

White Rock Gardens

MASTERPLAN 2002

Produced by means of public consultation

Improving White Rock Gardens

White Rock Gardens is the second largest park in Hastings and St Leonards and will be celebrating its centenary in 2004. Now there is an opportunity to improve this important area.

Hastings Borough Council has allocated £200,000 to improve the west side of the Gardens. In addition money has been set aside to replace the indoor bowling centre. With the exciting new 5-point plan for the town, more funding could be attracted.

The Council has therefore prepared this Masterplan for the Gardens to ensure that the most is made of the opportunities and that improvements reflect local views.

Building on success

The Masterplan is based on input from over 200 people who attended two Community Design Days in February, 116 people who submitted written or drawn suggestions in response to the first consultation flyer and 110 people who commented on the Draft Masterplan published in the summer issue of the Council's 'About' magazine.

Eight main objectives have been identified and refined through this public consultation, and over 60 detailed proposals for achieving them. These range from fairly simple improvements which can be implemented quite soon, to more visionary ideas which will need further investigation and fund raising.

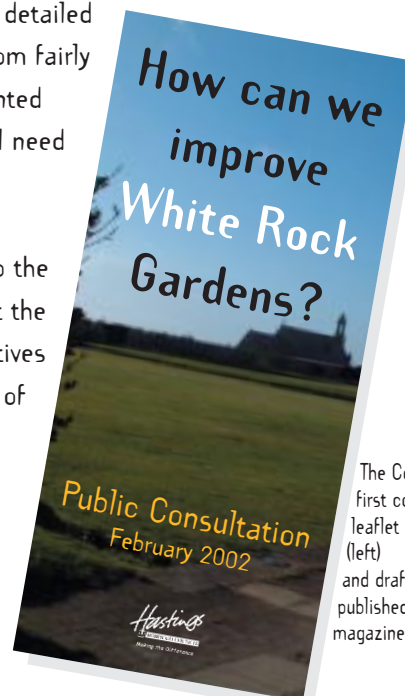
The overall strategy is to build on and develop the many successful things already happening, at the same time as exploring a range of new initiatives designed to realise the tremendous potential of the area during the Gardens' second century.

What happens next?

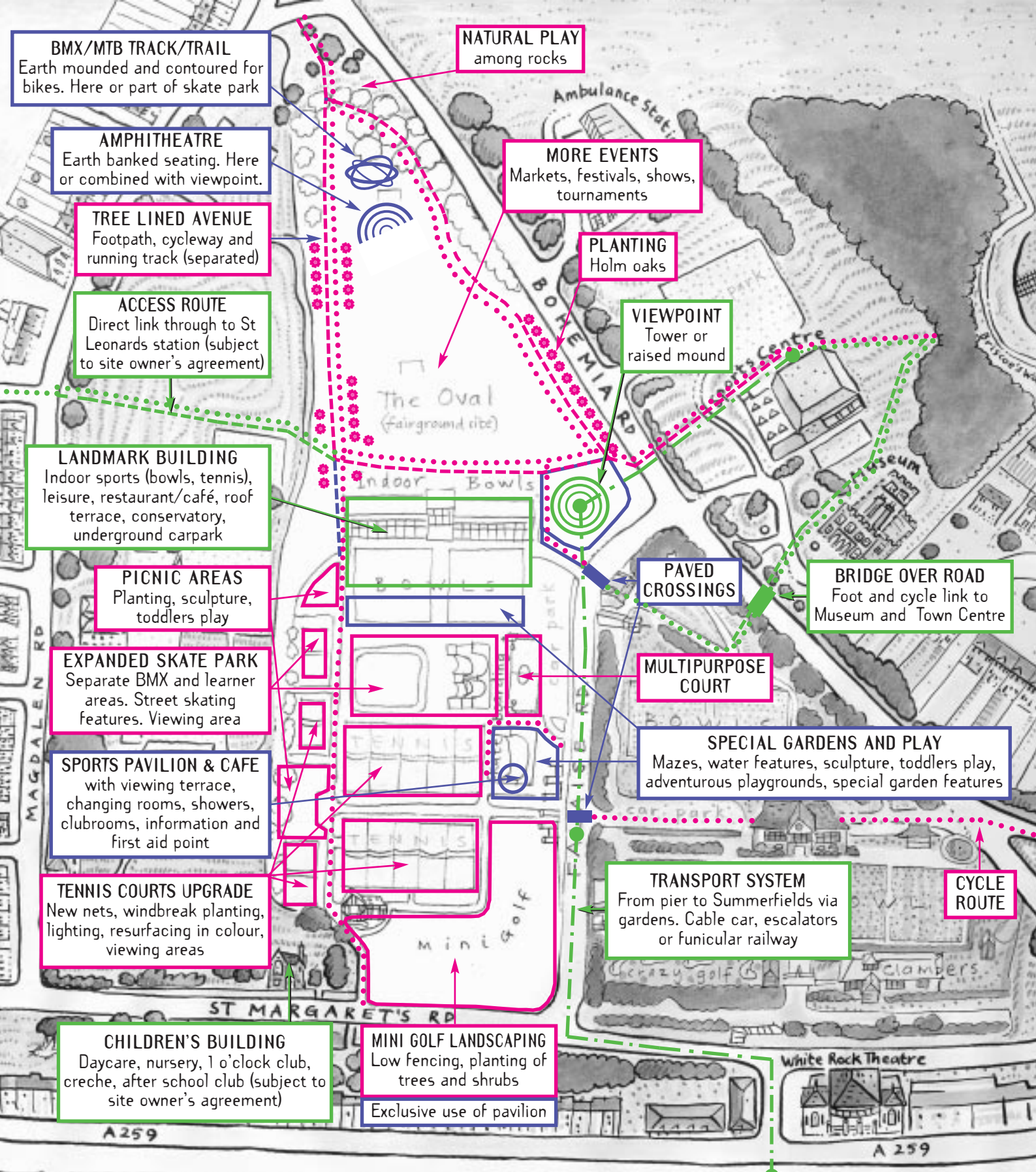
This Masterplan will now be used to guide the improvement programme. The next step will be to undertake detailed feasibility and design work on the proposals and then draw up an implementation programme.



