

Vision Statement

November 2006





“a unique blend of environmental design,
offering a platform for the exchange and
development of knowledge, as well as
stimulating excitement and discovery
for the visitor”

*Landscape Design - Journal of the Landscape Institute
International Garden Festival Liverpool Issue 1984*



1. the introduction
2. the vision
3. the city's regeneration objectives
4. the consultation process
5. the development scheme
6. the access network
7. the delivery mechanism and timetable



The original International Garden Festival movement was driven by an initiative to regenerate contaminated sites in deprived UK cities to emulate the success of festival garden schemes in continental Europe.

Unfortunately, today many of the original UK Garden Festival sites have been totally redeveloped, losing the opportunity to extend the legacy presented by the Garden Festival movement. Regrettably, in the last 20 years there have been very few truly significant public urban parks established in the UK.

The Liverpool Garden Festival site was the largest urban reclamation programme ever witnessed when the Gardens were originally commissioned in 1981. Attracting some £12.5m of Government funding in 1984 and bringing in some 3.2m visitors from UK and overseas, it became the first of five International Garden Festival sites created in the UK.

hear our story

1. the introduction



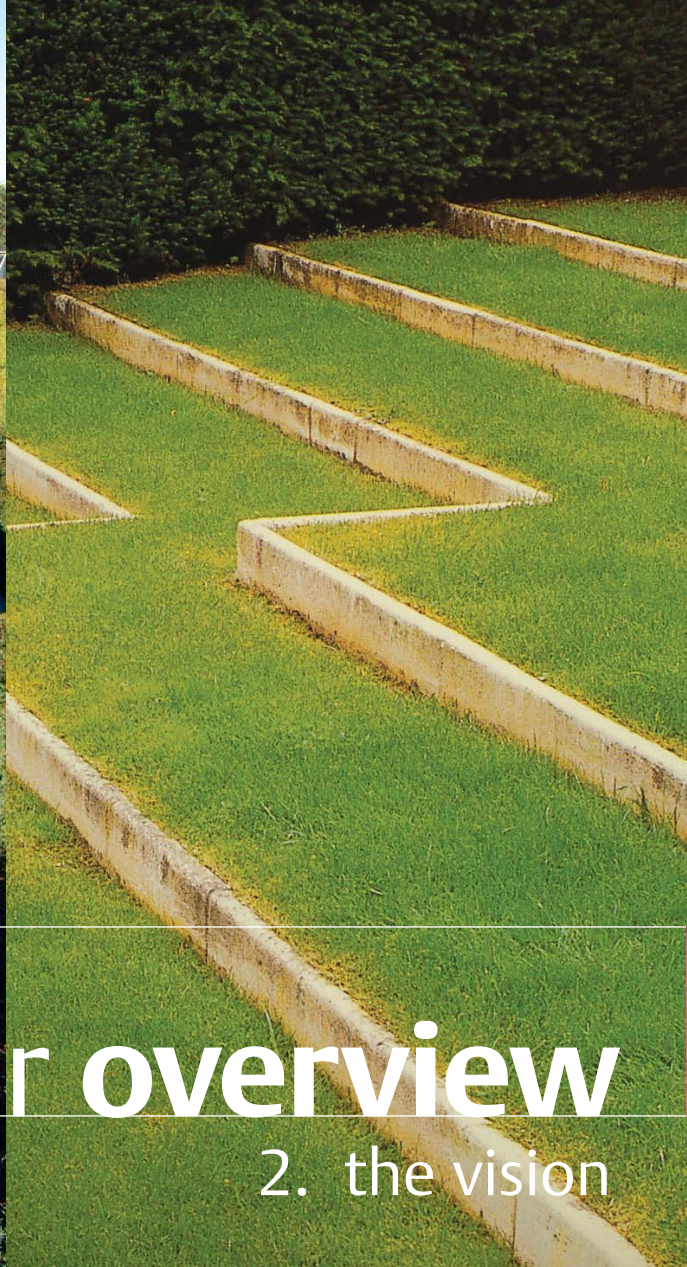
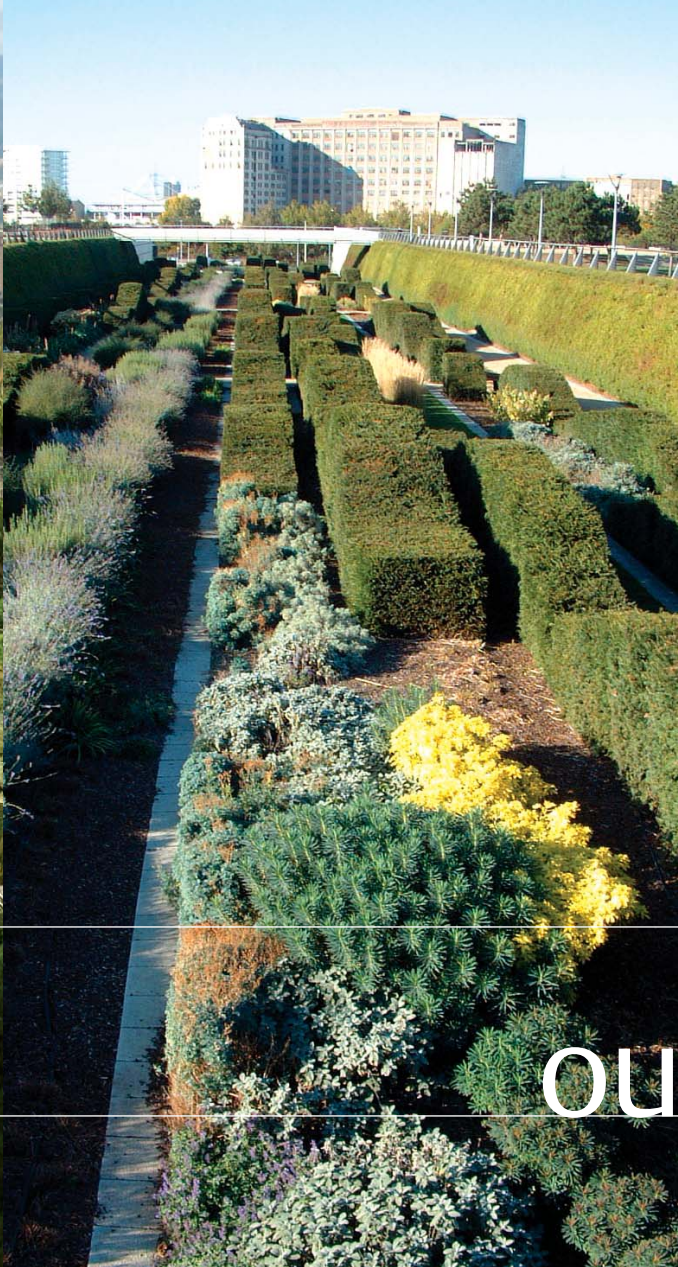
Today Liverpool is the only Garden Festival site still not to be redeveloped and remains sealed off from public access, blighted and derelict, having been left vacant since the failed Pleasure Island Theme Park closed in 1996.

The Liverpool Garden Festival site has for some time now been recognised as one of the most under-utilised assets in Merseyside. Securing the future of the Garden Festival site is a long-established regional priority.



Over the years, many attempts have been made to realise the opportunity the site presents. Until now, the complexities of the site have thwarted its redevelopment.

However, in May 2005 Langtree McLean acquired the site and now aims to deliver a Regional Waterfront Park, building on the fabric of the former International Garden Festival site. Through Langtree McLean's proposals, the site will now be opened up, providing access to the promenade for surrounding residential areas creating the missing link on Otterspool Promenade and making a significant contribution to the southern gateway into the City of Liverpool.



