

Why Invest in Landscape?

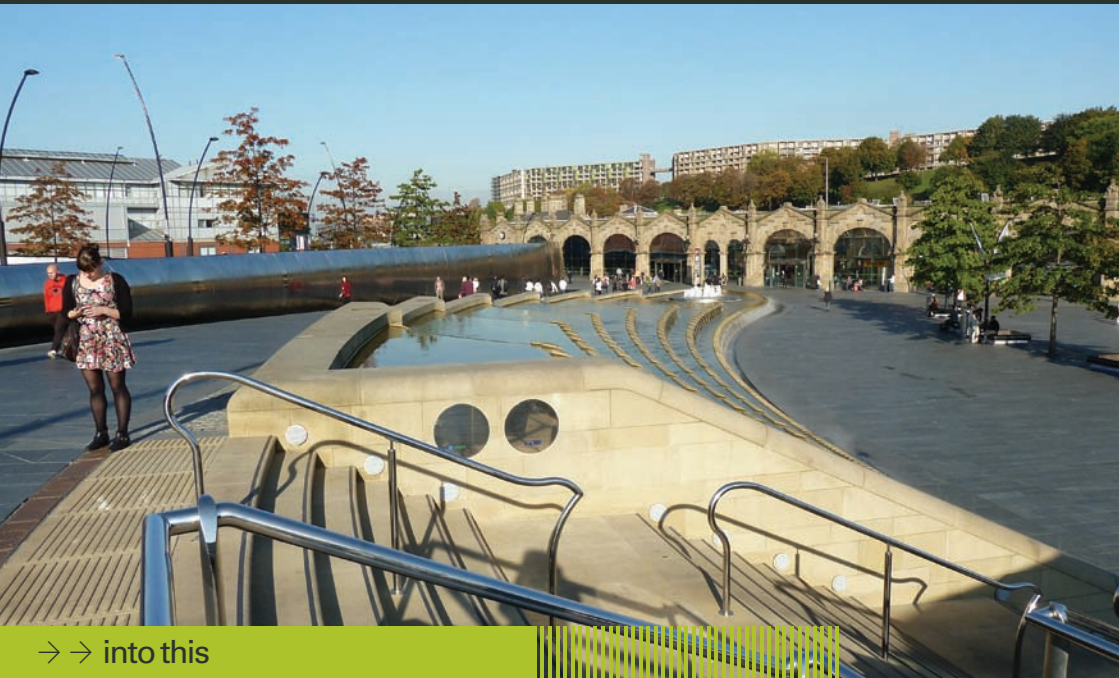


So that this can be transformed → →

Investing in our most valuable resource



Sheffield's Gold Route, finalist in the UK Landscape Award 2010
Credit: Sheffield City Council



→ → into this



Investment in the landscape makes sound economic sense – the evidence is compelling. When landscape is placed at the heart of the development process, developers profit while businesses and communities reap the economic benefits. This publication focuses on the positive impact on business and communities of investment in landscape.

Landscape architecture encompasses a wide range of activity from planning and design to scientific research and management, in both rural and urban areas. The case studies we have chosen focus on the positive economic benefits delivered by the application of these skills. These case studies demonstrate many benefits, including:

- Creating spaces that users can connect with both physically and emotionally – leading to benefits for local businesses such as increased footfall and time spent.
- Focussing attention on the value of the built and natural environment in the regeneration process.
- Delivering reduced development costs through the intelligent use of existing landscape features and the imaginative disposal/incorporation of construction waste.
- Realising increased saleability and rentability of both private housing and commercial property.
- Optimising the full development potential of a given location.

A key feature of landscape architecture is its ability to deliver a range of social, environmental and economic benefits at the same time. This represents an approach to development and placemaking which makes the most of our landscape. The need to tackle challenges such as housing supply, climate change, biodiversity loss and water management remains undiminished, despite the current economic downturn. The landscape architecture profession is uniquely positioned to create, for its clients, great places where people feel inspired to live, work and visit.

