



terra firma at 40 - a celebration

Introduction

Welcome to this whirlwind tour of the terra firma journey from our beginning in 1985, through four decades of landscape architectural practice. In the following pages you will see some of the rich variety of projects that we have been fortunate to be involved in. Many of the people who have been at the heart of the practice and in many cases, continue to be intrinsic to its success are featured, and rightly so; congratulations and thanks to you all!

A photograph of a lush green park. A paved path leads from the foreground into the distance, flanked by dense foliage and trees. The scene is bright and verdant, with sunlight filtering through the leaves.

The beginning

The beginning of terra firma coincides with the property boom of the second half of the 1980s. John Wigham, then the senior city landscape architect at Portsmouth City Council, could see there was an opportunity for a landscape architectural practice to assist with the new wave of development on the south coast. Encouraged by local architects, including Hedley Greentree, John set up terra firma on May 1st 1985.

Following a tour of east coast USA business parks with Hedley, John immediately set to work on designs for Hampshire Corporate Park, which was delivered over the next few years and still sits as a flagship project for the practice's early work and one of the best exemplars of high quality business park landscape in the country.

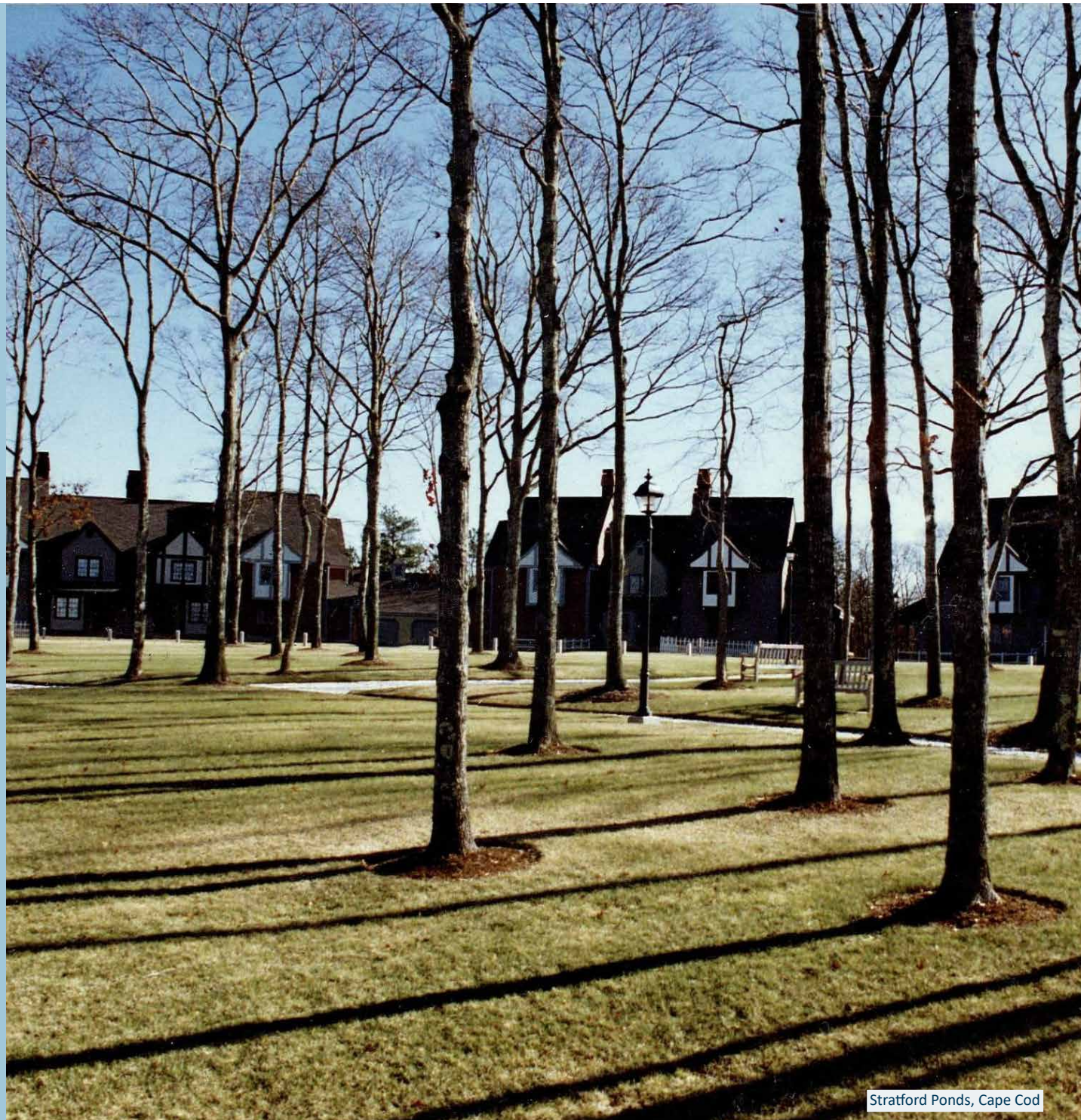
1985 to 1989

Initial rapid growth

Formerly an art teacher, John Wigham had trained at the Leeds School of Architecture and Landscape that moved under the wing of Leeds Polytechnic. The Poly later became Leeds Metropolitan University and then Leeds Beckett University, and still successfully produces high calibre students today.

John is remembered by his contemporary Chris Royffe (who went on to teach on the course and still does to this day) as one of his year's most talented students, slightly older than the others and supporting a young family, but confident and energetic.

Going on to work with Gillespies in Glasgow, John soon rose to being a team leader heading up urban renewal projects across the city. He met Tony Adams who joined the company as a year out student and they struck up a working relationship that would later rematerialize with the early terra firma.



Stratford Ponds, Cape Cod

MASTERPLAN



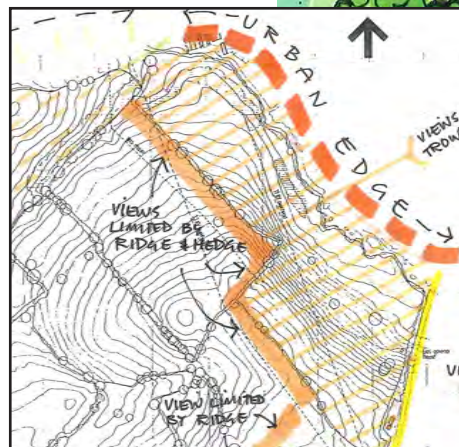
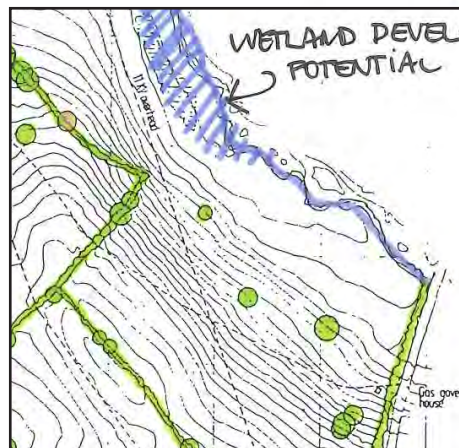
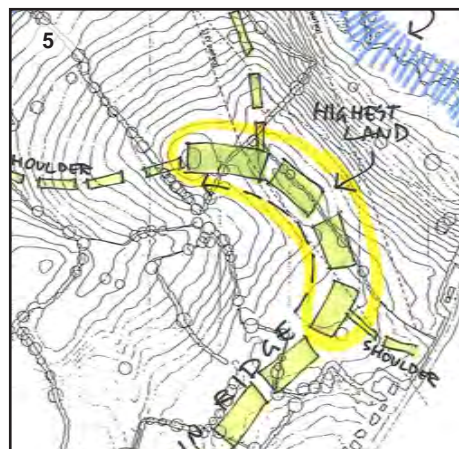
Stratford Ponds, Cape Cod

Moving south...