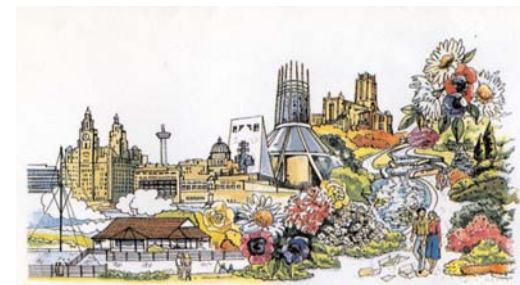
our overview

2. the vision



The Vision for Festival Gardens is to create a Regional Waterfront Park that breathes new life into the now derelict former International Garden Festival site.

A new contemporary park will be created and funded through a new residential development around the dome area, creating a high quality sustainable community at the heart of this modern riverside park. In conjunction with Liverpool City Council, Langtree McLean and its team have devised a transformational redevelopment plan for Festival Gardens, embracing initiatives such as the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park, the Mersey Estuary Management Plan and the Pride in our Promenades programme.



Langtree McLean's proposals for Festival Gardens represent a total investment of over £250 million via a 15 year programme to deliver over 1,300 high quality homes with ancillary shopping and community facilities, as well creating nearly 27 hectares of new iconic parkland with strong links into the existing community. This project is firmly focused on a viable and deliverable framework recognising that the long term management of the Regional Waterfront Park is paramount.

These proposals have been carefully and respectfully developed involving dialogue with all key stakeholders. The result is an exciting plan for Festival Gardens that will make a very valuable addition to the City's landscape. The planning application has now been submitted with the intention that the iconic parkland will be substantially delivered by 2008 to contribute to the City's Capital of Culture celebrations.



Liverpool has recently experienced strong economic performance in terms of reductions in unemployment, and a large increase in new business registrations. However, parts of Liverpool continue to suffer from high unemployment and deprivation, and the City as a whole sits within the bottom 2% of the most deprived districts in England. Encouragingly Liverpool now has a stable population after having experienced a steady decline in population over the last 20 years.

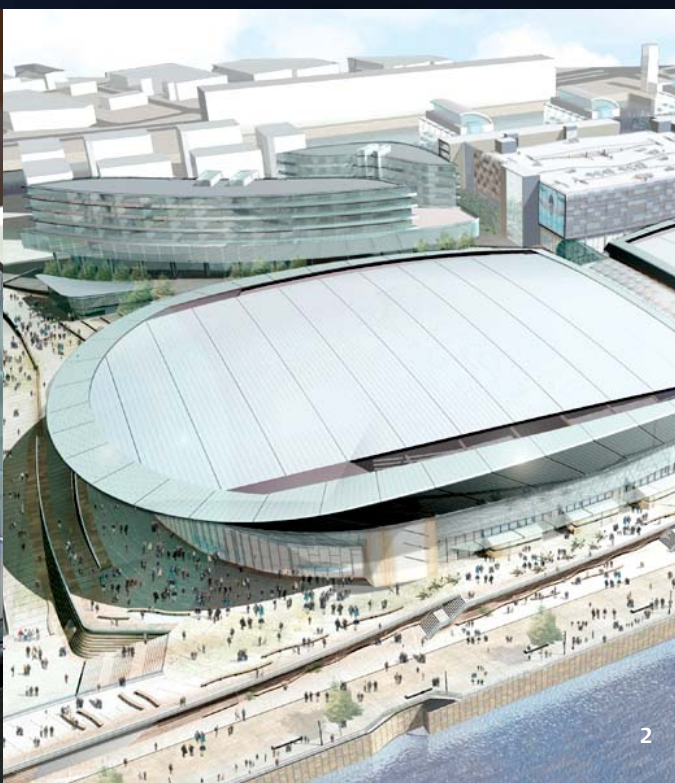
Within this context, Festival Gardens is one of the largest derelict sites in southern Liverpool and has a strong negative impact on the area, reducing its attractiveness and dissuading people to work, live or invest in the area. The Mersey Waterfront has been widely recognised as a major but untapped asset for the region and hence in 2002 the whole Mersey Waterfront gained Regional Park status in the Regional Economic Strategy.

