

# LANDSCAPE ISSUES

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## RE CYCLING

The popularity of cycling comes, so to speak, in cycles. Concurrent with the inexorable increase in the number of cars, there has been, it is true, a wide promotion over the past decade of the use of bicycles, with all their 'green' implications, but the present wave of popularity is more to do with both a perceived fashionability as well as the proven technological capabilities of the mountain bike. These machines, expensive as they are compared with the more traditional models, have revived an interest from all ages and all sections of society. They are ridden in towns and over rough terrain in the countryside. Town councils up and down the land are providing cycle lanes along main radial routes to town centres and are actively promoting the relegation of the motor car to the suburbs. Central business districts have been pedestrianised and special cycle racks are provided there. Some towns, notably Oxford and other university towns, can boast a long history of widespread cycle use.

Is this a trend that landscape architects should help to promote, or should concern be expressed about the damage, widely publicised, which mountain biking is doing to both bridleways in the countryside and the more remote upland areas, often within National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

For the ten years that the landscape course was based at the Oxstalls Campus in Gloucester, I frequently rode the three miles or so to work,

work, partly along roads, partly along cycle paths. One new estate I passed through, Abbeydale, had well-planned routes for both pedestrians and cyclists. Riding swiftly along the banks of the Twyver, unhindered by traffic, was, even in the worst of weathers, a pleasurable experience. My journey then took me across the inner ring road and down the old London Road. Here, with no cycle lane provision, and during rush hour traffic, the experience was often traumatic: cycling within a metre of the kerb, avoiding grids and potholes, and endeavouring at all times to be visible to car and lorry drivers made me think that designated cycle lanes, to segregate incompatible modes of travel, are indeed an advantage. But with my other hat on as a car driver, I felt there is a fundamental dilemma here for transport planners. If cyclists are removed from contact with the four-wheeled traffic is there not a danger that drivers will become unaccustomed to cyclists and will fail to take extra care where no cycle lanes exist?

In Cheltenham, many cycle lanes have been provided, often on sectioned-off lengths of wide pavement. There is also a cycle route along the old Honeybourne railway line from the main line station to Bishops Cleeve. This is ideal for me if I choose to travel by train\* to Cheltenham from Gloucester and ride the two miles from the station to the College campus which is virtually adjacent to the track. These days, sadly, many people avoid short cuts like this for safety reasons. Many sections are badly lit and too well vegetated, ideal ambush territory for muggers and other attackers. Recent news reports of problems in an area of Leeds where students walk across a common from work to halls of residence suggested that the solution is not always the provision of bright lights – potential victims are too easily visible from the dark areas beyond. How much consideration is given to these matters in the design of open spaces?

Many cyclists in towns complain of the pollution generated by the internal combustion engine. We have all received sometime in our lives a lung-full of car exhaust and it is not a pleasant experience. In

the countryside, on the other hand, smells are usually a great attraction, even the recently deposited liquid manure by a herd of cows on their way to the milking parlour! Last summer I spent a few days cycling the byways of the Cotswold scarplands not far from where I live. Better than a car for exploring the countryside, the bicycle puts you in close contact with your surroundings. You see the detail, hear the sounds and smell the scents of the countryside, things not easily sensed from within a car, travelling at great speed.

Admittedly, for someone not entirely at his peak of fitness, there are the disadvantages of 1 in 5 hills but with a choice of 21 gears the time spent climbing is a small price to pay for all the other enjoyments. Offroad, through the woods, the mountain bike is in its element. Here wild-life creatures can be observed; the relatively silent motion does not frighten them. Views over the drystone walls and hedgerows change just fast enough. Down the deep valleys of the dip slope, literally in the stream beds, you benefit from a view of nature only gained by walking or on horseback. Then back up to Painswick Hill for a final panorama of the Vale of Gloucester before the rapid descent of Portway. But here I stopped in my tracks, taken aback by the eyesore of multiple cycle tracks across the golf course up to the trig. point on the Beacon. And I wondered if *I* was a contributing factor.

Ramblers have often been accused of eroding the upland landscapes. Paths widen and become braided as increasing numbers of walkers choose 'easier' routes and upland runoff completes the erosion. Within lowland Britain horse-riders churn up bridleways into a morass of mud making them impassable to walkers except to the extremely well shod. And, now, patches of rough terrain are taken over as mountain biking training areas: steep hills are accentuated, hollows worn out and everywhere are scars on the landscape not dissimilar from those left by motor-cross fanatics: yet another dilemma confronts the countryside manager.

Returning to the town, to Cheltenham, and to the College in particular, it is in my view pleasing to report that a cycle culture is being promoted. With a number of campus and hostel sites within Cheltenham, and with the problems of car parking in designated conservation areas, it makes a lot of sense to encourage students and staff to travel between sites on bicycles. The College has proposed that all bicycles will be registered and incentives offered to those joining the Scheme, such as purchase grants and travel expenses. A recent questionnaire asked whether bicycle travel rates, higher than for cars, could be paid to staff for inter-campus travel. Other proposals with the scheme include sponsorship, police involvement, training and the provision of safety clothing. Landscape considerations are also addressed: cycle paths and their layout will be properly designed and identified, with appropriate signs.

Cycling, as a sport, leisure activity and mode of travel, should, in my opinion, be promoted, and it is gratifying that in the particular case of Cheltenham there is definite action on behalf of the cyclist. Car usage is being actively discouraged. If this is a trend (some would say it is only a return of a 60s philosophy) then there is scope for the involvement of landscape architects, not just within the urban environment, but also over the wider countryside, where clear guidelines and codes of conduct for the accommodation of the mountain bike are currently sadly lacking.

*\* Unfortunately British Rail seems to be legislating against cyclists. A letter I received from the Regional Manager last year stated the current policy but failed to explain the complicated rules: on certain trains – the old diesel units with a guards' van – cycles are carried free of charge; on Sprinters (regional lines) there is only room for three bikes; on Intercity trains cycles have to be booked in advance and, in my case from Gloucester to Cheltenham, the bike ticket costs more than the adult single, yet to take it to Aberdeen would still cost me £3.*

## **GOVERNMENT ADVICE FOR RURAL LEISURE PLANNING**

Nigel Curry and Caroline Pack

Historically, advice from various organs of government on how to execute land use planning for countryside recreation, access, sport and tourism has been disparate. A recent round of advisory statements in 1991 and 1992 from the Department of the Environment, the Sports Council and the Countryside Commission compounds this array of advisory statements and justifies a comprehensive review of them as a means of rationalising their collective thrust and critically evaluating the limitations of such a range of advice from disparate sources. This review presents the findings of part of a larger research project concerned critically to evaluate land use policies for leisure planning.

### **The Jurisdiction of Land-Use Planning for Rural Leisure**

Land-use planning for rural leisure is multi-faceted. Perhaps at its core is the local authority sector which has a statutory responsibility

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for the strategic planning of recreation through structure plans (by county councils and in two instances national park authorities). This sector also is responsible for the implementation of recreation policies in local plans (produced by county councils, but mainly district councils) and in national parks, the implementation of policies and the management of recreation and access through national park plans.

In addition to this statutory basis, a range of informal strategic plans has been introduced from the late 1980s onwards, principally through county councils, that take the form either specifically of recreation strategies, countryside recreation strategies or of more general countryside strategies that have recreation and access components. Added to this is a large number of non-statutory management plans formulated chiefly by county council planning or leisure departments and by national park authorities, but also by voluntary organisations such as the National Trust and the county wildlife trusts. These usually are concerned to steer change at individual recreation sites.

The 1968 Countryside Act also makes provision for the establishment of Joint Advisory Committees for recreation purposes in recognition that recreation, as a migratory activity, often can more coherently be planned beyond individual local authority boundaries. These committees also produce planning documents (eg, Cotswold Water Park Joint Committee (1983)), but they have the greatest force where committees are given delegated powers and a degree of autonomy to implement proposals, as in the Lea Valley Regional Park.

Strategic land use planning for recreation and access also takes place in the resource sectors. The Forestry Commission, from the White Paper 'Forest Policy' (HMSO, 1972), has been charged with the production of conservancy recreation plans and in the water sector too, strategic planning documents have been produced from time to time on an ad hoc basis. Since the privatisation of the water sector, however, land use planning appears to be restricted to one or two

broad statements of intent in the rolling corporate plan of the National Rivers Authority (1991). Here, the principal emphasis lies in working in collaboration with other organisations, particularly local authorities, in the development of policies. This is often done through the process of consultation on draft structure and local plans. Individually, the new water companies appear currently to be focussing more on a review of recreation activities (Welsh Water, 1991) rather than any coherent forward planning.

The implementation of this range of plans can take a variety of forms – planning permission, direct land purchase, direct management, delegated management powers, enforcement of rights of way legislation and so on. The focus of this paper, however, lies in a review of advice for the formulation of land use plans and therefore processes of implementation and the development of management plans for such implementation are not considered further here.

Advice for the formulation of land-use plans clearly is targeted at the local authority sector, since little published information is available relating to the development of recreation plans by the resource sectors. In this respect, guidance comes from central government – through development plan guidance, Circulars, planning policy and regional planning guidance notes – and a range of government agencies. The Countryside Commission, for example, offers national policy guidance of direct relevance to local authority planning, the most recent of which has been 'Policies for Enjoying the Countryside' (Countryside Commission, 1987, 1992). The Sports Council too compiles strategic planning statements, for example, 'Sport in the Community, into the 1990s' (Sports Council, 1988) and 'A Countryside for Sport' (Sports Council, 1992), many elements of which fall within the jurisdiction of local authority planning departments.

Importantly too, the Sports Council's regional offices act as a secretariat to the Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation. These

are consortia of 'interested parties' concerned with recreation, access and sport, and embrace local authorities, water companies, the Countryside Commission and representatives of the voluntary sector. They are charged with the production of 'regional recreation strategies' designed specifically to co-ordinate the planning functions, at a regional level, of the various agencies concerned with recreation. They therefore provide a regional 'benchmark' for local authority recreation land use planning. Voluntary organisations too, produce policy statements designed to inform the local authority sector, an example of which is 'Sport and Recreation in the Countryside' (Central Council of Physical Recreation, 1991).

A growth of interest in rural tourism, particularly in the context of agricultural diversification, has spawned further policy statements from governmental organisations. The English Tourist Board's (1988) national policy statement on visitors to the countryside embraces policies for both day-visitors and tourists and has been extended into a series of environmentally sensitive principles for rural tourism agreed jointly with the Countryside Commission (English Tourist Board/Countryside Commission, 1989). These principles have been widely adopted in the tourism strategies of regional tourist boards (for example, the Heart of England Tourist Board, 1989) which themselves are cited in some structure plans. A range of policies on rural tourism also emanates from the Rural Development Commission, the Agricultural Development Advisory Service and the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, and the Department of Employment. This range of advice and guidance is reviewed below, and conclusions are drawn relating to its principal limitations.

### **Policy Guidance for Development Plans, National Park Plans and Countryside Strategies**

Development plans are principally of three types: structure plans, local plans and unitary development plans which perform the func-



tions of both structure and local plans in metropolitan districts. Policy guidance on their formulation in respect of recreation policies has been distinct. The first two were introduced in the Town and Country Planning Acts of 1968 and 1971 and their functions have been modified by Circulars and statutes since that time. Unitary development plans were introduced after the abolition of the metropolitan counties in 1986.

The detailed process and objectives of structure plan formulation generally are considered in a number of documents (Cross and Bristow, 1983, Curry and Comley, 1985), but their purpose has been to provide both an interpretation of national and regional policies in terms of physical and environmental planning for their area and the framework in which the more detailed proposals of local plans are developed (Department of the Environment, 1984). They are normally to be reviewed at least every 5 years and are to work to a 15 year time horizon from the base date of the plan.

Within structure plans, policy issues have historically been considered either as 'key issues' or 'second order issues' and in line with Circular 98/74 (Department of the Environment, 1974), recreation and access have been second order issues in nearly all structure plans. The exception to this in a survey of all structure plans in the mid-1980s has been the South West Hampshire structure plan, where recreation in the New Forest was considered a 'key issue' (Curry and Comley, 1985).

Guidance on the production of recreation policies in structure plans was originally provided by the Development Plans Manual (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1970) which contained the 'scope of material' to be covered by such policies. This material provided for structure plan policies to be both positive and comprehensive.

The Manual called for structure plans to contain general policies for the provision of recreation facilities, land allocations for recreation and their distribution, policies on facility location and priorities, phasing and implementation. These policies were to embrace facilities, access and open country, and were to be accompanied by surveys of both demand characteristics and the supply of recreation resources.

The Development Plans Manual provided the cornerstone of guidance in recreation structure plan policy formulation up to 1988, when the government began a series of Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) designed more generally to inform policymaking in structure plan reviews as well as in local plans and development control. Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 (Department of the Environment, 1992) reviews the content and scope of all development plans in the wake of the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act.

Structure plans generally have had an uncertain place in land use planning during the 1980s, with proposals for their abolition in a 1989 White Paper (Department of the Environment, 1989), a reaffirmation of their existence in the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Department of the Environment, 1990a), and a strengthening of their powers in the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act to the extent that planning decisions must accord with them, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is designed to rekindle a plan-led planning system—a significant move away from a system, prevalent during the 1980s, based on negotiation as a result of Circular 22/80 (Department of the Environment, 1980).

For local plans, a critical evaluation of their functions, objectives and performance generally, may be found in, for example, Loew (1979) and Healey (1983). Their original functions were to apply structure plan strategies, provide a detailed basis for development control, provide a basis for co-ordinating development and bring local and detailed issues before the public. They also were to be reviewed every

5 years. (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1970). They could relate to whole districts (district plans), areas requiring particular attention (action area plans), or subjects requiring particular attention (subject plans).

Guidance on where local plans need to be produced, provided in Circular 23/81, (Department of the Environment, 1981), has ensured that the vast majority of them are urban. Indeed, McNab (1985) has suggested that the continuum from urban to rural has almost defined local plan preparation priorities. Where recreation is of particular concern it is usually to be found in subject plans produced by county, rather than district authorities.

Again, guidance on the production of local plans originally came from the Development Plans Manual. This allowed district, action area and subject plans to be produced for the countryside but the clear priority for all of these was to secure conservation objectives for both the built and natural environment. Policies for recreation could be promulgated for the local population, but the main focus for recreation as a migratory activity was that plans should, "reconcile recreation pressures where there is a need to channel and control the demands of nearby towns".

As with structure plans, guidance on the recreation content of local plans is now contained in planning policy guidance notes. Local plans from the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Department of the Environment, 1990a) are now to be singular –district-wide local plans –with enhanced powers under the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act similar to those of structure plans.

The disbanding of metropolitan county authorities in the mid-1980s has led to a single tier planning system in metropolitan areas. Some of the county functions for the countryside have been sustained by

'independent' units (such as the Greater Manchester Countryside Unit) which have had an advisory input into unitary development plans. General guidance in the preparation of these plans was contained in Circular 3/88 (Department of the Environment, 1988). Specifically for recreation and access policies in these plans, guidance has been somewhat ad hoc.

In London, for example, guidance has been produced by the London Council for Sport and Recreation (1991). This stresses the importance of strategic links to green space, such as the Colne Valley and the Lea Valley, the maintenance and enhancement of public rights of way and the sensitive use of the green belt for countryside recreation and sport. Exploiting the potential of London's water areas also is given specific attention. Other guidance is offered in London by the London Planning Advisory Committee although for recreation, their guidance is based on the London Council's recreation strategy.

For national park plans, introduced in the 1972 Local Government Act, principal guidance comes from the Countryside Commission (1974). This stresses the distinction between development plans (which national park plans are not) and management plans (which they are) indicating that park plans should interlock with, and complement, the development plan system. Despite this, the content of national park plans has remained very variable. In Dartmoor, for example, the range of policies and subjects covered resembles those of a structure plan in many ways. In the North York Moors, in contrast, the plan takes a much narrower focus, concentrating on a management planning framework specifically for recreation and conservation.

The Commission's national park plan advisory notes suggest that recreation policies should focus on facilities, lavatories, overnight accommodation, public access to open country, footpaths and bridleways and the management of common land for recreation purposes.

They suggest that criteria, objectives and phasing should be embraced in the plans but, unlike the Development Plans Manual, give no indication of what policies actually might contain and do not indicate what survey work might be conducted.

More recently, guidance on the recreation component of national park plans has come in a more covert manner through general recreation policy statements from the Countryside Commission (for example, Countryside Commission, 1987), planning policy guidance notes and a major national parks policy review (Edwards, 1991). It was proposed in the 1989 White Paper on the Future of Development Plans (Department of the Environment, 1989) that the planning functions of national parks should be significantly extended but this did not come to pass in the reappraisal of the development plan system in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Department of the Environment, 1990a). Despite this, national parks do have responsibilities to prepare park-wide local plans, under the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act. These should set out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land and should guide most day to day development decisions.

