

# Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: A new park model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is one of Europe's most successful new parklands. It formed the centrepiece of the most sustainable Olympic Games to date and is the largest new park created in Europe for over 150 years. It has since become a dynamic new heart for east London. The design itself synthesises centuries of British park design.

As lead consultants on the London 2012 Olympic Park, our vision informed the transformation of polluted industrial wastelands into a welcoming, social, high-quality space that can be enjoyed by everyone. Our masterplan has emerged as one of the most significant landscape projects for a generation.

The Park required a monumental and complex civil engineering programme: over 5,000 homes had to be protected from flooding, seven soil hospitals managed for remediation, a major drainage and utilities strategy implemented and myriad levels to be made from scratch.

The key design move was to identify the true landscape asset: the River Lea, which had been lost deep in a polluted channel. We pulled back the banks of the river to give it the heroic role it deserved,



**Client**  
Olympic Delivery Authority  
London Legacy Development Corporation

**Location**  
Stratford, East London

**Partners**  
Hargreaves Associates, Sutton Vane Associates, University of Sheffield, Sarah Price, Waterwise

**Services Used**  
Landscape Architecture, Planning

**Area**  
102 ha

**Schedule**  
2008 - ongoing

<sup>1</sup> View across the river, North Park

<sup>2</sup> South Park Plaza

<sup>3</sup> South Park view looking along the arc promenade

transforming it into a mosaic of wetland, swales, woodland and meadow, delighting visitors and providing practical flood control.

We also reduced the size of the Games' concourse, allowing the creation of a significant parkland from day one. Our design included the largest wildflower meadow ever planted in the UK, contained within a sculpted topography that ensured all material was retained on site. A southern festival park includes the London 2012 Gardens, which tell the story of Britain's extraordinary heritage in collecting plants from around the world.

The Park provides a lasting physical inheritance of the Games, with over 45 hectares of new wildlife habitat, many miles of foot and cycle path, destination play, gardens, cafés, and world-class sports and cultural facilities.

Throughout the development of the Park and in its post-Games life, we have taken a guardian role, working with LLDC to oversee future development and to maintain a coherence of design. We are currently working on a number of key projects within the Park, including Stratford Waterfront, which will establish the UK's next most exciting and significant cultural hub.



- 1 The London 2012 Olympic Park, a view towards the Velodrome
- 2 South Park view from the London 2012 Gardens