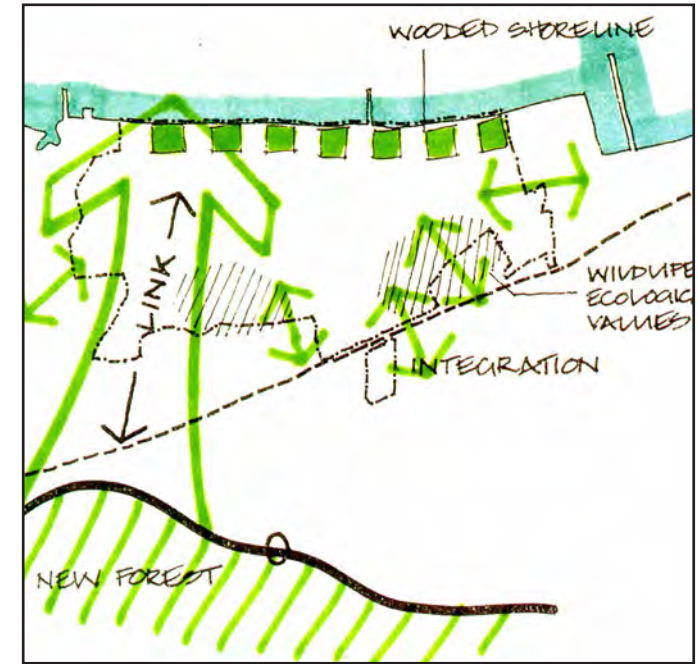
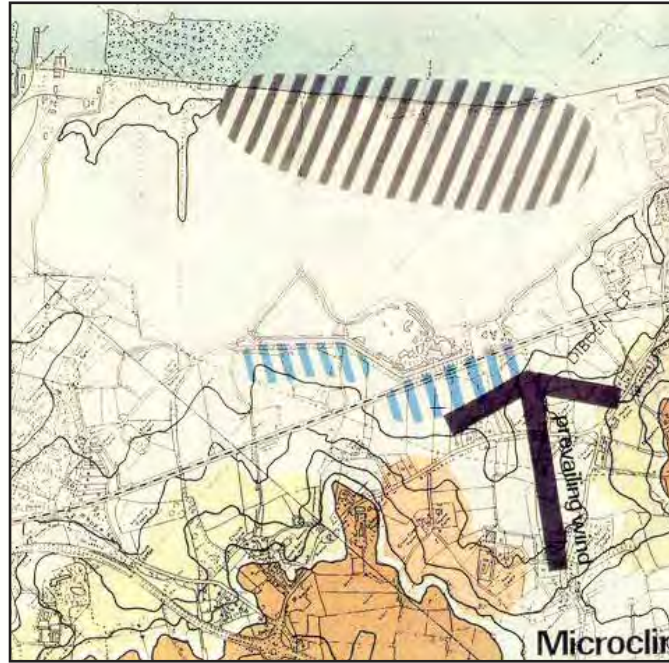
Gillespies were commissioned to masterplan the first British Garden Festival at Liverpool for 1984 and John was offered a senior role in this alongside fellow team leader Rodney Beaumont. Tony Adams joined the team on the project and remained with the festival for its dismantling, moving on to the next garden festival in Glasgow.

John decided instead to move south and took up the job at Portsmouth. At Portsmouth there was a small team of landscape architects dealing with all types of public realm including public parks, streetscape and public housing. Examples of work completed around the time can be seen throughout the city centre with signature hornbeams and bespoke fence designs. The original terra firma team consisted entirely of ex-Portsmouth City team members; John Wigham, Connie Gass and Geoff Partridge. Based in two rooms at Charter House in the city centre, they were soon joined by Tony Adams as partner. Alongside Hampshire Corporate Park, there were other business parks such as at Cheadle, Chineham (which terra firma were to later revisit twice for masterplanning) and Bracknell, as well as projects in housing and leisure.

The practice was also involved with early initiatives with school landscapes through Merrick Denton-Thompson's 'Learning Through Landscapes' initiative that started in Hampshire and has gone on to become a nationwide organisation.



The practice's growth was rapid, with offices opened in London at St Margaret's, Middlesbrough and briefly, Manchester, each in response to projects in the vicinity. Henry Mead, Steve Laws, Sarah Ryecroft and Drew Bennelick were all members of this wider team. The practice was starting to make its mark in the similarly fast-growing landscape profession, standing out with its imaginative name and well publicised foray into the US market with a couple of large masterplan projects on the east coast. However the five-year rise of the practice came to an abrupt stop with the financial crash of 1989/90. Defaulting client payments brought about the demise of the early terra firma and the sad loss of a first-rate team.



Dibden Bay

1990 to 1994 In the shadows

The next period is extremely difficult to document with any degree of firm knowledge. John who sadly is no longer with us, was working as a sole practitioner, setting up a second venture that rose from the ashes of the first company as The terra firma Consultancy. Based from his front room at Telephone Road, Portsmouth, there are records of smaller projects, feasibility studies and expert witness work, but it was with the second half of the 90s that larger projects emerged.

1995 to 1999 Petersfield and partnership

This was a period of quiet re-emergence from the preceding decade. The terra firma Consultancy's office was located in the charming flint buildings in The Spain in Petersfield, a conservation area with a history in the Spanish wool trade in the Hampshire market town. With four staff, including the graduate Robyn Holland (soon to become Robyn Butcher and now one of the current Directors) the practice set out to re-establish itself.

John and new partner Lionel Fanshawe, who joined in 1996, set out to capitalise on their differing, yet complementary experiences.

Continuing to work with local architects on leisure projects, and with earlier collaborators such as Martin Habell, on healthcare projects, new clients arrived from Lionel's contacts at the previous company Charles Funke Associates, where he had been a senior landscape architect for over 6 years. These projects included; Rikkyo School- the ex-pat Japanese boarding school in Horsham and at Curzon Street, an office courtyard refurbishment in Mayfair, won through a social contact, Toby Hunter, and the start of the burgeoning portfolio of properties owned by Waterbridge.



Curzon Street, Mayfair

Regrowth...

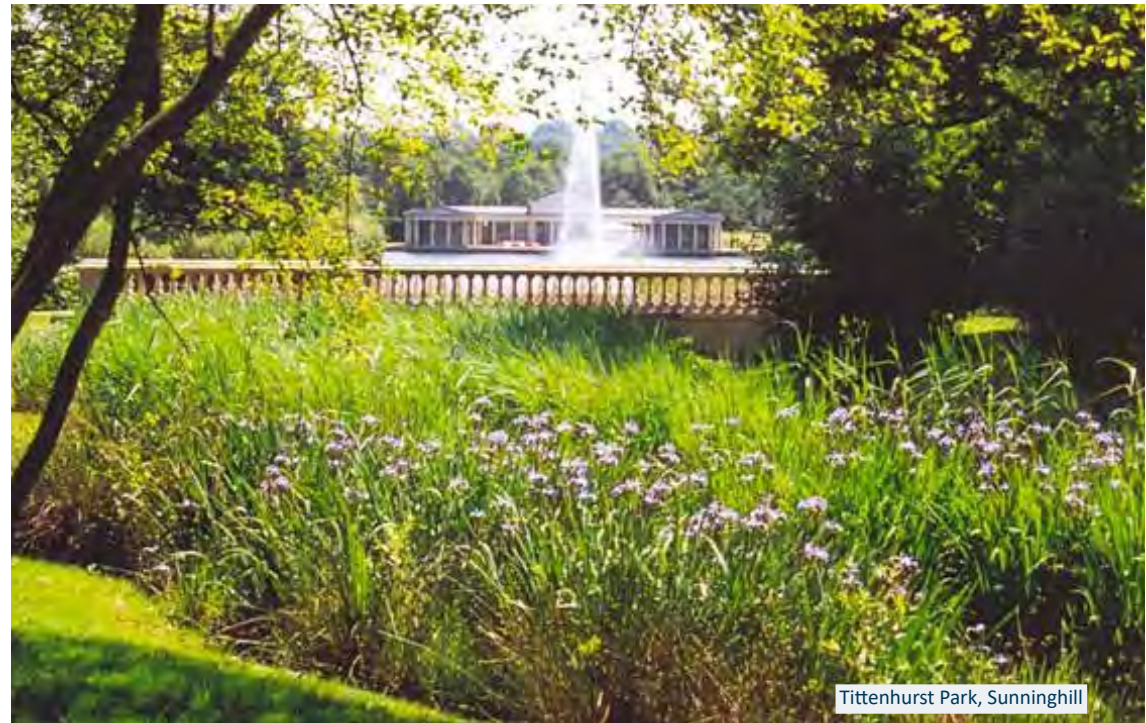
The workload exponentially increased with Waterbridge's expansion and with contacts of Lionel's from previous clients and projects. These benefited from the diaspora of property developer MEPC's project managers to other major developers such as Network Rail, Brixton Developments and Oxford University Estates; appointment by Tittenhurst Estate, to take over the final phases; the appointment to undertake the Falklands Memorial Garden through local Royal Navy contacts and work for Bourne Leisure. Staff numbers doubled, with appointments of the experienced Tim Griffin and Stuart Dunbar-Dempsey.



