

DREAMLAND'S ROLLERCOASTER RIDE



From opening as a restaurant and dance hall in 1863, to finally closing – though not for good – in 2005, it's been quite a ride for Margate's Dreamland. The first phase of the development is now complete and the pleasure park is pulling in punters again. This is, project designers, HemingwayDesign's personal take on the journey so far...

THE UK'S ORIGINAL PLEASURE PARK



Described as the heartbeat of Margate, Dreamland was one of the UK's best-loved amusement parks and at one time listed within the UK's top ten visitor attractions. Dreamland's second coming is one of the UK's most high-profile 21st century regeneration schemes.

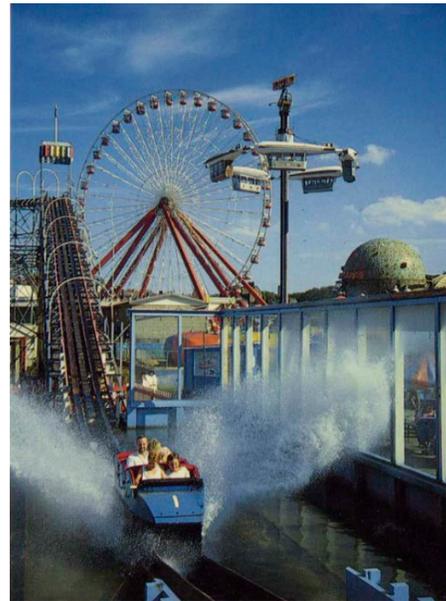
The site opened in 1870 as 'Hall-By-The-Sea', before changing its name to Dreamland in 1920, it is the oldest amusement park in the United Kingdom. Fast forward to 2003, when a plan to close the park and build housing on the site triggered a 'Save Dreamland' campaign. The Dreamland Trust emerged from the campaign, and worked with partners to secure £18m of Heritage Lottery and public funding to restore Dreamland and its jewels: the Grade II-listed Scenic Railway, Grade II-listed cinema complex and Grade II-listed menagerie cages.

In 2008 a suspected arson attack destroyed approximately 25% of The Scenic Railway, including the middle section of the track, the station and the workshop containing the distinctive trains. The disaster did not deter the Save Dreamland Campaign, who pressed ahead with its fight for the future of the site.

In a bold move, Thanet District Council compulsorily-purchased the site in September 2013 and work began in 2014 to restore the iconic Scenic Railway and external park landscape as well as breathing new life into the lower ground floor of the cinema building.

History

1863 Railway catering contractor Spiers and Pond opens a restaurant and dance hall in the unused railway terminus on the Mere causeway – the 'Hall by the Sea'



1870 Bought by the Reeve family for £3,750. Thomas Dalby Reeve is Mayor of Margate and goes into partnership with circus entrepreneur George Sanger

1875 Reeve dies and Sanger becomes the sole proprietor of the Hall and the land behind it, turning it into pleasure gardens, with sideshows and a menagerie in cages that are now Grade II listed

1893 A large skating rink is built. Shortly after this, the park gains some notoriety as the site of the murder of a prostitute by the local circus strong man

1919 Pleasure Gardens is bought for £40,000 by John Henry Iles who had already set up theme parks all over the world, including in Cairo, Berlin, Petrograd and Pittsburgh

1921 Inspired by Coney Island, a Scenic Railway rollercoaster is built and Dreamland opens, with 500,000 visitors in the first three months

1935 A 2,300-seat cinema opens – one of the very first in the art-deco style adopted by the Odeon cinemas

1939 - 1946 Dreamland is requisitioned by the Government for the duration of the war

Sixties This period proves to be Dreamland's heyday with 2.5million visitors a year

Seventies The Advent of cheap package holiday sees dramatic decline in visitors to Margate and the fortunes of Dreamland

1981 Becomes Benbom Brothers White Knuckle Theme Park

1990 Becomes Dreamland again

2002 Scenic Railway gets Grade II listing

2005 Closes. Sold to Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company for £20m

2007 Cinema Closes

2008 Fire destroys part of the Scenic Railway

2009 The Dreamland Trust gets a £3m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, £3.7m from the Department for Culture, Media, Sport and £4m from Thanet District Council respectively, to restore the Scenic Railway and amusement park site

