



Reservoirs



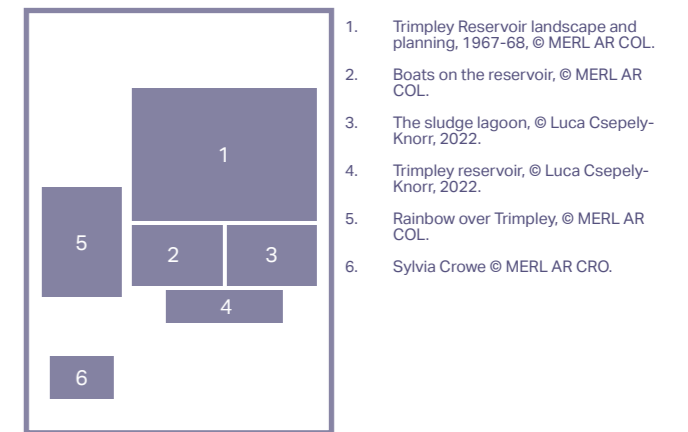
Reservoirs have been changing the landscapes of Britain since the early part of the 19th century, with an accelerating demand for water and water infrastructure in the 20th century. By the end of the Second World War, a number of companies - over 1,000 in England and Wales, and an additional 210 in Scotland - were involved in providing water. Legislation, such as

the 1945 Water Act in England and Wales, the 1946 Water (Scotland) Act and later the 1963 Water Resources Act in England and Wales, the 1967 Water (Scotland) Act and the 1973 Water Act, created a centralised system of Regional Water Boards and Water Authorities (13 in Scotland and 10 in England and Wales) responsible for supplying water and developing

new resources. With similarities to the 1957 Electricity Act, the 1973 Water Act also created a duty to promote 'amenity' by the Regional Water Authorities, and landscape architects became key part of the design teams for reservoirs.