County council-produced countryside strategies have no statutory basis at all. They began to emerge principally after 1988 when the first PPGs were produced, that themselves were to define the jurisdiction of statutory development plans more closely.

For recreation, there is conflicting advice about what kinds of strategy should be produced. A number of regional recreation strategies of the Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation advocate that local authorities (county, district and metropolitan) should produce general recreation strategies for both urban and rural areas (for example, the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Council for Sport and Recreation, 1989). The Countryside Commission (1987b) on the other hand, suggests that authorities should produce "countryside

recreation strategies – which might form part of a wider strategy for the countryside or a rural development strategy".

Other Commission (1987) documentation, however, suggests the production of "a policy for the countryside" which might include conservation or development proposals as well as those for the enjoyment of the countryside. As a result, authorities have produced one or more of three types of document – recreation strategies, countryside recreation strategies or countryside strategies, all with greatly overlapping areas of concern.

For countryside strategies generally, it is considered that they should contain, amongst other things, "environmental and recreation objectives and policies for the use of rural land" (Countryside Policy Review Panel, 1987), but different agencies perceive them as having different functions. The Rural Development Commission (1991c), for example, sees them as a natural development from their own Tourism Development Action Programmes, whilst English Nature (1991) sees them as a means of implementing policies in the government environmental White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' (Department of the Environment, 1990).

Their relationship to the development plan process is not unambiguously clear, although many of them are seen as either inputs, particularly to structure plans, or complements to development plans, able to consider a range of planning issues that fall outside of statutory jurisdiction. Under the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act, however, the Secretary of State considers all informal plans as an unsatisfactory basis upon which to determine development decisions (Department of the Environment, 1992).

The popularity of countryside strategies could well reflect the poor achievement of structure plans and their requirement for Secretary of State approval (which is no longer required under the 1991 Planning



and Compensation Act, although the Secretary of State may intervene "where necessary" in the production of structure plans) and consequent loss of local autonomy. The growth in their production, which accelerated after 1989, cannot be disassociated from the threatened abolition of structure plans (Department of the Environment, 1989) where the possible loss of such a planning function at the county level has provided an excellent stimulus to the development of a non-statutory surrogate (Curry, 1992).

The Countryside Policy Review Panel's (1987) proposal did suggest that strategies should not be produced before the issue of Department of the Environment advice. This has not been forthcoming, a reflection perhaps of central government's view of their importance. A great variability in both the product and the process associated with the production of countryside strategies has arisen as a result, and partly in response to this, guidance produced jointly by the Countryside Commission, English Nature and the Rural Development Commission currently is in preparation, but only after some 40 strategies have been produced.

Despite this, the Countryside Commission remains uncertain about what kind of lead it should take in the absence of any clear guidance from the Department of the Environment (Stansfield, 1990). Thus, overall, guidance on the content of recreation policies, either in general countryside strategies, specific recreation strategies or countryside recreation strategies, remains sparse.

#### **Policy Guidance: Circulars and Planning Policy Guidance Notes**

Government Circulars have provided the traditional means by which modifications to the development plan process have been made, many of which relate to the planning system in general – a number have been cited above. Specifically for rural leisure, Circular 47/76 (Department of the Environment, 1976) established Regional Coun-

cils for Sport and Recreation, and Circular 73/77 (Department of the Environment, 1977) empowered these councils to produce regional recreation strategies.

Other salient leisure Circulars have included 4/76 (Department of the Environment, 1976a) which considered a number of issues relating to recreation and access in national parks, including the policy that conservation should take precedence over recreation where the two are seen to be in unavoidable conflict. This Circular is commonly cited in structure plans covering national parks. Circular 13/79 (Department of the Environment, 1979) considered the role that local authorities should play in tourism in terms of their functions as development planners, infrastructure providers, facility owners and marketing agents. Circular 1/83 (Department of the Environment, 1983) contained provision in relation to public rights of way and the completion of the definitive map. Circular 23/83 (Department of the Environment, 1983a) outlined regulations relating to the control of caravans and caravan sites, and Circular 14/84 (Department of the Environment, 1984) on green belts, contained guidance on the sensitive development of recreation in these areas.

Although Circulars are still produced, the style of central government guidance has shifted, since 1988, towards the production of Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs), largely replacing Circulars to "provide clearer, more accessible and more systematic policy guidance" (Department of the Environment, 1992). Different PPGs now provide guidance on different topics of relevance to development plans, representing a move away from the comprehensive approach of the Development Plans Manual.

In fact, the PPG series of topics now defines the subjects that are considered relevant for inclusion in development plans (Department of the Environment, 1992). These PPGs are being supplemented by regional planning guidance (RPGs – although some of them are still

labelled PPGs) which contain regional land use considerations to be taken into account in the preparation of development plans. They are limited to matters relevant in the preparation of development plans, although recreation is not listed in PPG 12 (Department of the Environment, 1992) as one of the priorities that they must cover. They are formulated from, amongst other things, inputs by constituent local authorities.

For rural leisure, PPG 1, 'General Policy and Principles' (Department of the Environment, 1992a) sets the general context for land use planning and provides guidelines on things such as noise and access for the disabled, to developments generally. PPG 12 (Department of the Environment, 1992) relating to development plans, defines nine relevant topics for structure plans, including green belts and tourism, leisure and recreation. Earlier guidance on which of these issues should be 'key order' and which should be of secondary importance is no longer provided in PPG 12. All proposals in structure plans must, for the first time, have due regard to environmental considerations.

For structure plans, PPG 12 allows them to indicate in broad terms those geographical areas in which facilities for recreation, tourism and leisure are to be provided and to include general proposals for developments such as country parks and national trails. Local plans may identify sites ranging from a regional park to a neighbourhood play area. Under PPG 12, consultees on development plans are to include the Countryside Commission, the Sports Council and the Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation for appropriate matters, and authorities will also have regard to the regional recreation strategies of the Regional Councils.

Other guidance for rural leisure is to be found in PPG 7, the Countryside and the Rural Economy (Department of the Environment, 1992b) and PPG 2 (Department of the Environment, 1988a) on

green belts. PPG 7 stresses the importance of tourism and leisure as a means of rural diversification, although always in concert with conservation. Tourism developments in particular must ensure that environmental quality is not compromised, and all development proposals should be considered in the light of their potential impacts on the public rights of way network. Detailed considerations are given in an appendix, to development involving horses.

PPG 2 requires that green belts have a positive role in providing access to open countryside for the urban population. Such access is to be for active outdoor sports or for passive recreation, and it is suggested that leisure pursuits are likely to occupy an increasing proportion of green belt land, as the demand for land for food production decreases. Outdoor sports are considered to be one of the few uses for which planning permission might be given for the construction of new buildings or for changes of use.

It is, however, two other PPGs that provide principal guidance for land use planning for rural leisure. The first of these is PPG 17 on sport and recreation (Department of the Environment, 1991). In the context of an anticipated growth in pressure on the countryside, the planning system should ensure the adequate provision of land and water resources for informal recreation. This should be done by assessing recreational needs against current provision to provide opportunities for all. General development should be restricted where open space for recreation and access is threatened.

Again, regional recreation strategies and other regional guidance should be given renewed significance in the preparation of development plans and structure plans should define the scope of major recreation and sport initiatives as well as provide guidance on provision throughout the county. Local plans should be locationally specific and should be developed in tandem with district sport and recreation strategies (Sports Council, 1991a). Local authority owned

land should provide examples of 'best practice' in recreation facility provision.

In PPG 17, the urban fringe remains a priority area for recreation and access opportunities to be developed as long as this is compatible with existing uses and environmental objectives. It is considered here that "sites for recreational use may act as an important buffer between agriculture and urban uses to protect crops from damage". Planning applications for recreational uses should be looked upon favourably as part of farm diversification and the rights of way network in the urban fringe should be enhanced wherever possible. A similar tenor is evident for sport and recreation policies for green belts.

For the wider countryside, PPG 17 sees specific recreation sites as a means of relieving pressure in more sensitive areas. For these more sensitive areas themselves, particularly national parks, AONBs and heritage coasts, recreation must be of secondary importance to conservation objectives. Indeed, AONBs do not have a recreation function specifically as part of their objectives. In non-designated areas, recreation and sport must be reconciled with conflicting interests, through good management. This should not impair the environment and should be sustainable in the longer term. Impacts should be contained wherever possible, and where new provision is contemplated it might usefully be considered in the context of farm diversification.

For individual activities, PPG 17 concentrates on minimising impacts, particularly in relation to noise. In this respect, degraded sites, disused mineral workings and set-aside land may provide suitable locations for sports in the countryside and permitted development rights for the temporary use of high value land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), for sports, are to be withdrawn (Department of the Environment, 1992c). The development of air and water sports should be considered in the context of possible multiple uses

and in consultation with other appropriate bodies such as the National Rivers Authority. Golf course development should pay particular regard to land considered to be of environmental quality, particularly historic landscapes and SSSIs.

The second principal PPG advising on land-use policies for rural leisure is the draft on tourism. (Department of the Environment, 1992d). This encourages the growth of tourism in response to market demands, whilst protecting the environment. Thus the preparation of statutory development plans should include existing and future provision for rural tourism and its relationship to other environmental and conservation objectives. Structure plans should embrace environmental impact and the need to protect key tourism assets such as characteristic landscapes, unspoilt coastline and nature conservation areas.

Thus in general planning policy guidance for rural leisure appears to have four main strands. Firstly, policies should be restricted to land use considerations. Recreation should be for everyone and specific social groups should not be targeted within a land-use planning framework. Secondly, recreation and sport should be contained in areas of low quality environment and where developments do take place, they should be in tandem with farm diversification. This inevitably makes the urban fringe a developmental priority area. Thirdly, all rural leisure objectives should be subservient to environmental conservation goals. Finally, the public rights of way network should be maintained and enhanced wherever possible.

In broad terms, regional policy guidance for rural leisure is more positive than planning policy guidance notes. In RPG 6 for East Anglia (Department of the Environment, 1991a), for example, increased participation in both sport and recreation is to be encouraged. Both make a considerable contribution to regional and local economies and further land resources are anticipated to respond to increas-

ing rural leisure demands. The principal focus for development plans should be that of taking into account the need to provide a framework for meeting these increased demands. This should be done in the context of the appropriate regional recreation strategy.

For Merseyside (Department of the Environment, 1988c), too, recreation and tourism are seen to enhance the quality of life and to be good for the economy. The Mersey basin campaign sees leisure as an integral part of the revitalisation of the whole river system, and again, the regional recreation strategy should be taken into account in rural leisure developments. The West Midlands regional guidance (Department of the Environment, 1988b) also stresses positive action to maintain and improve public access to the countryside

### **Policy Guidance from Government Agencies**

Guidance on the formulation of rural leisure policies in land use planning from PPGs and RPGs has a certain degree of compulsion since the Secretary of State may intervene in the formulation of structure plans and must approve district-wide local plans under the 1991 Planning and Compensation Act. Through this mechanism, conformity to PPGs can be ensured. Additionally, however, government agencies, notably the Countryside Commission and the Sports Council, provide strategic policy guidance beyond PPGs of relevance to land-use planning. The adoption of such guidance, however, is less enforceable, which means that the uptake of such policies amongst local authorities is more variable.

Policies from the Countryside Commission come from a range of documents. *New Opportunities for the Countryside* (Countryside Commission, 1987a), for example, promotes a higher priority for access to the public rights of way network and develops the notion of recreation exploitation as a means of supplementing farm incomes. It does see, however, recreation as a significant pressure on the

countryside and calls for stronger urban fringe policies in both structure and local plans, to ameliorate such pressures.

The principal policy development within the Commission, however, has been the 'Enjoying the Countryside' initiative (Countryside Commission, 1987). It is recognised that many of the proposals contained within it can be successfully implemented only through collaboration with other bodies, particularly the local authority sector (Countryside Commission, 1977b), and a range of land use policies is promulgated, that can be successfully implemented only through local authorities.

These proposals include policies for public rights of way and long distance routes in relation to their development, legal definition, integration, maintenance and the completion of the definitive map. More access agreements also should be negotiated for both land and water, in tandem with improvements to wardening services, which may well be part of a management agreement struck with the private landowner. Access potential also can be improved through the development of new forests close to urban centres and new areas of common land.

In recognition of the minority interest in individual recreation facilities and sites, 'Enjoying the Countryside' proposes their selective development only, in areas where there is a distinct lack of provision. For facilities, including areas such as village greens, many of which are common land, their income earning potential should be fully assessed but in designated areas, particularly national parks, AONBs and heritage coasts, recreation developments should never compromise conservation objectives. Many of these policies might be developed through the production of countryside strategies, countryside recreation strategies, or recreation strategies.

'Enjoying the Countryside' policies are updated from time to time.

'Policies for People', for example (Countryside Commission, 1992), proposes a range of policies for local authorities aimed at improving public awareness of the countryside as a leisure destination. Specifically in land-use terms, it urges local authorities to use development control powers to encourage facility development with maximum access for all.

Like the Countryside Commission, the Sports Council does produce strategic planning documents for leisure in the countryside from time to time. The countryside component of their policy for the 1980s (Sports Council, 1982) centred on increasing countryside sports opportunities, particularly through the negotiation of management agreements with private landowners. Financial help would be made available to organisations and individuals providing facilities for sports in the countryside and the improvement of access, especially on the urban fringe, was to be encouraged. The report also encouraged local authorities to look favourably on development proposals that improve countryside sports opportunities. The Council, too, sought to work jointly with other organisations in promoting sport in the countryside.

Similar strategic planning for the 1990s was provided in the late 1980s (Sports Council, 1988). This now sees greater opportunity for sport in the countryside as a result of agricultural diversification. These opportunities embrace sports for the urban population, sport for rural residents and an improved public rights of way system. To help co-ordinate these opportunities, the Council has established a 'Countryside and Water Recreation Policy Group' and will work closely with the Countryside Commission in implementing the policies contained in the 'Enjoying the Countryside' initiative, to the extent that they affect sport. Close attention will be paid in all sports developments in the countryside, to agricultural and nature conservation interests and a particular focus will be placed on the potential of water areas for sports.

By 1992, the Sports Council had produced a new policy document, this time focussing specifically on 'a Countryside for Sport' (Sports Council, 1992). This policy statement represents a departure for the Sports Council in articulating, for the first time, a nationally orchestrated policy for the countryside, rather than as hitherto, a focus on individual sports. It is borne out of increasing pressures on the countryside that have intensified the Sport's Council's interest in both the opportunities and challenges that such pressure provides. The Council maintains that there is scope to increase participation in sports and active recreation in the countryside (outside of golf and field sports), through careful strategic planning and to a degree at least, through the enhanced powers given to regional recreation strategies through PPG 17. These strategies, if regularly reviewed, will assist in the promotion of sport and active recreation in the countryside in statutory land use plans.

For the countryside generally, the Sports Council seeks to promote sport in areas that are resilient to particular activities. In more sensitive areas, the notion of 'sustainable promotion' is promulgated, together with the maintenance of existing access opportunities. The potential for enhanced access to water areas is stressed, particularly in relation to water quality improvement policies of the National Rivers' Authority.

In the context of sustainability, the Council claims that an important distinction must be made between short term disturbance and longer-term damage to the countryside. The number of active participants in countryside recreation and sport is relatively small and generally causes little damage. A greater threat, perhaps, is posed by casual car-borne visitors and here good and perhaps more intensive management can be successful at ameliorating environmental impacts.

Land use designations should be encouraged that signal recreation as a primary land use, but in areas where conservation interests must

remain paramount, compensatory provision should be provided elsewhere. Over-restrictive policies, historically, have been based on presumptions about environmental damage, in the absence of any long-term data. The provisions of PPG 17 allow new opportunities for the positive promotion of recreational land uses in the countryside and provide a firmer basis for working with other agencies that have an interest in the countryside.

In implementing the ethos of these positive developmental proposals, the Sports Council seeks stronger input into development plans, particularly through regional recreation strategies, and within the context of sustainable development, is to encourage a wide range of promotional policies. Thus, new opportunities should be developed on derelict land as well as water areas. The new community and national forests provide a further focus for increased provision and appropriate locations should be more actively sought for activities such as motorised sports and gun clubs.

Built developments associated with recreation and sport also should be given closer consideration, particularly where they are likely to enhance the sustainable use of the site. But all of these promotional policies are based on a supposition, rather than a clear knowledge base, that the supply of recreation and sports provision in the countryside is inadequate. Indeed the report calls for a system to be developed that can adequately identify the supply base.

### **Policy Guidance in Other Statements**

In addition to policy guidance offered by government agencies, a range of other bodies produces policy statements from time to time on an ad hoc basis. These seek to influence government at all levels, many overtly addressing the local authority sector. Again, however, the extent to which such policies actually do influence government action remains unclear.