Sinah Warren Holiday Village, Hayling Island



The Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, Pangbourne



Tittenhurst Park, Sunninghill



The Forbury Restaurant, Reading

Waterbridge

The founding of property developers Waterbridge coincided with Lionel's arrival at terra firma. The pre-existing social connection between CEO Toby Hunter and Lionel was fortuitous and designs for the re-purposing of 7 Curzon Street, Mayfair were underway by Lionel even before his arrival at terra firma. The resulting project completion marked the commencement of a dozen years of work, spanning the length and breadth of the UK, and involving the upgrading of a huge variety of residential, commercial, industrial and multi-use sites including the boutique Forbury Hotel and Restaurant in Reading (left).

The Waterbridge portfolio of projects included the design of a bespoke style of street furniture, manufactured in collaboration with local Petersfield metalworkers, Corries.

Each project was developed with design guides and management schedules that were specifically tailored, as well as the development of layouts, planting and colour schemes that celebrated the individual locations and settings.

Networking

Following the success of the Petershill project at the foot of St. Paul's with Lionels' previous employment, MEPC directors approached terra firma with new opportunities at Chineham and Fleet business parks. Chineham was not new to terra firma, having originally been laid out to the practice's earlier designs in the late 80s, but was in need of a significant upgrade to compete with the new generation of office parks coming through on the M40 and M3 corridors west of London. Working with Nicholas Hare Architects, this next significant expansion was undertaken with award-winning results in time for the millennium.

Simultaneously MEPC underwent their own major changes, and as a result, key staff left for new challenges; CEO Julian Barwick to Development Securities, director Mike Wigg to Network Rail and project manager Hugo Buchanan to Brixton Developments; all three subsequently coming to terra firma with new projects.



London Road, Marlborough



Chineham Business Park, Basingstoke

The Millenium and Beirut

By the close of 1999, the two partners had reached a milestone. Lionel was keen to expand the company's boundaries overseas and took off for a 3 month sabbatical, venturing to Lebanon. This gave rise to a new workflow that was eventually to lead to a Middle East office. Beirut was a lively city in the throes of rebuilding after years of civil war. Originally not intending to be there for professional reasons, he soon found himself involved in initiatives that included looking at the potential for addressing the scars caused by the country's extensive quarries and road cuttings, the remediation of the city's largest landfill and designs for new urban parks (for which funding was successfully gained for the Municipality from the UAE).

On his return, with John ready to retire, Lionel took over the company in 2000. The new agenda was set out and it was made clear to Robyn that she would be part of terra firma's future.

Solidere, the company responsible for Beirut's rebuilding following the Lebanon Civil War, appointed terra firma to undertake a master plan and feasibility study for the waterfront and the potential for an Expo or Garden Festival as a catalyst to its redevelopment. The Lebanon period introduced contacts that brought about invitations to work overseas by internationally involved architects.



Beirut Expo Visualisation



Beirut Expo Masterplan information

2000 to 2005

New projects emerged through Crispin Wride, the Falklands Memorial Chapel architect, proposing terra firma for larger projects with international engineers Jacobs (the large multi-national consultancy which he formed a wing of).

Amongst these was the new National Air Traffic Control Centre for NATS at Prestwick, a large expansion of the UK's second largest air traffic control facility on pre-existing colliery spoil, involving state of the art soil remediation, sustainable drainage and ecological planting. The project was completed in the early 2000s and the newly establishing landscape monitored through visits by terra firma right up until 2022.



NATS Air Traffic Control Centre, Prestwick



NATS Air Traffic Control Centre, Prestwick

Technology

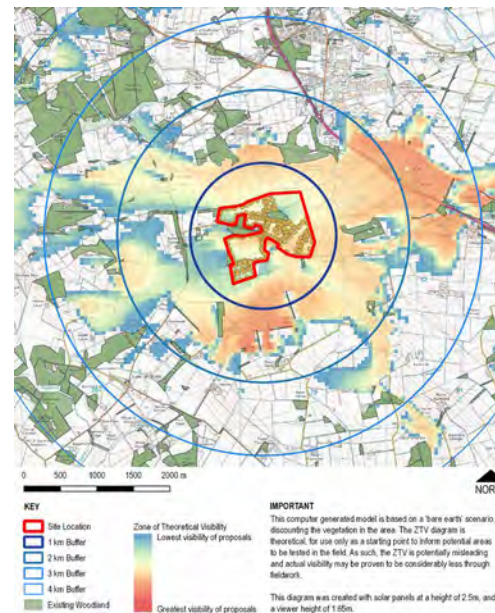
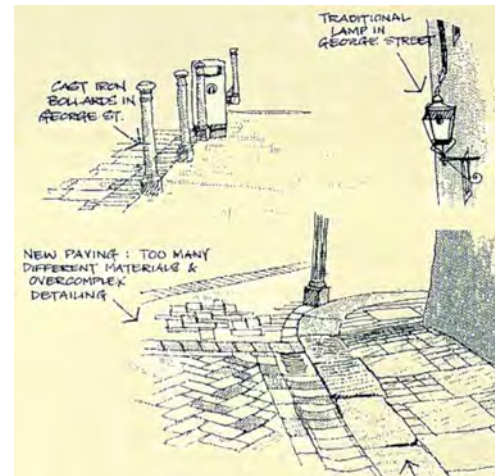
Although Lionel and others had come from practices that were early adopters of CAD (computer aided design) technology, it was only with the new millennium that software was purchased to commence the switch over from hand drawn designs.

Drawing boards were to survive in the office for further 15 years, and even now the art of the hand drawn has still not been lost.

Having a website, emails and mobile phones (even quite large ones) were attributes that the practice was rather more 'ahead of the curve' with. Presentation has always been a major factor in the practice's work. Perhaps unsurprising given the founder's fine art background.

However, it continues to be an area of lively debate in the practice, tussling between advantages of photo realistic CGI (computer generated imagery), characterful hand renders or glossy presentational literature with plain script.

The practice has been quick to adapt to more recent technology, BIM (building information modelling) and the 3D design tools of Revit. With a bigger team, we now continue to review latest technology developments and even conduct a certain amount of our own research and development. Embracing artificial intelligence is the next step.



On the up...

In 2002, Leonard Cheshire foundation appointed the practice to undertake the re-purposing of its original Cheshire Home at nearby Le Court, designing a memorial garden to its founder and becoming its term consultant for numerous facilities.

Portsmouth City Council approached terra firma to design and administer the implementation of their major social housing area regeneration project in Portsea, adjacent the naval dockyards. One of them, Cumberland Street, won a national award for its homezone attributes.

Through the latter part of this decade, the practice experienced some ups and downs in its fortunes. Staff numbers reduced, but then expanded, including additions of current Director, Alison Galbraith, current Associate Martin Hird, Senior Landscape Architect Vincent Mount and juniors Adrea Wheaton and Ramune Sanderson.

By the end of 2005, the practice had 10 employees and had outgrown its offices and was thinking about moving to bigger premises, which it did a year later.



Setting up in Dubai

Alshamsi terra firma (ASTF) was set up in Dubai in January 2006. A joint venture at the initiation of one of UAE's most important trading families, the partnership had come about from an introduction made by Lebanese Londoner Bassam Farha, who had previously put together the Afrimed initiative that had taken terra firma to Algeria. The fulfilment of ambitions to work more overseas, it was felt imperative that this should be done from a local base in partnership with locals. Although charming, well-connected, and providing excellent centrally located offices in Dubai within their largely retail based organisation, the local partners could be problematic to deal with but the partnership lasted 10 years.



