

# HISTORIC APPRAISAL : THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAIRHAVEN

## 1 Introduction.

1.1 This statement has been prepared as part of the current proposals to achieve support from the Heritage Lottery for the restoration of Fairhaven Lake and its Gardens. It has also been prepared in the context of an application to Historic England to achieve formal recognition of the site through the inclusion of Fairhaven on the National Register of Parks and Gardens. It therefore seeks to demonstrate the historical significance of Fairhaven Lake. The statement outlines key themes to draw out its significance, which are as follows:

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## 2. The Development of Fairhaven as a Coastal Resort.

2.1 Fairhaven is today a well-known coastal suburb, located between the towns of Lytham and St. Anne's as shown on plan (Appendix 1). It has a unique history, originally designed as an 'up-market' planned resort, envisaged as containing extensive residential development complete with a lake, recreational facilities and community provision. In this regard, it follows a pattern that was established along the Fylde Coast following in the footsteps of the planned towns of Fleetwood and later St. Anne's on Sea (Appendix 2), therefore being an important part of an historical association of comprehensively planned coastal resorts. However, whilst following this model of planned resorts, Fairhaven was designed to become a unique place evolved as a result of its particular location and its environmental characteristics, not least taking advantage of its natural coastal features. Fairhaven and its lake are inextricably linked, the latter being seen as an integral and essential element in attracting investors to undertake the development.

2.2 The site of Fairhaven originally formed part of the huge Clifton Estate and the potential for the development of a new coastal resort was enhanced with the introduction of a coastal railway linking Ballam and Lytham with Central Blackpool, in 1863. St. Anne's was founded in 1875 and developed under the control of the Clifton

Estate, which was keen to establish a 'high quality' resort. The completion of Clifton Drive linking Lytham and Ansdell with Squires Gate, in 1879, was significant in the development of St. Anne's and by 1890 it was progressing rapidly. The site, for the resort of Fairhaven, was located close to the Ribble Estuary and offered the potential ambience of a genteel coastal resort located apart from, but close to Lytham and the new town of St. Anne's. The coastal environment for the location of the new resort was 'protected' in part by the natural sea defences of the 'double stanner'; two stone and shingle embankments, naturally formed as parallel banks offering some protection to the dune landscape located behind (Appendix 3).

- 2.3 In 1891, it was Thomas Riley, a Fleetwood businessman, who conceived the vision for a new coastal resort. Riley, aware of the development of St. Anne's, seized the opportunity to propose, plan and then develop the marine resort of Fairhaven. The Clifton Estate welcomed his proposals as these included the construction of a 'sea wall' which would provide a defence for the lands controlled by the Estate. The Clifton Estate had previously attempted to establish sea defences but these had failed. It was Riley, an experienced railway contractor, who had the heavy plant available to create the first sea defences to provide the means of minimising the risk of flooding and importantly, offer the potential for the creation of a marine lake. In July 1892, Riley signed an agreement with the Clifton Estate for a lease for 999 years, of land extending to 264 acres, being located along the coast between Lytham and St. Anne's. This area was divided into two distinct areas on plan, namely 'red' for residential use and 'green' for recreational provision (Appendix 4.) It is more than likely that Riley had been influenced by the development of the Decimus Burton plan for Fleetwood and in particular the Maxwell and Tuke plan for the new resort of St. Anne's (Appendix 2).
- 2.4 Architect Arthur Carter was commissioned to produce a 'master plan' for the new resort to become Fairhaven, which was produced in 1893 (Appendix 5.) The town plan was evocative of the Edwardian era arranged in perimeter blocks linking the principal coastal road, Clifton Drive, with a new Inner Promenade. The layout was spacious in character set to prescribed building lines and the plan would have been sanctioned by the Local Board of Lytham Urban District. The proposed layout followed the design principles established for the extended urban area known as the Lytham Avenues (now a conservation area), approved in the 1880's. The outer stanner was to be extended and formalised into a new outer promenade (a marine drive) with the recreational area to be created between the inner and outer promenades.
- 2.5 The new resort was envisaged as being a genteel 'watering place' offering the virtues of spaciousness, clean air and community facilities including a hotel, recreational provision and affording extensive views of the sea over the estuary. The development was to be marketed over the North West. An illustrative architectural sketch was produced as part of the marketing literature for Thomas Riley in 1893. Riley's architect, Thomas Crook, created a dramatic impression of the new resort of Fairhaven, which envisages the lake and marine drive as being a major focus for the development (Appendix 6.)
- 2.6 The resort of Fairhaven developed from 1893 with the Fairhaven Estate Company being formed in 1895. The Fairhaven Estate was to be developed in two parts, the westerly end, effectively as an extension to St Anne's and the easterly end centred on the lake, which is illustrated on the plan of Arthur Carter (Appendix 5).
- 2.7 The development of Fairhaven was a speculative venture aimed at a particular sector of the property market. To achieve its potential 'high end' status as a genteel coastal 'watering place' it proposed wide streets with villa style development, a promenade with good access by rail and road. The coastal resort was envisaged as becoming a community with commercial facilities, places of worship, recreational facilities and a hotel. It was also aimed at attracting commuters and the wealthy from the industrial areas of Lancashire. The lake was an

