this aspect of their work will be considered in Chapter 6, Public Parks Management.

Jennette Emery-Wallis, an Associate at LUC, considers that public participation is essential to the success of any landscape scheme. Although consul-

tants are skilled at analyzing a site, local knowledge and local perceptions of site are considered invaluable, and key to the successful outcome of the completed scheme. LUC have always included elements of public consultation in developing scheme design, now however, most schemes require formal consultation in some shape or form. Jennette was clear that to consult in a worthwhile way is often very time consuming, which is why it is tempting for some clients and consultants to treat public consultation as a paper exercise, rather than truly using it as useful design tool.

Getting to hear all the voices can be difficult as Jennette put it ‘The people who don’t speak out are often (representative of) the more general public.’ However, Jennette felt that it very often was possible to predict what people would consider to be the issues relating to a particular project and/or site. And the key was to seek out the unique qualities and issues that related to the particular site, rather than just concentrate on general landscape issues. Although each project requires a different approach to public consultation, the Planning for Real™ approach has often acted as a starting point for LUC’s approach to the subject.

Most public consultation processes include a series of public exhibitions, which explain the design process behind the scheme and how it is to be funded etc. With HLF schemes, exhibition display boards often include a summary history of the site illustrated with drawings and archive photographs explaining the historical importance of the site and why elements should be conserved. This is followed by site analysis sheets, which explain the strengths and weaknesses of the current layout. A strategy drawing then looks to illustrate how these issues can be resolved. It is often at this point the public are asked to comment on the strategy and suggest alternative solutions. Several design options may also be displayed giving the public an opportunity to influence the design direction. Most consultations will also be supported by a comment sheet or questionnaire, in order for the consultants to glean as much information as possible about the public’s views. An example of a LUC’s HLF work is the Red Cross Gardens project in Borough, London.

### **Example; Red Cross Garden, Borough, London**

This project is being undertaken by Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST), a charity which has regenerated a number of public open spaces on the south bank of the Thames.

Red Cross Garden is of national significance in terms of ‘community’ involvement. It was created in 1888 by local people, as a part of a small social housing project under the direction of Octavia Hill. Octavia Hill was a social reformer whose concerns included volunteer action in relation to housing and open space, as a result of the latter interest in 1895 she was one of the co-founders of the National Trust.

Though the layout and its construction was not outstanding in design terms its cultural significance puts it in line for Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funding and this has been secured after consultation on Stage 1 proposals. Through the Stage 1 bid LUC recommend that the original garden layout be restored, however several elements of this are to be finalized through public consultation. BOST are taking the lead on this public consultation and LUC have produced a series of options, which the public will be invited to select and input from.

For example, the original scheme included a small pond and ornate bridge. The client and members of the public are concerned about re-introducing this element on safety and maintenance grounds. LUC have therefore produced a number of different options for this element, ranging from full restoration of pond and bridge according to original layout and details, to creating a grass bowl using original pond shape and installing the bridge. So the element is not lost but the maintenance and safety issues are overcome.

It is considered desirable that members of the local community are involved directly in the realization of the project, and like Octavia Hill, BOST will organize for local residents and school children to take part in planting trees and shrubs. School children will also be involved in designing several mosaics to be included in the garden to replace lost originals, whose designs are unknown.

Currently there are plans for further consultation, these include a garden party in the grounds with the proposed layout and vertical structures mocked up. The project is ongoing.

### *Reflections*

Although unusual for the client body to facilitate the public participation exercise, Jennette considers that the Red Cross Garden scheme represents a good model of practice. Here a client (BOST) with specific skills in public involvement is facilitating this aspect of the scheme. Jennette feels as landscape architects that 'We shouldn't necessarily drive the process (public involvement), but be a key component.' and that in certain circumstances 'It could be good to have specialist sub consultants or the client body facilitate the process.'

Jennette outlined the basic approach necessary for communicating with the public for consultation:

- make clear presentations, using images rather than plans where possible
- initial proposals and consultations should give genuine scope for changes resulting from consultation
- explain/demystify the design process, show how the design has come about

- use hand drawings to illustrate the scheme, they are 'friendlier' and often more easy to 'read'. CAD drawings even if there are presented as sketches invariably are perceived as the final design decision.

## 6. Public Parks Management

In this chapter the aim is to illustrate how public participation is influencing approaches to the management of public parks and green space.

### 6.1 Management with 'Community', 'User' and 'Friends' Groups

Perhaps a good illustration of the importance now placed on public involvement in environmental management and development is the publication in 2002 of the Urban Parks Forum document 'Parks and Green space Engaging the Community: A Local Authority Guide' and the DTLR document 'Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces' Dunnett, Swanwick and Woolley (2002). These documents restate the desirability of community involvement and demonstrate that across the UK an increasing number of schemes offer good examples.

In connection with Parks and Green space the terms 'Community', 'User' and 'Friends' groups are often used interchangeable. 'Community Groups' do not necessarily have a site-specific focus, 'Friends Groups' have often been set up independent of local authorities and 'User Groups' tend to be established by local authorities, but local authorities are increasingly using the term 'Friends'.

The Urban Parks Forum is currently compiling a database of all the 'community' groups involved in parks and green space maintenance and management and their initial findings suggest that several thousand such groups exist in the UK. It is estimated that 40-50 % of these groups call themselves 'friends groups', Urban Parks Forum (2002). These groups vary widely in their size, influence, funding and membership base this is in part because the vast majority are constituted around a specific site.