Background

Prior to November 2007, a busy roundabout formed the central feature of an area known as The Square in Barnstaple. The roundabout effectively formed a barrier between the town centre and its attractive waterfront, as well as degrading the setting of the listed North Devon Museum and other important monuments. The construction of a bypass, which reduced traffic in the town centre, provided an opportunity to redesign this area for the benefit of the wider community, in line with a local desire for an events space for the people of the town.

The Square

Barnstaple, Devon, England

→ → Landscape improvements at The Square have dramatically increased visitor numbers to Barnstaple's town centre



Jill White

Work undertaken by the landscape profession

A new public area was designed enabling the museum to form the centrepiece of The Square and opening up views towards the river and the Strand. In order to accommodate increased visitor numbers, new seating was introduced using a design robust enough to withstand the local microclimate associated with the riverside location and general wear and tear – minimising the longer term maintenance costs. Cypress oak trees were chosen to reflect the scale of the historic clock tower and the open spaces. Their tapering form addresses safety concerns, by allowing clear views for CCTV cameras, while separating pedestrian space from traffic. The need for flexible but durable paving was addressed with the use of granite slabs laid on sand, facilitating easy replacement whilst accommodating the vehicle loadings required by the increasing number of public events.

Economic impact

By relocating traffic to the perimeter of the area, Barnstaple has gained a vital town centre venue. A contemporary, uncluttered space for pedestrians has been created which enhances existing features such as the Museum and other locally important monuments. As part of a wider regeneration strategy, the new design has created clear links with the town centre, its river and nearby Strand area. The result is a new town square which is enjoyed by people both during the day and at night. Since 2007, major events have taken place and farmers' markets are a regular feature. The town's architecturally and historically important museum now forms the centre piece of the square and is easily accessible. The increased footfall in the area has led to a dramatic leap in visitor numbers at the museum from approximately 50,000 a year before work was completed to 78,000 in 2009.

“ Since its redevelopment in 2007, The Square has become the centrepiece and focal point for major events not least of which are the annual Christmas Lights switch-on celebrations which draw in around 10,000 people. The Square has given the town a space that has been used regularly for many community and charity events, ranging from New Year's Eve celebrations through to events for our local hospice and this year our first multicultural event celebrating our diverse community. All of this together with the general design, feel and ambiance has provided a general and welcome boost for business.

Craig Bulley
Barnstaple Town Centre Manager



The Square
Devon, England

Client
Devon County Council
Landscape architect
Devon County Council
Further information
www.devon.gov.uk

Background

Pontypool was once a hub of industrial activity, including coal mining and iron and steel production. The town lost much of this activity following the decline of these industries and was in need of revitalisation. In recognition of this, Torfaen County Borough Council commissioned LDA Design to prepare a Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, comprising a vision, a town framework and deliverable projects designed to halt the town's decline.

Pontypool Regeneration Strategy

Wales

→ → The Pontypool Regeneration Strategy has highlighted the important role of the town's natural assets in the process of regeneration



Work undertaken by the landscape profession

The landscape architects have proposed a landscape-led approach to the regeneration strategy. This means that the strategy seeks to identify and capitalise on Pontypool's wider landscape context; its park and river, located at the edge of the town centre; and the surrounding hills and valleys (including the Brecon Beacons National Park which stretches to the edge of Pontypool Park). Early consultation with the local community revealed that there was a limited understanding about Pontypool's identity and a corresponding lack of confidence in its future. The strategy therefore involves re-introducing the community to the landscape that defines it. Reconnection with these assets, drawing them right into the heart of the town, provides the basis for the necessary rediscovery and reversal of the downturn in confidence. Drawing on these natural assets will help to distinguish Pontypool and to give it a competitive advantage over comparable towns.