integral to the plan for both recreation and scenic effect, as originally envisaged by Thomas Riley. The design concept became a reality (Appendix 17).

- 2.8 It is considered that the development of Fairhaven is of major historical significance as an exceptional example of a planned resort/suburb taking advantage of its coastal location, its environmental potential and the comprehensive nature of its town planning. It has a strong affinity, in this regard with the development of Fleetwood and St. Anne's as planned coastal resorts, but is unique in that its lake - and an emphasis on recreational provision - was a major aspect of its planned development. The potential for the lake was pivotal in the thinking of Thomas Riley in the development of his speculative resort venture. The vision of Riley and those that followed him are significant in the creation and development of Fairhaven, which is, in turn, undoubtedly the result of the social and economic circumstances present at the turn of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

### 3. The Development of Fairhaven Lake: Phase 1

- 3.1 As outlined, the development of the lake and the provision of recreational provision was an extremely important element of the development of the coastal resort of Fairhaven.

"I have more faith in it every time I see it. Within the basin at the Ansdell end will be the Marine Lake and in the marsh – pointing towards St. Anne's - will be laid out by a landscape gardener, probably used for cricket, croquet and tennis"

*Thomas Riley explaining his vision to the Blackpool Times on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1892.*

The area of the lake was based around a small but natural tidal lagoon located behind the outer stanner. The creation of the outer promenade effectively created the original lake as envisaged in the master plan produced for Riley by Arthur Carter in 1893 (Appendix 5). By May 1893, a new sea wall, to become the Outer Promenade, had been completed and work proceeded to formally create the 12 acre lake. It would be filled by way of an elaborate valve system and work was completed by August 1893, with the lake being filled. The lake was thereafter used for extensive sailing and water based recreation.

- 3.2 From a historical perspective, Fairhaven Lake is considered to be particularly significant. It can be regarded as the third oldest marine lake in Britain, depending on definition, following Southport (phase 1) in 1887 and Poole Park in 1890. The first two, however, were designed in response to commissions by forward looking 'town councils' to support the promotion of the visitor market as in Southport or, in the case of Poole, as a town amenity. The uniqueness of Fairhaven lies in the fact that it was privately funded as part of a planned, purpose built speculative development specifically located on the coast and as a centrepiece of promoting the new resort. It was marketed as an exceptional location to invest, develop or visit. The lake and its associated recreational provision, located in an attractive coastal location, was the cornerstone of the development seeking to set it apart from other development schemes of the era. The lake may therefore be considered to be the first marine lake, privately funded as part of a comprehensive resort development.
- 3.3 Following the formation of the lake, boating was a major recreational pastime. By 1895, there was a small boathouse adjoining the lake shore but this was deemed inadequate, In March 1901, the Fairhaven Estate Company commissioned the architects Herbert and William Wade of St Anne's to prepare sketches, which resulted in the creation of a boat house and incorporated dwelling. The resultant pavilion style building is