In the past many groups, were established to address a crisis in parks management and were to a greater or lesser extent pressure groups opposing local authority policies and practices. However the benefits of such groups have made it increasingly common for local authorities to support or even sponsor the establishment of such groups. It is acknowledged that accessing funding through the active engagement with such groups is a consideration, Dunnett, Swanwick and Woolley (2002) and that in part this is a response to the obligations placed on local authorities by Best Value (2.3.1), Urban Parks Forum (2002). However the extent to which the credo of 'community' involvement has begun to flourish in local authority parks departments is also due to real commitment from a number of authorities. A number of these authorities are being rewarded with Beacon Status (2.3.1).

The extent of collaboration between local authorities and friend/user groups is extremely variable, of 50 local authorities considered by the scoping study for their report Dunnett, Swanwick and Woolley found that 6 did not

collaborate with such groups at all. Of those that did over half collaborated with fewer than 5 groups while at the other extreme Sheffield collaborated with 80 and Stockport 49. Such high numbers of groups are a result of local authorities actively establishing groups as policy applicable across parks and green space provision. The lower numbers are indicative of authorities which rely on existing groups or help to establish groups only to meet specific project objectives. Dunnett, Swanwick and Woolley (2002).

### **Example; Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC)**

OMBC is in a process of transition, which is progressively increasing the number of Friends Groups through the formation of project specific groups. As part of a rolling programme of park refurbishment OMBC concentrate on one park each year beginning the process with the establishment of a Friends Group for each park in turn. The consultation process is cast wider than this group but the Friends Group forms the hub of involvement through the proposal and implementation of the refurbishment. Subsequently the Friends Group meets with OMBC at least 3 times a year.

The role of the authorities' landscape architects has become increasingly important in this process and friends meetings are frequently attended by the principal landscape architect, Urban Parks Forum (2002).

#### *Landscape Architects' role*

The potential to engage the skills of landscape architects in respect of public involvement has been highlighted by Dunnett, Swanwick and Woolley (2002) they state that '.. in Sheffield, a sizeable number of landscape architects have been recruited into the parks department team because of their all round expertise. However the focus has been on landscape architects with a strong community focus: ... such landscape architects tend to have community engagement skills and experience developed as part of their normal involvement in consultations over design work'.

### 6.1.1 Case Study: Leeds City Council, Land use Consultants and The Friends of Roundhay Park, Roundhay Park refurbishment and management

**Primary sources:**

Interview with Andrew Booth, Park Manager, Roundhay Park, Leeds (29-05-02)

Site Visit, Roundhay Park, Leeds (29-05-02)

Interview with Robert Henderson, Deputy Chairman, Friends of Roundhay Park, Leeds (29-05-02)

Interview with Janette Emery-Wallace, Land Use Consultants, London (01-08-02)

Supporting Site Visits, Lister Park, Bradford (03-08-02), Temple Newsam Park, Leeds (04-08-02)

**Secondary sources:**

Henderson, R. (2001). Article *Best of Friends*, Leisure Management Nov. 2002

<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/> (accessed 20-11-02)

At Roundhay Park major refurbishment work is underway with consultants Land Use Consultants. Concurrently a long-term public involvement strategy is being developed.

Roundhay Park is a local authority park owned by Leeds City Council (LCC). Originally conceived as private pleasure grounds at the beginning of the nineteenth century it was purchased by what was then the Leeds Town Council. The design of the site capitalizes on the scale and variety of the topography and includes lakes, follies and a gorge walk. The Mansion House and ancillary buildings form a hub for the site, which now includes 'Tropical World' a series of glasshouses containing plants and animals from various global climate zones.

The period of public park use has seen a serious decline in the level of maintenance of the site, but also the addition of various practical and lively elements. The park has facilities to host large public events including rock concerts, an annual firework display and various festivals and fairs.

#### *Refurbishment*

Roundhay Park has won funding for a major refurbishment from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Urban Parks Programme of £6.1 M with match funding of a further £2 M. The bid for this funding was prepared by Jenette Emery-Wallis at Land Use Consultants (LUC).

Funding criteria from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Urban Parks Programme (UPP), stipulate that public consultation is part of the process of generating proposals. LUC conducted a survey of the history, current condition and character areas of the park; this was followed by the preparation of a Restoration Plan. This plan and accompanying

documentation formed a public exhibition at the park that lasted a week and was staffed by LUC staff. Debate was encouraged people were urged to write comments into a comments book.

A questionnaire, adapted from the Royal Parks Users Questionnaire was posted to every house in Leeds and was published in the local press. LCC was unable to fund a more thorough study and LUC acknowledge that there are deficiencies in using questionnaires. After analysis of the results of the questionnaire an outline master plan was drawn up. This plan ensured that HLF would accept the scheme through the first Stage of their 2 Stage process.

A final master plan was drawn up and accepted at Stage 2 by HLF for funding of £6.1 M. HLF were satisfied by the level of public consultation already carried out and so at this second stage no more formal consultation took place. However LUC continued to ensure that interested parties were kept informed of progress.

In late 2002 detail design work is to be carried out and the 4-year restoration programme begins.

Throughout the process the Friends of Roundhay Park (FORP) group is involved. Members have undertaken some of the site work necessary for part of the restoration, supervised by LCC. They are also being given guided walks by LUC to explain what is happening on site.