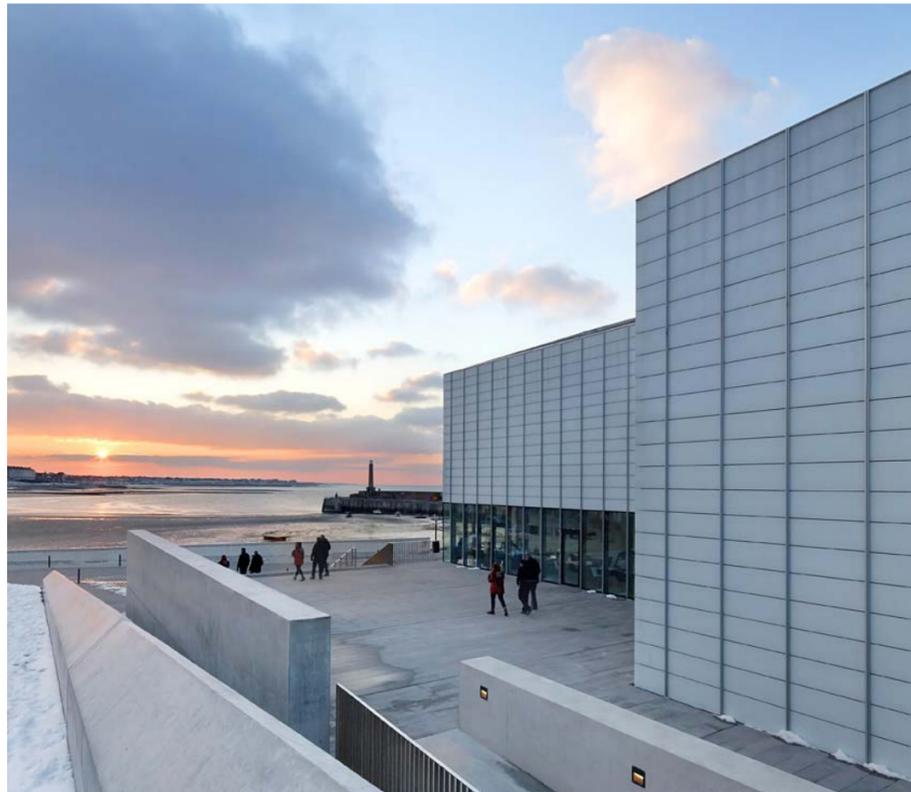
2011 HemingwayDesign is appointed to work on the Dreamland redevelopment

September 2013 Thanet District Council take ownership

2015 Dreamland 'Phase 1' opens with 17 rides including a fully functioning Scenic Railway



SOCIAL CONTEXT: THE TURNER EFFECT & MARGATE BEFORE DREAMLAND



There were a number of things that encouraged HemingwayDesign to bid for this project and one was Margate; a seaside town that, at the time, was often depicted by the press as a bit of a 'basket case' but was seeing a positive form of gentrification led by an arts community.

It was absolutely clear to us that there was something very interesting going on in terms of place-making and it was the kind of place-making that we as a business adore - the coming together of people. Young people, often creative and without vast sums of money, who were heading down to Margate and seeing opportunity, affordable accommodation, cheap spaces to open up their businesses and their galleries. There was a groundswell of people making things happen.

The arrival of a cultural institution, Turner Contemporary, had helped to 'gild' brand Margate. People were moving from their one bedroom flats in London to a four bedroom house by the sea and sandy beaches.

Margate was becoming as a place full of exciting opportunities. We knew Dreamland reopening would be another milestone that would help this great British seaside town rediscover its mojo and that in ten years time it wouldn't be a failed Portas High Street - but a cool town.



HEMINGWAYDESIGN'S VISION FOR DREAMLAND



HemingwayDesign were appointed in by The Dreamland Trust in 2011 to develop a vision, create a brand, tone of voice, and lead on the full design proposition for a re-imagined Dreamland. After many workshops with the local community, and months of meetings Thanet Council and the Dreamland Trust this is the vision that became embedded in the project:

Dreamland Margate will be the world's first amusement park of thrilling historic rides and classic side shows, eateries and evocative spaces, set within a landscape capable of hosting national festivals, major events and visiting attractions.

The new Dreamland will be a visual and sensual delight, created by forward-thinkers and creative designers - a concept not only evocative of Dreamland's past, but with an eye firmly on the future.