Al Falah New Town, Abu Dhabi UAE

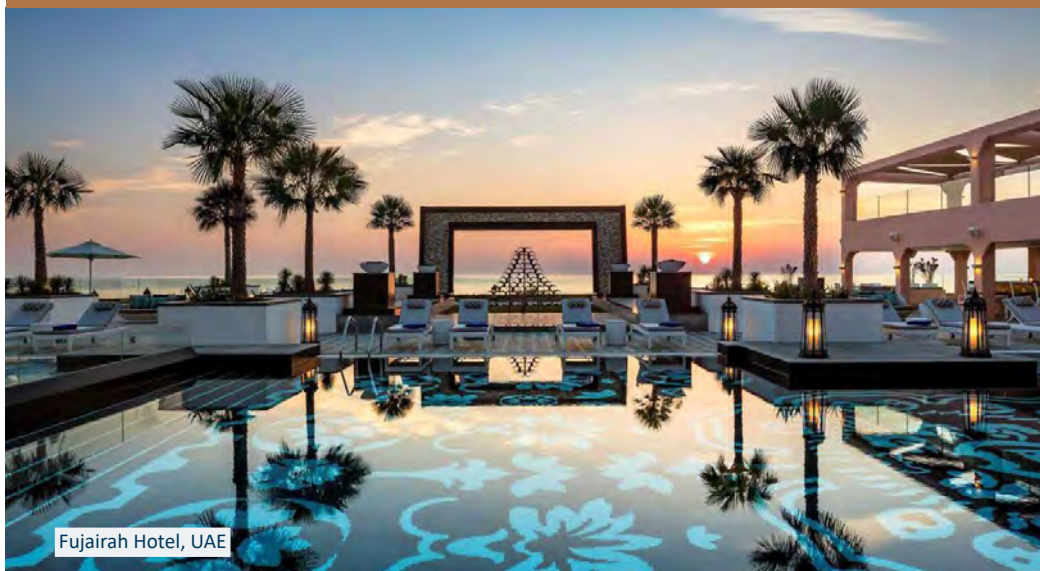


Al Falah New Town, Abu Dhabi UAE
Credit: Geddes Architects & Alison Hainey

John Wigham put himself forward from semi-retirement to be the first resident manager and did good work in establishing the office and procedures that emanated from the UK office and last to this day. However, he did not stay more than a year and the practice tripped through uncertain management until the arrival of Alastair Walby as resident director in 2008. During the first three years, plenty of work was undertaken to publicise the new practice through the massive Cityscape exhibitions where ASTF took stands every year and developers' and architects' doors were knocked on throughout the Middle East. By the end of this period, the office was twelve-strong and had projects in all sectors from the royal family residences to large scale infrastructure, most notably the landscape master planning of Al Falah, a new town for over 80,000 residents in Abu Dhabi.

However, just as the new venture was beginning to pay back on the investment, world recession finally reached the UAE in late 2009, and following the majority of projects being put on hold, drastic cutbacks had to be made at ASTF, culminating in a torturous visit Lionel had to make in order to make three quarters of the staff in Dubai redundant. It was to take nearly 5 years to recover.

In 2018 ASTF was dissolved by the local partners, despite its returning success and terra firma Landscape Architecture (TFLA) emerged in its place in the Dubai Freezone, evenly owned by Lionel and Alistair.



Fujairah Hotel, UAE



Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi UAE

terra firma Landscape Architecture's 12 strong team works out of Dubai Design District, still under Alistair Walby's leadership, but Lionel withdrew his involvement as co-owner in 2024. Continuing directly on from Alshamsi terra firma's closure, the two practices mark a continuous presence in the Gulf since 2006, significantly adding to the worldwide terra firma portfolio.

Projects have taken the practice as far west as Cape Verde and as far east as Pakistan, north to Turkey and Georgia, and south to East Africa. The Gulf States and Saudi Arabia have been the main theatres of operation and countless projects have arisen in all sectors, most notably in large scale residential and hospitality projects.

2006 to 2015

The practice's third decade saw a tripling in size of staff, arriving at its 30th anniversary with 30 people across four offices and having worked in 30 countries.

In the UK, the Petersfield office had now relocated to Cedar Court in the centre of town and had been ever widening the practice's project base. Some particularly interesting involvements included Butterflyworld, St. Albans; Rosia Montana goldfields in Romania; and University of Portsmouth.

Term consultancy work continued with Waterbridge and its offshoot, Newbridge; Leonard Cheshire Homes; Brixton industrial estates; and Churchill Retirement Living.

Expertise was acquired in landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA), wider environmental impact assessment (EIA) and later with landscape character assessment and capacity studies, notably working with Bettina Kirkham.



The 2009 recession did affect the UK office, with two periods of four-day weeks being imposed and two staff departed at that time. While projects were halted, most returned with the exception of five good size 6th form colleges when the Learning and Skills Council framework was abandoned.

The second half of the decade saw returning confidence and the joining of Martin Hird, later to become Associate, and Tom Jenner, later to become Operations Manager. The period included the completion of NATS Prestwick, awards for the various University of Portsmouth schemes and terra firma's third national memorial commission with the Muslim Burial Ground Peace Garden in Woking.

Kim Wilkie invited the practice to take forward the detailed design and implementation of his conceptual design for the Swansea Maggie's Centre, later opened by Charles Jencks and HM Queen Camilla.



Lion Square, University of Portsmouth



Muslim Burial Ground, Woking

Work spanned the length and breadth of the UK, including Cornwall's largest public inquiry for the new Energy from Waste Facility at St Dennis, and the master planning of MIRA (Motor Industry Research Association) Science Park near Nuneaton, a vast and important project that continues to this day.

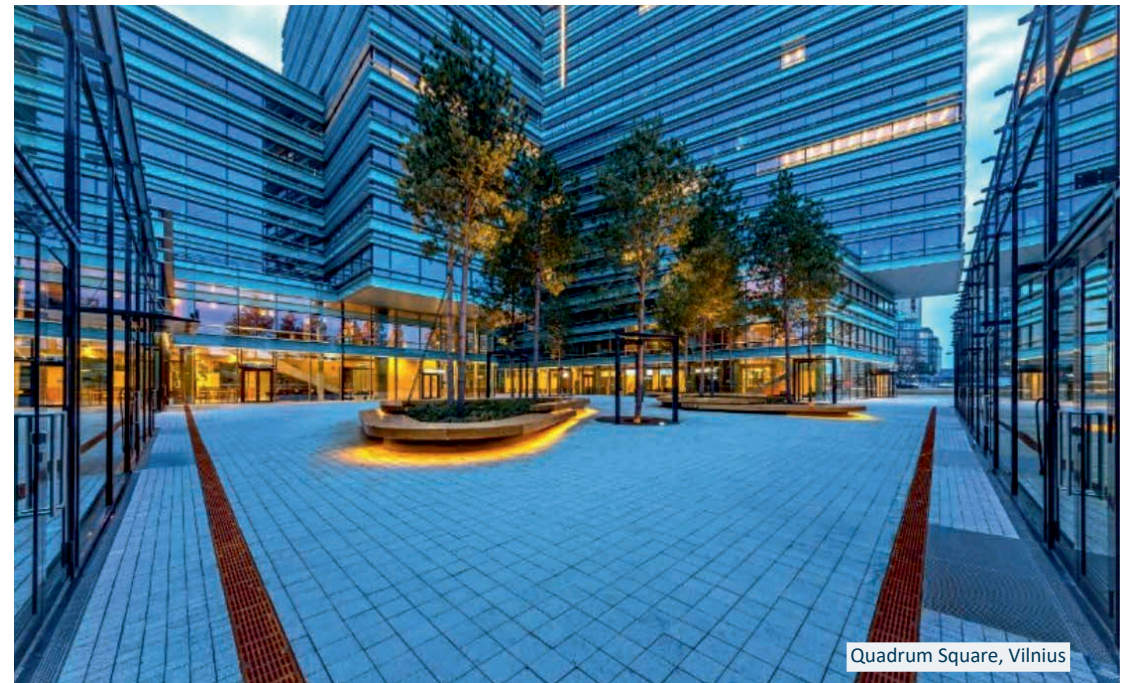
The benefits of collaboration were evident in many of these projects and in 2013, tFLAB London was formed with other landscape architects terra firma regularly worked with. Over the next 10 years, this was to render an eclectic mix of projects in China, Russia and Cyprus, as well as high-end gardens in London.

Venturing to Vilnius

In 2014, terra firma LT was formed in Vilnius with terra firma employee Ramune Sanderson, when she returned to her native Lithuania. In the ensuing years, this little office of 3 to 4 people went on to secure and deliver an extraordinary array of wonderful projects.

terra firma LT can be seen as an excellent example for any initiative to set up a landscape architectural practice in a country where none is already in existence. The practice has built an exceptional portfolio spanning all sectors including new city public realm, parks and streetscape, large residential projects and the international award winning Boksto heritage redevelopment. At a larger scale they have also been involved in 5 kms of continuous projects leading into the city, including riverside enhancement throughout the very centre of Vilnius and along the new Baltic Highway.

Ramune has gone on from this pioneering work for the landscape architectural profession to first become the lead city landscape architect at Vilnius Municipality and now advisor to the Minister of Environment, influencing strategies and policy as well as lecturing in the universities. terra firma LT continues under the leadership of Linas Usas.