In addition FORP are helping to disseminate information about the restoration. For Jenette this is particularly important in connection with potentially controversial aspects of the plan such as the tree felling, which is proposed to re-establish something of the historic spatial structure of the site.

### *Park Management*

Andrew Booth became manager of Roundhay Park in 2001 with the bidding process for HLF funding underway. Andrew has a background within local authority parks department management and previously in leisure management. He has had responsibility for conducting the Best Practice Review of Parks services at LCC.

In this context Andrew is developing methods of service delivery that reflect the need to consult the public under Best Value but also as part of a practical management strategy.

A number of approaches to consultation are used which recognises the diversity of interests people have in the park. Consultation is carried out through:



- market research using the Citizens Panel ( a representative group of 1000 Leeds residents)
- quarterly meetings of the Roundhay Consultation Group
- regular meetings and less formal contact with the Friends of Roundhay Park (the friends group)
- regular formal and informal meetings/discussion with other interested parties

The Citizens Panel is a resource used by all departments within Leeds City Council to gather information and opinions. The panellists are 1000 residents selected to represent the social, cultural and age mix of the city.

The Roundhay Consultation Group is made up of representatives from local schools, the youth service, the police, the Roundhay Forum, Roundhay Historical Society, residents groups, local elected councillors and FORP. Attendance at the quarterly meeting fluctuates. Annually the plan for the forthcoming year (which is necessitated by the constraints of the annual spending round) is presented to this group.

The Friends of Roundhay Park group (FORP) represent the most visible and proactive element in this process and as volunteer's members of FORP carry out work on site facilitated by Park Staff, this includes maintenance and recently the development of a bog garden. FORP do not actively participate in day-to-day management, though they are informed of activity within the park; this aids the dissemination of information.

The interested parties that Andrew aims to talk to at least once a month (while they are using the park) include golfers, cricket teams, anglers, bowlers, football teams, the 2 pubs on site, and the two cafes on site. Other groups are more difficult to contact but as Andrew says 'Just because you can't easily identify and/or contact a group it doesn't mean you can ignore them.'

The immediate neighbourhood of Roundhay Park has a large ethnically mixed population. However voices from these backgrounds are still largely absent from the consultation process, despite very intensive use of the park by Asian families in particular and the annual Leeds Mela (a festival of Asian music and culture) is held in the park.



*Fig. 26 Roundhay Park, Waterloo Lake.*

### *The Friends of Roundhay Park (FORP)*

As stated this group represents the most visible and proactive element in the process of public involvement in managing the park. It is a formally constituted group, which was formed independently of LCC. The membership is representative of those park users who are concerned about the physical condition of the park and the uses to which the park is put. As such could be regarded as a pressure group.

When we spoke to him, Robert Henderson, deputy chairman of FORP, had just returned from New York where he met his counterparts in FORP of Central Park group. Contacts between the 2 groups go back 4 years and the Roundhay Group has used the Central Park Friends as a model for their organization. This places an emphasis on forming partnerships with local business in the form of a Board of Patrons, who donate regularly to FORP. This allows FORP to fund newsletters (now in full colour) which have a distribution of 4,000 to park users through the cafes, Tropical World, the Patrons and directly to the 200 members of FORP.

The cost of membership has risen from £3.00 to £10.00 or £15.00 for a family, and this now includes free entrance to Tropical World, normal cost £1.00.

FORP have produced leaflets, postcards, note-lets and even an illustrated history of the Park. The web-site of the FORP is a co production with a local firm and includes a brief history of the Park and 36 virtual panoramas of the park with accompanying text. Postcards advertising the virtual tour have also been produced.

FORP are able to make donations to the Park and these have funded specific items such as litterbins and even a new quad bike. In addition there is ongoing practical conservation work carried out by FORP, most recently this has involved clearing the Gorge in response to the requirements of the LUC master plan.

While being an open membership organization Robert Henderson does not claim that FORP group is representative of all the parks users and/or potential users. While he would welcome a wider range of members the group does not actively pursue potential members from currently unrepresented backgrounds.

It is because of the particular interests represented by FORP group it cannot be regarded as the only vehicle for public involvement and consultation in managing the park. In recognition of this Andrew Booth has developed and continues to develop the approach outlined above including the wider reaching Roundhay Consultation Group.