considered to be of significant architectural merit and similarly unique (Appendix 7). It is of an unusual style being of a square profile with a half-timbered façade with a deeply projecting eaves on brackets. The Welsh Slate clad roof is hipped on four sides and surmounted by a shallow belfry, similarly with a hipped roof. The building is now used as the Ribble Estuary Discovery Centre operated by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Subsequently, a further new boathouse was approved in 1921 to replace earlier structures. This building is a notable example of the prefabricated system of construction designed by the Liverpool Company Isaac Dixon and Co. who specialised in iron and steel buildings. The boathouse is the only known example of this particular type of building (Appendix 7).

- 3.4 The original shape of the lake, dating from 1893, largely followed the natural contours of the land formally reclaimed, following the creation of Outer Promenade. In 1901, it was slightly enlarged due to its shallowness and 'rather austere appearance', an opinion of the Estate Company. This included an enlargement of the easterly end with the provision for swimming, the introduction of an island and the provision of ornamental planting on its banks. The lake was dredged and a new embankment constructed at the easterly end (Appendix 8).
- 3.5 As outlined, recreational provision was an important element in the development of the new resort. In February 1895, the 'Prospectus' of the Fairhaven Estate company suggested that a golf course could be laid out around the lake and within the area to the west. This became a reality later in the year. The golf club subsequently moved in later years, partly due to unforeseen tidal flooding of the course in 1896. The sea defences were strengthened as a result, a pre-requisite of attracting developers to the new resort. The area to the northerly side of the lake has been consistently used for recreational provision. Of significance, in connection with the development of the original golf course, was the development of the club house – now the lakeside café. Its design is attributed to the Architect Henry Littler, who designed many buildings within the Fairhaven estate and subsequently became the first chief architect of Lancashire County Council. Its colonial bungalow form and style, complete with verandah, hipped roof and chimneys is evocative of the period. The building, although extended and altered, is still considered to be a centerpiece of Fairhaven and its restoration represents a major strand of the Master Plan proposals (Appendix 17).
- 3.6 As outlined, the northerly side of the lake was always envisaged for the purposes of recreation. Following the closure of the golf course, alternative proposals were presented, the impetus being probably down to the Clifton Estate Company Secretary J.P Wilson, known to have been a keen sportsman. A plan dating from October 1909 proposed four tennis courts and a bowling green, which were opened in June 1910. Two further courts were opened in February 1911 and still further additions in 1913. By 1914, the site accommodated some 17 courts, a bowling green, croquet lawn and small sports ground.
- 3.7 The development of the lake and its associated grounds, in the way described, may not be considered to represent anything out of the ordinary. However, its ongoing development should be traced back to the nature and purpose of developing Fairhaven as a coastal resort. The importance of the lake to the venture and the importance of recreational provision as a specific amenity cannot be overstated. In this era, recreational provision was seen as being extremely important from a social and cultural perspective. The natural coastal environment thus provided a location for the development of what can be considered as a unique and historically important coastal resort, privately planned, financed and developed without deviating from the original intentions.