Such guidance has come in the past from federations of organisations such as the English Tourist Board/Trades Union Congress (1976) and the Chairmen's Policy Group (1982) but more commonly emanates from interest and pressure groups such as the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (1986), the Ramblers' Association (1982) and the Central Council of Physical Recreation (1991). Understandably, perhaps, such groups tend to be more radical in their demands and proposals, but the Ramblers' Association (1982) in particular has been successful in having many components of its 'rights of way charter' successfully incorporated into the 1990 Rights of Way Act.

As a recent example of these 'independent' policy proposals, the Central Council for Physical Recreation (1991) calls for policy changes in a number of specific areas, most of which have a clear land-use focus. In common with the Ramblers' Association the Council calls for the wider use of local authority powers to secure access over private land. This should embrace access to common land and should involve the development of novel ways of accommodating intrusive sports.

The Countryside Commission's (1987) targets for defining and improving public rights of way should be pursued vigorously to enhance opportunities for cyclists, riders and walkers but this kind of activity should be extended to cover rights of way over water areas, to cater for a growing demand for boating facilities.

The Council also calls for a more positive use of designated areas for recreation, particularly national parks, AONBs and green belts, through the incorporation of more positive policies in statutory plans. At the other extreme, derelict land on the urban fringes should be given particular priority for sport and recreation, especially for those unable or unwilling to travel to the countryside by car.

Outside of these areas it is claimed by the Council that the importance



of sport and recreation in development plans is not always properly acknowledged and provided for, and that regional strategies are not always fully taken into account. A fuller understanding of the national need for sport and recreation facilities is required if the proposals of PPG 17 are to be implemented properly. Like the Sports Council (1992), the Council feels that if conservation or environmental considerations preclude the development of recreation in particular areas, alternative locations should be provided.

Finally, the Council considers that the diffuse and disparate nature of government responsibility for countryside sport and recreation should be better co-ordinated. Governing bodies of relevant sports also should be better represented on a variety of government agencies.

### **Policy Guidance for Rural Tourism**

To an even greater degree than for countryside recreation, access and sport, the underlying theme of policy guidance for rural tourism in the late 1980s and early 1990s is one of environmental sensitivity. This reflects a clear shift in emphasis from guidance in the 1970s and early 1980s which was more squarely concerned with commercial exploitation within existing planning powers, often associated with job creation. Thus, for example, the Heart of England Tourist Board's (1976) 'Tourism in Rural Areas', stressed the economic potential of tourism, particularly in relation to agriculture, and the associated multiplier effects.

In the mid-1980s the Cabinet Office (1985) was championing the deregulation of the planning system as a means of creating jobs through the business of tourism. In the local authority sector, too (Morrisey, 1986), the principal objective was seen as supporting a fragmented industry to help it compete for changing patterns and levels of visitor spending.

By the late 1980s, however, policy guidance had shifted to the message that the environment is the essential infrastructure of the industry. The English Tourist Board/Countryside Commission (1989) 'Principles of Tourism in the Countryside' stresses the importance of the enhancement of historic and attractive buildings, the countryside, townscapes and cultural activity. It proposes a growth in activity holidays and farm-based tourism but that these should be encouraged in lesser known rather than congested rural areas. They should be used to extend the holiday season, and should be developed in tandem with environmental quality and increased opportunities for access.

The principles call for tourism to be an additive rather than extractive force for rural communities, supporting village shops and local craft and food producers as well as linking support to social facilities such as rural churches and events.

These principles have been developed into a more comprehensive package for 'sustainable tourism' by the Department of Employment (1991) which stresses the intrinsic value of the environment and the rural community as a tourism resource. Tourism developments should respect the scale, nature and character of their location and local authorities and other agencies should adopt such an ethos in their strategic planning and implementation processes. These are very much the sentiments expressed in the draft PPG on Tourism (Department of the Environment, 1992d).

The Rural Development Commission's (1991a) strategy for rural tourism replicates these principles in the consideration of tourism as a rural employment creating activity, and proposes their more widespread adoption in Tourism Development Action Programmes which have been commonly set up in Rural Development Areas.

In a further policy statement (Rural Development Commission, 1991b), the Commission sees rural tourism as a central force in

arresting the decline in agricultural employment and proposes the introduction of a new rural development initiative run along the integrated development lines of Rural Development Areas, for those areas most severely affected by agricultural decline. This policy runs in parallel with a range of initiatives introduced by the Agricultural Development Advisory Service and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under the 1986 'Alternative Land Uses in Rural England' package, a number of which provide specific grant assistance for farmers seeking to diversify into rural tourism.

Thus, a range of policies has been produced by central government and its agencies towards rural tourism, all with a common environmental theme. Much of the implementation of these falls to local authorities, through the planning process, working in collaboration with other government bodies. To rationalise this diverse bureaucratic interest, a number of joint working parties have been set up for specific rural areas, for example, 'Herefordshire Tourism' and 'Gloucestershire Tourism' to help co-ordinate different policy interests and to market the tourism potential of the area (Curry et al, 1992).

### **Limitations of Government Advice and Guidance for Rural Leisure Planning**

With such a comprehensive range of advice and guidance for rural leisure land-use planning it is perhaps not surprising that some limitations in its adoption can be discerned. The first, quite obviously, relates to its volume and number of disparate sources. Local authorities traditionally have considered land use planning for countryside recreation of 'second order' importance, particularly in the formulation of structure plans, and therefore a comprehensive acknowledgement of external guidance invariably has been a low priority for recreation planning.

Secondly, the time lag between the production of advisory docu-

ments and the plans themselves often renders plans out of date, relative to the latest round of guidance, as soon as they are produced. All first round structure plans and a majority of first structure plan reviews were produced prior to the first PPG in 1988, offering new guidance on structure plan form and content. Many of these plans remain in force, despite the guidance that has superseded them. Some 40 structure plans also were produced before the first regional strategies of the Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation were published - strategies that were principally to have an input into the structure planning process.

Most significantly, perhaps, much of the collective advice from government and others is not concordant. Environmental considerations have a varying priority in different advisory statements, and priority land areas for rural leisure vary considerably according to these environmental priorities. The Department of the Environment and the Countryside Commission, for example, favour the concentration of development into areas of low quality environment and the urban fringe, but the Sports Council and the Central Council for Physical Recreation consider designated landscapes and the wider countryside targets for development.

For facilities too, the Sports Council proposes their development as a central plank in improved provision, but the Countryside Commission considers that their development should be selective, since they form a minority interest for the participating population. It is these kinds of conflicting signals that to a degree nullify the collective nature of guidance and advice for rural leisure land use planning.

Clearly, it would be of service to the local authority plan formulators if such advisory documentation were to be more consistent and more fully integrated. Regrettably, this seems unlikely. Up to the mid-1980s, the Sports Council and the Countryside Commission both were sponsored by the Department of the Environment. The vast

majority of advice for rural leisure planning thus emanated from one ministry providing the opportunity for the development of more holistic advice. Since that time, however, the Sports Council has been transferred to the Education Ministry and in 1992 to the Heritage Ministry. This separation of ministerial control would suggest that policy co-ordination over rural leisure planning advice is less likely than it was in the mid-1980s as different ministries seek to develop their own distinctive portfolios.

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## **PARC GÜELL: The English Connection**

Elizabeth Turner

A unique synthesis of nature and architecture is displayed in Parc Güell. At its entrance, the name is spelt in English – despite its Barcelona location – perhaps suggesting its English antecedents.

The park is an extraordinary combination of magnificent avenues of date palms and snaking stone parapets, dense pine forests and oriental lodges with their minarets. Parc Güell provides an oasis above the shimmering heat of Barcelona for local people and visitors alike, with panoramic views out to the blue Mediterranean in the distance. What proved to be a commercial disaster in its day has become not only a valued local resource but a place important enough to enjoy an International Preservation Order.

In 1900, Eusebi Güell, a prominent Barcelonian industrialist invited Antoni Gaudí, an architect and designer of unusual daring (and described by Nicolaus Pevsner as the only true genius of the Art Nouveau period), to design an exemplary garden suburb, a 'paradise'

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of 60 villas, a 'town of gardens'. As a spin-off to this enterprise, Barcelona was to acquire its second park. Had the venture succeeded, the settlement, even today, would be considered pioneering – a perfect combination of settlement and recreational areas.

Nowadays, as the vegetation continues to return to its formerly barren slopes, the park is animated with the laughter of children, the murmuring of courting couples and the leisurely pursuits of young and old alike. This highly original 'work of art' is enjoyed by thousands of people each year. Here, whilst adhering to some of the principles of the English landscape garden in order to follow the wishes of his patron, Gaudí has really only 'borrowed' a few ideas and has then interpreted them in his own extraordinarily imaginative style.

## Background

In the late 19th century Barcelona was in a state of great change. The iron, cotton and steel industries, with their insatiable demand for a work force, led to massive urban expansion. The mediaeval city walls began to be taken down in 1854, and the city limits expanded engulfing neighbouring villages. The new Barcelona developed in grid pattern under the proposed Extension Plan (El Ensanche) of Ildefons Cerdá. The city's population quadrupled between 1850 and 1900 to 600,000 inhabitants, and Barcelona became the most important metropolitan city of the Mediterranean area. Thereafter the re-planning of the city became an almost constant obsession right up to the 1930s when Le Corbusier collaborated with municipal architects to develop the city and its surrounding coastal areas.

Gaudí, one of the principal pioneering architects of the modernistic period, was swept along in this tide of building and the fervour of the Catalan movement. He could not fail, along with the others, to recognise the abject poverty and misery of the slums that resulted

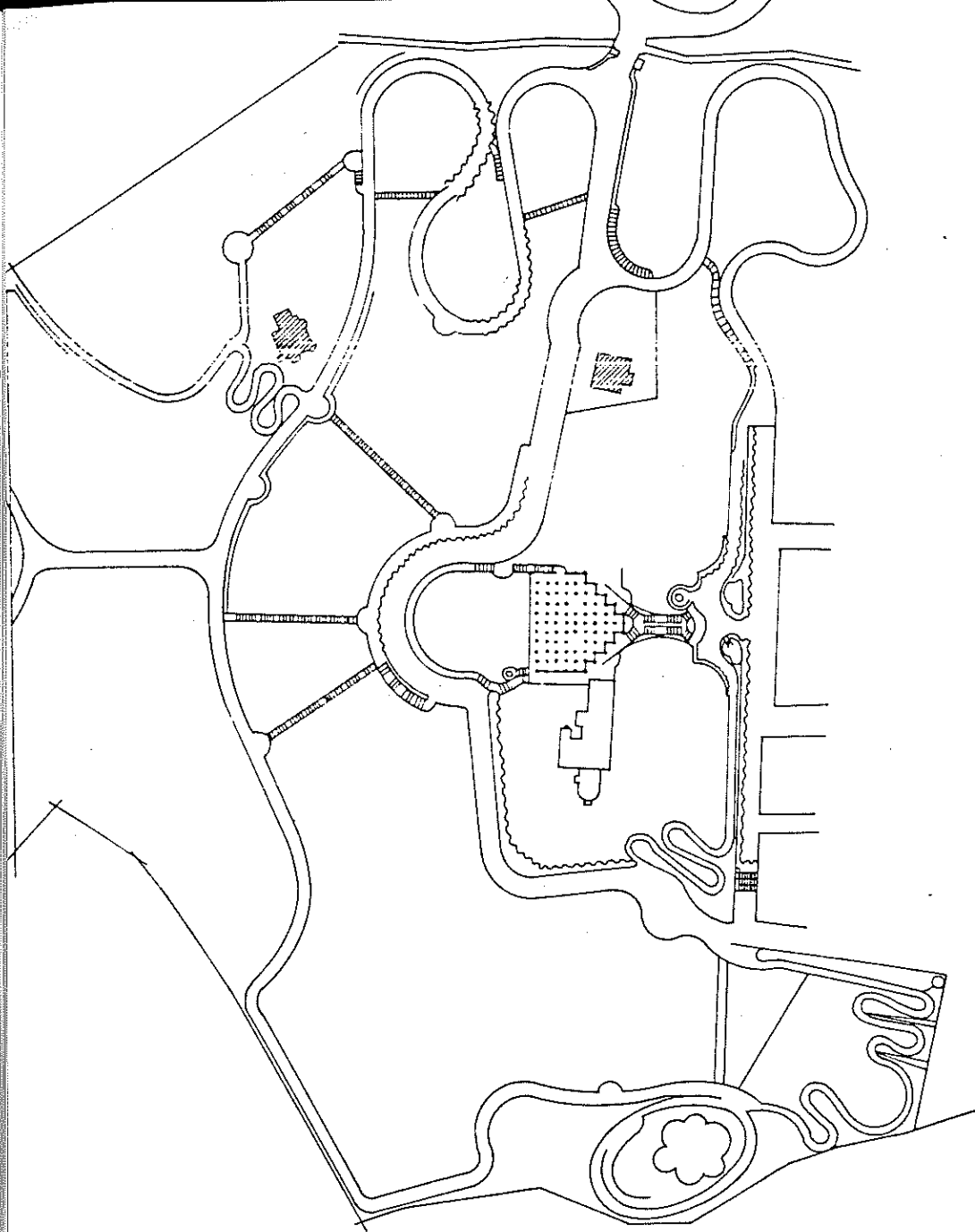
from this rapid urbanisation. He was influenced by the Art and Crafts Movement, a movement that was a reaction against the speed of change and its divorce from nature.

All over Europe in the 19th century cities were mushrooming. Many people were concerned and alarmed at the 'ills' resulting from urbanisation and proposals for 'ideal' cities and settlements as a conscious reaction to the fog, smoke, congestion, poverty and disease, poor sanitation and huge populations were forwarded. These 'ideal' places all had certain fundamental principles in common. They afforded clean air, sun, open spaces, greenery, and populations of 60,000 or less. Ruskin and William Morris advocated small cities, "any part of which was to be a few minutes walk from a belt of beautiful garden and orchard".

By the end of the century, the English social reformer, Ebenezer Howard, published 'Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Reforms' (1898). Its title was subsequently changed to 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow'. This found an enthusiastic following, particularly from a wealthy readership. Howard proposed cities full of gardens and greenery, and coined the phrase 'garden city'. This caught people's imagination and 1902 saw the foundation of the Garden City Association in England and Deutsche Gardenstadt - Gesellschaft in Germany.

Barcelona at this time was in the grips of a revival of Catalanian fervour. Modern times had seen an erosion of its traditions and the prohibition of the Catalanian language in schools. This repression served only to inflame the Catalanian people, which added a heightened dynamism to the creativity of its artists, musicians, intellectuals, writers and architects.

Against this backdrop, the young Catalanian architect Gaudí, acquired Eustebi Güell as a patron. Güell, an educated and widely-travelled industrialist was becoming increasingly interested in the



*Overall plan, grand plaza and cascade*

innovative ideas of social reform in England and France. It was to Gaudí that Güell turned to prepare plans for a 'garden city' for Barcelona, as a speculative venture, and a vehicle to test some of his own ideas of social reform.

Parc Güell was intended to be the centre of this privileged community, with an open-air theatre above the columnar market place. Gaudí planned to combine a series of highly individual features intricately woven into the whole project. It was here that he was to create a work of art that epitomises its strange origins in terms of its social, geological, geographical and cultural roots.

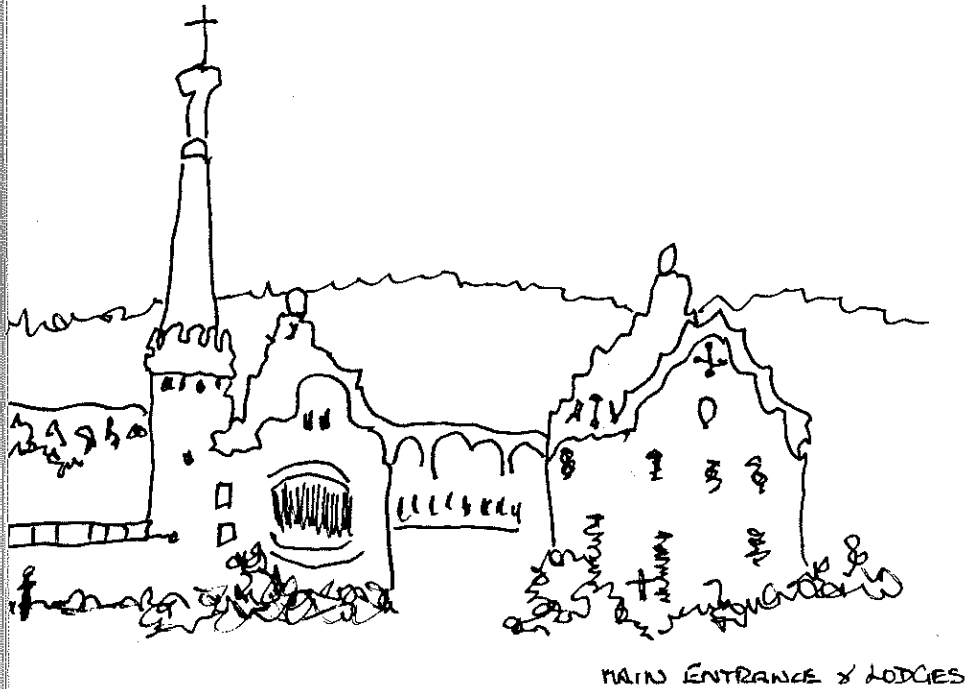
Eusebi Güell, regarding himself as one of the defenders of Ebenezer Howard's ideas, and wishing to try out some ideas of social reform of his own, asked Gaudí to draw up his plans for a utopian residential area on the steep, barren, isolated slopes of Montana Pelada in the Tres Turons district of Barcelona. The plan was to provide a model settlement combining sites for single family homes and recreational areas, in harmonious symbiosis with the local landscape. A total of sixty triangular plots were to be spread over 15 hectares offering sunshine, splendid views over the city and a panoramic view to the sea in the background.