Community Design Days at White Rock Theatre included interactive displays, a 'design for real' model and workshop sessions for special interest groups.



The Council's first consultation leaflet in February (left) and draft masterplan published in 'About' magazine in July (right).



White Rock Gardens Masterplan 2002

MAIN NEW FEATURES

Short term
2003 - 2005



Medium term
2006 - 2010



Long term
2011 -



Objectives and proposals

The eight objectives of the Masterplan are set out below with proposals for achieving them listed under each.

Approximate timescales are indicated by the numbering style:

red (plain) short term: 2003 - 2005 **blue (italic)** medium term: 2006 - 2010 **green (underlined)** long term: 2011 -

1. Range of attractions for all

A greater range of diverse, mutually reinforcing attractions for all age groups to create a 'buzz' of activity and greater security throughout the year. Integration of sports, play and leisure.

- i** More **play facilities** of all kinds for all age groups throughout the area.
- ii** **Picnic areas** and **seating** overlooking sports and play.
- iii** Specially designated **quiet areas**.
- iv** **Events programme**, especially during school holidays for children, but also for other age groups.
- v** More events on the Oval - **markets, festivals, boot fairs, shows and tournaments** - but avoiding loud amplified sound.
- vi** **Disabled access** to all facilities including ramps around steps and possibly information boards in braille.
- vii** An inspiring **adventurous playground**, perhaps including interactive water features and using recycled materials.
- viii** **Indoor children's facilities** including daycare, nursery, 1 o'clock club, creche, after school club.
- ix** All year **café** overlooking facilities (see also 3 vii).
- x** **Public art, sculpture** and **trails** throughout the area.
- xi** Imaginative new attractions such as **mazes, water features, miniature railways, novelty timepieces, pets corner**.
- xii** Earth banked **amphitheatre** with seating on the Oval. This could be at the north end with the football pitch moved slightly southwards or at the south end, perhaps incorporated with the Viewpoint (see 2 viii).

2. High quality, sustainable environment

Quality building and landscape on the West side of the Gardens to match, if not exceed, that on the East.

- i** More **planting** including **special garden areas** (eg wildflower garden, winter garden, 'secret' garden, water garden, sensory garden, fragrant flower beds, pergolas, conservatory).
- ii** Imaginative **lighting scheme** to make it an atmospheric and safe area to walk through at night. Use of floodlit features, solar lighting, movement activated lights and light shows for special events.
- iii** Facilities for **recycling** rubbish, and plenty of litter and dog bins. **Dog ban** in certain areas (eg playgrounds, sports areas).
- iv** Visible form of **policing** to guarantee the safety of Garden users at all times and to prevent vandalism. This could include park wardens, CCTV and emergency alarms if it proves necessary.
- v** **Resurface paths**, only when necessary, in sealed gravel with **special paved feature areas**.
- vi** **Restore** curved steps and other historic features.
- vii** **Rigorous, sustainable design standards** for all new buildings.
- viii** **Viewing tower** or raised mound at the highest point to make more of the spectacular views. This could incorporate the amphitheatre (see 1 xii).
- ix** Use of **solar and wind power** (both for energy saving and as a feature) providing it is not noisy or an eyesore.

3. Centre of sporting excellence

Improve existing facilities and introduce new ones to make the Gardens - together with nearby facilities - a centre of sporting excellence.