#### **4. The creation of the Borough of Lytham St. Anne's**

- 4.1 The initial planning and development of the Fairhaven Estate involved two local authorities; St Anne's and Lytham. The two towns were amalgamated in November 1922 to form one council. Earlier, in 1921, the Fairhaven Estate Company had enquired as to whether St Anne's Council was prepared to purchase and thereafter operate the lake and its grounds. It was finally agreed, in June 1922, that the - soon to be merged councils – would purchase the site for £34,000, the sum to be raised through borrowing. The purchase of the lake and recreational grounds was completed in November 1923.
- 4.2 Of particular note at this juncture was the involvement of James Williamson (1842-1930) the wealthy linoleum manufacturer of Lancaster – later Lord Ashton. His philanthropy is well known throughout Lancashire, often undertaken with anonymity – and included generous donations to hospitals, poor relief schemes and to fund works of great architecture. Lord Ashton struck up an affinity with St. Anne's following a visit and ultimately purchased a property on the seafront. His fondness for the town led him to make several gifts. These included £25,000 for the purchase and improvement of St. Georges Gardens (now Ashton Gardens – Nationally Registered), the funding of its War Memorial, war widows housing and a subsidy for the Corporation Tramway. In 1923 he provided the £34,000 required for the purchase of Fairhaven. His engagement and association with philanthropic deeds in architecture and public parks in Lancaster and St. Anne's is considered to be of significant historical value. In recognition of this generous gift, Fairhaven Lake was renamed the Ashton Marine Park, to be distinguished from Ashton Gardens in St. Anne's, with which Lord Ashton was also a benefactor.
- 4.3 The post First World War period is considered an important period for municipal activity. The local authorities or 'corporations' were utilising new powers conferred through legislation including powers of borrowing to fund worthwhile civic projects. Whilst Fairhaven had, in many ways, fulfilled its original commercial intentions that had resulted in an attractive coastal resort – or suburb – the newly formed Corporation had significant ambitions. Some of these related to more mundane issues such as drainage schemes. In the case of Fairhaven, the basic recreational infrastructure, whilst in place, was considered to have greater potential, to attract the growing residential population and visitors to the coast.
- 4.4 In the case of neighbouring Blackpool, a number of high profile civic schemes were underway including a promenade extension at South Shore and the creation of a very extensive municipal park – Stanley Park. In both cases Blackpool Corporation had commissioned the renowned Landscape and Town Planning practice of TH Mawson and Sons. It was no doubt partly for this reason that in February 1924, the Town Clerk of Lytham St Anne's was asked to approach the firm with a view to producing a scheme for "the complete laying out of the Ashton Marine Park", namely the site at Fairhaven.

#### **5. The Introduction of T.H.Mawson and Sons**

- 5.1 T.H. Mawson and Sons were to become the first international firm of landscape architects and town planners. Thomas Mawson was the first president of the Landscape Institute and president of the Royal Town Planning Institute in 1923. The firm was commissioned overseas, including Canada, USA, France and Greece and produced a prolific number of designs for private commissions throughout the United Kingdom. The 'Blackpool' link was of particular note, but Mawson's had in fact already been commissioned to prepare a scheme for the new cemetery in Lytham St. Anne's prior to the Fairhaven engagement. Mawson also had some knowledge of

the area, designing (for free) the garden for the White Church as his donation to the church building fund (Appendix 17).

- 5.2 In April 1924, Mawson's terms of engagement were set out and subsequently agreed which specified the preparation and presentation of the scheme within a bound copy (Appendix 9) and the supervision of the subsequent scheme as may be approved by the Council. The scheme was presented in August 1924 in the form of a 64 page document. This now represents a rare surviving example, containing a valuable source of information about the design philosophy of Fairhaven as a commission but, also in the way that the firm provided visionary material as to how schemes could be extended in the future.
- 5.3 The scheme had two elements; that covering the existing lake and its immediate landscape and the area to the west and currently undeveloped. In many ways these 'elements' can be seen as two distinct schemes. It is considered, in hindsight, that the second phase was 'aspirational' or 'promotional' highlighting what might be possible in the future. It was the practice of Mawson's to promote a long-term vision of a place that might be achievable in the future. The 'second phase' (Appendix 10) was extensive in nature and was based on a well-conceived formal design. However, the emphasis of the Council and the essential task of Mawson was one of enlarging and upgrading the lake, gardens and landscaping. The second phase was realistically impractical due, in part, to the financial pressures facing the new council including the need to provide a new sewage system and the fact that Council had a sizeable estate of parks and gardens. For a small local authority the Mawson scheme for the Lake was ambitious nonetheless. Following the presentation of the Scheme by Edward Prentice Mawson (son of Thomas) in August 1924, the Town Council asked him to prepare a cost for the 'primary phase', around the existing lake, which was subsequently estimated to be £16,500.
- 5.4 The fact that the second phase was not implemented should not diminish the importance of the work that was designed and implemented under the guiding hand of TH Mawson and Sons. The creation of the enlarged marine lake and surrounding parkland was, in fact, a commission quite unique to the practice, in an exposed coastal location. The scheme included the following key features.