*An Invitation  
to join*



ROUNDHAY PARK  
BELONGS  
TO YOU



Fig. 27 Friends of Roundhay Park, recruitment leaflet

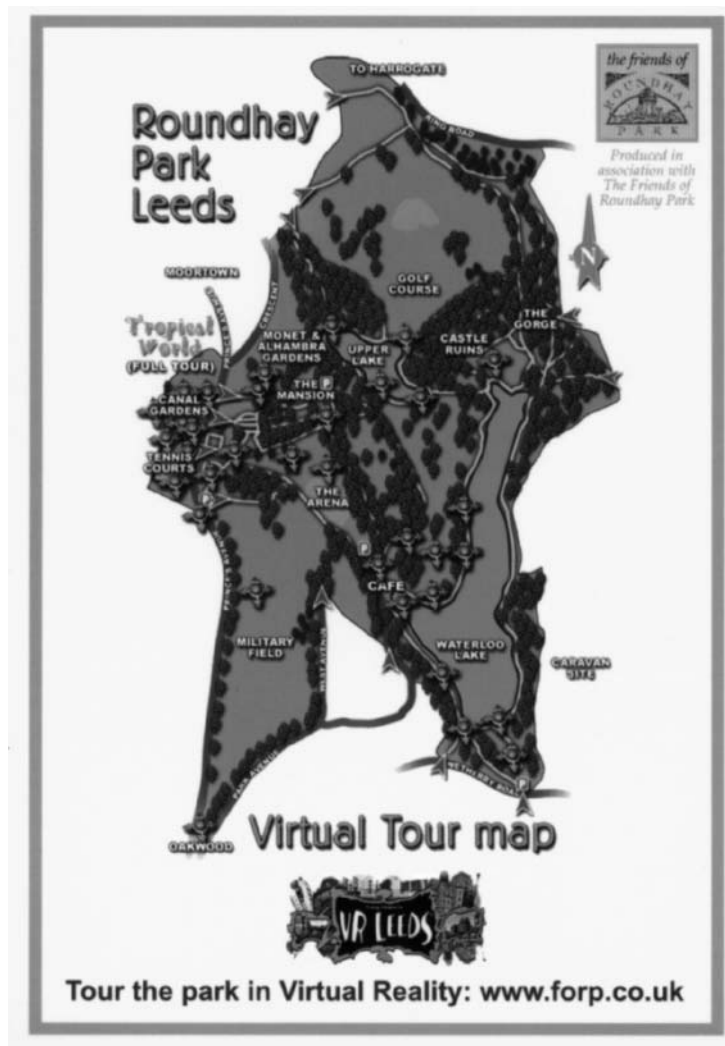


Fig. 28 Friends of Roundhay Park, postcard promoting the virtual tour of the park created in collaboration with VRLeeds.

## 7. Discussion

Whether it is through communitarianism, common sense or expedience the call for ‘community’ involvement in landscape projects in the UK is on the increase. Landscape architects are key players amongst the group of professionals charged with involving the public. Appreciating the arguments around the issues of ‘involvement’, ‘consultation’ and ‘participation’ is essential.

The nature of that involvement varies enormously, from consultation/survey exercises such as participatory appraisal used at Groundwork (3.1.1) to projects where members of the public are making all the design decisions as we saw at the BTCV (3.1.2). However we have seen that many projects give members of the public the opportunity to influence some decisions by feeding their ideas into the formulation of the design brief and/or through being given a choice from options presented by professionals.

Achieving a completely inclusive collaborative process where all stakeholders are equally engaged is obviously idealistic, even for small tightly defined landscape sites where all the stakeholders can be identified. However where landscape architects are charged with achieving the widest possible public involvement they must be clear about what can be achieved and what is desirable, socially and politically.

As we have discovered landscape architects have been influential in demonstrating the possibilities for approaches to ‘community’ involvement, especially through Groundwork UK (3.1.1), though not through the Landscape Institute to date. How much landscape architects consider their work to have such a political dimension is hard to say, it is also not clear that they are aware of the wealth of theory which supports the subject.

While organizations such as the Architecture Foundation (4.1.1), Planning Aid (4.1.2), Public Arts (4.1.4), BTCV (3.1.2) and Community Forests (3.1.3) are approaching the subject with their own professional agendas Groundwork (3.1.1) is the nearest thing to such an organization for landscape architects. Ironically the growth of Groundwork has been for the most part without the active support of the Landscape Institute. Even now when the issue of ‘community’ involvement in landscape issues has become so significant the Institute still has no policy or guidance for its members. Despite a lack of promotion, the particular skills and knowledge base of landscape architects in relation to ‘community’ involvement would appear to be increasingly widely recognized (6.1).

### 7.1 Design Quality

An issue that was often discussed during our visits to the UK was the quality of design and in the case of Public Arts the quality of artwork.

The association of uninspiring or even poor design within ‘community’ projects seems common. We found cases of environmental ‘improvements’ which had not involved a designer at all; for the BTCV professional design almost seemed incompatible with community action. For Groundwork Phil Barton highlighted a tension between community enabling and landscape design within his organization.

We found that where landscape architects are involved with community projects they tend to keep the design process for themselves, responding to the ‘community’ but not giving away their role as designers. In fact the design of the public involvement process itself seemed to be regarded as an exciting and creative prospect by many.

In this connection the architect Brian Lawson, citing the research of Mackinnon, offers an interesting insight *‘He (Mckinnon) found his creative architects to be poised and confident, though not especially sociable. They were also characteristically intelligent, self-centred, outspoken and, even, aggressive and held a very high opinion of themselves. Disturbingly it was the group of architects’ judges less creative who saw themselves as more responsible and having greater sympathetic concern for others.’* Lawson (1997). This raises the possibility that the sort of the landscape architects who find ‘community’ involvement appealing are simply less likely to be especially creative designers.

Three of the organizations we have studied had design (and art) quality to the fore. The Architecture Foundation, Public Arts and Yorkshire Forward have all tackled this issue.

By engaging high profile landscape architects, architects and artists with acknowledged creative flare it has been possible to demonstrate that ‘community’ involvement and high-end design are not mutually exclusive. The nature and extent of ‘community’ involvement varied between projects, but it seemed common to them all that the deliberative aspects of the process were often guided to ensure that people saw the desirability of professional design/art input.

Particularly interesting was the approach being pioneered by Public Arts and used by Gibbons at Edward Square of having ‘community’ projects running alongside the design/art process and feeding into it at key points.