look to the future

3. the city's regeneration objectives



1



2



3

Langtree McLean's plans for Festival Gardens will help to deliver a step change in the fortunes of the area and lay the foundations for delivering the Mersey Waterfront vision to secure new economic momentum for Merseyside. The restoration of Festival Gardens is of crucial importance to the Regional Park and the achievement of its objectives. The Pride in our Promenades initiative aims to improve over 7km of promenades at Otterspool. The Pride in our Promenades programme confirmed that the promenades are:

"Literally the face that Merseyside presents to the world providing a catalyst for increased interest and pride as Liverpool approaches its year as European Capital of Culture 2008. It is essential that this project is delivered if visitors to the city are not to be left with a negative impression of Liverpool and Wirral through the apparent neglect of its once magnificent promenades."

1. Grosvenor's Liverpool One Project 2. Kings Dock 3. Unity



your voice

4. the consultation process



The future of the former International Garden Festival site quite rightly raises very strong local opinion. Langtree McLean's vision is to re-awaken the strong sense of community pride and a sense of ownership by local people in a co-ordinated and positive way. For too long the site has been a blight on the local community with neglected landscapes, and anti-social behaviour.

In developing the regeneration proposals for the site Langtree McLean's ideas have been tested through detailed engagement and consultation with bodies such as:

- Mersey Basin Campaign
- Eden Project
- Landlife
- Groundwork
- Mersey Forest
- Riverside Housing
- English Nature
- CABI (Space)
- Envirolink
- Mersey Travel
- Environment Agency
- United Utilities



- Mersey Partnership
- Merseyside New Heartlands Pathfinder
- County Ecologist
- RSPB
- Merseyside Archaeological Service
- Merseyside Sites & Monument Record
- The Land Restoration Trust
- Mersey Waterfront Regional Park
- Wildlife Trust

Neighbourhood Committees and Residents Group presentations have also been undertaken.

Langtree McLean's proposals are therefore the result an extensive collaborative engagement with the local community and Council Officers, Members and other key stakeholders.



Langtree McLean's proposals have also been informed by a series of studies in order to conceive and refine the preferred scheme. These studies have included the following:

- urban design assessment
- linkage and accessibility study
- massing and scale assessment
- transportation assessment
- ecological assessment
- ground and contamination investigation (including on site invasive works)
- air and vibration monitoring and assessment
- noise monitoring and assessment
- drainage assessments
- archaeological assessments



The Vision has therefore been robustly tested and refined in light of the constructive comments made to date.