### ***The Lake Enlargement***

The enlargement of the lake was designed for a specific function – to provide for greater recreational capacity. However, the size, shape and form of the lake as proposed, was wholly at the suggestion of Mawson's. Lake design was integral to the broader landscape designs of the practice. Examples include Burslem Park, Stoke on Trent (1894), Haslam Park, Preston (1912), and a comparator in Stanley Park, Blackpool (1926). The practice also included water features for privately funded schemes e.g. at Rivington, for Lord Leverhulme. In the case of Stanley Park, a direct comparison can be made as it is almost identical in size to Fairhaven. It is perhaps no co-incidence that Stanley Park was under construction during the time the Fairhaven scheme was under commission. No doubt this size of lake was seen as being ambitious and impressive in scale and appropriate to the volume of water sports envisaged. An analysis of the Mawson Plan for Fairhaven illustrates the informal shape of the lake and its islands, a naturalistic appearance befitting its estuarine location. The lake was effectively doubled in size from its original 12 acres to its present extent of some 25 acres. The later hard edged banks are perhaps more to do with later engineering expediency rather than its envisaged design. Mawson envisaged 'soft lakeside fringes' with gentle gradients and shingle edging.

- 5.5 In proposing the design of the Stanley Park Lake (1922) TH Mawson and Sons suggest:

“No park of such aptitude is complete without a sheet of water for scenic effect and recreation. Fortunately, the lie of the land in this case is such that it will be easy to obtain, a lake great both in size and beauty and interest in its surroundings”

*T.H. Mawson and Sons report to Blackpool Corporation on its plan for Stanley Park, 1922.*

This statement perhaps aptly summarises the views of the practice of TH Mawson and Sons with regard to the design of lakes. The plan and execution of Fairhaven Lake presents a similar outcome of a ‘natural’ informal shape, undulating shoreline, inlets and islands and complimentary undulating landscape of both a formal and informal composition. This can be expressed more fully by considering the original Mawson Plans and the subsequent implementation. The lake as it is seen today retains Mawson’s Plan almost in its entirety. (Appendix 11). The lake is therefore considered to be an almost unique example of a Mawson design providing a body of water of significant scale in a marine location; its design based on the principles of landscape design promoted by the practice. The Mawson intervention brought a significant enlargement to the original lake and the picturesque qualities now associated with its present form are the direct result of the commission.

### ***Recreational Provision***

- 5.6 Recreational provision was always considered to be a major aspect of the development of the coastal resort of Fairhaven. This resulted in the development of the Lake and its grounds, firstly as a golf course in 1895, but subsequently by the provision of tennis courts, bowling green and croquet from 1910. Fairhaven is considered to be one of the first marine parks, nationally, with boating, commencing in 1893 and regattas from 1900. These ‘up market’ forms of recreation were to set the tone, being complimentary to the type of resort Fairhaven was envisaged as being.

It followed that the plan prepared by T.H. Mawson and Sons proposed a consolidation and increase in recreational provision on the northerly side of the Lake. This included the provision of additional tennis courts, bowling green and pavilion, which remains, a formal quadrangle, a small sports ground, a putting green and miniature golf course. An area for an open air swimming pool was included within the lake at its westerly end and enhancements to the harbour side area close to the café and boat houses (Appendix 17).