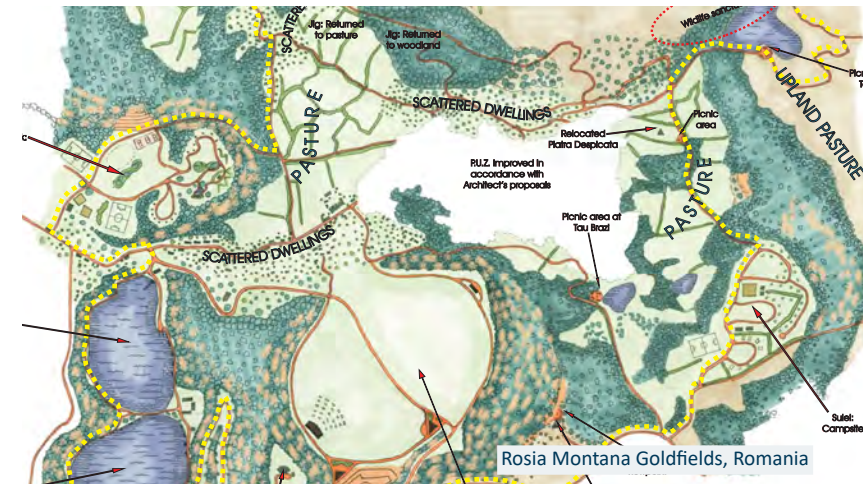
Other foreign excursions...

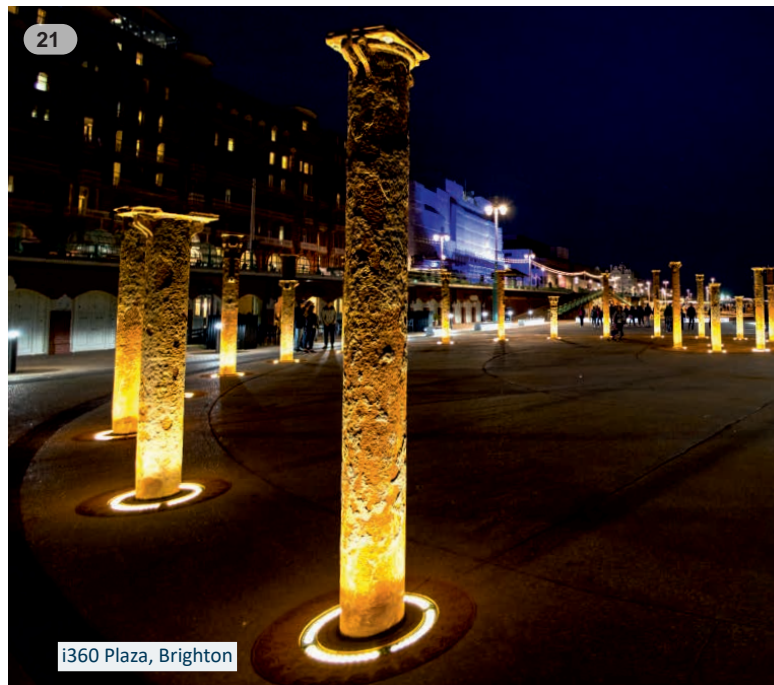
terra firma have undertaken numerous projects overseas directly from Hampshire including involvements in China, the Channel Islands, France, Gibraltar and the Middle East.

At the largest scale this has involved studies and designs for the massive Rosia Montana goldfields in Romania, Europe's largest goldmine. In conjunction with Neils Balgalis' Grupa 93 in Riga, there have been involvements in Green Infrastructure inputs to masterplans in Latvia as well as contributing to a presentation to the first Mad City international planning conference in Riga 2019.



Gibraltar - the location of four terra firma projects





i360 Plaza, Brighton



Selsey East Beach Regeneration, Chichester



Motor Industry Research Association (MIRA), Science and Technology Park, Nuneaton



Yorkshire Police HQ, Leeds

Back in the UK

The Petersfield office staff maintained good retention levels and gained notable additions during this period including Isla Denton-Thompson, Paul Strugnell and Alison Murray. In-house systems were fine tuned in line with Investors in People. Quality Assurance and Environmental Management systems were put in place, as well as a complete rebranding of the practice with the assistance of Visual Assets, Tracy Van Der Heiden and Mike Linnane.

This spawned a well-received new website with thorough search engine optimisation as well as corresponding logos, stationery, a self-penned publication and press releases around the time of our 25th anniversary, when a staff celebration took us all to Amsterdam.

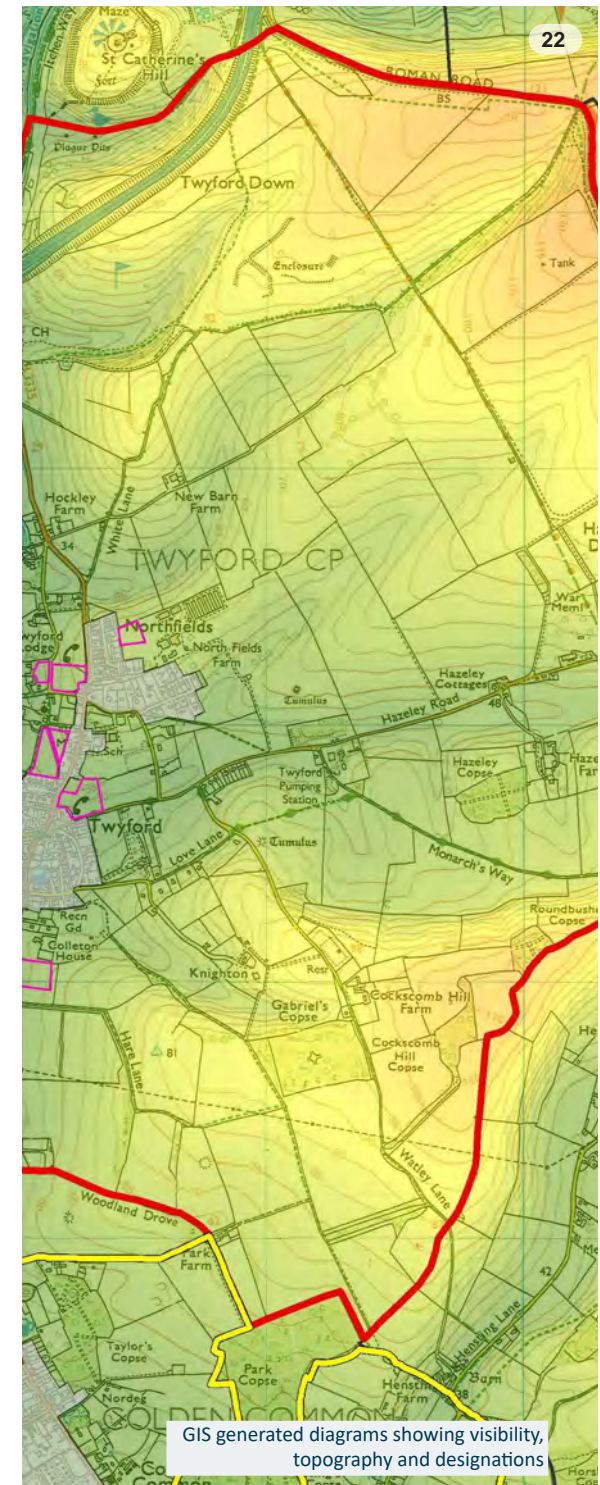
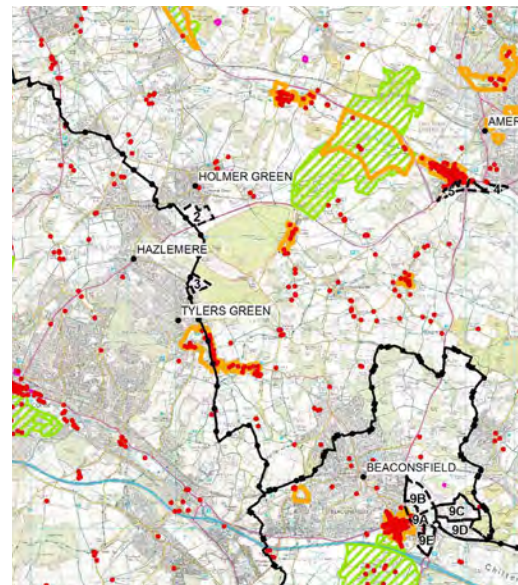
By 2015, the team was twelve-strong in Petersfield, with ten in Dubai, four in Vilnius and four with tFLAB based in London.

Landscape and planning

Prior to 2010 the focus of work had been on design, with a small proportion of landscape planning work mainly comprising site-specific landscape and visual impact assessments. When we were approached by the landscape team at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in April 2010 to undertake a Landscape Capacity Study to inform their local plan we asked sole practitioner Bettina Kirkham, with her wealth of landscape planning experience, to join us. Bettina agreed and so began what was to become a successful and long-lived collaboration.

