

Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust

Neverland Garden, Moat Brae Garden Features, Brief for Artists

1 Introduction

This brief describes the requirements for play area designers and installers to help create play features in the garden at Moat Brae House, Dumfries, as part of a project to develop the house and garden as a Centre for Children's Literature and Storytelling.

The Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust aspires to celebrate the connection of the historic house and garden with the author J M Barrie and his world famous story, Peter Pan, by creating an international visitor attraction.

The Trust's vision is for Moat Brae to be a place which promotes and encourages imagination, creativity and play, for everyone to enjoy, in recognition of its literary, cultural and historical heritage as the birthplace of Peter Pan.

The Trust aims to do this by:

- restoring the structure and fabric of the building, securing its future as a major asset for the local community
- establishing a national centre that will celebrate children's literature and storytelling across all time and all cultures, and
- re-inventing the garden as J M Barrie's Neverland, his 'enchanted land', where the playing of childhood games so inspired him.

More information on the project can be found on the Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust's website.

2 The Moat Brae Garden

Moat Brae House is situated on the north side of the town centre of Dumfries overlooking the river Nith where it makes a sharp meander on its general north-south course. The house lies at the east end of George Street in the Georgian 'new town' at the junction with Irving Street, with its garden – on the slopes of the Moat Brae – dropping steeply to the river on the north. The house and garden have fine views across the river and water meadows to the distant Galloway hills. Dumfries Academy adjoins the site on the south-east.

The garden became J M Barrie's 'enchanted land' in the 1870s when he was a pupil at Dumfries Academy, and famously inspired the creation of the character of Peter Pan, a fact to which he alluded when being awarded the freedom of the burgh in 1924. It extends down a steep slope to a high retaining wall and the Burns Walk beside the river. The original garden would have been laid out when the house was built to plans by Walter Newall in 1823, but evidence shows that it underwent periodic alterations with changes in ownership and use, new buildings and garden fashions. Little of the garden layout remains and that which does relates to both the 19th and earlier 20th century.

In the 19th century the grounds of Moat Brae extended 'upwards of an acre and a half' or about 0.6 hectares. The original garden area has been reduced on the west and some land added on the east, so the garden area owned by PPMBT today is approx. 0.36 hectares.

The garden had become severely neglected when the property was acquired by the Trust in 2009. Since then volunteers have cleared years of accumulated rubbish, weeds and roots of self-seeded shrubs and trees, although the more recently acquired east part is still in an unimproved state. More clearance is still needed, but all trees and bushes of value that are healthy, safe and not weakening the boundary walls will be retained.

3 House and garden proposals

A Phase A programme of emergency works to stabilise the house and make it wind- and water-tight, including new floors and windows, was completed in 2013. The current proposals for the house include full restoration and adaptation to new uses as the Centre for Children's Literature. New single-storey extensions are proposed on the west side for access, lift and visitor facilities (reception, café, shop) and on the east for an education suite.

The Neverland Discovery Garden will be a major attraction of the whole project. The surviving features of the Victorian garden and its natural topography will be used and developed to create a garden that reflects the inspiration on which Barrie drew for Peter Pan. It will incorporate a Neverland-themed adventure trail, with a variety of features to encourage play including play and art installations, set among planting of distinct character areas. Planting will be planned to show the connections between people and plants through identification and interpretation, with the opportunity for actual gardening and rural studies offered on site.

Features of the garden will include:

- a half-circle of lawn on the garden front of the house with the café and educational garden room leading onto it, with accessible upper garden areas
- a circuit of all-weather paths, with stepped sections, in scale with the garden
- assisted access to all garden areas
- a series of Neverland-themed features to explore and interact with through play
- the garden replanted to create spaces in character with the features and to restore sustainable native planting
- discrete areas of special planting on the theme of *Connecting Plants and People*.
- a main outdoor performance space located in front of the house in the lawn half-circle (ie. not associated with 'Home under the Ground', as on plan) and other spaces for story-telling and informal learning
- restored areas of the garden including stonework and planting
- a garden maintenance area with potting shed, growing beds and base for rural studies
- small scale engineering of slopes and safety barriers
- streetscaping of the house frontage with disabled parking.

