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"IT'S ALL ABOUT ENSURING THAT GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IS BOTH BEAUTIFUL AND BIODIVERSE"

coming at it as an ecologist because a landscape architect has a bigger picture. We tend to work on 'landscape scale' projects – bigger sites. What I'm interested in is how a development sits within the landscape. I get the most satisfaction out of seeing the finished product and saying, 'that's ours, we did that as part of a team'.

Is there a project that you are particularly proud of or that you would say stands out?

One I would emphasise is the Hellingly Hospital mixed-use scheme for Persimmon Homes, which involved masterplanning aspects and green infrastructure elements.

It was a huge project and included an old hospital, a Victorian park associated with the hospital that needed to be refurbished, a cricket ground that had to be rebuilt and a cricket pavilion. It started in 2008 and is largely complete.

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We provided both the landscape and ecology on that, so there's good design integration; there was also a stakeholder element driven by the parish council.

The developer, the local council, the residents and the local authority were involved. The local authority had a strong view on design. Not all of them do. It works well as a new community, particularly in terms of how all the elements interact and where the play areas are in relation to the built developments.

Another project is a quarry development: Medway Gate, near Rochester in Kent. It is an amazing transformation of somewhere that initially looked like a Mad Max film set. They did a terrific job of building a platform for the residential development, retaining a stunning chalk wall.

I would also pick out two projects in London: Athlone House, where we designed the garden, and Wick Lane, which is an Olympic Legacy project adjacent to the Olympic Park.

Could you talk us through any current projects underway?

The current one I'm excited about is Barnhorn Green, Bexhill in Sussex. It is mixed residential, and there's a big play area and a lot of green infrastructure. That one is going to be very interesting.

Has the role of the landscape architect changed since you started out?

Yes, I think things have improved. It's better understood and taken more seriously. We're not quite so often described as landscapers. There's always a danger of clients cutting corners. In small projects you can get away with a minimal approach to landscaping, but I think there's a better understanding of it now. It has become standard to have a landscape design as part of planning.

Do you see the role of the landscape architect changing in the future?

I think that issues like sustainability and biodiversity initiatives are increasingly important. Landscape architects that focus on design have a long way to go in terms of understanding the ecological side of things.

What do you think are the key challenges facing the industry?

At the moment, I think Brexit is affecting investment decisions, so people are holding off. Everybody would be more active if we had some more certainty. Global warming and climate change are also huge issues.