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HTA Landscape Design has completed the prestigious £3.3m scheme to restore and regenerate the Stevenage Town Centre Gardens, Hertfordshire. This is the first modernist, New Town landscape to receive investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund and incorporates the UK's first pre-stressed granite bridge.

HTA's landscape team was brought in by Stevenage Borough Council and the Green Heart Partnership to restore the four hectare park, which was an integral part of the original Stevenage New Town development and had become run down since it was built in the late 1950's.

The initial phase of the project commenced in 2006 with support from the Government's Growth Area Fund and included masterplanning for the site and the restoration of its original features and framework.

The main phase involved the faithful restoration of the remaining parkland, lake and play area with a new sensory garden creating a stunning contemporary intervention in an undeveloped area of the site. This work was funded by a successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' – a first for a New Town park. HTA acted as Lead Consultant, Landscape Architect, Contract Administrator, Architect and Project Manager.

The centrepiece of the refurbished gardens is a pre-stressed granite bridge designed by HTA, spanning 14m with a deck thickness of only 28cm and a weight of 22 tonnes. The bridge has no beam or piers and is the only one of its kind in the UK.

Other refurbishment works included the renovation of the lake and fountains, memorial and sensory gardens, new public toilet, a 1,500sqm play area, 1.5km of new paths and ecological enhancements including the planting of over 50,000 bulbs and 1,500sqm of wildflowers.

James Lord, Director of HTA Landscape Design, comments: *"The Stevenage Town Centre Gardens has been an exciting and fulfilling scheme to work on and we are proud of the two UK firsts that have been achieved as well as the recognition of heritage status for this modernism landscape. New Towns are coming of age and the Gardens are a significant asset that deserves to be looked after; they are the Capability Brown landscapes of the future."*

Gordon Drake, Green Spaces Project Manager at Stevenage Borough Council, adds: *"We have been extremely impressed with HTA's approach to this project, from their hands-on involvement and commitment to public engagement, to their creative yet extremely professional attention to detail, and their capability in managing the implementation on time and on budget. Their research into the heritage of the Gardens was very impressive and their design work was sensitive and respectful to the original features."*

HTA's Landscape Design team has led many high profile projects in the parks and public realm and housing and regeneration sectors since it was established eight years ago. Recent schemes have included the landscape design for Saffron Square in Croydon for Berkeley Homes and seafront and public realm regeneration at Bexhill-on-Sea for Rother District Council, as part of the CABE Seachange Funded Next Wave scheme.

Further information
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