The terrain was far from hospitable. Bereft of vegetation, it had no natural springs. Gaudí embarked on an ambitious plan. Capitalising on the topography, the climate and his own innate construction skills, he instigated the building of an elaborate infrastructure, and the park design. Gaudí created a series of complete and independent features, which he wove into a whole. The peculiarity of the original design was that it contained neither trees nor flowers, and instead relied on the voluptuous curves of the perimeter wall, the gate pavilions with their tile glazing, the 'stone palm tree' pillars that support the terraces and paths to provide the animation and sense of movement within the park.

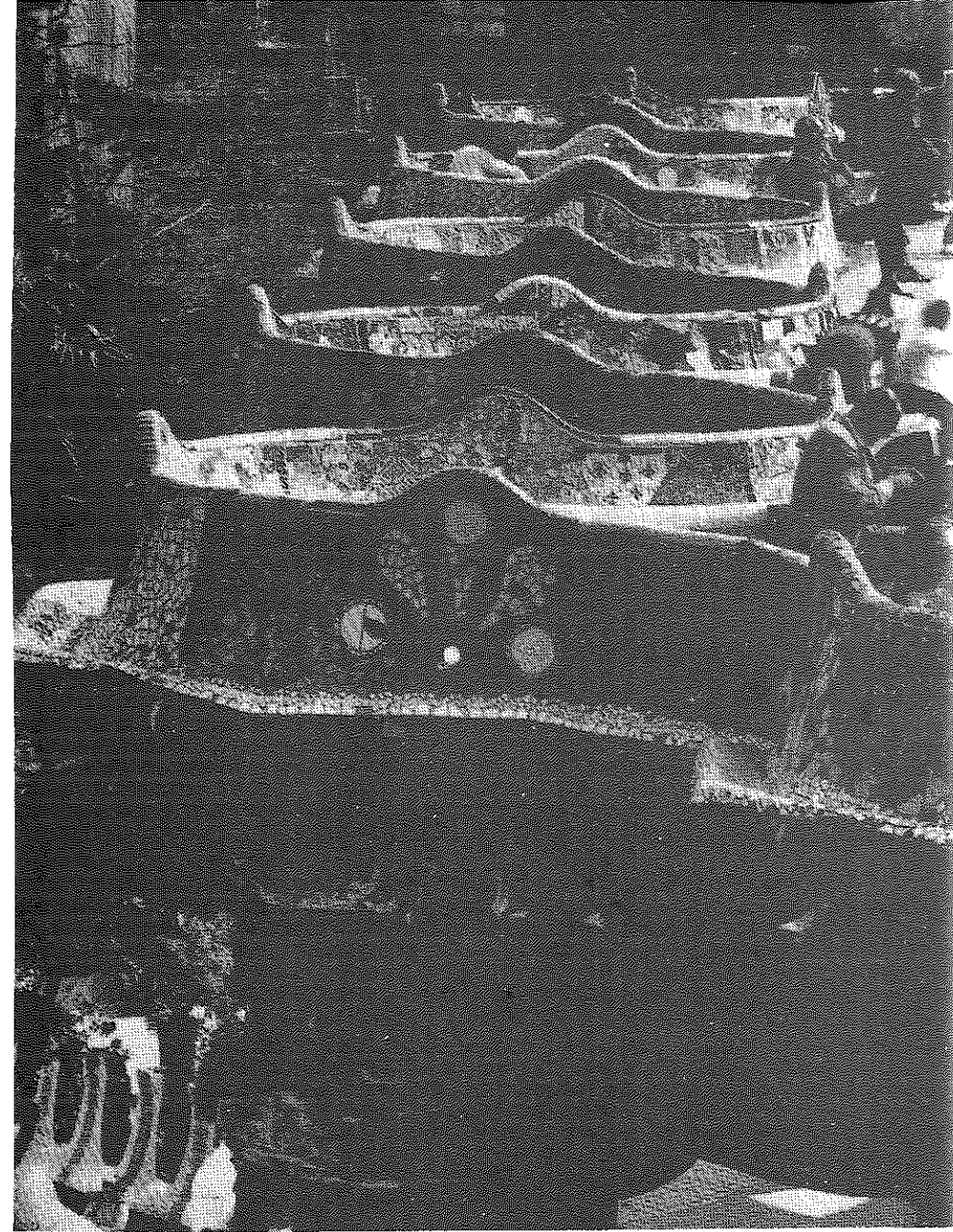
Gaudí's visit to North Africa and his work as a designer for Fonsere y Mestres, who built the grottoes and lake in the Sama Parc in Tarragona were clearly additional sources of inspiration in his unique garden at Parc Güell.

### The Parc

The real excitement of the Parc Güell is provided by the highly original features and their juxtaposition. The architecture of the Parc can be divided into distinct forms remarkable in their originality and doubly remarkable that they were all conceived and executed by one designer.



MAIN ENTRANCE & LODGES



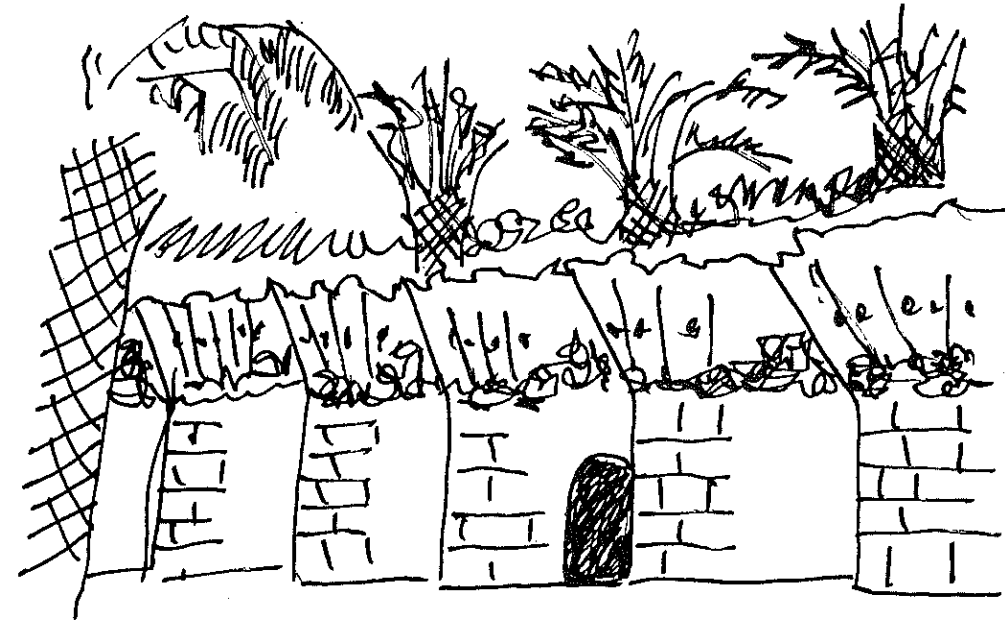
*Serpentine-cum-parapet fronting the terrace*

One group are the perimeter walls, the gate houses and the great axial main stairs. All are constructed from simple builders rubble and decorated with complex tile mosaics, but that is where their similarity ends. A high encircling wall encloses the Parc. Gaudí designed the wall to fit in with the natural contours of the hill side. He adorned the wall with fragments of tile and emphasised the seven gate entrances with particularly strong colours. The wall is built in ochreous undressed stone and widens towards the crest where it is topped with brown and white ceramic tiles. This ceramic skin, apart from being decorative had been very effective in protecting the wall from erosion by the elements. Güell had not wanted to repel visitors from the settlement with this wall; he saw it as providing an air of security. Nowadays the wall design is very effective in acting as a deterrent against intruders for the shiny rounded top offers no purchase to unwanted fingers.

The two fairy tale 'iced gingerbread' lodges at the main entrance are an extension of the perimeter wall. Originally they were to house the porter's lodge and administration for the garden city. Designed on roughly circular ground plans Gaudí made their proportions deliberately vertical. Their roofs display a fascinating combination of new and old technology of their day. The undulating roof surfaces have been achieved by the use of traditional Catalan building methods using vaulted bricks sealed with a rapidly acting mortar. The 30 foot pointed steeple of the administration block was to encourage Gaudí for the first time to experiment with reinforced concrete as he incorporated steel rods within its structure. The surface of the spire is decorated with a checkerboard pattern of small blue and white tile squares which mimic the floating clouds in the blue sky above Parc Güell.

The great stairway is probably the most naturalistic of Gaudí's work in the Parc. It has a slow innate sensuality and ingenuity and resembles a cascade pouring down to the main entrance. The stairway

is 'guarded' by a highly decorative tile encrusted salamander that "slithers" down a rectangular pool and appears to guard the way into the Parc. The great stairway leads up to the hypostyle hall which would have provided the community market for the proposed settler. A 'forest' of freely adapted Doric columns, set out in a mosque-like columnar grid, supports tile covered domes. These domes in turn support the plaza, or mirador, which drained into a large cistern below the market. The water contained in this reservoir is for use within the Parc.



STONE - NATURAL  
PALM TREES

All the paths within the park lead towards this enormous projecting plaza (called by Gaudí the Greek Theatre). The plaza's perimeter is

formed by a serpentine bench-come-parapet. This bench started in 1906, provides the crowning glory, and provides a strong visual contrast with the irregular mountain slope. Its meandering form provides corners and spaces intended as meeting places, and places where people can sit alone and contemplate their surroundings and views. Despite it being out of doors and offering seating for many people—it is still possible to chat intimately.

The plaza's form and colour, whilst bold and decisive, blends harmoniously into its surrounding. The broken crockery and fragments of tile provides a lavishness of colour, whilst weather proofing its surface and providing a hygienic surface. Gaudí went to enormous trouble to study the physiology of the human form in the designing of the benches, seats and backs.

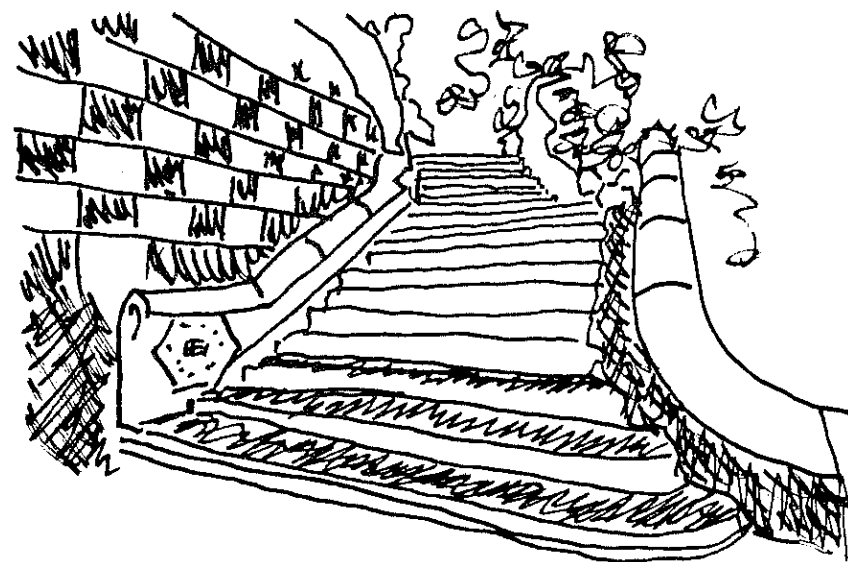
ELEVATED VIADUCTS  
vegetation & stone .



Representing another type of form, but with a less coherent photographic image, is the system of elevated viaducts that traverse the park's slopes. They form the network of communication within the park and were intended to provide access to the individual building plots. It was the exactitude of their calculations that flexed Gaudí's mathematical and constructional expertise. The stone pillars form the rustic rock-work causeways and the retaining walls support the roadways. These in turn form the elegant arcades and mysterious grottoes that create the unique ambience of this park.

### Present remains and condition

Parc Güell is now a municipal park attracting regular visits from local people, and many visitors from further afield. Güell's progressive ideas failed to captivate homesteaders of the day - but his loss is surely



GREAT STAIRWAY

our gain. The Witts'(1987) comment that "the Count anticipated a class of inhabitants for his community that would have made it more analogous to the fashionable London suburb of Bedford Park, rather than the rural cottage-suburbs that grew out of Howard's ideals". They observe that Parc Güell's 'artificial ambience' may have been the unavoidable result of trying to graft concepts applicable to one culture on to that of another radically different culture.

There have been major renovations in the park in the past years and the rock and tile work survive in remarkably good condition - a tribute to Gaudí's workmanship and his attention to detail. These renovations have quickened so as to try and complete them before the Olympic Games due to be held in the summer of 1992. The linear esplanades have been softened by the developing vegetation, and as this greenery 'succeeds', helped by the ingenious water conservation of Gaudí's original plan, the Parc settles into a comfortable alliance with the mountain's topography.

The Mediterranean vegetation has evolved naturally between the petrified stone 'trees' and wisteria scrambles over the whimsical caryatid figures. The Parc is enjoyed by thousands of people, some on a daily basis, some on a trip of a lifetime. Local people cut wild asparagus on the banks and visitors make pilgrimages to Gaudí's old rose-coloured home, now a museum, where examples of his furniture and lighting designs are displayed with other artifacts of his creative life.

Parc Güell is a highly successful municipal park, and a tribute to Gaudí's extraordinary flair as an organic architect working wholly within an organic setting. It fits harmoniously into the overall landscape, enriching it. It can be seen as a giant three dimensional monument, a sculpture of enormous proportions.

## Conclusion

Gaudí's Parc Güell exhibits the real quality of a park as a living space. One of its chief delights is the evidence of Gaudí's personal touch. Having orchestrated the topography, indigenous materials and skills of local craftsmen he has left a priceless legacy – and one that UNESCO recognised in 1984 as worthy of an International Preservation Order. The Parc illustrates a hugely successful 'marriage' of northern idealism (a throwback to the reaction against the devastating effects of urbanisation and industrialisation) with the vibrancy, vegetation, colours and informality of the Mediterranean culture. It represents a powerful alliance between Güell, with his interest in the social reforms of the day, and Gaudí, the hugely talented Catalonian architect, whose architecture in the Parc not only conforms to the landscape but appears to have grown out of it.

Le Corbusier is one of the few architects of his generation who openly declared their debt to Gaudí and to his revolutionary vision of the use of space in architecture. He wrote of Gaudí in 1957, "Only those who touch the sensitive heart of man remain and shall remain".

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### Biographical notes

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet**, born Reus 1852, died Barcelona 1926, is one of the most remarkable architects of the last hundred years. His lively character, despite severe bouts of rheumatism in his early years, only served to fuel his amazing creative genius. At 17 he began his architectural studies. These continued for eight years as he financed his studies by working in local architecture practices. His originality quickly observed by his professors made them wonder if he was a madman or a genius. With his single-mindedness and temperament it was not surprising that he soon diverted from the prevailing rules of the current architectural school of thought.

Quite a dandy, Gaudí had a penchant for the latest fashions, wore hats from the foremost hatter and even had his beard tinted an elegant shade of grey. This flair catapulted him into the artistic and intellectual circles of the day where he avidly kept abreast of the developments throughout Europe. In 1878, the same year that he graduated, Gaudí designed a glove stand for Cormella glove makers at the Paris World Fair. It was this work that was to attract the patronage of Count Eusebi Güell.

Gaudí was a devout Catholic and a fervent Catalanian. His enthusiasm for natural forms, his overwhelming interest in organic architecture and fascination with 'light', all contributed in his design and execution of Parc Güell. Gaudí spent a short time in North Africa on a design project, and here he was subject to Moorish influences and here learnt Berber techniques in mud-building. These are apparent in the construction of Parc Güell. This unique hill-side park is considered a milestone in Gaudí's professional development.