Throughout the subsequent decade we worked closely with Bettina on behalf of over a dozen planning authorities producing the full range of landscape-related planning studies; landscape capacity and sensitivity studies, landscape character assessments, local gap assessments, green belt assessments, at district, regional and parish level and including a number of protected landscapes.

As a practice we developed expertise in large-scale mapping and reporting and with Bettina developed a robust methodology which has been well received and tested at public inquiry.



GIS generated diagrams showing visibility, topography and designations



Housing development in Cyprus



The English School, Nicosia

tfLAB

The tfLAB model tapped into the potential of long standing terra firma collaborators, variously occupied as academics, sole practitioners and industry advocates, to seek out new work avenues, largely overseas or in London. Working out of her Clerkenwell office, high end garden designs were undertaken in the capital by Alison Hainey, as well as public realm refurbishment projects at MoreLondon and the V&A Museum.

Nigel Thorne, Jamie Liversedge and Lionel all travelled to China to speak at China Design Week over consecutive years, leading to projects there, also involving fifth member Steve Dawson. Cyprus projects included The Cyprus Cultural Centre, The English School and the Landmark Hotel, (all in Nicosia) and a concept study for an urban regeneration project in Moscow.

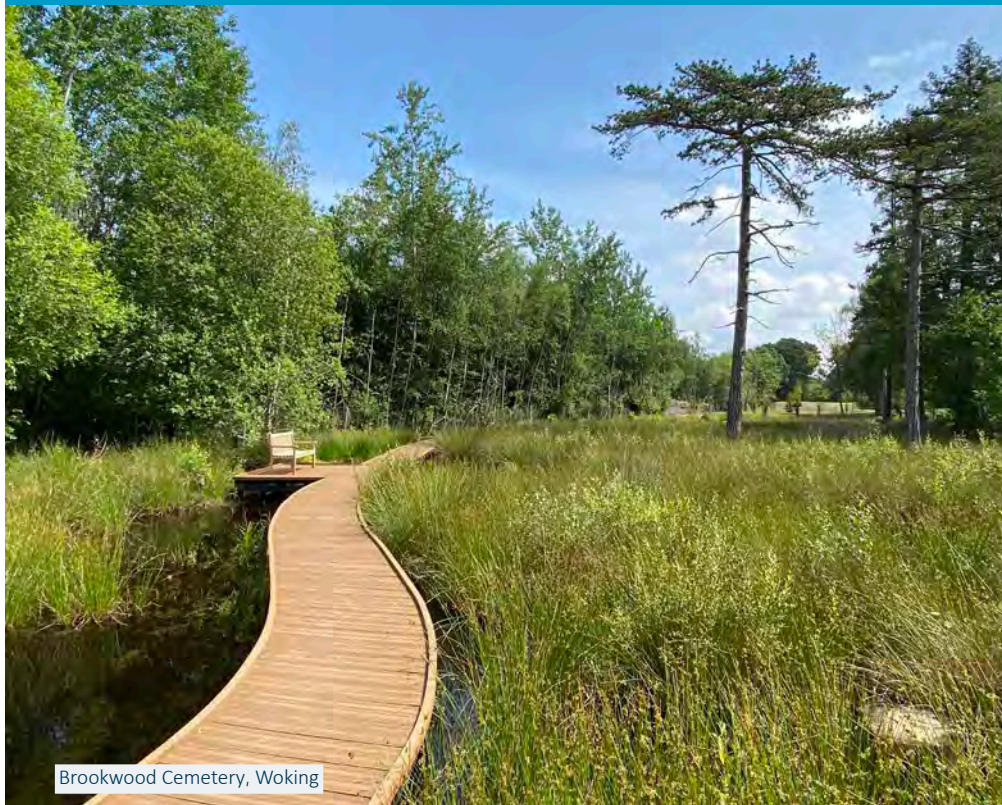
The practice was disbanded after its anticipated ten years and the retirement of some of its members. Although it was capable of doing far more, it can nevertheless be seen as a very good model and example of successful and enjoyable collaboration.



Leisure area masterplan, China

2016 to 2025 Consolidation

The practice's fourth decade has continued to be eventful, but so far as the main Petersfield office is concerned, been a period of consolidation and marked stability. Staff numbers gradually increased to seventeen and work volumes were sometimes hard to contain, with work often having to be turned away. In early years, it had been deliberate policy to remain smaller, to a maximum of twelve staff per office, resisting the temptation to become multidisciplinary and add skills such as ecology and arboriculture to services offered.





Phoenix Project, Lewes Northeast Quarter
Image: Human Nature

South Downs National Park

The practice's position within the South Downs National Park has led to a particular relationship on both sides of the fence. Lionel was invited to sit on Design Panel for the Park when it was first launched and on standing down after four years, has been succeeded by Robyn and Alison. terra firma have been commissioned to assist the Park's planning department with numerous tasks, including year-long consultancies on two occasions and advice on National Strategic Infrastructure Projects.

terra firma has also been involved in a vast number of applications, including two of the three main strategic sites; Lewis Northeast Quarter (the Phoenix project) and the Fernhurst Syngenta site. The company has also been prepared to challenge the system and won a very difficult public inquiry for a carbon positive EV charging station designed by Bill Dunster, to be powered by local farm biofuels at the nearby Buriton A3 interchange.



Syngenta, Fernhurst
Image: Plus Architecture

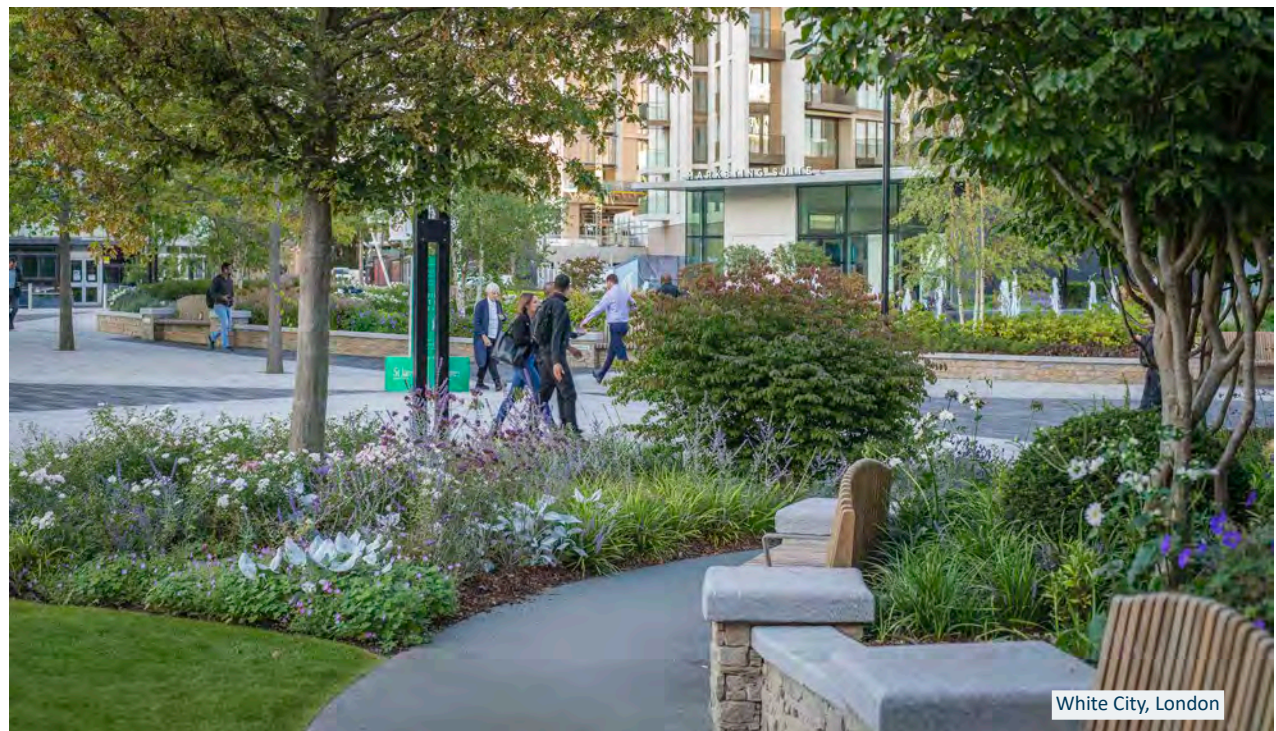


Timberyard Lane, Lewes

Collaboration and contractors

Workload continues across all sectors with a noticeable amount in education, healthcare and housing; many of these projects as a result of engagement under Design and Build Contracts for the Department of Education, various Healthcare Trusts, London Boroughs and many other larger organisations.