The Strategy recognises that increasing the economic performance of the town requires better interaction by people between the town centre, park, river and new supermarket. It also recognises that the quality of the town centre environment must be improved if footfall and expenditure are to increase.

Economic impact

Enhancement of the townscape through heritage improvements, public realm works and investment in the indoor market is projected by the Council to:

- Increase footfall by 10 per cent by 2015
- Increase occupancy levels to 90 per cent
- Create 25 jobs
- Encourage £1.8m in private sector investment in the refurbishment of town centre buildings

Torfaen County Borough Council is clear that the Strategy has been central to the Council's success in securing Heritage Lottery Funding under the Townscape Heritage Initiative and believes that the absence of a Strategy would have prevented them from pursuing funding from the Welsh European Funding Office. Decisions are expected shortly and it is anticipated that this will result in £2m of ERDF funding and around £2.6m of Welsh Assembly Government funding being made available for the delivery of the projects identified within the Strategy.

“ Without the Pontypool Town Centre Regeneration Strategy the Council would simply not be in a position to have applied for significant public sector funds or to have convinced the private sector that there is a positive, achievable future in which to invest. The Strategy effectively demonstrates how European and Welsh programmes for regeneration can be delivered in Pontypool, as well as providing the evidence as to why public investment is needed. I am certain that, without the Strategy, the Council would not now be looking forward to the potential of the transformation of the town.

Dave Evans
Torfaen County BC

”

Pontypool Regeneration Strategy Wales

Client

Torfaen County Borough Council

Landscape architect

LDA Design

Further information

www.lda-design.co.uk

Background

Cambourne is a new settlement covering an area of 400 hectares, nine miles west of Cambridge. It has planning permission for 3,300 new homes (with an allowance in the Local Development Framework for an expansion by 'at least 700' additional homes), three primary schools and a town centre with shops, offices, commercial units, a library, health centre, ecumenical centre, burial ground, allotments, police station, sports centre, hotel and business park.

Cambourne

Cambridgeshire, England

→ → Development at Cambourne has worked with the landscape and used waste from the site in an imaginative way for the benefit of developers and the new community



Retention of site features

At Great Cambourne Village Green, retention of such features resulted in the following approximate savings:

Feature	Quantity	Cost per unit (£)	Total cost saving (£)
Existing hedgerows	450m	6.50	3500.00
Ponds	3	500.00	1500.00
Mature feature trees	12	1000.00	12000.00
Woodland trees	75	120.00	9000.00
Meadow	700sqm	6.60	4620.00
Meadow drainage	600	5.80	3480.00
Tennis court (excavate, lay base and macadam)	680sqm	26.00	17680.00
Benches (from felled trees)	4	450.00	1800.00
Total			£53580.00

Work undertaken by the landscape profession

At the very beginning of the design process for Cambourne, landscape architecture practice Randall Thorp conducted detailed research to identify and categorise all existing features of landscape value within the project area, including trees, hedges, woodlands, ditches, ponds, grasslands and verges. This assessment enabled the retention of those features of most importance, maintaining the character of the location in a way that was cost effective. View lines were planned through built development and from the highways to ensure that features such as mature trees were visible to visitors and potential house buyers.

Economic impact

The work undertaken by the landscape architect resulted in a variety of positive economic impacts, including:

—Accommodating ‘waste’

From the outset, the landscape and open spaces were designed and phased to accommodate all spoil from the site. This required careful design to ensure that existing features were not buried or harmed and the resulting new landform looked natural. Upon completion, the project will have generated over 700,000m³ of spoil. Current rates for disposal off-site are in the order of £28/m³. However, because of the careful landscape

design at Cambourne, the cost of organising and administering the on-site disposal is approximately £8/m³, resulting in a cost saving of about £20/m³, or £12million.