- i** **Upgrade skate park/BMX facilities** to competition standard - larger area, lighting, learner skatepark, features for street skating and separate BMX area (see 3 viii).
- ii** **Upgrade tennis courts** with new nets, windbreak planting, lighting, resurfacing in colour, viewing areas. Investigate dual use of some courts for other activities.
- iii** Reinstate basketball court as **multipurpose court** for basketball, kick around, rollerblading.
- iv** **Improve minigolf area** with planting of trees and shrubs and low picket fencing to discourage people and dogs walking across the course.
- v** Use banks for **viewing sports** and **shelter planting** to reduce wind impact.
- vi** Provide **additional low key facilities** such as a **boules pitch**.
- vii** **New sports pavilion and healthy café** with viewing terraces, changing rooms, toilets, showers, clubrooms for tennis and other activities, information office and first aid point. (Minigolf then to have exclusive use of old pavilion.)
- viii** **Earth contoured BMX/MTB track/trail**. This could either be at the north end of the Oval or incorporated as part of the main skate park area, possibly by using the terraced banks (see 3 i).

4. Better access

More convenient and pleasurable access to the Gardens and better links within the Gardens.

- i** System of **signposting** within the Gardens and to nearby features (eg Museum, St Thomas of Canterbury Church, Stations etc).
- ii** **New tree lined avenue** around The Oval for walking, running and cycling (separated to avoid accidents).
- iii** Marked **cycleroutes** and cycle parks. Cycle ban elsewhere.
- iv** Improve **entrance gateways** with imaginative, welcoming new designs.
- v** **Paved crossings** across Falaise Road.
- vi** Investigate using **'head on' parking** in Falaise Road and improving layout of Falaise Road carpark to increase parking spaces. Also investigate making better use of St Margaret's Road carpark for Garden users.
- vii** **Elegant bridge across Bohemia Road** to the Museum for walking and cycling. Linking also to the Greenway to the station and town centre.
- viii** **Motorised transport system** from the pier to Summerfields Leisure Centre with stops at key points in the Gardens: Possibilities include outdoor escalator, cable car, funicular railway. Possible extension to Hastings station. Minibuses or dotto train could be used initially.
- ix** **Access route to Magdalen Road** providing more direct access to St Leonards Station. Subject to negotiation with owners of the site to the East.

Objectives and proposals

5. A Big Draw

Something regionally or even nationally special to attract locals and visitors to the Gardens. Feasibility study or competition needed to explore options. Possibilities include some or all of the following:

- i Spectacular transport system (eg cable car - see 4 viii)
- ii Tropical plant house and/or aviary (see also 6 iv).
- iii Wind turbine with revolving viewing gallery and cafe (see also 2 viii).
- iv Ice skating rink (big enough for national events) (see 6 iii)
- v Water park with interactive displays, walk-through tunnels and perhaps flume rides (perhaps sited between skate park and landmark building).

6. New landmark building

Incorporate all new indoor facilities required - including the already committed new indoor bowls centre - in a single new multipurpose building of quality design. Feasibility study or competition needed to explore options. Possibilities include some or all of the following:

- i Indoor bowls with facilities for national tournaments.
- ii Indoor tennis.
- iii Indoor ice rink.
- iv Conservatory for special plants and butterflies.
- v Roof terrace.
- vi Viewing galleries for all facilities.
- vii Restaurant/café/bar with panoramic views.
- viii Function facilities.
- ix Information office.
- x Underground vandal-proof car parking.

7. Promotion

Comprehensive marketing and promotion of the area as a whole and the individual facilities within it.

- i Establish clear promotional identity for the area - including East and West sides of the Gardens, the Museum, Summerfields and perhaps Horntyte.

- ii Layout map of Gardens and Information Boards displayed at all entrances with details of facilities available.
- iii Signposting from the seafront, Hastings and St Leonards town centres, the Old Town and West St Leonards (pedestrian, cycle and vehicle routes).
- iv Produce a Gardens Guide brochure.
- v Include information about White Rock Gardens in other promotional literature for Hastings and St Leonards.
- vi Label plants and shrubs.

8. Public involvement

Ongoing involvement of Garden users, facility operators and the general public in the management and development of the area.

- i Start 'Friends of White Rock Gardens' group.
- ii Form Steering Group of main interest groups.
- iii Support Special interest groups (eg BMX/skaters, mini golfers, tennis players, bowlers, etc).
- iv Newsletter (similar to that for Alexandra Park).
- v Information boards at entrance points and at main facilities with latest developments (see also 7ii).
- vi Publicise progress in local media.
- vii Start volunteer scheme for maintaining gardens.
- viii Hold workshops to involve people, particularly the young, in designing and making features for the Gardens and in developing performances for the Oval.
- ix Explore introducing sponsorship or 'adoption' of certain features and facilities by local businesses.
- x Establish on-site information and development office.

Further Information

For more information on White Rock Gardens improvement programme please contact:
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Further copies of this Masterplan can be obtained from Hastings Information Centre, Queens Square, Priory Meadow, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1TL
Tel: 01424 781111 Email: hic_info@hastings.gov.uk

Background reports with the results of the two phases of public consultation can also be inspected there.