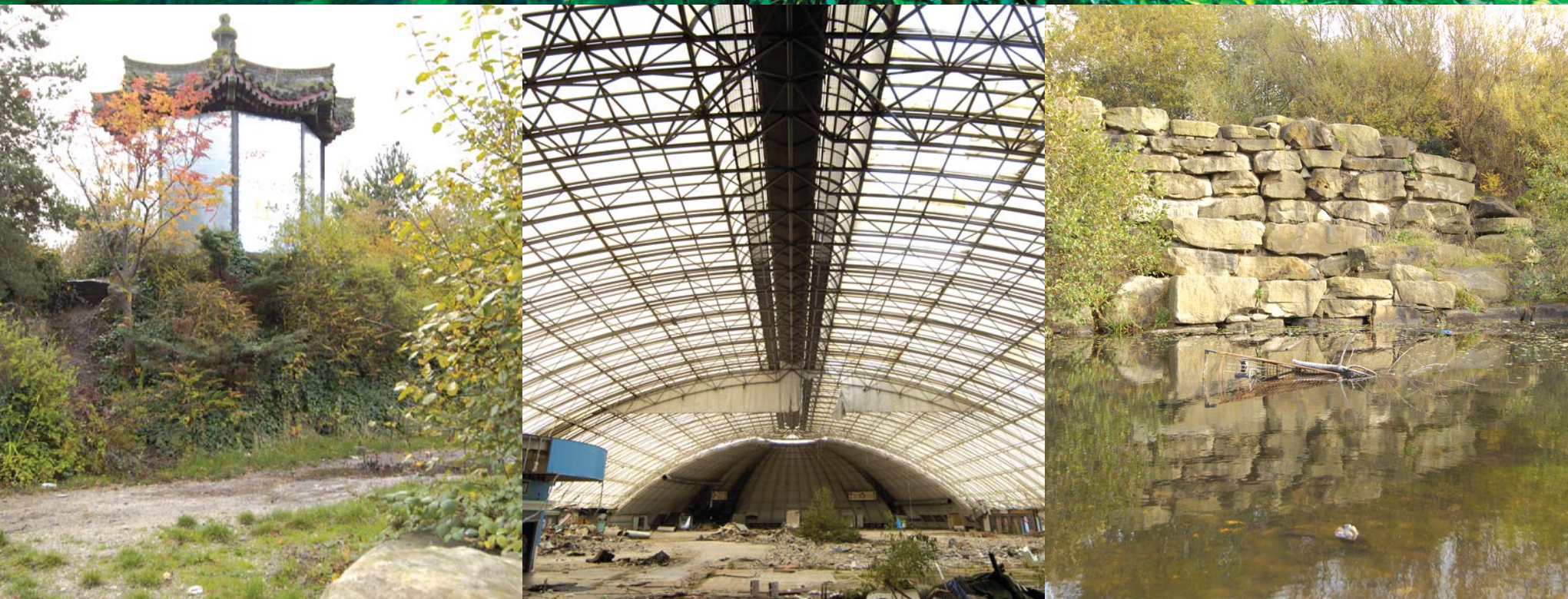


Langtree McLean's Vision has been translated into an exciting and far reaching solution for the site, which can be delivered and maintained into the future.

The scheme will be facilitated through mixed use development that creates a high quality sustainable community at the heart of this contemporary riverside park. This transformational development will safeguard the significant past public investment in the site; dovetail with regional policy directives (Mersey Estuary Management Plan and Mersey Waterfront Regional Park); catalyse the Pride in our Promenades programme, and deliver real and tangible change in time for the Capital of Culture celebrations in 2008.

our big opportunity

5. the development scheme



Festival Gardens represents the major opportunity to create a new emblematic landscape that is worthy of being considered a new Regional Waterfront Park.



A New Regional Park

This provides an opportunity for a public spectacle of national/ international scale to reinforce the importance of Liverpool as a major European City. This will link with the wider urban regeneration of Liverpool City in accordance with its status as the European Capital of Culture. It will further provide an opportunity to be a venue for key cultural activities during the Capital of Culture celebrations in 2008 and beyond.

The overall philosophy is to create a contemporary waterfront urban park of international quality, that integrates the restored valuable components of Festival Gardens’ fabric, with new emblematic landscape components.

The former Chinese and Japanese Gardens will be restored to create a focal oriental garden. This will re-establish not just a physical focus for Festival Gardens, but also a cultural focus within Liverpool for the Chinese and Japanese communities. The unified gardens will be traversed by the ‘Grand Axis’ which will run across the edge of the main lake and up to the elevated viewpoint at the top of the retained mound.

This will become a signature aspect of the new urban park. Moving into the site, towards the Mersey, the character of the gardens will become more naturalistic, retaining water bodies and creating habitats and creating a new biodiversity / educational zone. Retention of the existing topography and vegetation are key components of the scheme to retain the green character of the site.