—Smoothing the planning process

The landscape architect has been involved in the project since its inception, and since 1998, responsible for all ongoing revision and strategic changes to the masterplan as well as preparing all design briefing documents and reserved matters applications for open spaces and green infrastructure. This continuous involvement has ensured a high level of trust between the local planning authority, the landscape architect and the client. This has enabled the client to spend only a limited amount of time on briefing the landscape architect, and pre-application revisions have been minimal, all leading to swift and efficient planning applications and approvals.

—Increasing saleability

Marketing material for Cambourne has focused on the quality, quantity and ease of access to open space as well as the rural character of the locality. A 2006 household survey of Cambourne asked residents what their favourite thing about Cambourne was. The number one answer was “the environment”.

“ The real benefit to the community and added value that is reflected in a premium price for good property in a nice environment is only realised when the masterplan is supported by first class landscape design and implementation. The combined effect of good initial planning, implementation and good long term maintenance all adds to the reputation that Cambourne enjoys as a desirable place to live and this is reflected by consistent sales and ongoing delivery of homes with obvious benefits to major developers Taylor Wimpey and Bovis.

Neville Stebbing
Project Director for Cambourne and
Major Projects Director for Taylor Wimpey

Cambourne
Cambridgeshire, England

Client
Taylor Wimpey
Landscape architect
Randall Thorp
Further information
www.randallthorp.co.uk



Background

Princesshay is an historic area in the centre of Exeter within the old city walls and adjacent to the cathedral. Planning consent for the redevelopment of this central retail and leisure area, which totals 5 hectares, was obtained in May 2003 with works beginning on site in January 2005. The primary objective of the masterplan was to create a thriving, retail-led mixed use development to regenerate the city. A number of aims were established which would seek to achieve this objective, including:

Princesshay

Exeter, Devon, England

→ → Investing in the landscape at Princesshay has created a destination and increased retail rents



Laura Stone



Paul Osborne

- Establishing a new prime retail pitch
- Increasing Zone A retail rates which had become static at £175 per sq ft
- Creating a sense of place while retaining and enhancing the views of the cathedral
- Respecting the setting of historic monuments
- Creating a new civic square with catering uses to increase dwell time in the city centre
- Encouraging public realm improvements and introducing public art
- Linking key thoroughfares via a permeable pedestrian network

Work undertaken by the landscape profession

Landscape architects Livingston Eyre Associates were responsible for the design of the public realm and for the redevelopment of a considerable part of the Princesshay area, working alongside three teams of architects, and interfacing with the redevelopment of the High Street by Exeter City Council. Their work sought to create lively new spaces with strong identities through the use of a carefully considered palette of high quality materials. The design integrates the diverse architectural approaches and knits them into the existing urban fabric of the city. This work was seen as central to the success of the scheme and to achieving many of the established aims.

Economic impact

Redevelopment of Princesshay has been a key contributory factor to the continued growth of the local economy.

- Increasing rental values
Figures from Exeter City Council show that zone-A rents have increased since the redevelopment of the Princesshay area, from £220/sq ft in 2006 to £225/sq ft in 2008. The most recent figures for 2009 show a slight fall for Exeter as a whole but with Princesshay retaining the rents achieved in 2008. This compares favourably with other towns nearby, such as Plymouth and Taunton, which have seen declining zone-A rents since 2006.
- Increasing footfall
Figures from Exeter City Council also show that footfall has increased steadily since the redevelopment of Princesshay. Each year, over a week in March, pedestrian flow is counted and in 2006 stood at 112,000. In 2009 this figure had increased to 133,400.

“ The creation of an enclosed open space, to give a European feel to the centre and improve the ambience of Princesshay, would not have been achieved without a classic landscape design. This has culminated in Princesshay becoming both a destination shopping area and a place to meet. The provision of landscape and the continued high level of maintenance enhance the centre as a whole. The footfall into the area has increased markedly since the centre opened and its reputation of being a place to visit is supported by the landscape and public art on show.