The garden is shown in the Stage D design plan on page 6 and schematically in the artist's impression on page 1. The design plan and existing site plan are available as PDFs or CAD files if required. Email Peter McGowan Associates, landscape architects, with your request:

pma@ednet.co.uk.

4. Garden features and artist opportunities

The following features in the current garden design plan would benefit from the creative input of an artist or artists either through design and specification or complete design and fabrication. Numbers refer to reference numbers on the plan, which will be subject to design development. Other features are seen to be more suited to the direct involvement of crafts-people or designed by the project landscape architect or play area designer, although there are no fixed divisions and there may be opportunities for artists to influence other features or areas. The setting of artworks in terms of hard and soft landscape elements will remain the responsibility of the project landscape architect, although cooperation in the development of the design between the artist and PLA will be essential. Several features also have potential for involving children in their realisation during the design process in cooperation with the Trust and appointed artist.

2. Fairy-dust gateway – entry to Neverland / possible pay barrier.
4. Fairy bower, within restored garden area, a visualisation of Tinkerbell's bower, appealing to young children, located near café etc.
5. The Wendy house for small children located near café etc.
8. Mermaids' lagoon.
12. The crocodile.
21. Nana's kennel.
23. Former wall-top railing replaced with artist-craftsman designed feature railing, 1.2m high

5 Design principles and requirements

All features are to be derived from J M Barrie's original story (play and novel) of Peter Pan and Wendy and its depiction of Neverland, rather than later adaptations such as the Disney cartoon film.

Literal interpretations of features from Peter Pan and Neverland are not necessarily the best approach; what is sought are elements of scenes, situations or features from the story to which visitors, especially children, can respond imaginatively and have a creative response through play or other interaction.

A main aim should be to add to the attraction of the garden to visitors. For this original and memorable features are needed that will appeal to a wide spectrum of visitors, especially families with children.

The use of natural materials in natural forms – eg. round debarked timber, other types of wood, natural stone – is to be preferred. Environmentally sustainable materials and finishes from local sources are to be used wherever possible. A consistent use of materials and colours (in a restricted palette) in all the main garden features will give a unified feel to the garden. Artists with experience or who prefer to work in these media will be given preference.

The use of colour may be an important aspect of the garden features, however the use of bright primary colours that are typical of play equipment is to be avoided.

A sound system is to be included as part of the garden trail, with different sounds contributing to the character in the area of each feature, eg. ticking sounds at the crocodile and at intervals leading to it. This may be another dimension to be considered by the artist.

Lighting will be provided through the garden for practical and creative purposes, to extend the useful hours of the garden. Again, this may be another dimension to be considered by the artist.

Thought should be given to sensory opportunities to spark the imagination of children, with many opportunities to touch, feel, see and hear play installations. Including the elements fire, air, water and earth are also desirable; ideas may include wind chimes, cause and effect installations and water play. It is planned to have a fire pit near in the Indian Camp' and there will be a water supply through the garden.

Features need to be designed to be highly durable for a very high level of public use, at all times of year and with low maintenance requirements.

The safety of features is paramount. Features will be used for children's play and will need to be rigorously designed, detailed and fabricated to avoid potential causes of injury from falling, trapped limbs and fingers, cuts or grazes from sharp edges or rough finishes, moving parts, instability or other factors. As a rule, the setting of features will be surfaced with safety surfaces such as bark chips, sand, gravel proprietary granulated rubber (to be specified by others), bearing

in mind accessibility around the path system. All features will be subject to health and safety assessment during the design stages and on completion.

6 Implementation

Features may be designed to be supplied by the artist to site, with a component of on-site assembly by the artist, or to be constructed by the main contractor or specialist sub-contractors, including any necessary tradesmen or craftsmen.

7 Artist's fees and budgets

The cost of commissioned artworks will come from the budget for play and other features within the garden, including surfacing, barriers and retaining edges, etc, associated with individual features. The purpose of this brief is to elicit firmer costs for artworks within the overall budget so that a discrete budget can be determined.

8 Submission requirements

Artists are invited to submit statements of interest supported by a brief CV and illustrated examples of their work, with costs, that they consider relevant to the Neverland theme for features and the design principles listed above. Artists may wish to state their interest in named individual features as listed above or others shown in the design plan.