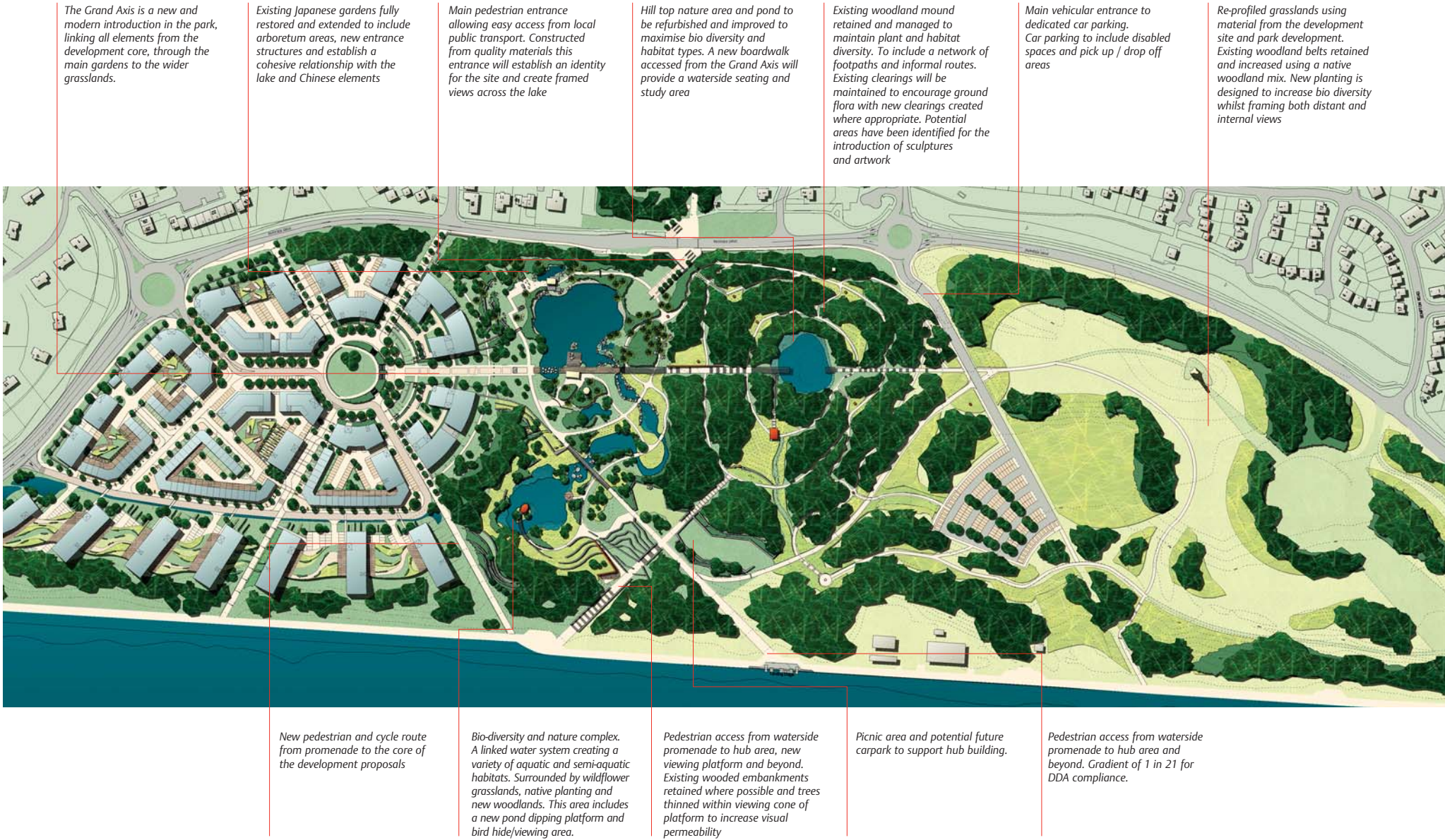
New aspects to be introduced to the gardens will respect, and positively enhance the retained landforms and green spaces. The original Garden Festival created barriers between the site and the Mersey to establish a more forgiving climate for visitors but in doing so they also established an unnatural break in the continuous greenspace of the Otterspool area. Major remodelling to part of the central area of the site will open up and integrate the links between the Mersey and Festival Gardens.