This has brought about the opportunity to work on larger projects, often with tight budgets, but addressing social and educational needs.





Harwich Navyard Development (Image: Gaunt Francis Architects)



Clements Court, Hounslow

Living

A terra firma staple over the years has been its involvement in housing developments, from blocks of flats, to housing estates, to retirement living, to large single dwellings, and everything in between. Irrespective of demographics, we all need a place to call home. A sizable proportion of all our lives is spent at home, and perhaps therefore it's inevitable that a significant portion of the firm's overall output is within the housing sector.

Over the years, terra firma has regularly worked for leading housing developers Barratt David Wilson and smaller developers including Bargate Homes (Hampshire based), Bugler (London based), Bewley Homes (across the south east) and Wates Construction. Work has also been undertaken for housing associations across the south east including Raven and Radian, working with the latter on the award winning Code 6 (CfSH) scheme at Stoneham Green in Southampton. In the early 2000s terra firma designed an award winning retro-fit homezone and regeneration of the Cumberland Street area for Portsmouth City Council.



Stoneham Cemetery Road, Southampton

terra firma has been involved with numerous exceptional dwellings in the countryside for private clients, on the basis of being exemplar designs within the framework of national planning policy with officers to achieve the planning consent.

The practice has also acted as term consultant to several organisations including Leonard Cheshire Disability and Churchill Retirement Living, for whom we designed and delivered dozens of sites over the course of many years. Our later living housing work continues with McCarthy Stone and includes a retirement village within the South Downs National Park which required a strong landscaped approach spearheaded by terra firma and extensive negotiation with officers to achieve the planning consent.



Water Lily House, Alresford (Image: AR Design Studio)



Churchill Retirement Living, Princes Risborough

Learning

terra firma is engaged in education projects for almost every type of facility and this sector, led by Director Robyn Butcher, forms a large part of the day-to-day projects for the team.

Recent work on DfE projects has included multiple SEND schools throughout the south-east, secondary schools, new-build schools, such as the 900-place Elmgrove Primary in London Borough of Harrow, St Nicholas SEND School in Croydon and Hoe Valley School in Woking, amongst many others.

Further and Higher Education work has involved extensive projects with University of Portsmouth, current work for a prestigious University in Central London and the award winning Pelham Campus redevelopment for Brighton Met, with bespoke student designed art work depicting the local starling murrin. Independent schools also contribute to the workload, with long-term consultancy for St Swithin's School and Princes Mead in Winchester.

The team prides itself on a pragmatic and proactive approach to these projects, where budgets are often restricted, to allow the educational features essential to the teaching to be at the forefront. Our success with the design and build process working alongside Main Contractors is reflected with our continued repeat work.



Barton Peveril 6th Form College Eastleigh

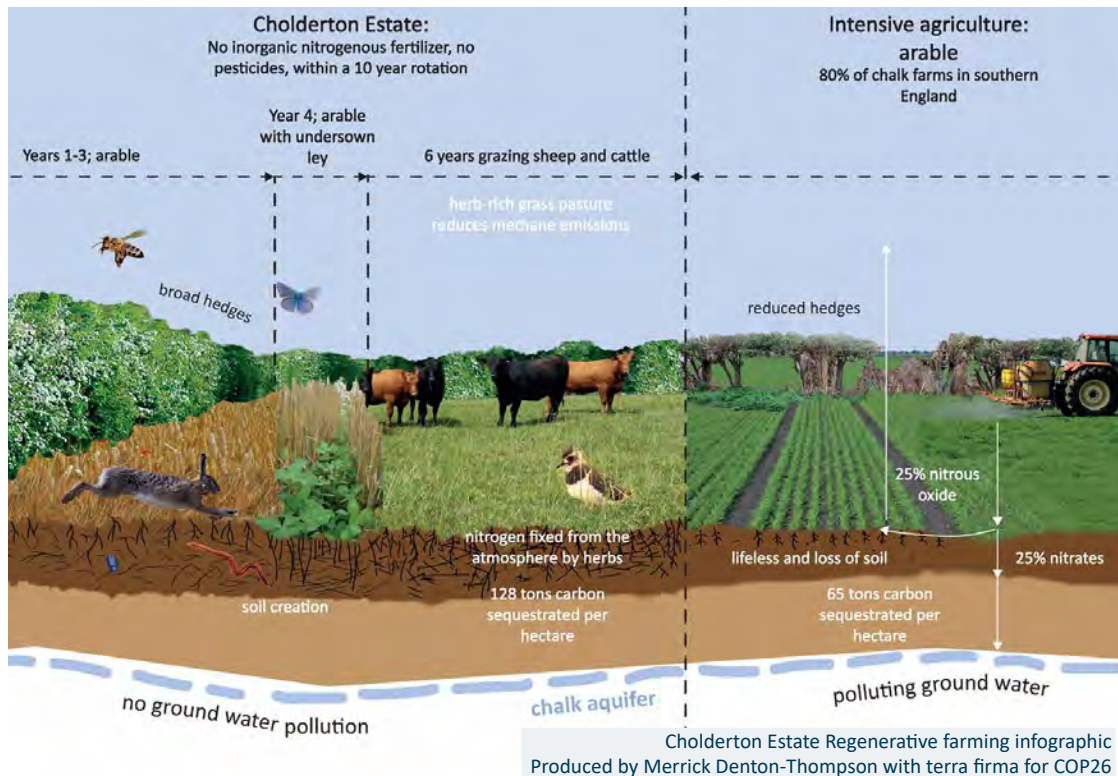


St Nicholas SEND School, Croydon

In looking forward to the next 40 years, it is with obvious concern for the future of the environment, but we need to embrace doing what we can with optimism. As landscape architects we can increasingly become involved in driving landscape led and indeed landscape scale interventions in our projects, wrapping in the strategies for Local Nature Recovery Schemes and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

We are looking to expand our work in these areas, offering skills in interpreting and communicating landscape character drivers, assisting in vision, strategies and delivery.

We can draw upon partners from previous projects to provide other inputs in natural capital and carbon accounting, ecology, data collation and the tools to communicate, audit and monitor interventions to suit the end user.





Petershill, London

Heritage

Heritage is never far away from most projects when working in the UK and the main message here or overseas is to respect it and use it to build a project's narrative. Within the specific sector, terra firma has produced Conservation Management Plans for Dropmore, Broomfield and Osterley Parks, provided all the landscape design and assessment inputs related to the multi award winning Sutton Hoo Revealed project and worked with the National Trust elsewhere at The Vyne, Claremont and Hinton Ampner.

The practice has also had major involvements with numerous gardens, parks and estates including Goodwood, Cowdray, Southwick, Diding and Treyford, Tittenhurst, Stansted, Brookwood Cemetery and Butser Ancient Farm. Terra firma have designed three national memorial gardens; The Falklands Chapel, Pangbourne, Leonard Cheshire Memorial at Le Court and the Muslim Burial Ground, Horsell Common.

Public realm projects such as Petershill with its processional route to St Paul's Cathedral and the i360 plaza, reutilizing the old columns from Brighton pier, have an obvious heritage narrative and others, such as the new quad at Jesus College in Oxford with Jeremy Rye, tell the story of long lost medicinal plants from a shared Welsh history.



Muslim Burial Ground, Woking

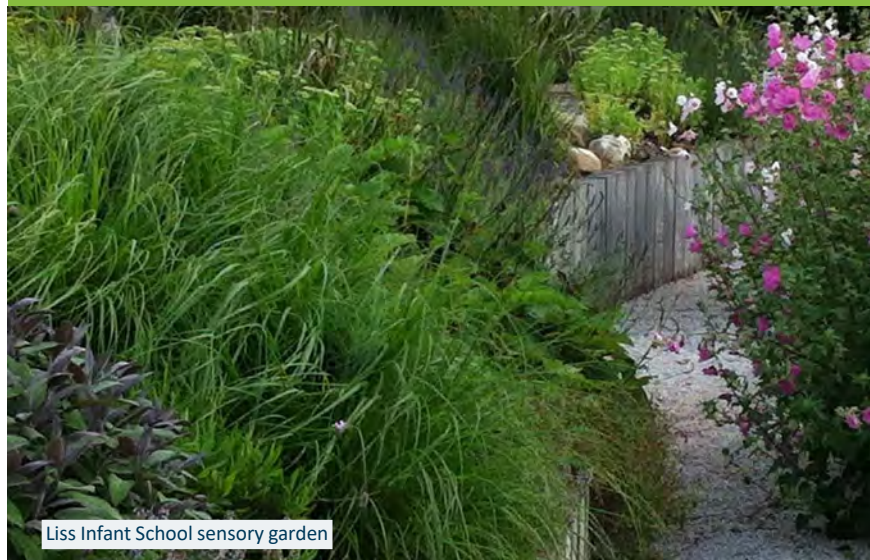
Health

Director Alison Galbraith heads up terra firma's healthcare portfolio. Alison is uniquely qualified as a landscape designer in this role following a former career as a trained nurse, working in acute wards in the UK and overseas as well as caring for older people in both public and private settings. terra firma is currently working on the design of a new mental health hospital in Surrey and the delivery of a new hospice garden in Hampshire, a new health centre in Chiswick and a mental health outpatient centre in Barnes. Alison oversaw the landscape design for the newly completed Hythe Health Centre in the New Forest.

terra firma took on the detailed landscape design of the prestigious Maggie's Cancer Care Centre in Swansea from Kim Wilkie. Alison led the detailed design and construction phases and volunteered in undertaking the initial planting of the vegetable garden herself prior to the official opening of the garden by HM Queen Camilla.