This is not ‘citizen control’ in that people are not designing themselves (see Arnstein’s ladder of participation 1.1). However projects from Public Arts and Landscape Project’s Hulme Park have empowered people by giving them responsibility for commissioning artwork and acting as clients. Similarly it could be argued that giving people the opportunity to engage the services of high profile designers/artists can be extremely positive in terms of capacity building.

Ultimately this line of discussion raises the question of accountability and highlights the shift from a single client for the designer i.e. the local authority/institution to a much more complex, heterogeneous entity, which is loosely termed 'the community'.

## 7.2 The Complex Client

As Roe and Rowe state in their chapter *Community and the Landscape Professional*, 'A great variety of project structures are now emerging as a result of work which does not conform the norms of a single client...' and they cite '...community groups as the chief client...' as a manifestation of the new type of professional relationships which are being formed. Benson and Roe (2000).

The community group as the chief client obviously creates a host of challenges for a designer, interacting with what can be competing interests within the group and dealing with potentially variable levels of commitment and engagement.

For the landscape architect 'community' involvement often creates the curious situation of them being charged with identifying the 'community' to work with. It is then this 'community' that the landscape architect is answerable to, a case of having defined your own client, in a sense. The relationship is often complex, if generally amiable, and the landscape architect is at once guiding members of this 'community' and being guided by them.

Additionally it can be unclear from project briefs who is and who isn't the 'community' in question, despite the fact that the landscape architect may be expected to be 'widening access' and 'inclusivity'. As we have seen landscape architects find themselves making decisions about whether access is wide enough and whether the process is inclusive enough.

The issues of inclusion and access are constantly unfolding; the myriad needs of different disabled people, the old, the young and cultural considerations are all being examined and new thinking is enabling practitioners to be ever more responsive. Organizations such as the Black Environmental Network (BEN) (<http://www.ben-network.org.uk/>) and The Research Group for Inclusive Environments (<http://www.reading.ac.uk/ie>) offer expertise in these areas.

## 7.3 The Complex Project

Public participation in its fullest sense requires landscape architects to create projects and structures that go far beyond those necessary to get well-designed landscape 'on the ground'. Going beyond consultation demands a whole set of new skills, what Rowe and Roe describe in detail as the toolbox

of new techniques (Benson and Roe, 2000). As previously stated the design of the process can be regarded as an important part of the whole project process and finding creative ways to engage people has become a key element in projects such as Architecture Foundation Roadshow and Yorkshire Forwards Renaissance Towns.

Partnership working is becoming increasingly common and often Community Development Workers, Educationalists, Social Workers, the Police and a host of other professionals will contribute to projects. As well as interpersonal skills between professionals, public involvement requires an ability to communicate effectively with the public.

Landscape architects must accept that certain projects are as much about 'community development' and 'capacity building' as they are about environmental improvements. Creating imaginative and well designed landscape may simply not be a priority and it is often only the landscape architect who is in a position, through a project to act as a champion for design and/or art.

These developments call many of the assumptions and traditional practices of landscape architecture into question, and now landscape architects are conducting participatory appraisals, running 'community design' events, identifying and pursuing 'community' inclusiveness and increasingly offering their expertise in 'community involvement'.

It is certainly underestimating the variety and complexity of this work that the Landscape Institute's Appointment document only describes, under Part 2 Other Services, '*Public Meetings 2.2.12 Prepare and organize material for public consultation and liaison; attend public meetings.*' Landscape Institute (1988).

## **7.4 Expertise, Education and Training**

While within the profession of landscape architecture there is now considerable expertise in public involvement, particularly through Groundwork, the extent of education and training e.g. Continuing Professional Development, (CPD) geared towards the profession seems disproportionately low.

Groundwork is described in the Baker Associates report in 1999 as '*an effective "laboratory" or "test-bed"*' the report also states that the methods which prove effective are '*absorbed into practice by a wide range of regeneration organizations and projects*'. Groundwork does train its staff and disseminates best practice amongst the Trusts.

Rowe and Roe state that '*Most landscape schools in the UK now have some community landscape component although this is variable and has not so far been regarded by the professional accreditation body (the Landscape Institute) as an essential part of students' education,*' Benson and Roe (2000). The situation remains the same as of April 2003.



The longest-established education for landscape architecture students in community involvement is at Leeds Metropolitan University. Here Design and Community Projects have been part of the curriculum for final degree year students for almost 25 years. These projects are 'live' and have resulted in students working with over 80 local groups, schools and other institutions. These projects have developed interpersonal skills, project management and technical landscape building skills with little emphasis on public involvement theory and practice. Over 800 graduates in landscape architecture have completed these projects and, allowing for the fact they will not all have gone on to become landscape architects, this must represent still a sizeable percentage of a profession of only 4,500. (See Landscape Institute <http://www.l-i.org.uk/>)

Ian Thompson considers that there are significant practical limitations on 'community' projects at undergraduate level and considers that CPD events for practicing landscape architects may be extremely useful.

The Prince's Foundation for Architecture has taken a role in providing education and training in 'community architecture' though it seems that the activities of the Foundation are viewed with a degree of suspicion by the architecture establishment.