**Josep Maria Jujol** was an important collaborator and assistant of Gaudí in the instigation of Parc Güell. An architect by training, he was a man of extraordinary fine sensitivities and is best remembered



*Tile decoration or 'trencadis'*

for his decoration of the fabulous bench-come-parapet, which is encrusted with 'trencadis', the rubble thrown out of the kilns and potteries. Josep Jujol was a specialist in ceramic artwork and it is considered that his contribution made the venture so luxurious and sumptuous.

**Eusebi Güell i Bacigalupi** was one of the most powerful members of the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie. His marriage into an aristocratic family gave him important business contacts in France and England. His subsequent travels gave him the cultural outlook and wealth to make him one of the foremost patrons of modern architecture. After meeting Gaudí at the Paris World Fair, Gaudí became a welcome guest at Güell's home where local artists, writers and intellectuals met. Güell's library would have contained the influential writings of John Ruskin and William Morris, and the preliminary forms of Art Nouveau would have been apparent in the poetry of the pre-Raphaelites, in particular that of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which would often have been read at such gatherings.

## LANDSCAPES OF BARCELONA

Barcelona was perhaps the city that just had to be visited in 1992 and not only because of the Olympic Games. A renaissance of Catalan culture, centred on the city, had been much in evidence since the restoration of democracy in Spain following Franco's death in 1975. The flourishing through the 1980s of arts, literature, music, architecture, virtually completely suppressed by the fascist dictator, and the investment by the municipal authorities in city refurbishment – new roads and infrastructure, restoration of old squares and gardens, the creation of modern plazas – could be seen as both a commitment to the people of arguably Spain's most vibrant city and also as a means, successful as it turned out to be, of securing the hosting of the 25th Olympic Games.

Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, a region extending in triangular form northwards from Valencia on the Costa Blanca to encompass the eastern Pyrenees from Andorra to the French department of Roussillon. The Catalan language spoken by most inhabitants has its own vocabulary and grammar, although to many outsiders it appears a cross between mainly Spanish (Castilian) and French. Almost everywhere the old Castilian, imposed by Franco on an unreceptive population, has been replaced by Catalan – place names, newspapers, television. (In this report Catalan names will be used.)

Barcelona's unique character is all about its people and places. The excitement and vitality of the city have influenced great artists such as Picasso, Dali and Miró, and many people not involved with architecture have heard of Antoni Gaudí. In their turn, these famous names are now part of the image of Barcelona and in some way express its spirit.

However, especially for those of us from more temperate climates, one of the major factors generating the distinctiveness of the city is the pattern of public use of the wide variety of open spaces in the city. Both in the siesta which follows, or often incorporates, the what for us is an early afternoon lunch, and in the early evening period when the day's work is done, the small squares and parks become full of people; relaxing, chatting, or playing chess or the ubiquitous *petanca* (Fig 1), the typical scene is family groups or gatherings of the gender-segregated elderly. This is not incidental or passive use; it is central to the lives of these people.

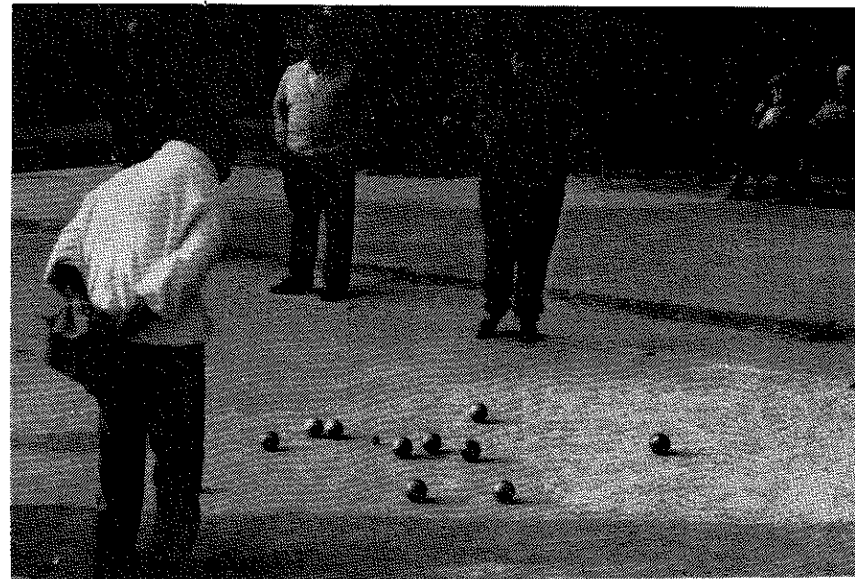


Figure 1

Such use is made possible, even necessary, by the climate of the area, and it is accompanied by a response in terms of the design of these areas, both traditionally and in their contemporary form. There is much for us to learn from the methods of modifying or controlling the microclimate employed there.

The other characteristic feature of how people inhabit the open spaces of Barcelona finds archetypal expression in La Rambla. Here, on what used to be the bed of a river, the wide tree-lined central strip between two opposing one-way traffic lanes is edged by stalls, not only now selling postcards and souvenirs, but still very much part of the city before and without tourists. It provides the location for richly colourful flower markets and the fascinating musical chaos and poignancy of the group of stalls selling caged birds and small animals, along with bars, restaurants and endless opportunities for parading, watching or meeting other people. Here it is possible to believe that the pedestrian really does come first and that life is so much more exciting when we are not on wheels. In fact La Rambla sets the tone for the rich variety of street experience in Barcelona, not only in the Gothic Quarter but also in many of the new ramblas being designed as part of the urban regeneration programme throughout the city.

Many of the new spaces conform to an outline formula devised by the city's planners to ensure both continuity and diversity. This requires that each new park or plaza is composed of the following elements:

- a 'garden' area, green, informal, for relaxation
- a 'square', ie a more formal paved area for informal outdoor games
- a building containing a cultural or sports facility, ie an auditorium, gymnasium or community centre
- a sculptural element, usually modern, sometimes relating to the year of the park's construction
- an element retained from the past or the site's former use

Other noteworthy characteristics are the use of water, both sculpturally and to affect microclimate, the very bold and imaginative use of lighting to encourage use (and safety) at night, and the use of palm trees and cacti, which somehow seem to speak the language of architecture better than they speak the language of nature.

.....

A party of 27 final year Cheltenham landscape architecture students and two members of staff stayed in Barcelona for nine days in early May 1992, to visit and study the parks, gardens, squares and landscapes, principally in the city but also within the metropolitan area and the wider hinterland. Horticulturalists, architects, planners and landscape architects gave talks and/or acted as guides on the visits to specific sites which included the following:

1. Small squares and patios within the mediaeval city (Gothic quarter);
2. Parks and gardens maintained by the city authorities:
  - Jardi Costa i Llobera (Cactus garden),
  - Parc Güell (Gaudí's classic garden city park),
  - Parc del Laberint (renovated 18th century garden);
3. Metropolitan area parks and projects:
  - Sant Adrià de Besos (a new park in a socially-deprived area),
  - Molinet (new linear park with extensive sports facilities eg swimming pool),
  - Aigües (a new park in suburban valley with ecological planting),
4. New city squares:
  - Parc de l'Escorxador,
  - Parc de l'Estació del Nord,
  - Parc del Clot,
  - Parc de l'Espanya Industrial,

Plaça de la Palmera,  
Plaça dels Països Catalans,  
Plaça Reial;

5. Civic Streets:

La Rambla,  
via Julia,  
Passeig Marítim;

6. Olympic Village (athlete accommodation) and Olympic Port  
(marina development);

7. City cemetery (extensive necropolis) and El Fossar de la  
Pedrera (Catalan memorial garden in derelict quarry);

8. Montserrat (mountain nature reserve and tourist attraction).

The formal programme was followed up by students making independent investigations of the sites. One day was also allocated to allow more in-depth research or visits to parks and gardens not included in the schedule. While site layouts and design evaluations were seen as the focus of the studies, many students chose to record how the different sites were used. Admittedly climate has a lot to do with open air activity, and despite the torrential storms witnessed on the first two days of the trip, the remainder of the stay enjoyed more typical Mediterranean weather of hot and sunny days and warm nights. The city squares and most notably the Rambla teemed with people both citizens and tourists. The city centre, unlike most British cities, is very much a residential area: high apartment blocks housing a density of population equivalent to that of Calcutta enclose a rabbit warren of narrow streets whose character has altered little for decades. The city is a live functioning place and it is no wonder open spaces are much in demand and fully used by the citizens.

The results of the student investigations have been compiled into a study tour document. Included below is a selection of individual and group descriptions and evaluations of largely thematic topics related to the landscapes of Barcelona. In addition to this documentary

source of reference, several hours of video were taken in Barcelona adding a dynamic dimension to a record of the nature and functioning of the designed landscapes there. This is providing a useful account of the trip as well as a powerful teaching resource for use in studies of landscape history and contemporary European design, and inspiration for students in design projects.

*Robert Moore and Will Cretney*

**Useful publications**

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## THE GOTHIC QUARTER

The Gothic Quarter of Barcelona is comprised of labyrinthine streets and alleyways, tightly packed together and enclosed by tall buildings. Housing is situated alongside shops and offices ensuring a lively interaction between work and relaxation characterising a strong community. The importance of open spaces in the form of squares surrounded by the shops, offices and apartments is fundamental to the spirit of the community. This spirit is clearly evident in the Raval. The Raval covers approximately one square mile and has the highest population density, unemployment and crime rates, yet it buzzes with life and is looked upon by the residents as a 'village'.

The squares function as public meeting places for social activities such as trading in the form of small markets and community celebrations as well as providing an outdoor room for the residents in which they can relax and play. The design of the squares and the surrounding architecture varies from square to square creating an identifiable sense of place.

Characteristically they are paved with unit paving such as cobbles, slabs, or decorative tiles but some are simply surfaced with gravel. Most contain water features which function visually, aurally, and as drinking fountains and perhaps most importantly as an ameliorant to the dry microclimate experienced in the city. Surprisingly, many squares contain no planting and of those which do the planting is simple, consisting of a full or partial canopy of trees for shade under which seating is arranged. Typical tree species may include:

- Phoenix canariensis - date palm
- Phoenix dactylifera - date palm
- Platanus acerifolia - London plane
- Tipuana tipu - yellow jacaranda
- Robinia pseudoacacia - false acacia

Plaça Reial exhibits the archetypal form for a square with residential space above and shops/business below, surrounding the central social area (fig 2), where attention is focused on the water feature. As a child Miró played in and around this fountain, and a study of his paintings reveals that some of the symbolism derives from the shapes still extant in the square, most notably the tall palm trees. Originally the square was open to traffic which circulated around its perimeter and the central space was once divided into four smaller areas of grass. It is difficult to say how the changes have affected the place but it is still a lively and very distinctive square.



Figure 2





Figure 3

Plaça de la Seu (fig 3), a large space in front of the cathedral, comes to life every Sunday when hundreds of people gather to dance to the music provided by an orchestra. The dance is called the Sardana. The square contains no trees, possibly in order not to impede the wonderful view of the Cathedral.

Plaça del Rei is the courtyard to the Royal Palace. In mediaeval times it was used as a cattle market but today the space is somewhat dead. The architecture surrounding the square however makes up for that. On entering the area, the quarter circle of steps leading up to the Chapel dedicated to Santa Agata and the Salo' de Tinell are very striking. Next, the tall gothic arches in front of the Salo' de Tinell leap out visually and dominate the space. But perhaps the most impressive structure is the five storey renaissance tower of the Rei Marti. It is this building which first draws one into the space and, although when in the square it recedes because of the other striking buildings, its presence is always felt, guarding over the whole area.

*Helen Jablonska*

### A STUDY OF TWO PLAZAS

Over two hundred new squares, parks and street improvements have been completed to-date in Barcelona. They are a mixture of progressive (Plaça dels Paisos Catalans) and popular historic designs (Plaça de la Mercé), many with elements of sculpture to animate the design.

Defending his preference for the historic designs, the architect Bohigas states that "the traditional square in...Mediterranean cities has always had a hard surface...a place to walk, to dance, to barter, to love, to be." This may well succeed in the smaller, more intimate spaces, but some of the larger squares seem to strive too hard to be

monumental: the Paisos Catalans design is clearly dramatic yet many users are disappointed with the lack of greenery, shelter and a sense of place.

Designed by Piñón, Viaplana and Miralles, the **Plaça dels Paisos Catalans** has a sort of surreal, abstract quality and is deliberately arty, apparently based on Kandinsky's work. The square is built on a platform above railway tracks, hence the minimal depth of soil for planting. It is bounded on three sides by noisy thoroughfares and on the fourth by the station car park (fig 4). Surrounding buildings are of various styles, heights and functions. A bold and modern design, the square tries to define the central space through the use of contin-



Figure 4

uous granite paving. A central axis, the undulating mesh of a canopy, honours a grid pattern and makes the link with the station entrance and has the effect of visually shortening the plaza.

On the opposite side is a sinuous curve of heavy wooden benches. From here, two straight rows of vertical steel pipes lead off and converge towards the northern corner. Water spouts in umbrella fashion from these pipes over slightly inclined rectangular areas of paving (fig 5). Viewed at night, this flood-lit water feature adds a touch of elegance and animates the plaza.

To fix the boundary of the square, where vehicular access may be possible, steel balls have been used, a device now popular in other areas of the city. Another feature, somewhat puzzling to explain, are the rows of slightly angled posts which hold the lighting. These somewhat whimsical structures have also been observed in other parks.



Figure 5

The Plaça dels Paisos Catalans succeeds as a square in terms of its new and interesting design, though it has been said that it "is more a piece of modern art than a landscape design". When temperatures lower in the evening, and being sufficiently-lit, it comes to life and is well used.

In contrast, the **Plaça de la Mercé** is located in a very old, tightly-knit section of Barcelona, not far from the dock area. Before 1981 buildings had stood on this spot, but had become badly decayed. Demolition produced a square rectangular in shape, with a prominent Baroque church dominating one end and determining the character of the design proposals.



Figure 6

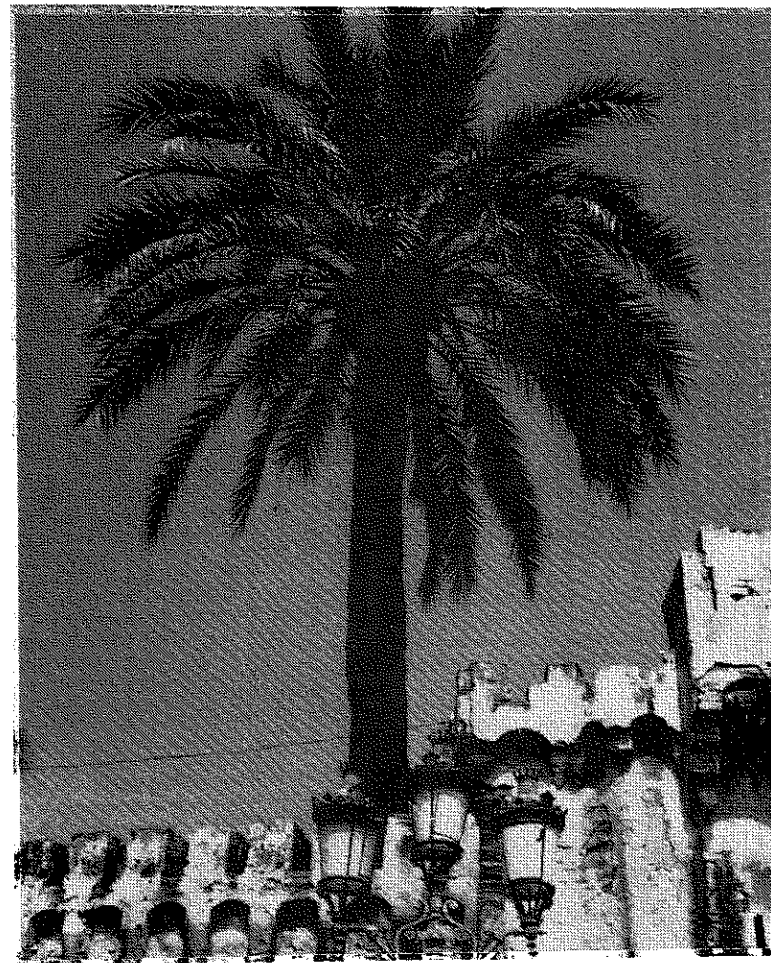


Figure 7

Compared to other new squares, this one is surprisingly unadorned and modest. The paving is a simple, white marble giving emphasis to the pale tones of the church. At the eastern end, to the left of the church facade, is a rather temporary-looking rostrum with three flagpoles. Diametrically opposite stands a rectangular fountain, the main feature of the square, with a statue above. Behind the fountain are eight trees, set in pairs, shading two groups of benches.

