



First Narrative - Clean Water for Life

This narrative speaks of the paramount importance of clean water to life. The visitor is informed by beautiful and captivating signage that clean water is a precious commodity throughout much of the world, and becoming rarer. Systems installed to clean water coming from the park or recycled grey water and prevent it going green or malodorous are also explained.

Fed with clean water, the ponds stay clean, oxygenated and algae-free not by man-made chemicals but by ecological means. These means include beautiful aquatic and marginal plants, submerged reef features, cascades over phosphorus-fixing ironstone and solar powered air diffusers. The soothing sound of cascading water brings further health benefits.

The clean waterbody at the Academy entrance acts as a mirror reflecting the beautiful Academy building and encouraging people to stop and benefit from a moment of meditation and reflection - whilst looking through to the purifying systems of life beneath the surface.

The pond also cools air to the benefit of visitors, sustainably supplementing the functions of other cooling systems. Water, abstracted from this system in the summer months, irrigates shallower soil areas over built form, keeping them green and helping cool the airspace below. The encircling of the building by water features again is both functional and symbolic.



ECOLOGICAL CONCEPT OVERVIEW

The project recognises the importance of understanding and cherishing natural resources and virtuous cycles of nature - for the multiple sustainable benefits that such an approach brings. The overarching theme of the ecological strategy therefore is 'reintegrating man and nature'. The landscape design is developed to extract direct benefits from natural systems, stimulate thought, and 'speak' of environmental stewardship and integrity. Studies have shown that the greatest benefits to man of nature in the urban context are realised when the landscape tells stories, helps us name what is around us and reminds us of our responsibilities towards it. To express this over-arching theme three related and overlapping ecological narratives are played out in the design.



Second Narrative - Nature is Good for You

From the moment of arrival, the landscape quietly enlightens and delights the visitor. The first advertisement of this starts at the site boundary, where broad sweeps of astonishingly colourful wild flowers sweep towards the Academy entrance, placing a modern slant on the bedding plant displays of Jubilee Gardens. As the visitor approaches, nature is seen to enfold, encircle and partially cloak the Academy suggesting an intimate symbiosis between building and landscape.

The healthy and health-giving nature of the wetland around the Academy is indicated by the variety of wildlife present, which varies with the different components and provides seasonal interest, capricious encounters with nature and the therapy of bird song, enhancing at every turn the psychological health benefits of a visit to this regionally important facility.

Third Narrative - Naming and Awareness

The ecologically informed landscape quietly voices the message *'Nature can benefit us daily and in many ways, but the greatest benefits will come only if we understand and care for it'*. The design 'says' that human kind and nature must become one closely integrated, multifunctional, mutual support system: *to achieve this we must become more aware.*

To aid this process the design chooses to proclaim and explain what is best of the region's natural heritage. Created habitats are more than a random selection of attractive plantings that attract wildlife, but an advertisement for the unique Coversands - scattered and fragmented gems of biodiversity that occur around Scunthorpe, which local government together with many other organisations are focussed on protecting and restoring. The Coversands habitats are varied and complex. To help people to understand and be proud of their local natural heritage, the Coversands are *dissected, arrayed, named and explained* in the Academy landscape design. Whilst looking attractive and interesting throughout the year they are also interpreted with beautiful signage for the curious observer. The wonderful variations in plant types, soil chemistry, depth and layering are put on show with two clear messages to the visitor:

'These wonders are in your area - go to see them, value them and enjoy them!'

'These assets are fragile. We have lost so much by simplifying, over-fattening and degrading the landscape through over-intensive land use. We must protect, restore and cherish what remain'



SCUNTHORPE RENAISSANCE:
Central Park and Sports Academy
SPORTS ACADEMY: ECOLOGICAL CONCEPT

B BIODIVERSITY BY DESIGN