While Planning for Real™ was widely cited as significant in the development of method and practices we found that it was not widely used by the landscape architects we talked to. The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF) struggled to find an example for us of its use specifically for landscape design despite the fact that NIF have trained a number of landscape architects in the technique. We found that to achieve a comprehensive Planning for Real™ exercise, as part of landscape design project, was generally considered overly complex and/or time consuming. This may be because practitioners are not sufficiently well trained in the technique or that it is geared towards planning in its broader context and requires significant adaptation to the circumstances of particular landscape projects.

With the exception of Groundwork and some local authority landscape architects we found there was an absence of any specific training and that 'common sense' and 'learning by doing' prevailed. With little recourse to relevant literature, web sources or networks landscape architects, particularly those in private practice, seemed to rely on 'rule of thumb', this mirrors the findings of Thompson (2000). The ability of landscape architects to effectively assimilate and synthesize methods and practices is evident throughout this process and pragmatism rather than idealism seem to prevail.

## 7.5 Management and Maintenance

Ian Thompson suggests that designers consider the most satisfactory aspect of schemes produced in a collaborative manner is that they are '*... going to have a far greater chance of long-term success than one that has simply been imposed.*' (Thompson, 2000) However as evidenced at William Foster's Playing Fields, collaborative design alone is no guarantee of the long-term success of a scheme (4.1.3). At the same time many landscapes appear to function excellently without any involvement from public beyond their happy enjoyment of it.

If the case can be made for public involvement as a means of achieving improved sustainability then it may be that the involvement itself needs to be sustained. This is particularly relevant with regard to the involvement of children who quickly outgrow the designs they have collaborated on leaving a next generation of children with a design handed down. This may mean that site design should provide scope for ongoing alterations, additions and developments, or that a site should function as an essential setting for cultural activities and events.

Increasingly the most common structures for ensuring continued involvement include Friends Groups. The need for local people to involve themselves in the management and maintenance of their local parks and green spaces through Friends Groups has been in many cases a response to local authority neglect. However the desirability of such involvement has been widely acknowledged by local authorities, and Friends Groups are now a common phenomenon. These groups tend to represent a relatively narrow section of the public and there is a danger that they are regarded as synonymous with the 'community' and thereby used to achieve tokenistic public involvement (6.1).

## 7.6 Fun: the Magic Ingredient

Almost without exception the practitioners we spoke to tell us that 'fun' was essential to their work. Engaging often reticent members of the public was seen as simply impossible if the process was not to some extent fun. It would be fair to say that a general sense of fun pervaded our interviewees, all the more remarkable because they are often working with individuals and groups who are the poorest and most excluded in society. The work often requires practitioners to create situations where people can experience their environment and the company of others in a celebratory way, through events and parties. This is the realm of 'community building' but as we have seen environment and 'community' are increasingly being approached in tandem.

For many of our interviewees commitment to fun/celebration was bound up in a notion of creativity. Creating engaging and fun events was seen as es-

essential to the success of projects and is potentially a highly creative aspect of the work.

## **7.7 The Danish Perspectives**

An international move to increase the level of public involvement in decision making has generated policy at UN and EU level that obviously impacts both Denmark and the UK. There is therefore a parallel need to explore both the theory and practice of this in relation to landscape projects in both countries. In the UK evidence of public/'community' involvement is well established as a funding criterion for many environmental improvement projects and while this is not the case in Denmark the emphasis is certainly shifting in this direction.

The UK design and planning tradition, and management models seem considerably different from those in Denmark. Denmark's long established democratization of the planning system has meant that over the last 30 years a tradition of public involvement in the decision process has existed. In UK the last 10 years has seen a rapid increase in the emphasis on public involvement and this has meant that discussion and development have been much more intense than in Denmark. As a result a wide range of practical methods has been developed with the goal of understanding the wishes, concerns and values of the public before projects begin, and importantly ways to involve the public in different ways during projects. With a tradition that differs significantly from that in Denmark members of the public in UK have had an influence on the planning and management of public parks through the establishment of Friends Groups. The establishment of such groups is still an embryonic phenomenon in Denmark.

The focus on Friends Groups as a means of involving the public in the UK presents a significant difference with the Danish experience. The poor state of UK parks and green space has been highlighted through the work of The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce and again this is in sharp contrast to the situation in Denmark (Beer, 2002). Similarly the poverty and social exclusion that exist in the UK is without parallel in Denmark. Due to the extreme deprivation in parts of the UK environmental improvements are often instigated as a means of developing 'communities' and capacity building in a social context. In Denmark the closest parallel can be found in the "Kvarterløfts" projects in which a democratic consciousness and local responsibility are developed in a holistic approach to environmental improvements.

In general there is a lack of trust in the UK between the public and their local authorities and a high degree of cynicism about the ability and willingness of local authorities and central government to manage affairs. This is very different from the Danish situation where there is generally a high level of respect for the municipal system. The situation the UK has resulted in a long list of independent organizations that work outside the municipal system, with great efforts from voluntary workers. Here too, the UK

tradition for voluntary work with social, environmental and cultural goals can be seen. This tradition and the high status afforded charities in the UK gives some of these organizations significant power and influence, they are also seen as capable of work which is beyond the skills and resources of many local authorities (3.1). The tendency to create new organizations independent of/or partially connected to existing state and municipal authorities can also be seen in Danish urban renewal, but the great dependency on charity and voluntary work is not to be found.

