

## LI visit bolsters Chinese links

### LI POLICY

The Beijing Olympic Park was one of the highlights of a trip to China for LI president Nigel Thorne and former president Kathryn Moore in April.

"The park is larger than 680ha, has a 48m-high hill, extensive forests and wetlands and a 200m waterfall. It is absolutely central to the whole Olympic programme," said Moore. "Every stone of the waterfall has been carefully placed under the direction of Professor Meng Zhaozheng at Beijing Forestry University, vice president of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture [CHSLA], one of the most eminent professors of landscape architecture in the country. The scale of what they are doing out there is really impressive.

"CHSLA expects that this will be the most sustainable Games ever held and hopes that it will contribute to ameliorating pollution locally within Beijing. It's seen as a desperately needed green lung in the city."

Thorne and Moore spent ten days in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong at the invitation of CHSLA; the LI and CHSLA signed a Memorandum of Agreement in 2004. The trip aimed to raise the profile of landscape architecture and British practices with the Chinese Ministry of Construction; to liaise with the British Council and local

representatives of PI-UKChina, of which the LI is a member, on a joint project to map educational and professional qualifications in the built environment; and to meet LI members working in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Nigel Thorne said: "Our key contacts were with major departments of landscape architecture at Beijing Forestry and Tongji Universities in mainland China, and Hong Kong University, where plans are afoot to establish landscape architecture as a separate department."

He added: "Certainly, the audiences there were very aware of environmental issues affecting the world today and the impact that landscape architects can have.

"The profession is incredibly strong in China, but it suffers, as in the rest of the world, from not having enough landscape architects to do the immense amount of work that is on offer. China needs to increase its number of cities by 20 in three years to cope with population growth."

A long-term objective of the trip is to encourage the exchange of students, teaching staff and practitioners between Chinese and British universities.

Moore added: "We have offered a couple of bursaries to students on our accredited courses to attend a landscape architecture summer school in Shanghai. The British Council in Beijing is keen to set up a programme to advertise landscape architecture there to encourage students to come to UK universities and to develop a better exchange programme."

Among the UK companies that the LI met for talks were Atkins, Scott Wilson, Arup and Treasury Holdings.

Thorne and Moore met a large, enthusiastic group of LI members based in Hong Kong on the final leg of their visit. Thorne said: "The reception was an informal question-and-answer session that covered a wide variety of issues, not least of which was the LI connection with the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects. Hopefully, these links will be strengthened significantly in the near future."