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Media release

## Tributes paid to man who oversaw creation of London 2012 parklands

Former colleagues of the landscape architect who oversaw the design and delivery of the widely-acclaimed London 2012 parklands have paid tribute to his achievements.

John Hopkins, who died suddenly last week at the age of 59, was project sponsor for the Olympic Parklands and Public Realm at the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) from 2007 to 2011. He selected and led the team that developed more than 250 acres of green space, providing a vibrant atmosphere for the Games and a sustainable platform for the London Legacy Development Corporation to double the amount of green space in the new Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, which is due to re-open in stages from this summer. (*See Notes to Editors for a breakdown of the Olympic Parklands*).

John, who was a leading landscape architect, urban designer and environmental planner, possessed a wealth of experience in regional planning, site design and implementation. Prior to joining the ODA, he was a partner at LDA Design, heading up their London office. His career took him across the world as he practiced in Malaysia, Australia, Hong Kong and the United States.

Born in Liverpool, John graduated in Landscape Architecture from Thames Polytechnic, followed by a Masters at Louisiana State University in the United States. He was a Fellow of the Landscape Institute and a Churchill Fellow in urban design, in addition to being a Corporate Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Leaving the ODA as the Olympic parklands project neared completion, he moved to America, where he was a Visiting Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, while holding a similar role at the University of Greenwich in London. John had also been leading a consulting team advising on Shelby Farms Park in Memphis, Tennessee – a 4,500-acre green space – in addition to completing a study which would form part of landscape management strategy for Network Rail in the UK.

His work had been recognised by the Landscape Institute's *Peter Youngman Award for Outstanding Contribution to Landscape*, and by the Royal Town Planning Institute, Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects and the Civic Trust.

John was also an established author and contributor. He had been researching and writing a book on ecological planning and design based on 'One Planet Living' themes, called *The Global Garden – Ecological Economics and Infrastructure*, and in late 2012, with former colleague Peter Neal, was the co-author of *The Making of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park*.

**Sir John Armitt, Chairman of the ODA, said:** "We are all shocked by the sad news of John Hopkins' passing. He was pivotal in shaping and then delivering our vision of an important new park transforming this part of London. So many people delighted in seeing the parklands and public open spaces last summer – which will now be an enduring legacy of John's work. Our thoughts are with his friends and

family at this sad time.”

**Dennis Hone, Chief Executive of the ODA and London Legacy Development Corporation said:** “John’s contribution towards the creation of the UK’s largest new urban park for more than a century is immeasurable. His breadth of knowledge in landscape architecture ensured the parklands were the hidden treasure for many spectators during the Games, and his energy will live on as the park reopens for generations of visitors to enjoy.”

**Sir Nicholas Serota, Director Tate and former ODA Board member, said:** “The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park owes its form and its success to the vision and determination of John Hopkins. His imagination brought unexpected new features to the original plan, while his watchful eye ensured that quality and sustainability would be the hallmarks of the largest urban park created in England in more than a hundred years. His recent book on the Park, co-edited with Peter Neal, is a testament to his ambition and will serve as a bible for the next generation of landscape designers”.

**Sue Ilman, Landscape Institute President, said:** “It is with great sadness and regret that I heard of John’s death: sadness for the loss of someone who not only ‘inspired a generation’, but also inspired great admiration and affection amongst those he met; and regret, for the loss of a person with such vision, clear-thinking and so many plans he still wished to pursue. He will be greatly missed.”

**John’s fiancée Laura Adams, who is Executive Director at Shelby Farms Park Conservancy, said:** “In many ways he was an iconoclast - a man who knew what he stood for and was unafraid to tell the truth. He never let us forget the urgency of our responsibility toward our environment, but he was thoughtful, with the patience and humility to plan and design projects whose real benefit can only be truly appreciated by a generation he’ll never know.”