Among the private practice landscape architects we visited, there is significant attention paid to public involvement in the design process. As is the case in Denmark, the Landscape Institute in the UK has no policy on the subject and it is very much up to individual offices to choose and use the methods they find appropriate. As in Denmark the practice of public involvement is therefore dependent on individuals' experiences and available literature. In UK, as in Denmark, individual offices are developing their knowledge and experience independently, their experience is extremely variable with some practices becoming particularly skilled.

Other professional organizations in UK have engaged in the debate around the necessity for public involvement and at least some of the bigger organizations have actively supported the subject through implementing projects and developing methods and practices. The need for such methods and practices for public involvement is important in both countries, but in UK the recent focus on public involvement has resulted in numerous books, articles, etc. which describe practical methods such as Wates (2000) and Public Arts (2001), or those which place the subject in a wider theoretical context such as books by Benson & Roe (2000) and Thompson (2000). Corresponding literature in the area of landscape design and planning is not available in Danish. In the UK we have seen that the growing literature on methods, practices and terminology is providing a basis for discussion and ongoing developments in this area.

25 years of experience with Design and Community projects on the undergraduate landscape architecture course at Leeds Metropolitan University has given an educational experience of the issues of public involvement to a significant number of now practicing landscape architects. Corresponding courses cannot be found in Denmark. However, if education in this area is to be developed in UK and DK, it is clear that research is required to examine its potential and practicality.

## **7.8 Conclusions**

- Design Quality is not a sacrificial offering to public involvement. Where designers are proactive in the process, public involvement has the potential to give more people the opportunity to develop their own ideas about design and the landscape. To do this landscape ar-

chitects must be given the opportunity to continue to develop as designers.

- In many cases disparate, unrelated and often unsustainable (unmaintainable) projects have been undertaken in the name of 'community development'. Landscape architects must have confidence in dealing with the agenda of 'community development' so that they can demonstrate the desirability of a strong design ethos within projects.
- Involving the public in landscape design only offers short-term benefits unless structures are in place to ensure continuing involvement in future developments, management and maintenance. Where children have participated in schemes they quickly grow up leaving facilities for the next generations that have not been involved.
- Effective public involvement usually requires additional resources to those allocated to a traditional approach, to be effective they will also require long-term funding. Direct economic and social benefits of public involvement may be hard to assess in a quantitative way.
- Landscape architects need well-developed interpersonal skills and an ability to create events/situations that appeal to people in order to facilitate public involvement. This applies to creating events/situations during the process as well as designing landscape that helps facilitate events/situations.
- With a few exceptions landscape architects in the UK are not currently being trained in the practice, or educated in the theory, of public involvement to any significant degree. However there is a high level of expertise within the profession particularly, but not exclusively, at Groundwork.

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### 8.1 Personal Communications

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## 9. Appendix

### 9.1 Appendix 1, National Award Schemes

- Beacon Council Scheme
- Green Flag Scheme
- BURA Award for Community Regeneration
- Public Involvement Awards
- Landscape Institute Awards

*Beacon Councils Scheme* was introduced in 1998 in response to the White Paper: 'Modernising Local Government: In touch with the People'. By awarding councils Beacon Status annually in an evolving set for categories the scheme aims to help identify best practice. The categories relevant to the current study are Neighbourhood Renewal and Improving Urban Green Spaces, which featured in the last round of Beacon Awards and Community Cohesion, Street and Highway work, Rethinking Construction and Quality of the Built Environment in the current round.

While Beacon status is awarded by the ODPM, the dissemination of best practice, training etc. is undertaken by the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA), which is an independent body set up to assist local authorities.

(<http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/beacon/> 12-09-02)

(<http://www.idea.gov.uk/> 12-09-02)

**The following awards are presented by non-governmental organizations.**

*Green Flag Scheme*, Civic Trust, is an annual scheme, which assesses the quality of public parks against 8 criteria of which no. 6 is 'Community involvement - ways of encouraging community participation and acknowledging the community's role in a park's success'. The ODPM is represented on the judging panel.

(<http://www.civictrust.org.uk> 12-09-02)

*Award for Community Regeneration*, British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA), is an annual award sponsored by English Partnerships, the umbrella body for the Urban Regeneration Agency and the Commission for the New Towns. BURA is an independent body with links to government. BURA are producing an evaluation and review of award winning schemes which will be published late Oct.2002.

(<http://www.bura.org.uk/> 12-09-02)