Andy Littlejohns
Princesshay Operations Manager
Land Securities

Princesshay
Exeter, Devon, England

Client
Land Securities
Landscape architect
Exeter City Council, Livingstone Eyre
Further information
www.exeter.gov.uk
www.livingstoneyre.co.uk



Background

The Diglis Canal Basin, Worcester, is a brownfield site that was the principal wharf area for the city in the early 19th century. With the declining use of the waterways the area became neglected and derelict. The site offered the opportunity for new homes, within a mile of the city centre, in an attractive waterside setting. The river presented problems of flood risk and it was expected that the granting of planning permission would be difficult. However, 451 units were approved, 30% of which were social housing. The development is being built in 5 phases, with the first 3 phases completed by 2010.

Diglis Water

Worcester, England

→ → Working with the landscape at Diglis Water helped overcome constraints to development and increased saleability



LDA Design

Work undertaken by the landscape profession

In 1999 Bryant Homes/Taylor Wimpey, in partnership with British Waterways, commissioned landscape architecture practice LDA Design to prepare a landscape masterplan for a mixed use site in order to overcome this potential constraint upon development. The appointment of a landscape architect ensured a cohesive design and a means of achieving planning permission due to the practice's understanding of flood risk and alleviation. To address the risk of flooding, a waterfront park was designed as an attractive, multifunctional, focal point along the edge of the River Severn to act as a flood defence. The waterfront park was designed to be flooded and to hold water when the River Severn reaches its capacity. The development of this park was crucial to the delivery of the masterplan, and assisted with securing planning permission.

At the same time, the character of the wider setting was also considered, to ensure that the development knitted into the existing urban fabric. The strategy behind the masterplan recognises the importance of the appearance of the built environment and how this can transform people's attitudes toward their homes and communities. The quality of the external environment was carefully considered, to ensure that the land in which the buildings are situated is attractive, valued and useable.

The park also acts as a significantly improved pedestrian connection to Worcester city centre and its inclusion has opened up land previously inaccessible to the public and preserved its use as a flood plain whilst enhancing the conservation, recreation and biodiversity value through a landscape management plan and ecological strategy.

Economic impact

Working with British Waterways and Taylor Wimpey/Bryant Homes, the landscape architect has created a development that integrates the waterway's heritage, providing almost 500 new homes, boat moorings, a waterfront park and high quality public realm. All of this has factored in the potential flood risk and the development has been designed to cope with a 1 in 100 year flood event.

“ Due to its attractive riverside location, with quality homes sensitively woven into this historic area, the marketability factor of Diglis Water is extremely high. The site is proving to be one of the most popular in the Midlands, following an initial 3 month period of marketing the first phase.

Ian Davies
Design Manager
Bryant Homes West Midlands

Diglis Water
Worcester, England

Client
Bryant Homes/Taylor Wimpey
Landscape architect
LDA Design
Further information
www.lda-design.co.uk