Mawson’s suggested that the lake and its recreational surroundings could become the focus for national tournaments. The ‘consolidation’ and extension of the present recreational facilities should be viewed in the context of the social and economic circumstances of the time. The 1920’s witnessed the development of a number of parks, nationally, due to a number of factors. These included significant urban expansion, a government drive to promote personal health and fitness and a major growth in recreational participation. The new recreational provision contained within the Mawson Plan resulted in the Town Council borrowing finance from the Ministry of Health with 20 years being specified for repayment to finance its implementation.

In line with the circumstances of the day, the Mawson plan completed and extended the recreational provision in the spirit of the ‘public park’ in line with other commissions undertaken by the company. This fulfilled the ambitions of the new Town Council, but also meeting the national objective of increasing recreational participation and enhancing public health.

### ***Undulating Landscape***

- 5.7 The creation of the significantly enlarged lake into the site necessitated a remodeling of its surrounding landscape. The informal and picturesque shoreline with promontories, inlet bays and islands resulted in the formalisation of the recreational provision within the park. It allowed for the creation of an informal style of parkland to the southerly side which followed the convention and was an integral part of the TH Mawson philosophy of landscape design.

The north westerly, and southerly sides of the lakeside were completely remodeled. In common with established landscape designers of the Victorian and Edwardian tradition, these informal parts of the park were characterised by an undulating landscape of artificially created mounds, a natural shoreline, curvilinear paths and grouped plantations. This 'naturalistic' approach complemented the form of the lake and its estuarine location. The levels created, soft landscape and plantations were likewise complementary to the coastal environment of the estuary, with extensive views outwards from the Promenade. In turn, the relationship of the lake to the Inner Promenade was enhanced which created views and framed vistas over the lake towards the urban edge of Fairhaven and its interesting skyline (Appendix 17).

In the submission to the Town Council, Mawson's proposed specific plantations and shrubs considered suitable for the coastal environment thereby supporting the desired aesthetic effect, which is illustrated on the plan (Appendix 12) and schedule (Appendix 13).

### ***The Japanese Garden***

- 5.8 One of the principal features of the Mawson Plan was the proposal for the Japanese garden/ lagoon, situated on the southwesterly side. The original plan is reproduced (Appendix 14) and photographs of it at Appendix 15. In addition to the creation of larger lakes, TH Mawson and Sons included smaller features in many commissions that included caves, cascades, waterfalls, artificial cliffs; all responding to the natural landform of the site. These features naturally included rockwork as well as specimen plants and trees. It is known that Mawson worked alongside the famous firm of James Pulham and Son in the creation of these picturesque features and there is strong evidence to suggest that the firm of TH Mawson and Pulham and Son corroborated in the design and creation of this feature at Fairhaven (Appendix 16). The original plans included rock caves but it appears that this part of the scheme was not implemented. However, the vast majority of the Garden was implemented and was a significant feature of the scheme produced by the Practice in what was a unique commission.

This former feature is fondly recollected by many residents who are familiar with the lake and its gardens. There is the strongly held belief that the feature was simply 'covered over' in the mid-late 1960's as it required repair. In doing so, it provided a site for a small pitch and putt course, which has since been removed. This firmly held view seems all the more credible as there is archaeological evidence, in the form of stone protrusions, which are visible and directly coincide in location and appearance to the former garden rockery. Much of the shrubbery that Mawson specified remains in situ. The restoration and repair of this feature is a major element of the Master Plan now prepared for the Fairhaven Lake site.

### ***Implementation of the Mawson Plan***

It has been suggested that TH Mawson and Sons engagement with Fairhaven was somewhat superficial, producing a scheme and then leaving the scene. However, through extensive research it is now known that the practice, for the most part in the form of Edward Prentice Mawson, was engaged throughout its construction and beyond.

In common with the construction of many public park projects, (Preston parks in the Victorian Era and Stanley Park, Blackpool in the 1920's) much of the labour eventually used was provided through a Government scheme – the Unemployment Grants Commission. This proved to be the case with Fairhaven. The 1920's followed the harsh economic realities of the First World War and unemployment remained high, particularly in the traditional working class industrial areas.