From the large-scale Historic Rides Collection carefully sourced from leading amusement parks in the British Isles, to classic stalls, amusement park artefacts and all manner of fairground paraphernalia, there will be a bringing-together of evocative content that will create a fully immersive and timeless environment for generations to come.

Dreamland will be a brand new, quintessentially British visitor attraction with an appeal that touches not only families, but also lovers of arts, heritage-hunters and the culturally-curious - or those who are simply seeing a great day out.

We aim to excite and thrill new audiences as well as evoke memories in those for whom the original Dreamland held a vital place in their heart.

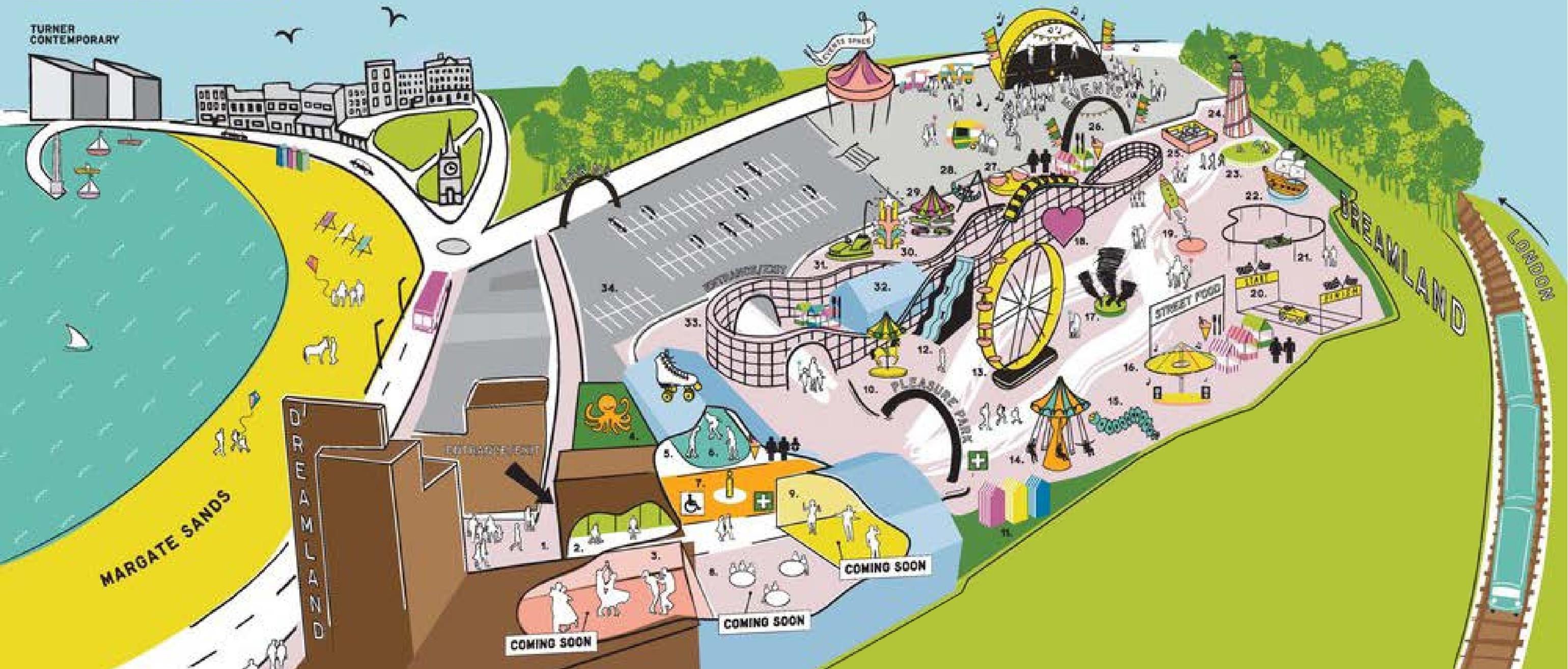
SCOPE OF WORK

As project designers HemingwayDesign led on all public facing touch points including masterplanning, the repurposing of rides, interior design and furniture specification, bespoke fixtures and fittings, artistic interventions, brand and graphic, marketing and merchandise.