From the point of view of the users, this square is more successful than some of the more elaborately designed ones. Located within a residential area that was in need of open space, the square provides both the 'hard' area and a more intimate, shadowed area (Fig 6). The former spaces are used for children's games, street theatre and exhibitions. The latter serves as a place for relaxation.

*Melissa Clarke*

## THE USE OF PALM TREES

Palm trees figure significantly in the landscape of Barcelona and they are instantly recognised by their very distinct form (fig 7). These trees form a link with Moorish influence of Southern Spain and give a very Mediterranean feel to the place.

There are four main varieties of palm used in Barcelona and these are as follows:-

### **Phoenix canariensis** - Canary Island Date Palm

This is a shorter palm of up to 18m with a robust trunk. The leaves are feathered and arching and it bears pendant clusters of tiny yellow-brown flowers followed by yellow-red fruits in autumn/winter.

### **Washington filifera** - Desert Fan Palm

This is a fast growing palm attaining a height of 20m with fan shaped

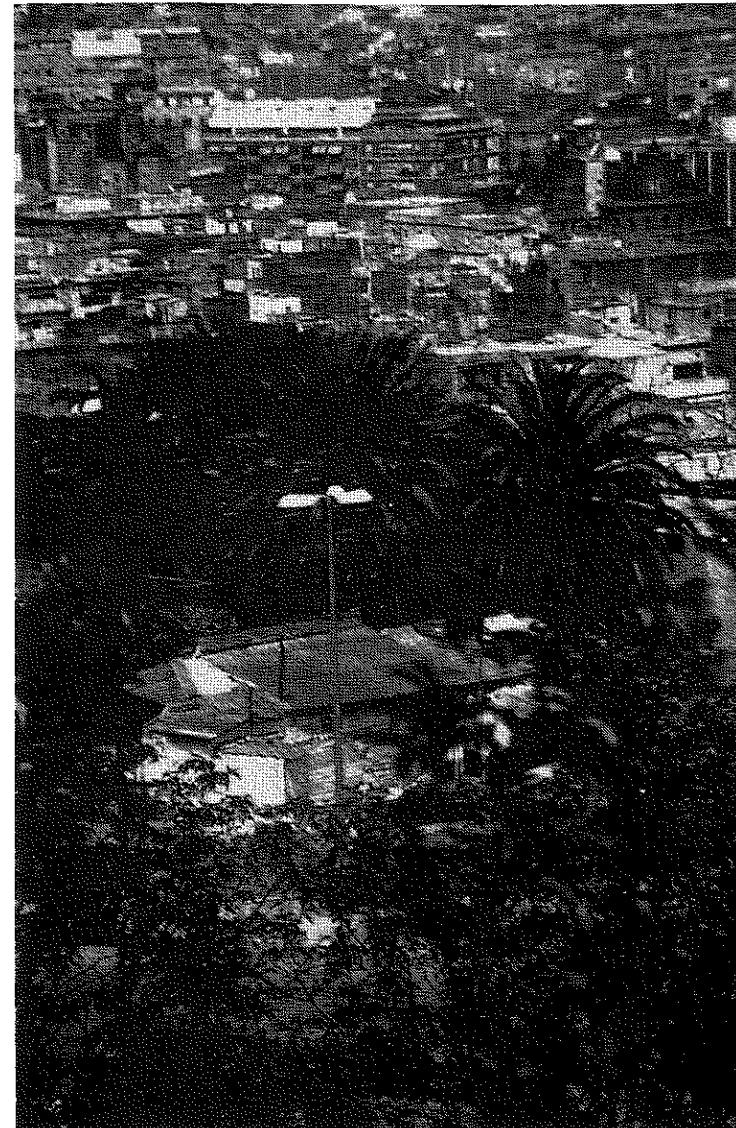


Figure 8



leaves of grey-green. This palm has clusters of tiny creamy white flowers in summer and berry-like black fruits in winter.

**Chamaerops humilis** - Dwarf Fan Palm

This is a slow-growing palm that only achieves approximately 1.5m height and spread. The leaves are fan shaped with a spread of up to 1m. Tiny yellow flowers are borne in clusters during the summer.

**Phoenix dactylifera** - Date Palm

This magnificent palm will reach heights of up to 30m. The leaves are feathered and arching and it produces dates in season.

These palms have a number of uses in the cityscape, both in a traditional and modern context. Because of their geometrical form and strong vertical emphasis, they are often used to complement buildings as individual specimens or in groups. At the other extreme their strong architectural form is used to provide contrast to other planting in shrub areas or as specimen trees.

The most significant use of the palm tree in Barcelona is in relation to street/avenue plantings and for the emphasis of city squares. Palms are used in the city to define routeways, both pedestrian and vehicular, and have the effect of a strong directional pull. Of particular note is the fact that no standard of height or variety dominates the planting of palms as street trees and therefore, if studied, a range of types and heights may be observed. Palms have also been used to a great extent along the roadways in the new Olympic Village in order to create at once a majestically formal and exotic atmosphere to the place.

A number of the squares in Barcelona have plantings of palms which further maintain the link with the Moorish influence that exists in the city. Palms may often be used as the sole vegetation species or in conjunction with other tree species. Pines and palms are often mixed to good effect with the fine fronds of the palms being complemented by the dense, bold green of the pines.

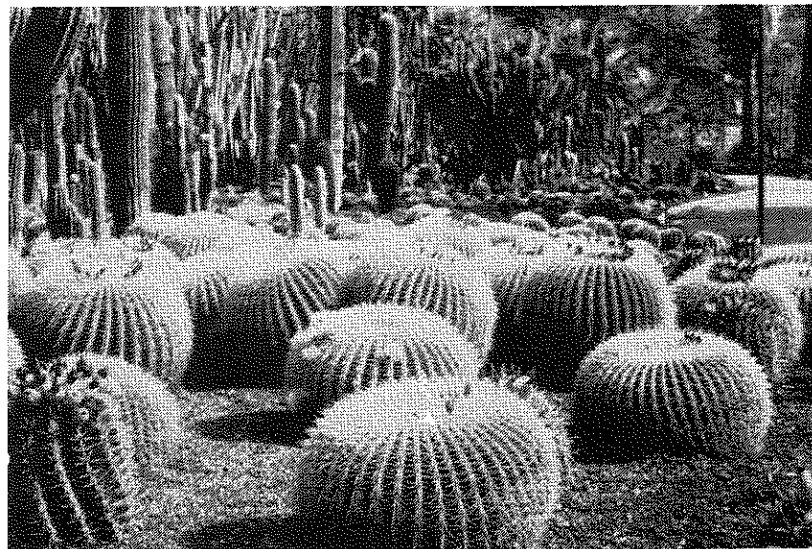
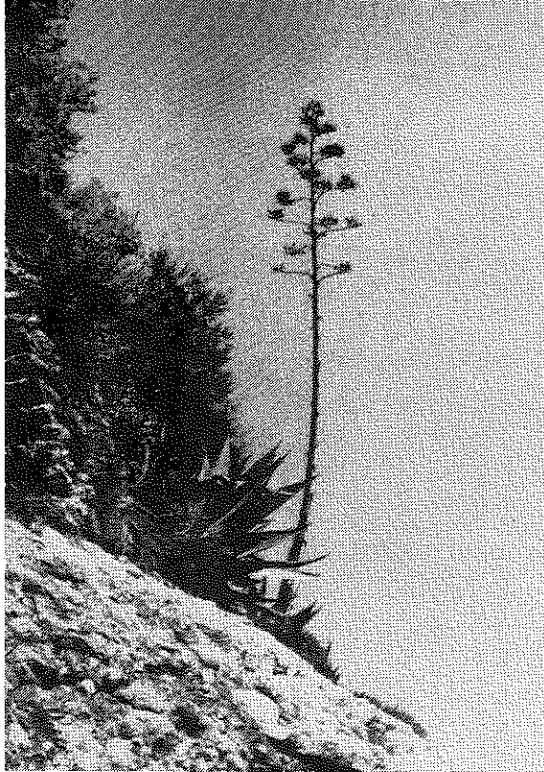
The smaller of the palms, the Dwarf Fan Palm, has been used to good effect as a tunnel avenue which reduces the scale of the surrounding area. In older parts of the city, palms, when viewed from above, may appear as green oases, breaking up the built form and thereby often being a more significant landmark than when viewed at street level (fig 8). It would appear the palms are more visually striking when grown within a hard landscape surface than when grown within a grassed area and much has been made of this visual quality within Barcelona.

*Sarah Giddens*

## CACTI GARDEN

Without doubt some of the most impressive sights in Barcelona are the massive succulents. *Agave americana*, which grows wild on the hillsides around the city, is used in landscape design both in amenity planting and in gardens. These beautiful plants are normally grown as house plants in Britain, except in warmer areas such as the Isles of Scilly where they are able to survive our winters outside. More impressive than the rosettes of sword-shaped leaves are the 5m high flower stalks produced after 50 years (fig 9). The plant uses so much energy to produce this incredible head of flowers that it immediately dies afterwards. Originally a native of South America, *Agave americana* is also planted in its variegated form, *Agave americana* 'variegata' which is slightly smaller than the common variety.

Another succulent commonly used in Barcelona is the genus *Aloe* from South Africa. Many different species are used including *Aloe aristata* and *Aloe cameronii*. Like the Agaves they are planted either as specimens or en masse in amenity planting, where they serve the same purpose as low shrubs and ground cover in Britain. In these



Figures 9 and 10

situations, however, their exotic form may be lost in the overall design. Both Aloes and the Agaves offer the landscape designer in Barcelona the chance to use plants which inject that touch of the exotic and the unfamiliar with the added advantage of needing little irrigation where water is scarce.

An example of how much designers can do with these plants and other succulents is seen in the Jardí Costa i Llobera situated on a south-east facing hillside overlooking Barcelona Harbour. This garden, created in the 1960s, is a wondrous collection of cacti and succulents from countries such as South America and South Africa. The site itself benefits from its aspect receiving warmer air from the south, from its dry limestone soils and from its steep terrain, limiting its use for other activities. Species such as *Echinocactus grusonii* which grows to about 50cm is a rounded barrel-like cactus planted en masse, acting as a shrub layer to the taller species of cacti, which might include *Lophocereus schottii* (from Arizona) which can reach over 3 metres in height. In other parts of the garden masses of pink *Mesembryanthemums* are planted, creating a sea of colour out of which massive columns of the taller species of cacti rise (fig 10) contrasting with the sword-shaped leaves of the Palms, Aloes and Agaves.

This garden and the use of exotic species throughout Barcelona opens up a whole new perspective in the art of landscape design, one which unfortunately cannot be transferred to climates like the U.K. (At least not until global warming produces a major change!)

*David Ritchie*

## A ROLE FOR INDIGENOUS VEGETATION?

Walking around Barcelona, it is difficult to imagine what the natural vegetation of the area might be. But for the construction sites, which abound in attractive Mediterranean weeds, the plants used in most of the public green spaces are ornamentals which are completely unsuited to the hot, dry climate of Spain. An enormous amount of time and money is expended in keeping unsuitable vegetation alive, and artificial irrigation (costly and ethically dubious) is obligatory. Severe pruning is necessary in order to establish non-indigenous trees, which then take years to resume their former shape, and even then, these exotic vegetation types are not robust and cannot be freely used. Grass is there to be looked at but will not survive being walked on.

This reliance on exotic vegetation types probably stems from nineteenth century emulation of cities such as Paris and London. It is surprising that it has persisted so long, especially as a lead was given by Gaudí as early as 1900, when he designed the Parc Güell, whose planting is all native to the area. Colourful Mediterranean annuals thrive on dry, stony, olive-covered slopes, looking perfectly at home, and, equally importantly, needing no expensive maintenance.

The hills beyond the city, which are included in the municipal Parc de Collserola, give some idea of how stunningly attractive the indigenous flora can be. Much of this area is maquis - the low, dry scrub of the southern Mediterranean which comprises mainly *Arbutus unedo* (strawberry tree), *Quercus ilex* (evergreen oak), broom and several types of cistus. Within the hills of the Collserola a wide selection of flowers are found there. These species - attractive and drought tolerant - would make a far more fitting contribution to the city's green space than unusable grass and butchered forest trees. However, their use would require a radical policy change which is unlikely to come about while parks are designed by architects (who know little about plants) and planted by horticulturalists (whose

methods and taste are derived from nineteenth century northern Europe).

Clearly a holistic attitude towards designing with plants is needed, and this will only come about when landscape architects have a larger role to play in the design of Barcelona's parks.

*Lorraine Mason*

## CLIMATE AMELIORATION

The climate of Barcelona presents very different problems and requirements for the landscape architect to those experienced in Britain. Despite the fact that the rainfall in both countries is approximately similar, the summer months are uncomfortably hot and dry in Barcelona. Consequently a variety of methods are employed to ameliorate this aspect of the climate in the city's open spaces and thereby to encourage public use. This is especially important in the afternoons when many stop work for the siesta, a period of relaxation and chatting, have a game of chess or sometimes play a leisurely session of bowls. Protection from the hot outdoor sun enables cool, outdoor 'rooms' to be created. The success of these spaces as social areas may be judged by the amount of use they enjoy, which in turn seems to relate in no small measure to the success of climate amelioration.

Of particular interest is how the social traditions have been considered in the designing of the new city parks and plazas. Underpinning all the designs is a desire to recreate both the informality of the city 'gardens', seen as relaxation areas, as well as the more geometric elements of the traditional city squares, suitable for outdoor games. The 'garden' areas are well vegetated and in the case of the Parc de



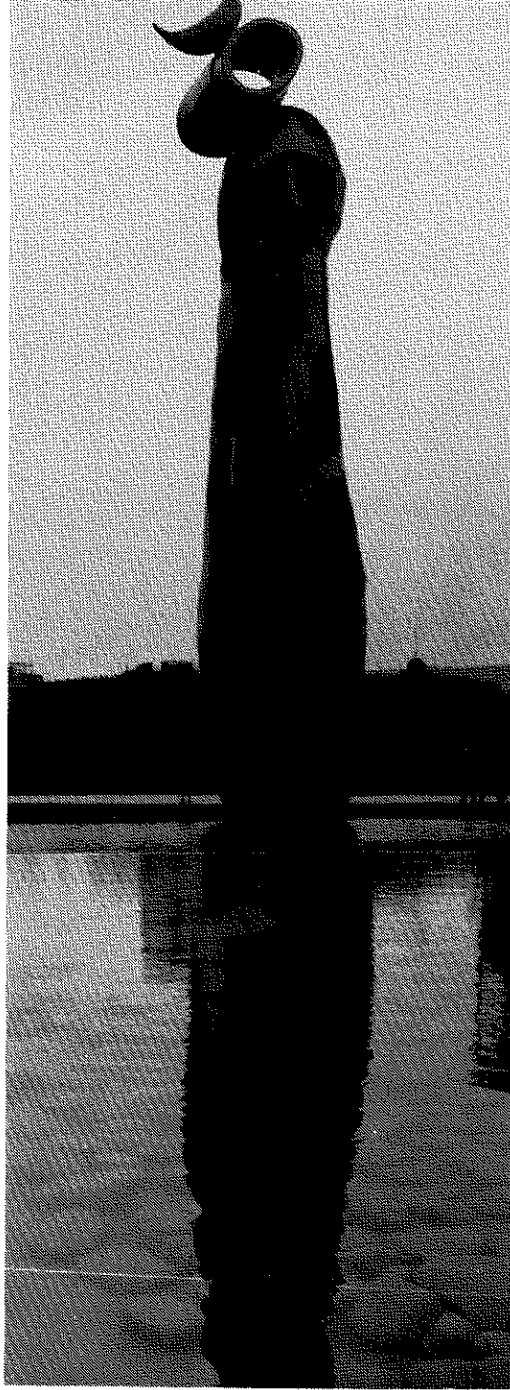


Figure 11

l'Estació del Nord young limes have been planted around sunken circular steps increasing the shade. The 'squares' are usually exposed and little protection is afforded, except where adjacent buildings cast deep shadows across the sandy and hard surfaces.