Artists are asked to submit their preferred basis for fees (eg. fixed fee with quotation or percentage of the cost of each feature, or other basis).

Submissions should be received by the Trust by email or post by noon on Monday 23rd November 2015, at the address below.

For any queries about the project and submission, please contact Iain Wilson, Trust Administrator, phone 01387 255549, email iain@peterpanmoatbrae.org. Artists wishing to visit the garden should contact Iain Wilson regarding access; the garden is normally locked.

9 Selection of artist or artists

One or more artists will be selected on the basis of how well their experience and previous work relates to the project and the concept for the Neverland garden, and how they will add to the attraction of the garden to visitors.

It is envisaged that a shortlist of artists will be invited for interview after initial assessment of artist's submissions.

From this list it is envisaged that one or more artists will be invited to work up sketch ideas for one or more garden features and that a small fee will be allocated for this work. Thereafter PPMBT will decide which artist or artists and which designs they wish to proceed with.

The artist and PPMBT will agree the exact extent of the artist's involvement and relevant fees before PPMBT confirm an appointment. This may include one, some or all of the features for which the artist has submitted a statement of interest.

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Moat Brae House and Garden

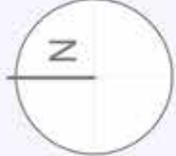
George Street

Dumfries

DG1 1EA

3 November 2015

Garden Design, Stage D



- Footpath circulation - 1.2m general width
- Resin-bound gravel or similar
- Other paved surfaces, natural stone
- Stoops or ramped stoops
- Play surface - sand, bark chips, rubberised safety surface etc
- Pedestrian-priority forecourt with high quality stone paving and street furniture
- Hedge
- Grass lawn; other areas not paved or planted recessed with grass or wild flowers
- Ornamental bedding
- Special planting, including 'Discovery Garden - People & Plants' planting
- Other tree and shrub planting; native and exotic species for different effects at each feature
- Existing vegetation, mainly elm regeneration - to be thinned and coppiced, laurels hard pruned; restocked with native trees
- Existing trees retained with their work; with tree canopy
- Trees and large shrubs to be removed or woodland management (some remain as coppice) incl felling from Arb Survey
- Stoops to be revegetated with native small trees and shrubs
- Proposed boundary fence lines
- Artist craftsman designed wall-top railing
- Other safety rails and handrails not shown
- Rockwork: natural stone or artificial rockforms
- Gabions or other retaining structures
- Realigning or adaptation of internal retaining walls
- Works to Academy retaining wall

Neverland features and play attractions

- 1 House lawn, cafe sitting-out space and garden with flower borders, in the real world before entering Neverland, with distant views, graded to doorways
- 2 Fairy-dust gateway to Neverland and pay barrier
- 3 Surviving features restored - the garden that Barrie may have known.
- 4 Fairy bowler
- 5 The Wendy house
- 6 Gate into Neverland and exit gate
- 7 Lookout point, slide and steps
- 8 Mermaids' lagoon, with rockwork
- 9 Performance space with accessible upper level viewing terrace and assisted path access to performance level
- 10 'Home under the Ground' beneath the performance space
- 11 Pirate ship
- 12 The crocodile (and plunk)
- 13 Discovery grove
- 14 Indian camp
- 15 Pirates' cave
- 16 Skull rock
- 17 Exotic plant glade
- 18 Tree-based activity including walkway, tree-house, rope swing, zip wire to Pirate ship, nestling etc, using existing trees and wood from essential tree work
- 19 Fairy hut
- 20 Play lawn and teaching beds
- 21 Nana's kennel
- 22 Maintenance yard with polytunnel, equipment shed, raised growing beds, growing area, composting bins, activity space and hardstanding
- 23 Former walk-top railing replaced with artist-craftsman designed feature railing

Peter Pan Moat Braab Trust
Neverland Garden
 Stage D Garden Design
 Peter McGowan Associates with LDN Architects
 12 June 2014
 Scale - 1:200 @ A1 (1:400 @ A3)
 Dwg. no. 234.4.1 Rev C