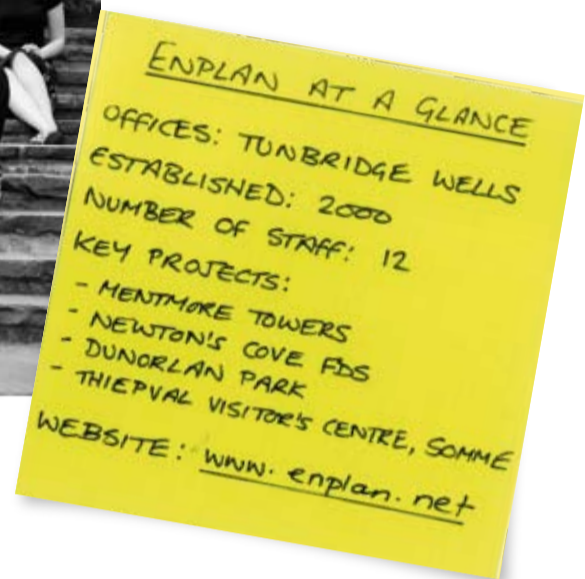


# Enplan

**Ben Stevens** spoke to landscape partner Phil Russell-Vick, senior landscape architect Ben Hilder and planning partner Martin Carpenter



Left to right:  
Charles Thacker, Lazlo Suppel,  
Ben Hilder, Michelle Dawe, Sion  
Thaysen, Sam Aldridge, Phil  
Russell-Vick, Jo Clatworthy,  
Lynne Meek, Martin Carpenter,  
Victoria Richards, Louisa Bruce



Enplan answers your questions

**E**nplan LLP is a small but growing multidisciplinary practice. Started in 2000, the concept was to offer clients with interests in developing and managing land of both private and public sectors the combined advice of landscape architects, environmental consultants and planners from a smaller practice, on projects from inception through to completion on site. This ethos remains at the heart of the consultancy, now complemented by a strong portfolio of design projects.

Led by Phil Russell-Vick and Martin Carpenter, the practice established itself quickly with work such as the HLF-funded Dunorlan Park and Cobham Park restorations, BCI award-winning Newton's Cove coast protection scheme and a variety of masterplans and EIAs for large mixed-use brownfield and greenfield developments. Current work includes flood defence, renewable energy, hotels, leisure, residential, enabling and historic landscape projects.

The practice completed the Thiepval Visitor's Centre for Lutylens' WWI Memorial to the Missing on the Somme in 2005, and in 2006/07 gave expert witness work for SnOasis, the world's largest winter sport facility. It won the landscape commission for the 6\* hotel project at Joseph Paxton's Mentmore Towers in Buckinghamshire, including both contemporary and restorative design aspects, and began construction on a residential scheme at Charters, Ascot.

**Your website indicates that you don't recruit by advertising – do you find there is a shortage of good landscape architects? And how do you ensure you employ the right people and deal with fluctuations in work?** *Ruth Holmes, The Royal Parks*

BH: We have been fortunate enough in the past not to have had to rely on advertising. We hope the website suggests that while we may not be advertising at a particular time, we would always be interested in the right person. Currently, our profession is in a state of crisis in which all sectors are short of resources. This will continue to hinder the growth of practices and the profession generally.

Getting the right staff for the future means we need to build relationships with students now through work experience, and ensure that when they return we provide the opportunity to mentor them through to Chartership; retaining and developing key staff has always been important to us. There will always be fluctuations in the quantity of our workload because, as a growing practice, we will not shy away from good projects even if they challenge us in terms of resources. What such fluctuations demand in practice are rapid learning curves for junior staff, a focus on the work we know we can do effectively and an open approach with clients on resourcing and programming.

**You recently gave evidence against the Crow Holt Wind Farm. Are you against onshore wind farms per se, or just in this particular case?**

*Name and address supplied*  
MC: We support renewable energy in principle and recognise that wind farms, both on and offshore, can make an important contribution to the national targets. However, onshore wind farms can cause real landscape harm and detrimentally affect the amenity of local residents. We consider that wind turbines can be absorbed in large landscapes, but in more intimate landscapes, such as Crow Holt, the new generation of turbines above 120m high can overwhelm their settings.

For Crow Holt, we were asked by Bassetlaw DC to review the landscape and the visual impact assessment that

was submitted with the planning application. We advised that the harm had been substantially understated and at the subsequent Planning Inquiry, the Inspector agreed with our evidence that the impact of the development would cause severe harm to a wide area and would impact significantly on the amenity of residents at Grove some 800m away. The Inspector's decision is perhaps of greater significance, as this Nottinghamshire landscape is not designated.

**What do you see as the biggest threat to the image of landscape professionals, and what can be done to improve it?**

*Claire Fouweather*

BH: The biggest threat that we see (apart from the image we have created by always moaning about our lack of image) is that of becoming marginalised in ever-expanding project teams (nothing new there either!). Often, the main skill that separates us from other professions is the ability to bridge the disparate facets of development and to produce solutions that pull together the complex threads of a scheme. We usually act as lead consultant on projects, or at least with a direct relationship with our client, and in this context we are able to create the most positive image of our profession. Making an impact in a team requires a thorough understanding of the development process and the capability to add value to all aspects, not just the landscape ones.

**Climate change and the need for new housing are key concerns in the UK. As a landscape and planning firm, what is your vision to address these issues simultaneously?** *Yogita Walunj, landscape architect and urban planning student*

PRV: The Government's drive towards zero carbon homes is going to set a very challenging agenda for the house-building industry and we believe that, as it begins to bite, it will shake out new development companies and will force a re-positioning of existing ones. Until there is legislation, however, the mindset of many companies will not change quickly. Current planning themes of re-using previously developed land, building at higher

densities and reducing the need for car trips will continue, while energy consumption, sustainable construction and social inclusion will be new key issues. Much more greenfield land will be needed, and it is here that landscape architects will have their main role. Building at high densities on urban fringes is not a natural fit with our nucleated settlements; by design, the larger-scale allocations can allow for better physical and social integration while producing a mass of development that makes zero carbon sustainability economically efficient.

**You promote your close working relationships with clients, several of which are large-scale developers. How do you ensure that they are fully aware of, and willing to fund, the range of sustainable construction solutions appropriate to that project when it's highly unlikely they'll realise any long-term profit from them?**

*Lucy Wilson MLI, Cornwall*

*Environmental Consultants*

PRV: Our developer clients are increasingly aware of sustainable solutions as guidance rapidly develops, local authorities seek sustainability appraisals at planning and a new breed of sustainability consultants emerge. Development must be economically viable, so willingness to fund when there is no absolute requirement is the issue, although central Government legislation must be around the corner. In the meantime, developers need to be shown a business advantage; these can appear at the planning stage, where sustainability commitments can influence decisions and at construction, when end purchasers/users increasingly show a preference.



A Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £2.1m enabled Enplan to restore Dunorlan Park in Kent



Mentmore Towers in Buckinghamshire, set in a Grade II\* park by Joseph Paxton, is set to become a 6\* hotel

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For each question we publish

Glenn Howell Architects will be the subject of next month's Peer Review, while in November it will be Nicholas Pearson Associates. Send questions to the editor: [ben@wardour.co.uk](mailto:ben@wardour.co.uk)