John is survived by his daughter Rosie and son Jack, his fiancée Laura Adams, Sister Patricia Hopkins, brother Kevin Hopkins and Rosie and Jack’s mother Jill. Tributes are being planned for John in the coming weeks, both in the UK and USA.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

##### **John Hopkins DipLA MLA FLI ASLA:**

- Dipl., Landscape Architecture, Thames Polytechnic (1976)
- M.L.A. with distinction, Louisiana State University (1986)

##### **Notable publications:**

- Co-authored *The Making of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park* (2013) with Peter Neal
- Contributed a chapter to *Relating Architecture to Landscape* (1999), edited by Jan Birksted;
- Was a featured practitioner in *Ecology, Community and Delight* (1999) by Dr Ian Thompson;
- Jointly edited with Ken Fieldhouse and Sheila Harvey *The Cultured Landscape— Designing the Environment in the Twenty-first Century*. (2005), contributing a chapter - *Music Makers and the Dreamers of Dreams* - and the concluding chapter - *The future: landscape design in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* – with Peter Neal.
- Wrote *Urban Space: Form, Funding and Function* (2001), based on research in the USA;

##### **Olympic parklands:**

- [Download images](#) of the north park’s Olympic Park in blossom, spectator lawns and wetlands.

- [Download images](#) of the south park's London 2012 gardens and wildflower meadows.

### **Parklands fact-file:**

#### **Before, during and after Games:**

- 4,000 new semi-mature trees of between four and seven metres high, with over 2,000 trees grown in Hampshire already planted in the Olympic Park, including Wild and Bird Cherry, Ash, Hazel, White Willow, Crack Willow, Alder, Aspen, Holm Oak, English Oak, Rowan, Lime, field Maple, Sweet Gum and Silver Birch.
- More than ten football fields' worth of nectar-rich annual and perennial meadows that were designed to flower during the Games.
- Wetland bowls and rare wet woodlands in the north of the Park create habitat and help manage floodwater, protecting new housing and venues and 5,000 existing properties from a 1:100 year storm.
- 300,000-plus wetland plants, grown in Norfolk and Wales, have been planted as part of the UK's largest ever urban river and wetland planting.
- The riverside London 2012 Garden stretches for half a mile between the Aquatics Centre and Olympic Stadium on land that has been cleaned and cleared of railway sidings, contamination and Japanese Knotweed. The garden celebrates centuries of British passion for gardens and collecting plants, with picnic lawns, timber seating and 120,000 plants from 250 different species across the world arranged into four temperate regions: Europe, Americas, Asia and the Southern Hemisphere.
- A riverside Royal Horticultural Society Great British Garden overlooking the Olympic Stadium, featuring Bronze, Silver and Gold areas with matching colour wildflowers and grasses, features and running-track inspired spiral paths.
- New habitats for species including: otter, kingfisher, grey heron, bee, house sparrow, bat, song thrush, starling, toadflax brocade moth, lizard, black redstart, flower and fungus beetle, frogs, newts and toads, eel, water vole, slow worm, grass snake, linnet, sand martin, swift, and invertebrates.
- Feature planting designed by the Klassnik Corporation, We Made That and Riitta Ikonen - an art collective based in the Host Boroughs – and the University of Sheffield to represent the industrial heritage of the site.
- 250 benches and more than 3,300 seats built into the parklands so that people are never more than a 50-metre walk from a seat.

#### **Further legacy features of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park:**

- The southern part of the Park will focus on retaining the Games spirit, with riverside gardens and areas for markets, events, cafes and bars in legacy.
- The northern area of the Park will use the latest green techniques to manage flood and rainwater while providing quieter public space and habitats for hundreds of existing and rare species.
- A one mile road cycle circuit built into the parklands around the Velodrome, with lighting for year round and evening use but low level UV values to protect bats. Also, 6km of off-road mountain bike tracks and a network of cycle paths across the Park including National Cycle Network Route 1.
- A large lawn with an amphitheatre setting in the north of the Park suitable for games, picnics and other leisure activities.
- More than two hectares worth of secure and accessible allotments – the size of four football pitches.
- 5km of restored and accessible previously neglected rivers, including the original Carpenters Lock restored in a riverside bowl in the centre of the Park, connecting the northern and southern areas.
- Hanging gardens thirty feet above ground on the huge footbridge from Stratford City with meadows, lawns, shrubs and rows of trees welcoming people over the main walking entrance into the Park.
- A tree-lined 'park road' into the north of the Park modeled on The Mall and Birdcage Walk next to St James's and Hyde Park.
- A new regional sports club set in parklands with a tranquil garden square centered on the original Eton Manor Boys' Club war memorial and lined with Sweet Gum trees which turn red around Remembrance Day.
- Large concourse areas reduced in size in legacy and broken up with 'islands' of plants, trees and meadows.

– Ends –

For further information please contact the Olympic Delivery Authority Press Office on +44 (0)203 023 6800 or visit the website at [www.culture.gov.uk/oda](http://www.culture.gov.uk/oda)

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