The cost of implementing the Mawson plan was by way of borrowing. However, through negotiation, the Commission agreed to pay part of the interest payable on the loan on the proviso that 75% of the labour force came from the unemployed of Preston. This means of construction is of historical significance and is a reminder of the social and economic circumstances of the day. It follows a practice of providing labour to create a project of immense value in the long term.

Edward Prentice personally supervised the works during construction reporting regularly to the Town Council from its commencement in November 1924 until its completion in the spring of 1926. The completed scheme was officially opened on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1926 by Lord Derby.

## **6. Fairhaven in the contemporary context**

- 6.1 The completion of the Mawson Plan resulted in the lake and gardens environment as it is viewed today. Since its completion in 1926, over the intervening time, now approaching 90 years, there have been some inevitable albeit small scale interventions and alterations, the most significant being the 'loss' of the Japanese Garden. However, in essence the foresight of the founding developers and the engagement of the eminent landscape architects TH Mawson and Sons in the 1920's has resulted in a recreational facility that has served its purpose well, secured the orderly and attractive development of Fairhaven as a resort – now suburb – and provides a well-loved local amenity.

The lake and gardens are well managed to a Green Flag status. However, it is known that with its age there has been deterioration in its infrastructure, the effects of weathering, particularly affecting the soft landscape and the loss of some features, notably the Japanese Garden. Some incremental changes have taken place to the café building and other structures' which significantly detracts from the potential quality of a restored park, in line with the ambition of the Mawson Plan. Overall, the restoration proposals would seek to bring back to life the historic quality and character of the place for the benefit of the visiting public. The lake has become silted which, whilst not visible, restricts the potential for water based recreation, that would be commensurate with its overall character and ambience.

Fairhaven has the added significance of its role within a coastal resort of some repute and located in a pivotal position along the Ribble Estuary, designated as a site of international significance for its wildlife. The Estuary and the coastal resorts are seen as playing an important visitor role in the establishment of a regional park based around the Estuary, in which it is envisaged the visitor economy will grow through the development of

eco-tourism. The development of the new sea wall at Fairhaven will fully complement the restoration proposals for Fairhaven, being an integral part of the Master Plan. It is anticipated that the sea defences will form an attractive perimeter to the lake environment and will work in tandem with the restoration proposals. These proposals are also 'historically' important and it is essential that they complement the Mawson landscape and enhance the lake environment. Perhaps the single most important influence for the creation of Fairhaven was the potential to use the natural sea defences as a way of creating a protected, developable site for the new resort. In this way the current proposals to reconstruct the present defences seek the same overall objective of protecting the area, thereby creating a particular historic link. The scheme will offer the prospect of a high quality public realm, providing extensive views and vistas over the lake as envisaged by the original developers and later by TH Mawson and Sons. Some initial ideas include the re- interpretation of the Marine Drive, as envisaged by Thomas Riley, as a boulevard containing observation spaces for the estuary, interpretation facilities, public art and a remodeling of the car park.

Lytham and St. Anne's is renowned for its open spaces and parks which are a fundamental part of its character. The twin towns contain an attractive 'necklace' of open spaces, which are essentially linked together. These include Lytham Hall Park (Registered), Lytham Green, Promenade Gardens (Registered) and Ashton Gardens (Registered). Each park is different in character although complimentary and Fairhaven adds to this grouping being centrally located between them.

## 7. The Approach to Restoration

7.1 The general approach to the restoration and enhancement of Fairhaven Lake and its gardens is outlined in full in the submission, but can be summarised as follows.

