



London's Arcadia

The Thames Landscape Strategy in Action

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London's Arcadia Executive Summary

Background

London's Arcadia was the first in action project put together by the Thames Landscape Strategy Hampton to Kew in 2002. The project aimed to restore and enhance the historic riverside landscape beside and overlooking the River Thames between Teddington and Richmond Locks, a central section of the Thames Landscape Strategy Hampton to Kew area in West London. The project was approved by London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRuT) Cabinet in 2001 with Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) submissions in 2002. A design development grant of £291,000 from the HLF was received in 2003 with consultation and designs submitted to the HLF in 2004 for approval. The main £3.1m grant works commenced following the HLF funding approval in 2005 under the original submission title "Arcadia in the City."

The stretch of the River Thames that runs beneath Richmond Hill between Teddington and Kew flows through one of the largest open public spaces in London. This is an area unique in its combination of landscaped gardens, habitats, avenues, vistas, sight lines and historic buildings. There are no other areas in the UK that have as many listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas as in the London's Arcadia project area. The London's Arcadia project area also provides an important environment for local flora and fauna. London's Arcadia is fundamentally about sustainability: how the competing demands on this landscape can be balanced, and how what is valuable can be conserved and adapted. The project aimed to enable the riverside environment to fulfil its potential in which listed sites and registered parks and gardens, their associated habitats, wildlife corridors, plant and animal biodiversity are appreciated, understood and respected by local residents and visitors alike.

The name London's Arcadia name is drawn from *Arkadia*, a region in Greek Peloponese and symbol of an idyllic pastoral landscape that was recreated here after people returned from the grand tour in the 17th and 18th Centuries. The primary objectives of the HLF Arcadia project were to restore vistas and views which had often become overgrown, restore historic infrastructure, enhance the value of the landscape for nature and historic conservation and celebrate this unique landscape through interpretation, improved physical connections and celebratory and educational events. The project was in part inspired by the 100th anniversary of the 1902 Act of Parliament which protected the view from Richmond Hill as well as being the cradle of the English landscape movement it is also the starting point of the modern Town Planning Acts as well as the impetus to the start of the current global environmental movement where nature was let into the garden and first appreciated. The English landscape movement as the environmental movement is considered one of the most influential and important gifts that England has given to the world along with the English language and democratic parliamentary government.

Most recently the concept of 'London Arcadia' has recently been recognised by the Mayor of London in the "Draft London Plan 2009" which has identified 'London's Arcadia' as one of a number of areas in London that should be designated as a cultural quarter.

Organisation

The London's Arcadia project was based on partnership approach. An Executive Committee was established to develop and steer the project. This included organisations such as the Thames Landscape Strategy, the National Trust, the Environment Trust, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames as the led partner with the HLF. The Father Thames Trust (the charitable arm of the Thames Landscape Strategy) provided a separate account for Arcadia into which donations were paid for match funding.

A Partnership Board made up of the partners was also formed to assist in directing, marketing and fundraising for the project. The Partnership Board met annually and was chaired by Lord Watson of Richmond (as Chairman of the Father Thames Trust), with Sir David Attenborough (Patron of the Thames Landscape Strategy), Patrick Begg (The National Trust Regional Director for Thames & Solent), Gilly Drummond (English Heritage Commissioner), Cllr Serge Lourie (Leader of Council London Borough of Richmond upon Thames) and Robert Runcie (Regional Director Thames Region, Environment Agency) representing the partners.

Two officers were appointed within Policy and Design a Project Manager Ken MacKenzie and a Volunteer Co-ordinator (first Tasha Hunter from 2005-07 and then from September 2007-09 Francesca Morrison).

Funding

The HLF provided LBRuT £2.0m of the £3.1m grant with the rest of the funding secured from external sources secured by the Father Thames Trust. The Funding partners secured a total of over £5.4m with LBRuT contributing £420,000 towards the costs of the project (£300,000 specifically towards the improvements at Twickenham Embankment.) Of the £3.1m total HLF budget a total of £2.1m of HLF funding was spent on capital improvements to the parks and gardens in the project area as part of the London's Arcadia project with a further £103,000 in education and marketing, £298,000 in volunteering and learning, with the remaining cost incurred for professional consultant fees, staff wages, training and miscellaneous project costs.