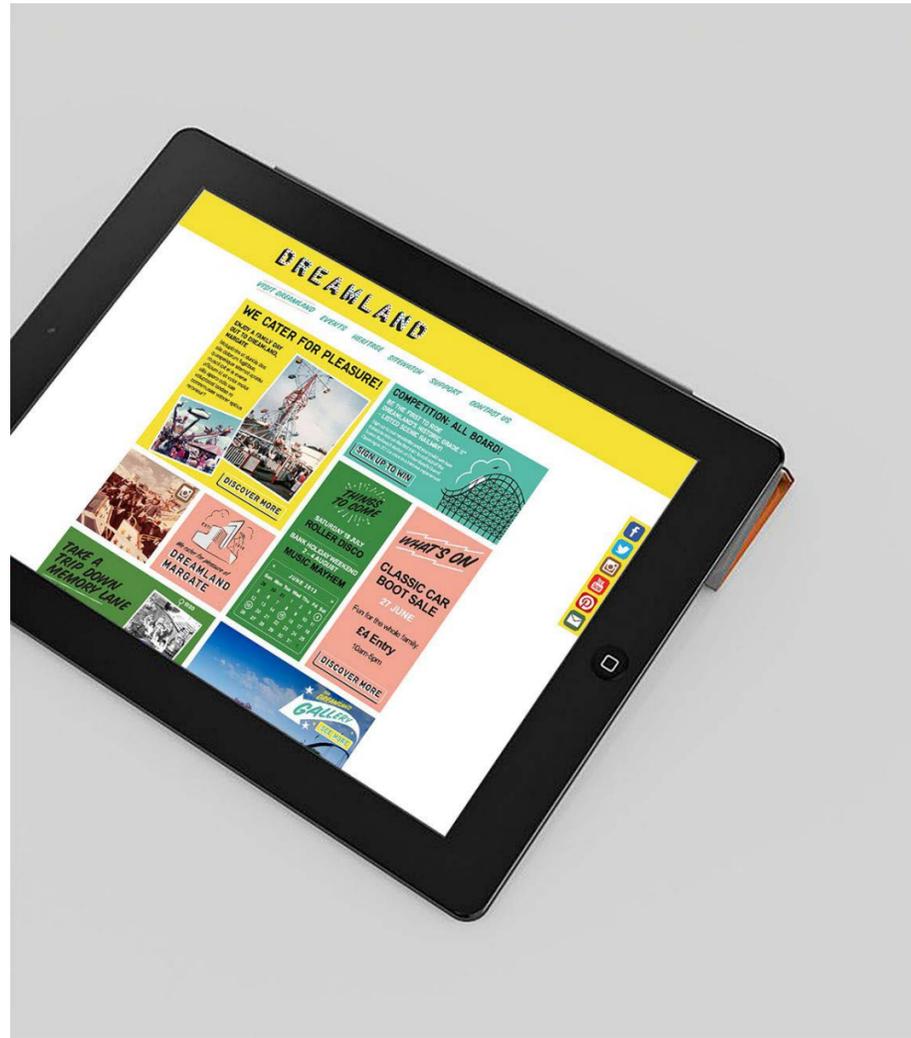
This was delivered alongside a team of consultants including Guy Holloway, Ray Hole Architects and M&C Saatchi amongst others.

With the total project budget for the whole Phase 1 development set at £18million (including 17 rides,

the refurbishment of the buildings, landscape and marketing spend etc) equalling the cost of one new blockbuster ride at Alton Towers; thrift and up-cycling was a core design principle - there was no other way of delivering this project!



BRAND & IDENTITY



We wanted the brand and tone of voice to feel cheeky; for it to feel subversive, a bit risqué, a tad edgy and yet appeal to all generations as well as feeling slightly homespun. It had to represent the British seaside heritage with a wit that felt relevant and of the now.

The Dreamland identity we created was indeed a dream to work with! Our concept design for the website, developed by Be Wonderful, has proved the brands exciting and flexible credentials with a platform that sells Dreamland as a fun filled and cool entertainment venue.

"The park's branding, signage and uniforms are defined by an off-sherbet colour palette of turquoise- and lime-greens, electric yellow and antique pink that could easily be the stripes on a typical English 'stick of rock candy.' A design that has a timeless aesthetic you can't quite place."