- The restoration plans are set out in the form of a Master Plan for the lake, gardens and sea defence proposals as a composite whole. The historical context of the development of the lake and in particular the involvement of TH Mawson and Sons has a major influence on the proposals.
- The proposals seek to reintroduce and reinstate features designed by Mawson including the Japanese Garden/Lagoon, landform and landscape, footpaths, structure planting and lake edging.
- The restoration and conservation of key buildings including the present café, considered to be designed by Henry Littler, to provide a sustainable attraction and centrepiece for the lakeside environment and link in with enhancements to the harbour side.
- Enhancements to the lake itself to enable it to be used to full effect for water based recreation through de-silting.
- Community engagement, in the development of the proposals, implementation and future management. Providing educational activity to promote heritage knowledge of the site. Production of an Interpretation Strategy to enable the significance of the lake, its gardens and its setting to be fully appreciated.
- Conservation Guidelines for design of paths, paving, street furniture, lighting and public art.
- The development of a strategy for the future management of the lake and its gardens.
- Using the restored lake environment and the associated sea defence proposals to promote an understanding of the ecological significance of the site and surroundings. Ensure that the two schemes form a composite whole.
- Enhance the overall visitor experience for the long term.

## 8. The Risks to Heritage

- 8.1 It is considered imperative that the coastal defence works at Fairhaven are implemented as soon as practicable. The existing sea wall has a short life expectancy estimated to be five years. In the absence of improvements the lake environment would be subject to a high risk of sea inundation, flooding the lake and gardens, buildings and wider environment. It is essential that the sea defence proposals are constructed to protect the character of the site and its landscape quality for the long term.
- 8.2 It follows that the sea defence proposals should be designed in such a way as to respect the historic landscape of the site. The new sea wall and promenade would seamlessly integrate the two key elements of the master plan, i.e. the wall and the restored landscape setting of the gardens and their associated architectural features. The new sea defence works, along with the proposals included within the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, will ensure that an integrated approach can be taken in the confidence that the overall investment will significantly enhance the quality of the historic lake and gardens. The design of the scheme will need to reflect the character and quality of Fairhaven and in this regard the choice of finishes, including surface materials, hard and soft landscaping will be important factors to ensure this outcome is achieved.
- 8.3 The lake and gardens have a number of key landscape architectural features that have been lost or altered, many in an unsympathetic way, over the years. If restored, these features would contribute significantly to the character, appreciation and understanding of Fairhaven Lake and its gardens. Without implementing these proposals, this potential would be unfulfilled.
- 8.4 There would be a lost opportunity to enhance the interpretation, appreciation and reputation of the lake.
- 8.5 It is likely that the lake infrastructure would continue to deteriorate over the longer term.

## 9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Fairhaven Lake and its gardens are considered to be of significant historical value. The lake has its origins in the natural estuarial environment of the Ribble Estuary. It was created as an essential and integral part of the speculative private sector venture of creating a new coastal, genteel resort. The lake is a particularly early example of the marine lake and very probably the first to be created in the context of a privately funded development.
- 9.2 Its recreational provision was an essential component of the development of the lake and this remains the case.
- 9.3 The bringing of the lake into public ownership and the involvement of Lord Ashton is significant. The commissioning of TH Mawson and Sons in 1924 resulted in a complete re-modeling of the lake and its surrounding landscape in line with their plan. This commission was quite unique to the Mawson output – a marine lake, quite different to more formal landscapes often associated with the Practice. The design philosophy of the plan remains in evidence resulting in a feature of high aesthetic significance. The Lake forms part of a group of open spaces in Lytham and St Anne's with the majority appearing on the National Register.

- 9.4 The heritage value of Fairhaven has been fully researched and its historic significance is now fully appreciated. During the extensive public engagement undertaken in the preparation of the proposals it is clear that it is a highly valued facility by the local community.
- 9.5 The proposals seek to implement a programme of restoration of key features of architectural merit and the landscape of the lake. A key outcome is to promote an understanding and appreciation of the Lake's very unique history and built and natural heritage and the economic, social and cultural factors that influenced its development. The Master Plan outlines an overall vision but, in doing so, identifies a series of initial priorities.
- 9.6 In the absence of a concerted action to enhance the Lake and Gardens the objectives of fulfilling its considerable potential will be lost with the possibility of a continued decline over the longer term.

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