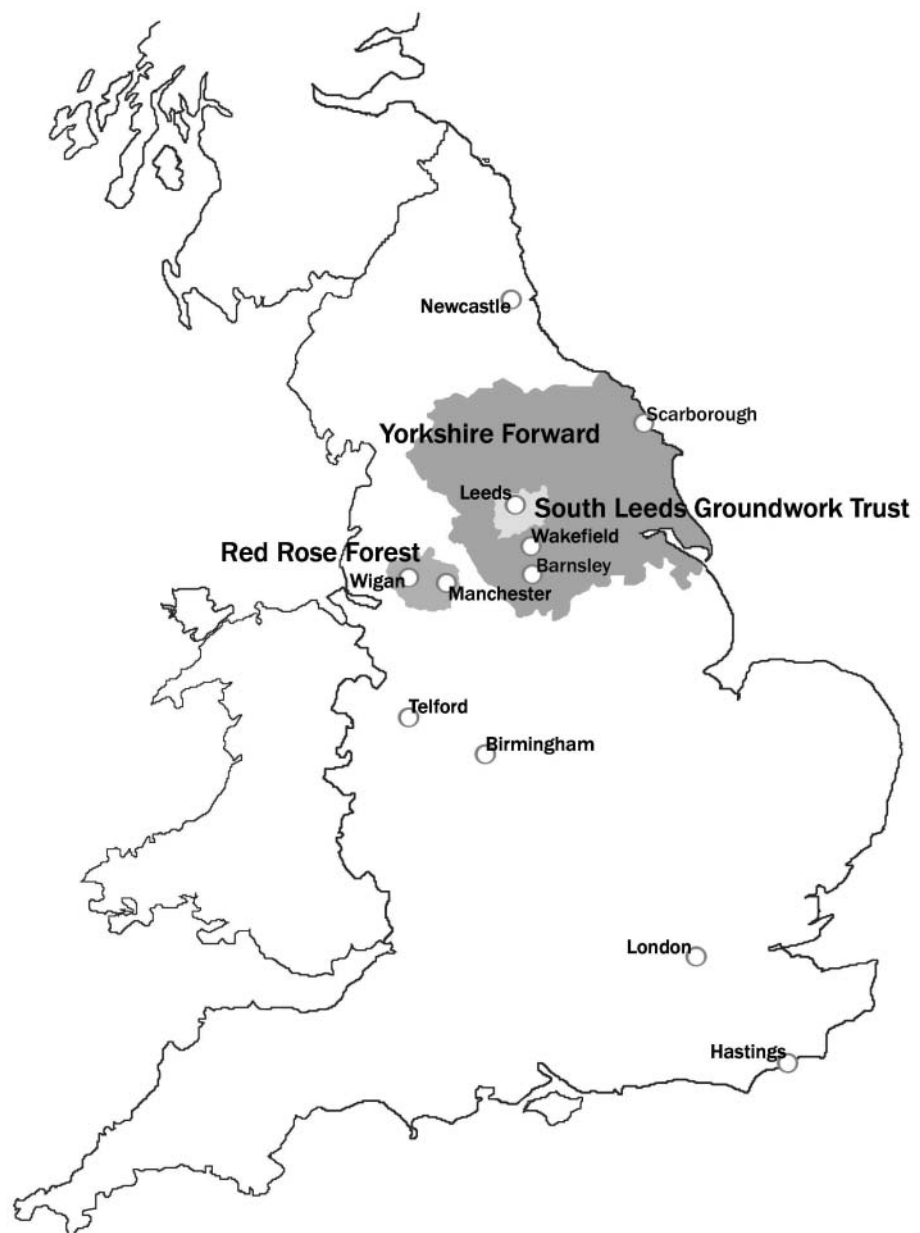
*Public Involvement Awards*, Institute for Public Policy Research & the Guardian, is an annual award for any group or organization, which show a genuine commitment to involving people in decision making. In the past Ground work have been short listed in the general category.

(<http://www.ippr.org.uk/12-09-02>)

*Landscape Institute Awards*, have in previous years included an award for Small Community Projects and though for 2001 no award was dedicated to the issue it is recognized as significant in the judges' comments for the President's Award.

(<http://www.l-i.org.uk/23-09-02>)

## 9.2 Appendix 2, Key locations referred to in the report.



### 9.3 Appendix 3 Methodology

The aim of the report is to give a contemporary overview of public involvement in landscape architecture in the UK. To conceptualise this, an understanding of the philosophical, political and historic background was required. This was achieved through literature and web searches and importantly through contacts, existing and initiated, with academics in the UK.

Scoping the study was the initial focus and proceeded rapidly following known routes, literature and Internet sources. An approximate scope for the study was established and on this basis, organizations, groups and individuals were identified to form the pattern of visits and interviews. The nature of this study is such that the case studies are intended to typify the developing tradition of public involvement in the UK.

Two visits to the UK proved useful; the first visit aided with furthering the scoping work and helping to determine the itinerary of the second visit.

The timescale for the visits has proved to have been well planned May 26<sup>th</sup> - June 4<sup>th</sup> for the first visit then Aug 1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> for the second. The intervening period was adequate to plan the second in light of the first. After the second visit two periods of work 4 weeks in September and 4 weeks in November proved adequate for writing up.

Identifying and then contacting key individuals and organizations was essential and was on the whole accomplished by the conclusion of our second visit. All interviewees have been given the opportunity to comment on the text pertaining to the relevant case study before publication.

Notes from texts studied at every stage of the process formed the theoretical and political and discussion sections of the text. Notes taken on the visits were edited to form the bulk of the case study texts, combined with notes of supporting documentation. A uniform format for case studies was rejected due to the variability of the studies.

Giving an overview of the subject in the UK context is daunting due to the labyrinthine pattern of independent and Government organizations and structures. The nature of the Landscape Institute is such that there is no official policy on the subject. Faced with a mountain of general information and a paucity of specific information we are in danger simultaneously of oversimplification and speculation.

In the hope of grounding this report our primary sources are invaluable, however we are aware that the small number of private practices involved makes some of our identification of trends somewhat speculative.

Through the study it had been hoped to use drawing in parallel with writing as a means of research and presentation. Exploring this concept through the study was considered too time consuming, when so much text based information processing was required.

The distribution of workload between the two of us reflected very much our respective language skills and areas of expertise. Jens provided organization and overview with Richard concentrated on sourcing and processing information. Richard's background in local authority work and public involvement provided a knowledge base for the study to proceed rapidly through the complexities of the situation in the UK.





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