Giovanna Dunmall, Wallpaper



A key part of the vision was the up-cycling of salvaged artefacts and repurposing of defunct rides to create artistic interventions and attractions within the internal spaces and park landscape.

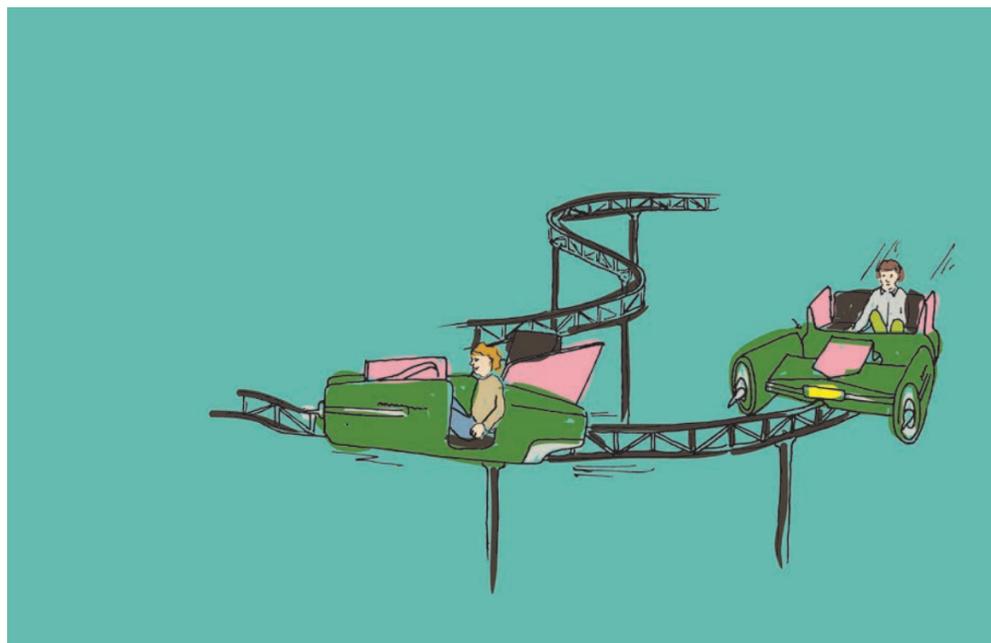
Flotsam and jetsam was gathered – often from eBay or private collectors including Blackpool Pleasure Beach – and transformed in a Margate workshop by an army local creative artists, engineers and skilled trades people know as the 'Dreammakers'.

Useable original Scenic Railway timbers were reclaimed and upcycled into park furniture and 'Scenic Salvage' merchandise including jewellery and even handbags. The flotsam and jetsam became cohesive and beautifully designed objects that captured the very soul of Margate and Dreamland's historic story.



UP-CYCLING

RIDES NARRATIVE



Dreamland charts the evolution of seaside amusement with a ride collection made up of large-scale historic rides carefully restored in the British Isles, to sensitively re-imagined interpretations of contemporary rides fitting of Dreamland's heritage.

One of the re-imagined contemporary rides is the spinning cups. Every fairground has spinning cups – but here we've turned them into a Wedgwood teas-set. We commissioned a Wedgwood artist from Stoke, who normally draws Greek goddesses, to illustrate the history of youth culture – from Teddy Boy to Mod to Punk to New Romantic and Raver – all in Wedgwood style. Another is the Counterculture Caterpillar, where we commissioned John Shuttleworth to create a medley of subverted pop songs on his bossa nova organ – played out against a backdrop badly airbrushed portraits of pop stars. Like so many things here it's going to work on many levels. There are so many things that will make you laugh.

MERCHANDISE



"The Dreamland Emporium is bristling with superior souvenirs, many designed by local artists, such as Zoe Murphy and Keith Brymer Jones. There's also retro furniture from Junk Deluxe, including decorative items crafted from pieces of the original scenic railway."