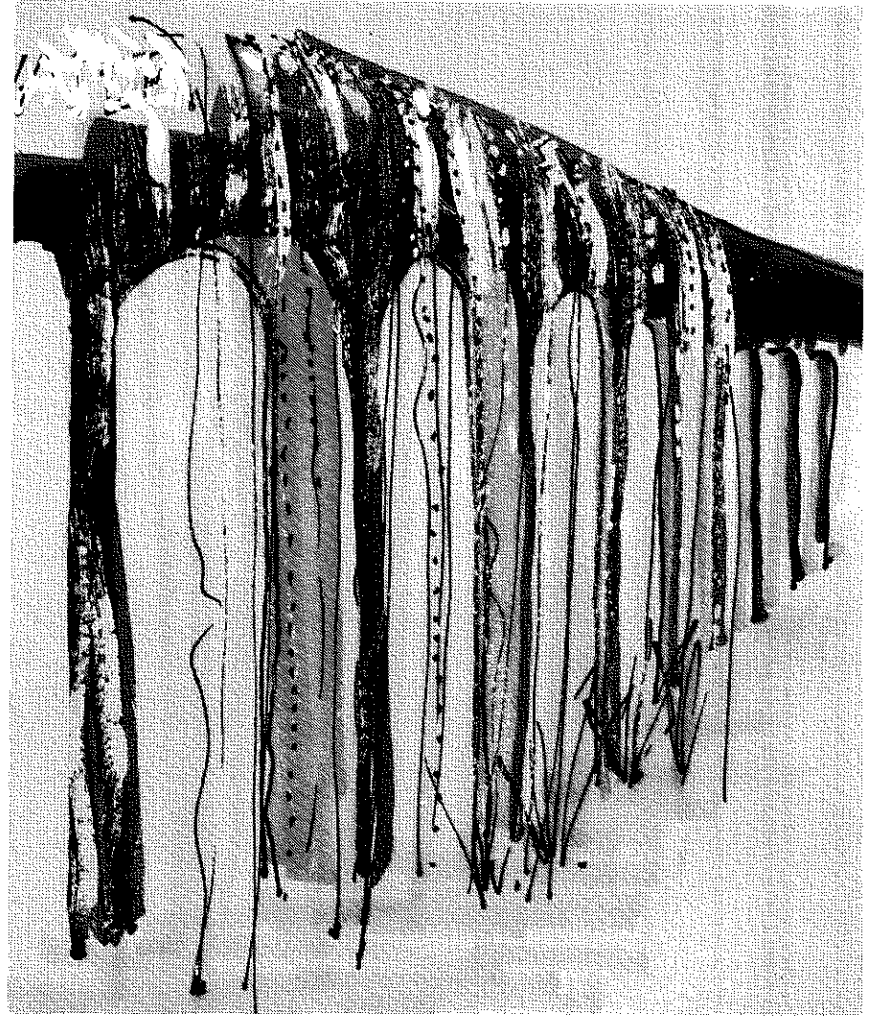


Figure 12

Within the parks there is often a sculptural element, which is usually 'modern' and is commonly accompanied by a water feature. In the Parc de l'Escorxador, the massive "Dona i ocell" sculpture of Miró dominates the smooth pool of water lined with pebbles (fig 11). Usually shallow and rectangular, these pools invite the visitor to trail their fingers and toes in them, although it seems that it is mostly tourists who take advantage of this.

Water, however, does not just provide refreshing relief in a physical sense. Psychologically the sight and sound of water is cooling and soothing. In the Parc del Clot, fine spray cascades from off stone arches (fig 12), remnants of a bygone railway station. The effect of water is greatest when moving, evoking turbulent winds or generating calming sounds. In the Plaça dels Paisos Catalans, where problems of soil depth precluded the planting of trees, substitute palm trees are created by novel fountain effects. The spray from the plumes carries for some distance and much of the neighbouring hard surfaces are drenched but cooled.

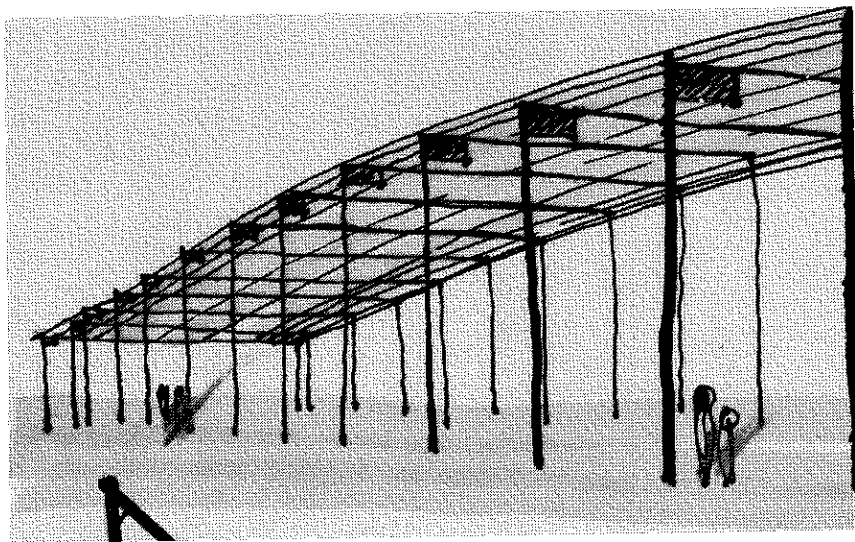


Figure 13

Another feature of this plaza, and much repeated in other new designs (Besos and Fossar de la Pedrera), is the provision of long canopies of steel, glass and plastic to afford some degree of shade simulating the shading effect of tree foliage (fig 13). This is a feature which has emerged strongly in the last decade, as more and more landscape design has been done by architects who may well be more familiar with and confident in the area of materials involvement. The great advantage of these structures is that they enable an instant and controllable shading effect to be achieved whilst at the same time being able to develop expressions of form and sculpture which are more unambiguously urban and contemporary than plant material might be.

In many metropolitan area parks, within the city suburbs, the land was degraded and planting was not easy to establish. Furthermore vandalism and social deprivation has discouraged the use of many open spaces. This called for innovative solutions, including the design of picnic areas and social gathering places, well protected from the climate, and sometimes surrounded by ecological planting, in the expectation a wider range of people will be encouraged to use the parks.

*Lorraine Shill*

## LIGHT AND SHADE

The searing temperatures experienced during a summer in Barcelona are probably one of the most important factors affecting the treatment of open space in the conurbation. The Barcelona inhabitants have become experts in handling the design of their spaces and surrounding buildings in order to optimize cool shade and this is particularly true of the urban designers in their recent creative achievements in

urban regeneration. The evolution and layout of the city, and its social life, centres on shaded and open spaces where the inhabitants congregate and promenade by day and by night. In common with many European cities this 'promenading' is an important activity, probably only seen in Britain in the holiday resorts.

Trees are one of the most important shade elements utilised in almost all the Barcelona spaces. A particularly effective example is seen with the lime trees along the Rambla. Elsewhere in the old part of the City, important open spaces exist such as Plaça Reial (fig 14), which is one of the oldest. Here a palm tree structure, unfortunately much



Figure 14

depleted over the years, casts a pattern of alternating light and shade while more densely shaded walking areas are provided by the encircling colonnade from which cafes now spill out into the square.

The year 1927 saw the creation of the Barcelona Pavilion by Mies Van der Rohe, the quintessential expression of masterly handling of light and shade. The cool marble surfaces combined with open expanses of water reflect the sky and give the feeling of infinity and, contrasting with the cool uncluttered interior subtly enclosed with glass, respond effectively to the local climate. More recently open space development has continued along traditional lines - trees for shade combined with open ungrassed areas and water, either still or in movement, to provide a refreshing cooling effect. The Spanish generally are experts in the use of water for cooling the air and to catch the light; they have a long tradition from far back in Moorish times. One of the most successful examples in Barcelona is at Parc del Clot where a cascading aqueduct provides relief from the arid city climate.

Although our more northerly climate does not require the same need for shade or water, purely for comfort, nevertheless the effect of light and shade is often forgotten by designers who are not sensitive to small microclimatic differences. All too often water is used in quite inappropriate places such as in the shade, failing to make use of natural light. The use of trees for shade is a fascinating study, as almost every species gives a different quality of light penetration, and certainly different seasons give different effects.

*Sally Winter*

## SUMMARY

In attempting to draw together what we might learn from Barcelona '92, it is possible to focus on a number of issues:

- its essential 'Spanishness' or maybe even its Catalanian eccentricity, though much of the recent developments, at least aesthetically, may be seen as growing out of the mould-breaking Parc de la Villette in Paris, and associated contemporary architectural theory

- the scale of design activity and levels of investment even in 'open spaces', but then here we are dealing not with cosmetics but with rebuilding the economic infrastructure of a city, maybe even to some extent the re-emergence of an independent nation!

- and perhaps most crucially, the very low profile (almost non-existent) of the landscape architect in this exciting and impressive achievement. The most important questions to carry forward could be how it might have been different, even better, with a greater involvement by landscape architects, and how might we make sure that we have the opportunity to find out?

*Will Cretney*

## **ELASA European Landscape Architecture Students Association Meeting at Rapperswil, Switzerland, 15th-20th March, 1992**

The aim of ELASA is to foster relationships and opportunities for Landscape Architecture students across Europe. Europe faces many exciting challenges as old divisions are erased, and possibilities for the exchange of ideas and experiences have never been greater. With this backdrop of enthusiasm and interest, ELASA's Third Annual Meeting was celebrated at the Landscape Architecture Department of the Technikum at Rapperswil, Switzerland. One hundred and twenty students from twenty six European countries attended the Meeting, some as Representatives of their countries and some to enjoy the comradeship and opportunities presented by an exciting array of workshops.

The spectacular location of the Technikum on the shores of Lake Zurich, surrounded by mountains, coupled with the comfortable student hostel accommodation and generous hospitality of the Swiss, created just the right atmosphere to break down any language and cultural barriers. The British contingent happily shared their quarters with the Bulgarian and Lithuanian colleges.

Each participating country contributed to a thought-provoking exhibition of students work and ideas, held in a public arena within the Technikum, which acted as a focus for delegates. Of equal importance it was also a public statement to the rest of the college, who

showed an avid interest and curiosity in work from so many different cultures.

The ELASA conference had two main components. Firstly, up to two delegates from each country attended the Representative Meeting. Considerable work was carried out by the national representatives in working towards a more coherent approach to the aims of the organisation to promote greater sharing and co-operation across Europe. The major debate addressed the setting up of a viable Information Centre, whose role will be to disseminate current information on education and work opportunities within Europe. It was decided that the Centre should be located permanently in France, where it will also be responsible for publishing a Yearbook. Concurrent with this meeting, other student guests were free to choose from an extensive palette of workshops, excursions and lectures, organised by the host students. These included a midnight hike through the snow to "awaken the senses", opportunities to engage in land art, discussion and illustration of the conflict between tourism and agriculture, and many ecological aspects of Landscape Architecture, as pertaining to Switzerland.

After wining and dining we toasted the future of ELASA, which will include the 1993 AGM hosted by Turkey, and the subsidising of events in Spain and France. By the Autumn of 1992 ELASA should have a permanent address and headquarters in France, where all Landscape Architects, both students and professionals will be able to obtain details of education, work and exchange opportunities throughout Europe.

*Elizabeth Turner (Co-Representative for Great Britain), Second Year student, Cheltenham*

### **1992 DISSERTATIONS: BA Hons (Landscape), Cheltenham**

The following is a list of the successful degree dissertation submissions for 1992. These documents can be consulted in the College library at Francis Close Hall and abstracts may be obtained from the Librarian on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Dissertations for the period 1982-88 are listed by subject in **Landscape Issues**, volume 5, number 2, November 1988. Subsequent dissertations are published annually as on these pages.

**BARLING, Robert** Unrecognised designers. The lesser known landscape architects and garden designers of the inter-war era

**BUCKLER, Lawrence** The use of sculpture to heighten the experience of landscape

**BURLTON, Minnie** A future for the past. The important eighteenth century landscape of Hawkstone Park

**CLARKE, Melissa** The democratic square. An investigation into the needs of the public in the design of urban squares

**FRENCH, Louise** Nature's place. The role of natural elements and environments in children's play in the city

**GIDDENS, Sarah** The effects of compulsory competitive tendering on the design and maintenance of public sector landscapes

**HIPWELL, Katherine** Pressures and issues affecting wildlife habitats along the Wessex-Solent coastline

**JABLONSKA, Helen** Epping Forest. A study model for future public park design and planning

**JONES, Angela** The oriental influence. The influence of China and Japan on the English garden

**MACKLE, Declan** An investigation into field boundary loss, with particular reference to three farms in the Cotswolds

**MARSHALL, James** Cleeve Common. An investigation into the effects of recreation on Gloucestershire's largest common

**MASON, Lorraine** Edward White, 1875-1952 - his contribution to the profession of landscape architecture

**McMURTRY, Niall** Nature conservation in towns and cities through a green network

**MILES, Laura** A procedure for the restoration of historical industrial landscapes

**NEWTON, Ian** The awareness of the landscape architect to environmentally conscious materials

**PARK, Regina** Llanhilleth: A discussion of the active interrelationship between people, economy and landscape

**RENNIE, Alistair** Glencoe and Blackmount: New proposals for managing outdoor recreation in the landscape

**RITCHIE, David** School ground design

**SHAW, Peter** The acceptability of design within the electrical power supply industry

**SHILL, Lorraine** The specific art of landscape design. An exploration into its role

**STEPHENS, Karen** The impact of country parks on derelict land in Wigan

**SYMONDS, Keith** The chase and the Midland landscape

**VINCENT, Alison** Visual concrete in the urban landscape

**WATTERSON, Caroline** The beauty of mosses - a potential for design

**WILLIS, Mark** The use of satellite imaging in the field of landscape architecture

**WINTER, Sally** New settlements and landscape planning



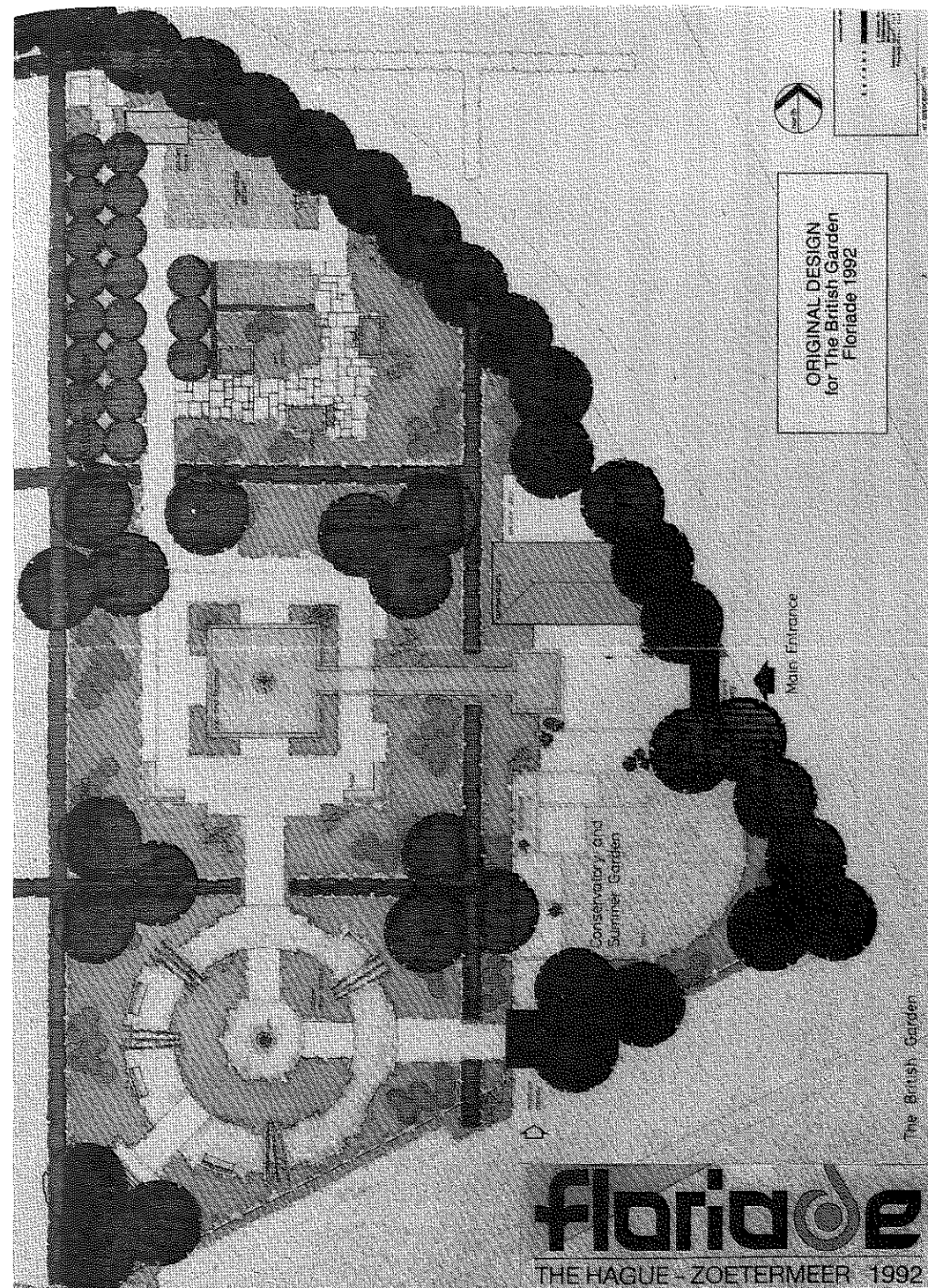
## THE BRITISH GARDEN, FLORIADE 1992

The design of the garden was determined by two factors: first, the retention of a grid of alder (*Alnus cordata*) hedges throughout the International Gardens area, and, second, the representation of a British garden tradition. Thus the hedges divide the garden into four separate theme gardens, a series of rooms thought to typify British gardens. Each were created and maintained as testimony to the art and skill of the British gardener and designer.

