

Designing London: The Landscape Legacy of the Greater London Council, 40 Years On

Date (Autumn 2026) and Location to be announced

Call for Papers

Deadline for Abstracts: 6 February 2026



Alton Estate Roehampton, LCC

In 1986, the **Greater London Council (GLC)** was abolished by the government of Margaret Thatcher, marking the end of a powerful era in London's metropolitan governance. Yet, four decades later, the GLC's contribution to the design of London's landscapes—its parks, housing developments, civic spaces, and environmental policies—continues to shape the daily life and character of the capital.

This conference marks the **40th anniversary of the GLC's demise** by critically reassessing its role in landscape architecture, urban design, and public policy.

The GLC's in-house architects, planners, and landscape architects fostered a distinct civic design culture—progressive, socially engaged, and ambitious in its scope. This culture was reflected within the Green Belt policy; the two new Metropolitan Parks (Burgess Park and Mile End Park) and Metropolitan Parks generally, such as Hampstead Heath or Crystal Palace Park; the Regional Parks, i.e. Lea Valley Regional Park, Colne Valley Regional Park, and the Havering Country Park. The GLC also proposed new towns, i.e. the aborted Hook, and half-born Thamesmead. In addition, there were expanded towns such as Hastings and Bletchley, as well as the GLC support for New Ash Green. And of course, there were the Thames Barrier flood defences.

Finally in 1982, late in the GLC history, was the appointment of David Goode as Senior Ecologist with an afterlife, post 1986-2000, as the London Ecology Unit with Jacklyn Johnston as its landscape architect. From riverside parks and green corridors to housing landscapes and urban renewal projects, the GLC's legacy remains visible, though often overlooked.

We invite contributions from scholars, practitioners, former employees and policymakers that explore the landscape, social, political, and design legacies of the GLC, and consider how its work resonates in contemporary debates about urban governance, public space, and environmental design.

Themes may include (but are not limited to):

- The GLC's landscape architecture and open space planning
- Parks, green spaces, and recreation in post-war London
- Housing landscapes and the integration of architecture and open space
- The role of the GLC's Architecture, Planning and Development departments
- The politics of design under local government
- Public participation and community landscape projects
- Gender, class, and labour in the GLC's design teams
- Comparisons with other metropolitan authorities in the UK and abroad
- The dismantling of metropolitan governance and its design consequences
- The GLC's environmental and ecological policies
- Archival and oral histories of GLC projects and designers

Submissions:

Please submit an abstract of **250–300 words** and a brief biography (100 words) to j.woudstra@sheffield.ac.uk and robertholden13@aol.com by **6 February 2026**.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **28 February 2026**.

Organised by: **FOLAR** (plus ...) and supported by the **Landscape Foundation**