Marina O'Loughlin, Guardian



STAFF & UNIFORM

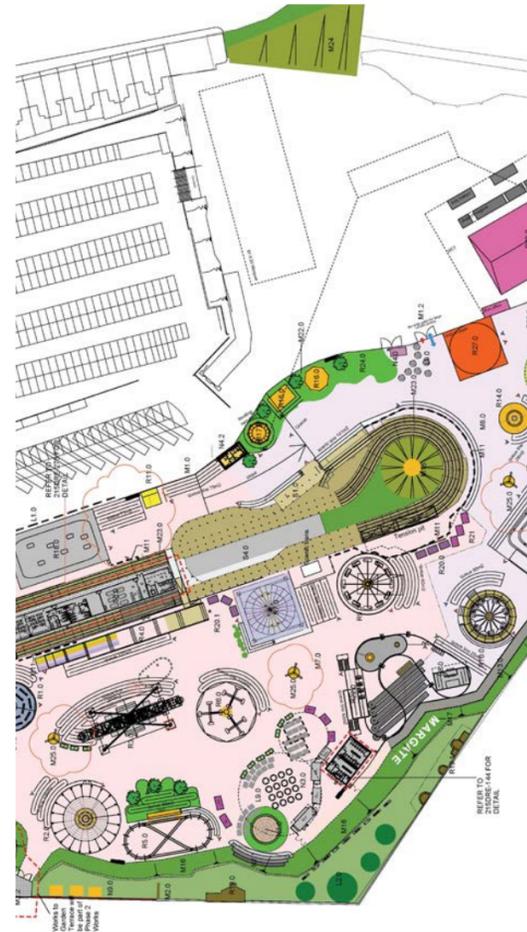


"The staff, in their vintage Levi's 501s, denim overalls and jaunty 1950s-style bandanas – are bursting with sugar-rush enthusiasm. Their T-shirts bellow fairground-speak: "Scream if you want to go faster", "Hands in the air", "We cater for pleasure", a riff on the original strapline, Pleasure Without Measure. My first teenage, um, stirrings took place on the waltzers, and I'm delighted to see that the long-haired, tattooed ride-wrangler aesthetic is still in place, even if it's softened by the seaside rock palette."

Marina O'Loughlin, Guardian

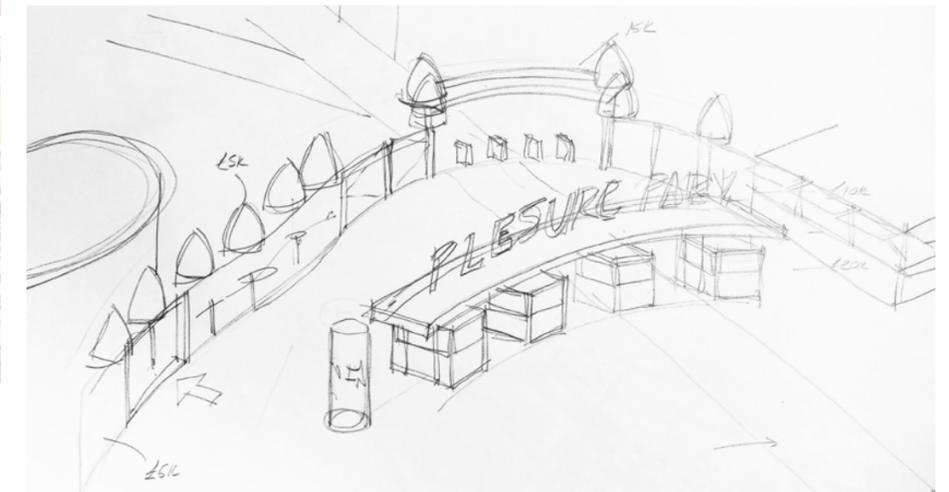


MASTERPLANNING & LANDSCAPE



HemingwayDesign worked alongside the appointed architects to deliver a cohesive and flexible site-plan that produced a landscape, interspersed with up-cycled artistic interventions that has allowed Dreamland to become so much more than just an amusement park.

The aim was to create a space that would encourage visitors to linger, take in the ambience and history and enjoy the food, drink, walkabout entertainers, live performances and sideshows as well as the was capable of hosting private parties, weddings and corporate events to nationally significant festivals.



HemingwayDesign developed the vision / concept and delivered the design spec including space planning, bespoke fixtures and fittings, materials and furniture for all internal spaces.

"The roller disco has its original ceiling, and the booths alongside it are decked in original Formica samples unearthed in a warehouse in Blackpool. Other British coastal towns have sent across their giant fibreglass clowns and Viking-style boat-swings. At the back of a giant ballroom, they have uncovered an original 1920s mural of some dogs, doing the things dogs did in that innocent time: wearing clothes, walking on two legs, chatting."