Of the £3.1m total HLF budget a total of £2.1m of HLF funding was spent on capital improvements to the parks and gardens in the project area as part of the London's Arcadia project with a further £103,000 in education and marketing, £298,000 in volunteering and learning, with the remaining cost incurred for professional consultant fees, staff wages, training and miscellaneous project costs.

The additional funding from the partners was used to increase the overall quality and habitat works beyond that originally envisioned with the £3.1m HLF costs leaving a lasting legacy for LBRuT with enhanced open spaces, a proactive volunteer community, as well as freeing up other LBRuT budgets to deliver more in other areas across LBRuT.

Key projects

Richmond Hill and Terrace Field - landscape and access improvements. Works included restoration of Terrace Field and the Terrace with strategic view enhancements, improved access, tree planting, wildflower meadow, and hedgerow works.

Ham Avenues and towpath restoration, landscaping and access improvements - following the project Ham Avenues has been removed from the English Heritage Parks and Gardens at Risk Register. Works included the establishment of over 1 mile of native hedgerows, 108 new native trees planted, extensive areas of wildflower meadows and reedbeds created, along with other biodiversity works such as mistletoe inoculations, native black poplar tree planting, and many bird and bat boxes placed throughout the area (as well as in all other project areas), new dry route links off the towpath enhancing access links throughout the area as well as improvements to the towpath and landscape works to Ham Street car park.

Radnor Gardens landscape and access improvements - 25 trees planted, new street furniture, and a new DDA access path put in place Twickenham Embankment landscape and habitat improvements - transformation of Twickenham Embankment from the slipway to Water Lane with a stunning urban landscape. Also, the work successfully established the first sand martin bank on the tidal Thames at Eel Pie Island Nature Reserve as part of the London Biodiversity Action Plan.

Cambridge Gardens, Marble Hill riverwalk (Warren Footpath), Orleans Garden and Orleans House Garden landscape and access improvements -works included new DDA access path to Cambridge Gardens, landscape enhancements to Cambridge Gardens and Orleans Gardens, improved access and landscaping to Orleans House Gallery, extensive new wildflower meadow and reedbed establishment, tree works, and the implementation of the first LED bat and human friendly street lighting along the Warren Footpath as well as new traditional Windsor street lighting for Orleans Road and Riverside by Marble Hill House park and Orleans House Gallery Gardens with bat friendly ultraviolet light blocks.

Richmond Promenade (Bridge House Gardens, Rotary Gardens, Midhurst Park, Gothic Site, and Riverdale Gardens)- landscape and access improvements included new DDA ramps and stairs with handrails to the gardens, new landscaped gardens, new street furniture and tree planting. Planting to assist invertebrate populations in particular for bumble bees, butterflies, and moths was part of the schemes.

Richmond Riverfront, Cholmondeley Walk, and the Old Deer Park - landscape and access improvements work. Works include improved access works, interpretation, tree planting, green landscaping and historic restoration links.

St Margaret's and Isleworth Promenade - restoration and landscape improvement works. Works included restoration of the nearly 1 mile of Edwardian cast iron railings, tree works and planting, interpretation, new street furniture, street lighting, creation of a pocket park and landscape improvements.

Education, Marketing, Volunteering and Learning

Projects have provided the opportunity for over 50,000 individuals to experience, learn, and understand the local environment and its history.

Over 105,000 volunteer hours were invested in improving the local environment and habitats developing civic pride and a sense of ownership in sustaining the parks and gardens in the area.

The project worked with a diverse section of the community with over 105,000 volunteer hours (15,000 volunteer days) over the life of the project working alongside the community amenity groups, prisoners, probation services, youth offenders, scout troops, school children, youths, etc. The thousands of volunteers that took part each were able to develop key heritage skills whilst learning about the history, environment and local heritage. In the process the volunteers developed public ownership of the sites and now provide a skilled knowledgeable resource for future maintenance of the parks and gardens.

Delivered workshops for 5,695 school pupils in Richmond, Hounslow and Kingston from 31 schools.

Worked with at least 4,472 people as part of free family learning activities.

Provided 45,000 education and walking leaflets to the community to learn about the local environment, history and habitats.

Delivered 25 targeted projects working with a range of vulnerable or hard to reach groups including young parents, Children Looked After, families or young people living in deprived wards, and young people with disabilities.

Provided activities at 12 community events, showcased education outcomes through 11 exhibitions and performances, provided 7 new learning resources and worked with 12 different partner delivery organisations.