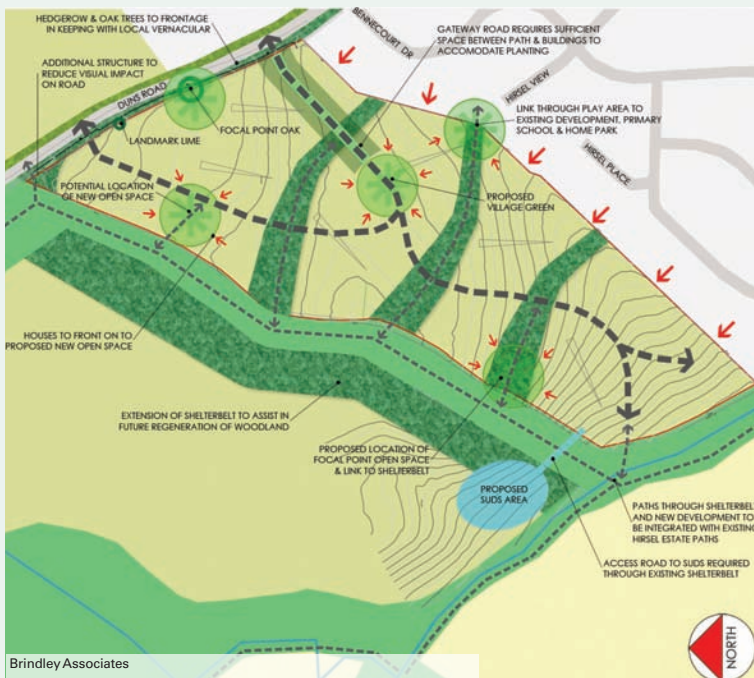
Background

Leet Haugh is part of The Hirsell Designed Landscape which lies to the north west of Coldstream in the Scottish Borders. Covering an area of 4.3 hectares, although currently in agricultural use it is allocated for housing in the Scottish Borders Local Plan 2008. The development will comprise a range of locally appropriate two storey homes including cottage style and courtyard properties. The planning application for 105 homes was approved in September 2010 and work is due to commence on site in late Spring 2011.

Leet Haugh

Coldstream, Scotland

→ → Optimising development potential without impacting on the wider landscape



Work undertaken by the landscape profession

The landscape architects and environmental planners Brindley Associates Ltd provided a range of services to the client to assist them in preparing their planning submission including:

- Landscape & Ecological site appraisals
- Landscape masterplanning
- Detailed hard and soft landscape designs for planning approval and implementation on site

Through good working relationships with the client and the multidisciplinary design team the site has been planned and designed with great sensitivity in line with the Scottish Government new policy document. 'Designing Streets' and Scottish Borders Council are promoting the site as an Exemplar development. Initial detailed landscape analysis of the site and its setting has informed the masterplanning process and has resulted in a development that is appropriate to its landscape setting, which respects the local vernacular and that creates a distinct sense of identity.

Economic impacts

The landscape team had direct and positive involvement in the masterplanning from the outset. Working in close collaboration the design team produced a layout that resulted in an extra 40 houses being approved, in addition to the original allocation for 65, without detrimental impacts on the surrounding landscape. This has resulted in considerable economic gains for the developer.

In addition, the proposal to re-use salvaged stone to build walls throughout the development by local apprentices, will not only provide additional savings but will lead to important job creation for the local community whilst serving to reinforce the local landscape character.



Brindley Associates were a proactive and essential part of our design team on the Leet Haugh project.

We found the landscape architect's expertise to be integral to the success of the project through the whole process from analysis of the existing features, and input into the site masterplanning, through to the design of hard and soft detail landscape proposals. Our experience has shown that landscape architects can provide valuable assistance in helping developers to optimise the development potential of a site whilst avoiding negative impacts on the wider landscape.

Jamie Hudson
Hudson Hirsell LLP



Leet Haugh
Coldstream, Scotland

Client
Hudson Hirsell LLP
Landscape architect
Brindley Associates Ltd
Further information
www.brindleyassociates.co.uk

Why Invest in Landscape?

Investment in the landscape makes sound economic sense – the evidence is compelling. When landscape is placed at the heart of the development process a range of economic benefits are delivered for developers, local businesses and communities. Working with the landscape can reduce development costs, optimise development potential and increase the saleability of housing and commercial property. The natural environment can act as a focal point for regeneration activities, and the creation of new spaces can attract visitors and revitalise previously underused areas.

The landscape architecture profession is uniquely positioned to create, for its clients, great places where people feel inspired to live, work and visit.

Read the Landscape Institute's position statements on climate change, green infrastructure and housing.



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Material change for a better environment

WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) works in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to help businesses and individuals reap the benefits of reducing waste, develop sustainable products and use resources in an efficient way.

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Details and case studies of Landscape Institute Registered Practices at:
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Landscape Institute
Inspiring great places