Zoe Williams. Guardian

"You're immediately in the heart of the hubbub: a glorious tin-tiled ceiling left in decoratively peeling state soars over roller-disco, bar, acres of neon – including a wonderful artwork by Ramsgate-based artist Rachel Wilberforce – and banks of original pinball machines."

Marina O'Loughlin, Guardian

INTERIOR



"DREAMLAND WALKS THE TIGHTROPE BETWEEN WORK OF ART AND FUNFAIR: AN AMUSEMENT PARK GENUINELY UNLIKE ANYTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN. INCREDIBLE IN SCALE, IN SCOPE, IN DETAIL, IN VISION, IN THE RADICAL PURSUITS OF FUN: IT'S AWE-INSPIRING."

Zoe Williams. Guardian

"THE WHOLE THING HAS BEEN DONE SO BRILLIANTLY YOU FEEL SAD YOU DON'T LIVE NEXT DOOR AND COULD HANG OUT THERE EVERY SATURDAY AFTERNOON."

Sarah Powell, Huffington Post

WHAT THEY SAY

"DESIGN IS A HUGE PART OF IT: YOU DON'T NEED TO NOTICE THAT THE TEACUPS RIDE HAS BEEN PAINTED BY A WEDGEWOOD ARTIST IN CLASSIC JASPERWARE STYLE - BUT WITH CULTURAL ICONS FROM MODS AND ROCKERS TO NEW ROMANTICS, OR THAT THE ORIGINAL DODGEMS HAVE BEEN REPAINTED WITH DAVID BOWIE AND CHUCK BERRY. BUT IF YOU DO, IT ADDS AN EXTRA LAYER OF PLEASURE."

Marina O'Loughlin, Guardian

"MIXTURE OF RAMSHACKLE AND HIP IS THE PERFECT REFLECTION OF MARGATE ITSELF, WHICH IS UNDERGOING AN INTOXICATING CULTURAL REVIVAL."

Tom Jonze, Guardian

PRESS COVERAGE



THE FUTURE

This has been a monumental restoration project but it's just the start. After 4 years of working on the Dreamland Margate development, after so many false starts and times when we thought that some of the enormous obstacles that presented themselves could in fact be insurmountable, the first phase of this amazing community instigated project opened in June 2015.

Dreamland Phase 1 is a work in progress. It has been one of HemingwayDesign's most rewarding and challenging projects (to say the least) but it is far from the finished article. Over the coming months and years we hope much more of HemingwayDesign's original vision will become embedded in the DNA of the operators and realised in the exciting wider Pleasure Park spaces that will be redeveloped in future phases.

The arts instigated renaissance of Margate as a now world renowned holiday / tourist destination has attracted record visitor numbers to the town. Margate's creative community is thriving with independent galleries, shops, bars and restaurants opening regularly. The lure of Turner Contemporary continues to gain momentum and now the town's beloved Dreamland 'Pleasure Park' is open again after a 14 year closure with plans afoot to programme large scale cultural events attracting the crowds during the low season... Margate is walking with a swagger!

As Dreamland sees the transition from a grass roots project into a sustainable business and we urge you to go enjoy Phase 1 and contribute to this great regeneration story - and help refill the community coffers.



Margate doesn't take itself too seriously. There is so much fun going on; it's political, it's sparkling and it's witty and it's also beginning to get international media attention - how the hell is Margate in the top five places to visit this year according to Lonely Planet? It's just crazy, but it's happening!

DREAMLAND AND MARGATE HAVE ACHIEVED UNPRECEDENTED MEDIA COVERAGE DURING 2015. FROM THE PREVIEW AND OPENING DAY ALONE THE PROJECT ACHIEVED MEDIA COVERAGE WITH A VALUE OF £11.1M.







HEMINGWAY DESIGN.

We design things.

FURTHER READING

houseofhemingway.co.uk/hemingway-design/projects/dreamland

dreamland.co.uk

CONTACT HEMINGWAYDESIGN

EMAIL

info@hemingwaydesign.co.uk

TEL

020 8903 1074

VISIT

15 Wembley Park Drive
Wembley
Middlesex
HA9 8HD



HemingwayDesign



@HemingwayDesign



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