Vegetable garden Maggie's Centre, Swansea



Liss Infant School sensory garden



NHS Staff garden, New Chiswick Health Centre



Low carbon

terra firma is BS EN ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems Standard accredited and as a Landscape Institute registered practice, abides by the profession's wider objectives and principles. This includes the declaration of a climate change emergency.

The practice strives to embed best practice environmental sustainability principles both in the workplace and in all projects through design and specification. The terra firma Carbon Team have identified an overarching strategic objective to minimise the carbon footprint of the business. We have established a baseline, a carbon reduction plan and an offsetting scheme to achieve carbon neutral status.

Reducing the business' carbon footprint is fundamental in our overarching desire to reach Net Zero ahead of the Government's target of 2050.

Robyn and Alison bought into the practice at the end of 2020, becoming equal co-directors with Lionel, with the view to total succession and Lionel retiring in 2025, coinciding with the practice's 40th birthday.

The senior team still includes Martin as Associate, Ally as office manager and Alice Cooper and Alex Strudwick as senior landscape architects.

Senior staff members have variously been supported in taking up voluntary positions on Landscape Institute committees, design panels and university external examiner roles.

Junior staff are mentored to the Pathway to Chartership, the final rung of professional training. Training and support is integral to the practice's culture and 'people-first' remains the mantra from the practice's earliest days.





The future...

Moving into the future life at terra firma will undoubtedly be different without Lionel, but the underlying framework of integrity, passion and genuine endeavour to achieve better and best, which Lionel's leadership has been fundamental in creating, will continue.

Within this framework an exciting chapter will now take us into and through terra firma's fifth decade under Robyn and Alison's leadership. New business strategies and visions developed in the past year by the whole team will continue to evolve and be shaped by us all. New challenges will arise; some predicted and others no doubt unforeseen. We are a strong team and no challenge will be too great for us!



Lionel Fanshawe



Looking back on a 45 year career in landscape architecture that started with entering the course at Leeds in late 1979, I can honestly say, what makes me the most happy has been the success of terra firma, not just commercially but as a catalyst to a positive environmental change and simply as a great place to work.

Robyn Butcher



So many best moments over the last 30 years that I have difficulty knowing where to start. First day back in 1995 was pretty exciting and proudest moment was knowing I had become part of the ownership team. The constant coffee supply always makes me smile! Happiest moments are mainly time spent with the team in and out of the office and realising that I am amongst a fabulous set of friends.

Alison Galbraith



I love my job, and while there are a few tough moments, one stand out experience was the garden party at Sarah Robinson House in Portsmouth in 2006. My 6-year-old son and I helped residents plant flowers donated by our landscape contractor. It was a joy working with long-time residents and kids new to gardening. We topped off the day with party food and a magic show, making it a truly special celebration with real impact.

Martin Hird



A day's fieldwork with Lionel and Archaeologist Gerry Wait, trudging through the snow and taking in the fresh air and stunning scenery of the Transylvanian mountains, at the end of which enjoying the hospitality of our local hosts in an abandoned Austro-Hungarian village, eating fine Romanian food and discovering Tsuica!

I had such a great time at Tom and Martin's weddings! Both were absolutely amazing in their own unique ways. It was wonderful to share those happy moments with colleagues. And let's not forget about Bernie's BBQs - always a giggle and filled with a fantastic crowd!

I find it hard to distil best moments. I just know that my memories of working at terra firma are filled with lots of great things: teamwork, laughter, learning, growth, support, travel, biscuits (pre-recession) and more. It is being part of the small, family-like team that has always been my favourite part of the job.

Fieldwork days, always eventful trekking up (and up again!) the South Downs, with pencil and camera in hand, trying to keep pace with Lionel's brisk walk (or more a sprint). Wading through water and fields to find the best view only to hear the immortal words: "Can you draw this in 3D?" Sure, why not!. But above all, it's been a real privilege to work on such a wide range of incredible projects, with no two days ever the same, alongside a brilliant team of colleagues.

I've been lucky enough to work on some amazing projects at terra firma over the last 9 years. A high point for me was seeing a challenging project finally complete on site, having seen it all the way through from early sketches, to planning and construction. It marked a significant point in my career at terra firma and one I am immensely proud of.

Alison Murray



Tom Jenner



Alice Cooper



Alex Strudwick

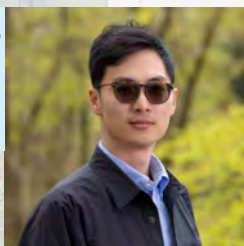


Paul Strugnell



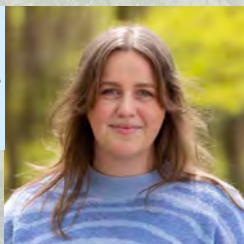
My best moment was when I was straight out of college embarking on a new career after retraining after over a decade of employment in a completely different role. From the start I was given the opportunity to work on many varied projects and given the chance to be involved in the design process. Being involved in the Muslin Burial Ground project from concept to construction, the Royal opening for it was a highlight. Just a shame it wasn't Harry that turned up that day.

Leo Cheung



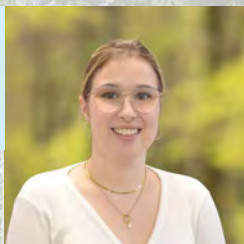
I still vividly remember the moment I first joined, feeling warmly welcomed by the friendly people in the office and excited to be part of a team delivering such a wide range of interesting projects. That feeling has stayed with me, and even now, I continue to learn so much from the talented people around me every day

Emily Bird



Site visits out into the South Downs and beyond are always a fun part of the job for me. One particular site visit stands out in my mind though... Alison and I face to face for the first time in a year or so during COVID, socially distancing whilst clambering around a chalk quarry in heavy snow. It was unique and rather treacherous!

Eleanor Flack



My best moment at terra firma is how welcoming everyone has been! The office is always filled with laughter and positive energy. Being part of such a vibrant team has made my time here incredibly meaningful and enjoyable.

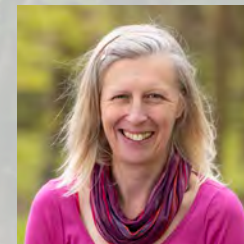
Best moment's are some fantastic group trips & outings with the terra firma team, including: Travelling on the Eurostar and spending the weekend in Rotterdam for the 35th anniversary; Foraging for fungi on a Christmas outing; and a Guided walk through the rewilding at Knepp Estate.

I would say my most memorable moments at terrafirma are the social activities we've shared as a team. It's always great to see a different, more relaxed side of everyone and to learn about their interests outside of work.

My best moment at Terra Firma was conducting research on LiDAR and developing the process for running those ZTVs. I believe it had a significant impact.

Being welcomed by the terra firma family on my second day in the UK is something I fondly remember. The best moments after that were all the field trips and the patience with which I'm continuously taught everything are some of the best moments in office. And of course - the game evening was a hoot!

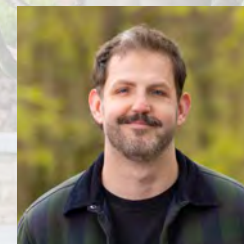
Nicola Tree



Sonali Mallapur

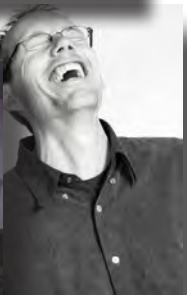


Mikey Stevens



Nasrin Chowdhury









terra firma

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

"Landscape Architecture is central to our quality of life. It affects the way we live, the way we interact with each other, how well we work, and how much we enjoy and look after our environment. These are responsibilities we take very seriously at terra firma."

Lionel Fanshawe. Director and Principal Landscape Architect