The main entrance leads into the **Summer Garden**, with an orangery as its focus and serving as an information centre. British paving and brickwork forms a terrace leading onto a lawn surrounded by colourful seasonal planting. The path then leads into the **Rose Garden**, filled with a mixture of old-fashioned and modern roses with lavender, scabious, hebe and artemisia, spilling onto blue brick paving. New wrought iron arches and an arbour are covered with rambling roses. Next, one passes into the **Pool Garden**. Here a raised pool with its fountain forms a dramatic focus to this space as well as to the garden as a whole. The effect is enhanced by the herbaceous planting where rainbow colours contrast with white flowers and dark green leaves. A small canal makes a visual linkage with a small pool outside the orangery. The last 'room' is the **Kitchen Garden**, demonstrating a range of activities and features in a small plot: greenhouse, potting shed, compost bins, cold frame, espalier fruit trees.

James Wilson

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## CHELTENHAM NEWS

### MODULAR DEGREE DEVELOPMENTS

#### *BA(Hons) Landscape Architecture*

In September 1993 the Cheltenham Landscape Architecture undergraduate course becomes, subject to validation, a Landscape Architecture Field within the College's modular degree scheme. On account of its vocational character, students will follow a 'defined route', comprising a number of compulsory modules forming the 'core' of the subject. The remainder of the programme consists of a free selection of other modules, not necessarily all landscape- or design-related, and chosen by students on the basis of interest or the desire to assign a distinctiveness to their landscape architectural education and training.

Landscape modules are usually practical in nature and often organised around projects located within the design studios. Many of the modules derive from the established course, which has evolved since the early 1960s, receiving Landscape Institute recognition in 1974, CNAAs degree status in 1980 and honours validation in 1984. Most recently following a visit by HM inspectorate from the DES, it was awarded an 'outstanding quality' designation. But the field is not just a repackaging of the old course, although it inevitably draws on much

that has contributed to that course since it was last fundamentally reviewed a decade ago. With modularisation, changes to the teaching staff, and in recognition of having to address issues that will take the course through the 1990s, it seemed appropriate to reconsider its philosophy, aims and content.

Whilst many of the component elements and subjects which make up the existing course remain broadly relevant, the Course Team has sought to focus on the special advantages conferred by both the College's geographical location and by the course's associations within its own Faculty (Countryside Planning, Environmental Policy, Design in the Built Environment, Local Policy, Geography and Geology) and other close relations in the College (eg the Faculty of Arts). These provide a basis for underpinning the course's distinctiveness and future directions. Discussion in these areas has led to two principal objectives in the new course.

The first is that the activity of landscape architects is clearly in the realm of the design of the landscape. That defined mode of intervention is one that landscape architects must increasingly claim as their own. In order to do this a course must equip intending practitioners with the theoretical, technical and aesthetic abilities that this role requires.

Following on from this is the perception of the intellectual and philosophical basis of that interaction and where and how it is directed. The collapse of the Modernist paradigm, the perceived inadequacy of Post-Modernism to fill this vacuum, and an increasing sense of fragmentation and incoherence driven by rapid global change at the hands of powerful and apparently uncontrollable agencies have led to the necessity of finding strategies for resistance to hegemonic corporate and international design and the reassertion of identity at all levels and in all fields. Landscape architecture is in no way exempt from this.

As concern grows that the burgeoning pervasiveness of what has been called the 'middle landscape' (neither truly urban nor truly rural) may become the 'Everywhersville' of the 21st century, it becomes apparent that the creation of place and identity are the means whereby, if at all, designers can be active in resisting the loss of cultural meaning and the alienation resulting from planned corporate banality.

The location of the College within the lower Severn Vale, well served by rail and motorway routes, and with the Cotswolds, Oxford and Swindon to the east, and Gloucester, Bristol, and Bath to the south and west seems ideally placed for a course whose second principal objective is to identify with the issues raised by this proliferating inter-urban development.

This role for landscape architects does not presume a reactionary return to historical motifs, nor does it constitute a call for avante-garde visionaries. It envisages them as working within a coherent framework of change and within comprehensible spatial scales of neighbourhood and region. It offers the potential of employing the benefits of modernisation and technological change within the parameters of sustainability, whilst using expert and tacit knowledge to create identity, variety and diversity appropriate to specific place, activity and culture.

As to the particular course content, Level I introduces the disciplines of design, communication, and site planning with complementary modules in earth sciences, botany, ecology, history and evolution of the landscape. Level II includes modules in design method, appraisal and criticism, landscape culture and society, design development, planting technologies and landscape construction. Level III comprises landscape planning, environmental assessment, land reclamation, design of the countryside and history of the designed landscape. Throughout the three levels, computer and video technologies are

introduced, specifically to aid landscape design and analysis. Computer applications consist of plant databases, terrain modelling, CAD, paintbox systems and GIS. Video filming provides a valuable resource for site survey and analysis, and design evaluation.

Of the 30 modules a student has to take over the three levels of the course, 24 landscape modules (and two 'workshops') are compulsory for the BA(Hons) qualification. On successful completion, the student may then apply for admission onto the Modular Masters course.

### *Post Graduate Course in Landscape Architecture*

The Faculty of Environment and Leisure has developed, on behalf of the College as a whole and under the leadership of the Faculty's Director of Research, Professor Nigel Curry, the scheme that will form the basis of all post-graduate courses.

Concurrently with this, three courses within the Faculty are going forward to validation as the first courses in the Scheme, with a proposed starting date of September, 1993. These courses are Landscape Architecture, Environmental Policy and Management, and Landscape and Society. A fourth course, Leisure and Tourism Management is following these through to validation. With the exception of Landscape Architecture, these first courses draw on existing modular undergraduate courses, and staff research and consultancy expertise. Landscape Architecture develops specifically out of the existing, professionally accredited Graduate Diploma Course which has run successfully for many years.

The development of the Modular Post-Graduate Course has enabled staff to look at opportunities to develop the Graduate Landscape Architecture Course in ways that offer greater potential for student interaction with other fields and staff, and the prospect of a stronger research element underpinning the Masters award.

The basic format for the Post-Graduate Scheme provides for six modules leading to the award of Diploma (which in the case of Landscape Architecture will carry LI Part 3 accreditation) followed by the possibility of continuing and submitting a dissertation during the following year for the Masters award. The three modules in Semester One are specific to the chosen course and compulsory; and the three in Semester Two are chosen from a number of optional modules that appear on each course curriculum map.

The compulsory modules cover such topics as research methods common to all courses, and, in Landscape Architecture, professional and contextual studies, advanced landscape technology, design and documentation, information technology applications, and landscape evaluation and assessment methods.

The optional modules offered by the Landscape Architecture course are Place and Meaning, Reading and Responding to the Context, and Designing for Sustainable Development. Two of these will have to be chosen. The optional modules offered by other courses are Countryside Recreation Policy and Management, Ideology and the Built Environment, Ways of Seeing, and Conserving Valued Landscapes.

As new courses join the Post-Graduate Modular scheme it is intended that the number of optional modules on offer to Landscape Architecture students will increase and that there will be potential for the modification of the ratio of compulsory to optional modules consistent with maintaining LI accreditation.

It is envisaged that the new course will provide a strong base in the professional skills required of graduate landscape architects whilst offering both increased design-based project work and the scope for students to pursue their own areas of interest in and around the discipline. Additionally, the Masters element provides for a focussed, research-based study in Landscape Architecture for those students so

inclined and which, it is intended, will form the basis for increased research activity within the Department.

### **COLLEGE WORKS**

Building work proceeds on two of the College campuses and the landscape courses are exploiting the learning opportunities so offered. Where possible, exercises and projects have been based on the landscape work undertaken by the in-house consultancy, Cheltenham Landscape Design, which has imbued coursework with a sense of realism as well as offering the practice an abundance of ideas and alternative approaches. In addition the students have had the opportunity of attending the Public Enquiry held recently to resolve the planning issues arising from the development proposals for the Park, Hardwick and Folley campuses. The landscape submission was made by James Wilson.

A somewhat more prosaic opportunity for involvement was offered by the hoardings surrounding the construction sites at Francis Close Hall. The First Year students were asked to design a number of signs that would help visitors find their way around the campus and at the same time enliven the rather dull grey of the hoardings. It is intended to implement three of the designs that serve these purposes.

The building work at Francis Close Hall is progressing well despite some recent poor weather. The Catering building steel frame is now complete, the concrete floors have been cast and the roof and the construction of the external walls are proceeding. The Countryside and Landscape building has reached the point where the second floor slab will be cast sufficient for the character of the interior spaces to emerge. It is still anticipated that we will be in occupation of our new premises for the start of the new academic year.

## STAFFING CHANGES

The early retirement of **Peter Boswell** completes a sequence of departures from what, up to now, has been known as the School of Landscape Architecture. Several major influences on the development and success of the landscape course have gone to pastures new, and amongst them Pete had the special distinction of also having experienced the course as a student, shortly after it had first started in what was then the Cheltenham Art College.

His contribution over the years has been various. Always happiest when teaching in areas that related directly to his own practical experience "in the real world", he taught many aspects of the course over the years, gradually developing a special concern for planting design. As the course developed, his voice was always one which stressed the value of continuity and tradition and also a constant reminder not to lose sight of the basics.

Pete has a number of passions and one of them is New Orleans jazz. Some of us are still eagerly awaiting the definitive lecture on the relationship between jazz and landscape design. Like others who have left, Pete has taken on a new lease of life and his role as course leader for the Garden Design course run by the Open College of the Arts ensures that his talents will continue to be applied in the field. We wish him all the best.

The Department of Countryside and Landscape welcomes **Barbara Hammond** to the teaching team. She read Modern Languages at Oxford University which she followed with a Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Birmingham Polytechnic and a Diploma/MA in Urban Design from Oxford Brookes University. Her most recent work has been as Urban Designer at the London Docklands Development Corporation and at the London Borough of Southwark where she has been involved in a wide range of urban regeneration initia-

tives. As a Landscape Architect she has worked in private practice and local authorities.

She has been appointed as Course Leader for the Design in the Built Environment Course, but also has several teaching commitments in the Landscape Architecture courses, most notably in running the 'urban' project and in teaching urban appreciation.

## CONGRATULATIONS

**Christopher Beardshaw**, now a third year student at Cheltenham, achieved worthy success in the Young Horticulturalist of the Year competition in 1992. He reached the regional finals of the competition, which is run by the Institute of Horticulture and sponsored by the Shropshire Horticultural Society. Well done!

With a proposal to extend her 1991 undergraduate dissertation on 'landscape conditions in building development' (see Landscape Issues, volume 8) to how they are applied in the European Community, **Alice Ross**, a recent diplomate of the Cheltenham School, has been awarded a Landscape Institute travel grant of £350. She has already visited Belgium and France, and soon will complete the study looking at Dutch and German examples. We look forward to her report.

Congratulations also to **James Wilson** for his work on the British Garden at the Floriade, Zoetermeer, Holland. The garden won the Supreme Award as the best exhibit, the Best International Garden and the best Outdoor Exhibit. He was responsible for the main design (see separate note in this issue).

*Contributions from Richard Sneesby, Mark Cowell, Bob Moore, Colin Young and Will Cretney.*

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Peoples Parks by Hazel Conway, Cambridge University Press, 1991**

There has long been a need for a single volume devoted to the Victorian municipal park, a need now largely satisfied by Dr. Conway's admirable book. Copiously illustrated with plans, prints and photographs and augmented with an extensive gazetteer of British municipal parks, the book brings alive an aspect of municipal enterprise that affected the lives of so many urban dwellers yet which subsequent generations have tended to take for granted. A useful bibliography is marred only by the odd omission and error.

Because this subject touches upon such a diversity of disciplines, it has proved difficult to do justice to all of them, so that, for example, although the design of parks is emphasised in the sub-title, there is not the kind of penetration here that would appeal to the landscape designer. High on the list of issues suggested by a close analysis of municipal park design is that of the impact of industrialisation on an undertaking that was principally a rural craft. On the one hand mass production had the effect of imposing a placeless ubiquity on many of these new public landscapes, while on the other it was possible for local industries to endow a park with a richness of meaning and expression that would resonate with local culture. However, as a basis for further design case studies, the book has obvious merit and one suspects that this might hold true for other sectional interests too. It is claimed that the main international influences on the development of British parks are identified and fairly predictable European and Japanese influences are cited but so too, rather more intriguingly, is the Turkish. The import of foreign influence was marginal to the main thrust of park development; of far greater impact was the export

of design ideas, particularly to North America and parts of the Empire.

Emphasis is placed on that period between the 1840s and the passing of the second Public Health Act, arguably the most interesting and certainly most formative period in the public park movement. The efforts of reformers are set in the context of urban overcrowding, growing moral turpitude, insanitary living conditions, widespread disease and an alarming loss of traditional recreational lands. The response to these conditions by reformer and legislator and their occasional opposition by some sections of industry are examined. In the early years the vacuum created by a dearth of municipal action is shown to have been filled not just by private philanthropic initiatives but rather unusually by collective endeavour such as that of the Amicable Society of Woolsorters of Bradford. At this point the rather more enduring achievements of the railway industry at Swindon and Crewe might have been explored. Within this otherwise broad picture Manchester's park-making record is detailed, followed more selectively by those of Liverpool, London and a host of other industrial towns and cities. Yet two further aspects which would complete this history are given scant attention and mar an otherwise scholarly account, namely developments after 1875 and the rise of the resort park.

A consideration of the operational framework of municipal parks focuses on the control exerted by bye-laws and by the role of the all-to-often overbearing park-keeper who was normally expected to combine a policing function with his horticultural expertise. Enforcement of the regulations was intended to ensure a decorous populace within a well-ordered environment which, while excluding some activities, allowed a range of sports and recreations appropriate to the character of the space available and which were thought to be 'improving'. We are offered fascinating glimpses into the everyday life of parks and their neighbourhoods and the kinds of people who

used then, yet again the exclusion of the resort park has denied us the opportunity to learn of the influences and needs of users such as invalids, convalescents and excursionists; and whatever became of the nanny!

*Colin Young*

**Urban Streetscapes: a Workbook for Designers by Johanna Gibbons and Bernard Oberholzer, BSP Professional Books, 1992.**

Source books for landscape design details are few and far between. High Street book shops are likely to stock at the most, one or two and these will probably be North American publications. One book that will almost certainly be on the shelves is *Urban Streetscapes*. This has more to do with the publishers blanket marketing than the demand for what appears between the covers.

The authors set out "not to devise standards for street furniture...but rather to explore the potential and some of the ingredients of their design". In this respect they have achieved some success. Section 1 (Issues in Streetscape Design) covers, albeit briefly (this section being only three pages in length), matters of townscape identity, design consideration, co-ordination of street furniture and finishes with a plea for an integrated approach to design of the Streetscape, which is admirable if not too original. In Section 2 (General Principles), matters of design concept, themes, material selection, patterns, colour, construction (very basic), dimensions, rhythm, function, and siting are illustrated through examination of external hard landscape elements including; pavings, kerbs, steps, tree surrounds, seating, planters, litter bins, bollards, fences, walls, gates, lighting, signs and water features. Each element is discussed and then illustrated through black and white photographs and line drawings.

Section 3 (A Co-ordinated Approach) lists seven case studies of co-ordinated Streetscapes in South Africa and are similarly illustrated.

Most of the content is made up of photographic or pictorial illustrations, both black and white. Many of the photographs are good and well reproduced for a book of this price. The line drawings, however, are crude and appear to have been taken from photographs begging the question why the photographic format was not used uniformly throughout the book. Both are accompanied by captions and personal comment. These are usually descriptive and often banal. For instance we are shown a drawing of a timber, slatted bench constructed from a square section frame and half round timber arm rests, with the caption reading "Tsukuba, Japan, timber slatted bench, square section frame with half round timbers for arm rest comfort". Very helpful.

However, it is not all bad. The collected examples, up to 600 in number, are taken from all over the world and well illustrate a wide range of choices available to landscape and urban designers in the detailing of urban space. The overriding question is 'who is this book for?' There are few dimensions and materials given, little information on construction and, perhaps the largest omission, no names and addresses of manufacturers. Not a book for the drawing board or for constant reference, but perhaps more useful as an ideas sourcebook for a college or practice library.

*Richard Sneesby*