New viewing areas and platforms will be created to provide animation and activity along the Otterspool Promenade as well providing areas for contemplation, recreation and education within Festival Gardens. For the first time, Festival Gardens will be fully integrated into its riverside setting.



A full understanding of the site and its context has enabled the design to respond to existing constraints and opportunities. This has allowed the most sensitive and valued elements of the site to be retained and integrated into the design, to ensure their long-term viability, including:

- Restoration of the Chinese and Japanese Gardens to preserve a central part of the former International Garden Festival site and ensure the long term sustainability of an important part of the City’s heritage.
- Significant built features and structures from the original festival will be retained, restored and incorporated within the landscape proposals. A number of artifacts are currently stored off site and some of these will be re-introduced to the restored landscape.





- Significant examples of habitat improvement and creation across the site, including:-
 - Pond/ditch creation and restoration
 - Wetland/marsh creation
 - Wildflower grassland areas
 - Woodland planting and management
 - Creation of a specific bio-diversity zone on the site, based around the restored wetland area. This will provide an educational resource and will become the focus of a new urban ecosystem.
- A nature conservation management plan, which highlights a series of measures that would encourage bio-diversity on the site, centred on pond and wetland, woodland and grassland management.



- Introduction of bat boxes and bird boxes to encourage breeding species on the site.
- Interpretation and signage will be used to educate visitors on issues of conservation and sustainability.
- Selective thinning of woodland and significant new woodland planting which will make a positive contribution to the aims of the wider Mersey Forest Plan in terms of providing a net gain in overall woodland cover on the site.
- New wildflower grassland to provide areas of higher floral diversity with limited public access. Informal mown paths that allow access but reduce pressure on grassland areas.



A Management Plan will help to ensure that the landscape philosophy is retained as the basis for managing the site in the future.

Langtree McLean has signed a development agreement with the Land Restoration Trust, a unique company founded by English Partnerships, Groundwork, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency. It is hoped that the Land Restoration Trust will play a major part in the future management and enhancement of the proposed Regional Waterfront Park, whereby:

- A financial contribution towards the long term management costs will be made by Langtree McLean which could be supplemented by other sources of funding to add additional benefits to the scheme. This will ensure that the future of the park is secure for both the new and existing communities neighbouring the site.



- Managing partners will be appointed by the Land Restoration Trust to carry out day-to-day management responsibilities for the park and wider gardens. The developer Langtree McLean will establish a management body to look after the residential development.



1



2



A New Residential Community

A new residential community will sit within the new park.

A new arrival plaza will be created with shops and community activities facing onto it. This links with the new communal greenspace, where residents can sit and relax with wonderful views of the wider park and the Chinese Gardens. High quality apartments enclose these spaces to provide a real community feeling.

Between these two elements are townhouses which are a maximum of four storeys in height (including car parking). Car parking is generally below the buildings, to minimise its visual impact. However, where it is outside, it is screened by the use of decking, pergolas and appropriate planting.



The total extent of residential development is 1,040,365 sq ft gross (895,200 sq ft net), which comprises 1,308 apartments (936 – 2 bed and 372 – 1 bed), and 66 townhouses i.e. 1,374 units in total.

The development has been conceived to take account of the existing landscape features and hence, the ‘finger blocks’ oversail the existing landscaped mound along the River Mersey frontage, which is substantially retained. Similarly the swale and informal street through the townhouse development allows the landscape to permeate into the development as does the ‘Grand Axis’ and the central landscape space.

1. Kings Dock 2. Unity



Park Section from Riverside Drive through to the Mersey



Much has already been made of the fact that the new residential community will deliver high quality aspirational housing, ancillary shopping and community facilities. This type of accommodation will be attractive to skilled workers within the City and will provide further opportunities to retain this workforce within Liverpool in a sustainable location within a short rail connection to the City Centre. The new development will therefore help to sustain and reinvigorate the current community and will be socially sustainable.

