

Inspirational spaces

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Do you know of a community garden – small or large – that deserves recognition for its design?

The SGD launches a new initiative in its awards scheme this year – a category open to everyone for all kinds of garden, no matter how small the space or budget. This is the story of one garden that shows the power of community involvement...

CASE STUDY: Alexandra Road Park, North West London, a journey towards creating a Park for People

About two years ago the residents of Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate decided to take their local park under their wing and applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Parks for People grant programme. Having been successful at first round they are now waiting to see if they will get a full grant of £1.5 million. Two residents describe the journey so far...

Lefkos Kyriacou: "Alexandra Road Park is a rare example of late 20th-century landscape design. The park is four acres including footpaths (of which three acres are the only Designated Open Space on the estate). It forms the setting for the Grade II* listed buildings of the Alexandra Road social housing estate designed by Neave Brown (1968-78) for Camden Council.

"The park is an east-west swathe of green space between two blocks of the estate and was designed by Janet Jack (1972-78) in conjunction with Neave Brown's new housing. The park cannot be uncoupled from the housing and together they are a

highly valued example of landscaping and architecture from the period of rebuilding (1960s/70s) post-war London.

"Elements lost from the original design include much of the play equipment and a grass bowl (replaced by the circular lawn). Otherwise the original design is largely intact, with much of the planting contemporaneous with the construction of the estate. A habitat survey carried out in 2010 noted that the extent and diversity of planted vegetation is unusual for residential development.

"The value of the park's original design to the community goes beyond the fundamental concern for heritage. The community has given overwhelming support to retain and rejuvenate the original character of the landscape and is leading several initiatives to implement this vision."

"ALEXANDRA ROAD PARK IS A RARE EXAMPLE OF LATE 20TH-CENTURY LANDSCAPE DESIGN"



ABOVE A view of Janet Jack's Alexandra Road Park in 1992, and, left, a play area (no longer part of the landscape) from 1978

Elizabeth Knowles (SGD Friend):

"As a long-term resident of Alexandra Road I am very proud of our unique park, one of very few modern parks, but we were concerned for its future. Creating the Friends of Alexandra Road Park, which is part of our bid for Heritage Lottery funding in partnership with the London Borough of Camden, has been lots of fun. We have regular planting mornings where we clean, weed and plant. Last year we had a Jubilee picnic in the 'bowl' area of the park, complete with Punch and Judy.

"We have J & L Gibbons as landscape architects – they have done a great job of balancing restoration and the plans for exciting new playgrounds that echo the original design. Erect Architecture have done the designs for the new play structures. For residents and visitors it is the way to ensure it for future generations and a key to its survival. Parks really are for people."

NEW

SGD
2013
AWARDS

DESIGNING FOR COMMUNITY SPACE

Are you involved with a community project? Members and non-members, designers and the general public, are invited to submit projects for the SGD 2013 Designing for Community Space Award.

WHAT

Entries are encouraged from any outdoor space – temporary or permanent – of any size, which is owned by, for the use of, or designed with a community

WHEN

8 July 2013
Register your intent to enter to qualify for Early Bird entry rates.
Deadline for entries
12 August 2013

HOW

Go to www.sgd.org.uk and click on Awards Website for full details of how to make your entry

The SGD 2013 Awards are sponsored by Barcham Trees

The Designing for Community Space Award is sponsored by Easigrass