Good sustainable development practice has been integrated into the planning of the scheme. The new development is built upon the site of the dome and car park, which is previously developed land and hence, facilitates the recycling of such a wasted resource. Overall, with the addition of the parkland uses, a sustainable residential-led mixed use scheme will be created.



However, it will also incorporate small scale ancillary retail use, to allow residents to walk to do 'basket' shopping and community facilities such as a medical centre.

The scheme also takes into account the former uses on the site by minimising the distribution of the existing landform and ensuring the retention and improvement of the current gas monitoring system. The underlying made ground is unsuitable for soakaways or other infiltration based Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS). Rain water drainage will therefore collect in open swales to encourage evaporation before being channelled into collection pools on the site, and then being discharged into the River Mersey.

The Festival Gardens proposals are also economically sustainable as the scheme has been fully costed and confirmed to be viable, not only in terms of its delivery but also its long term maintenance into the future.



a sustainable future

6. the access network



Access to the Festival Gardens will be via the existing roundabout off Riverside Drive, and through a new network of pedestrian and cycle paths. Access to the residential community will be from the other existing roundabout and a new access south-west of the Riverside Drive / Promenade Drive junction.

A full assessment of the road network has been undertaken, which demonstrates that it is adequate for the level of vehicles that will be created by the development, subject to improvements to roundabouts on Riverside Drive and the Jericho Lane/Otterspool Drive junction. A package of sustainable transportation measures are also proposed including new pedestrian crossings on Riverside Drive, improved bus stop facilities and improved connectivity with the train station through Priory Wood.



A network of new paths will be created to link Festival Gardens to the residential community. Priory Wood will be retained and enhanced both as a wonderful landscaped amenity but also as a pedestrian access route to St Michael's Railway Station. New bus lay-bys and pedestrian crossings along Riverside Drive will further encourage sustainable forms of transport. Through the 'Grand Axis', the new pathways and a hierarchy of greenspaces, the new residential community will be integrated with the urban parkland.

As well as physical integration, Festival Gardens' proposals are linked to City Council's vision for Otterspool Promenade, encapsulated within the strategy document, Pride in our Promenades.



The community will be encouraged back into Festival Gardens through the nature of the activities and landscapes that will be created. Through regular activity and use, people will enjoy a custodial role to ensure that anti-social activities are precluded. A series of physical measures that control levels of use and activity will further reduce the opportunity for anti-social activity. Similarly, through the long term role and stewardship of the Land Restoration Trust and their managing partner, clear and effective management regimes will be put in place after consultation with local stakeholders.

The people of Dingle, St Michaels Hamlet, Sefton and those other distinctive communities around the site will also benefit from being re-established with the River Mersey. They will have access to 27 hectares of new iconic parkland and a strong sense of community pride and of ownership of the site.





our promise to you

7. the delivery mechanism and timetable



The Vision needs to be delivered to address the degenerative effects of the site in the locality and also to deliver the regeneration benefits on the ground, as part of the Capital for Culture 2008 programme.

The Festival Gardens project is integral to the Pride in our Promenades initiative, as it will act as a gateway for visitors in 2008. Over £220m will be spent on tourism as part of the Capital of Culture celebrations and 1.7m visitors are expected. Langtree McLean's proposals can contribute with the creation of the new Regional Waterfront Park for the Festival Gardens. However, they also guarantee a vibrant integrated residential community and regional park, which will deliver a long term sustainable legacy for the people of Liverpool.



Overall Langtree McLean has developed a Vision for the future of the Festival Gardens site that is both exciting and deliverable. Through active and positive engagement with all key stakeholders, the Vision has been developed and refined and Langtree McLean's planning application has now been submitted as the first stage in its delivery. The much needed work to create the iconic new Regional Waterfront Park can commence as soon as a planning decision is made, which will allow the people of Liverpool to celebrate the re-birth and new life of Festival Gardens.