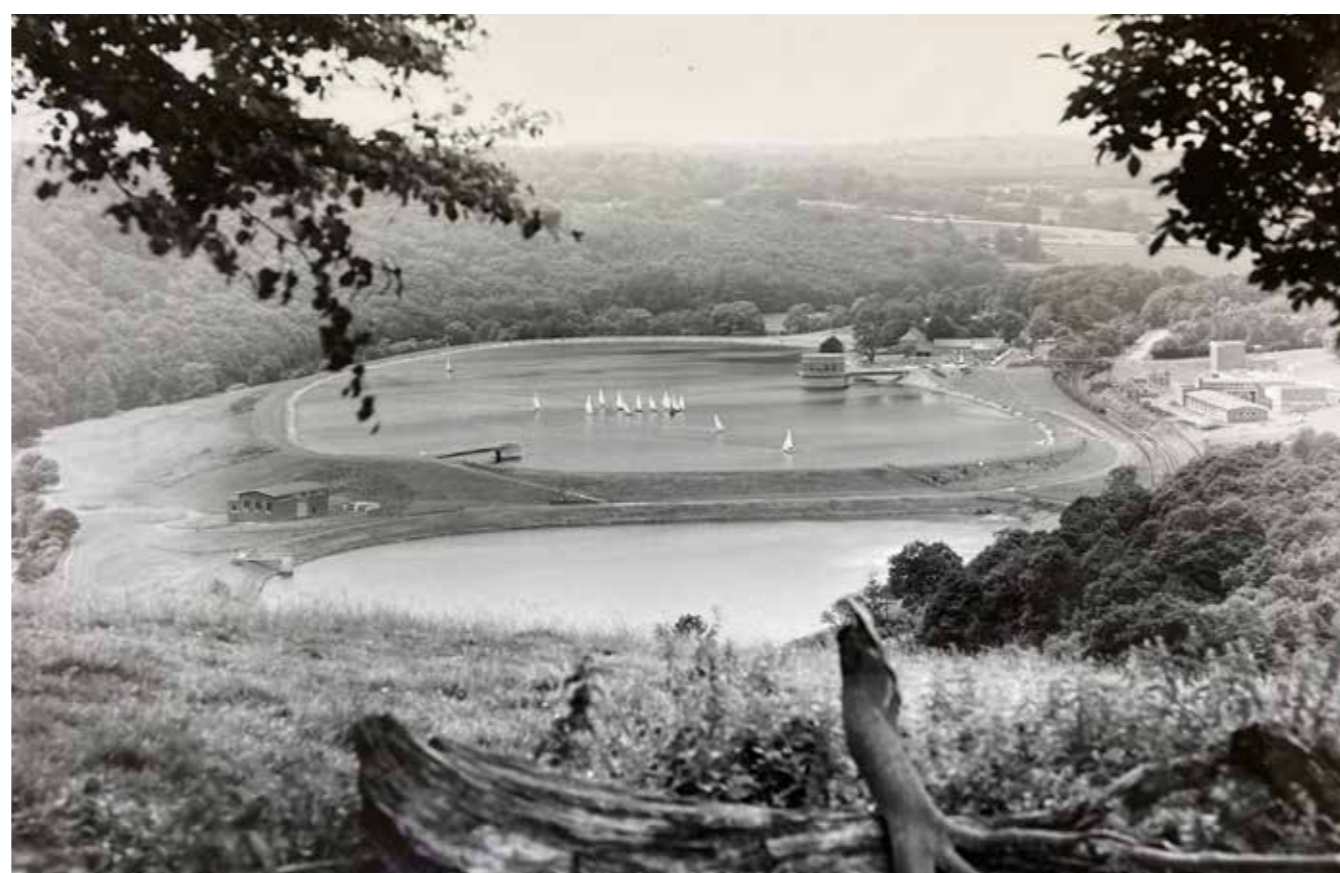
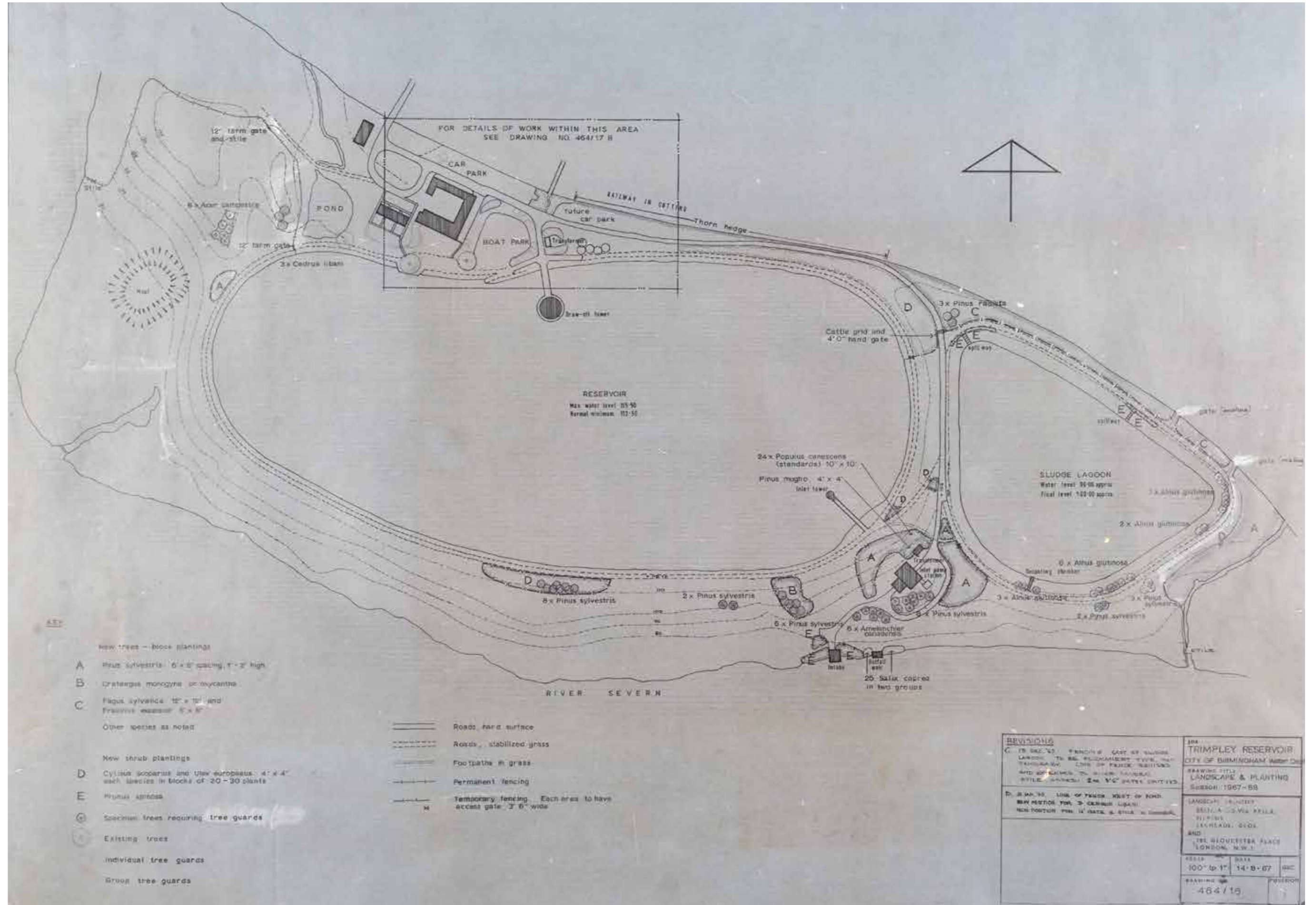
A Landscape First

TRIMPLEY, WEST MIDLANDS



The first reservoir where a landscape architect was involved in the design was Trimpley, commissioned by the Birmingham Water Board, and municipally owned water supplier. Colvin here mastered a challenging situation as the reservoir posed 'a threat to the existing calm and rural character' of the surrounding area. As she explained in her book, *Land and Landscape*, the aim was that 'new forms should be linked to the surrounding land-use pattern, by connecting new plantations and pasture with those existing beyond the site.'

Colvin achieved this with strategic tree planting, and input into the design of the engineered embankments. While parts of the new landscape were used for sheep grazing, options for rural recreation and access to the general public was also provided through a series of paths on the top of the embankment to create views down to the river and across the reservoir as well as through opportunities for fishing and boating. At a lower level, separate from the reservoir, she created a small nature reserve by damming a stream and preserving the existing trees.



DAME SYLVIA CROWE



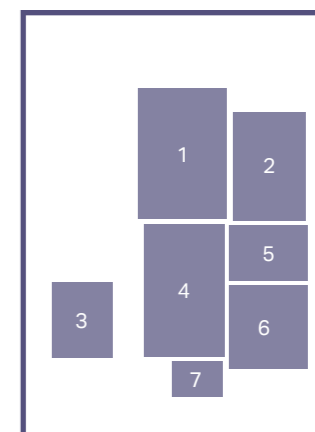
Together with Brenda Colvin, Sylvia Crowe (1901- 1997) was another leading force in the development of the changing landscapes and landscape profession in Britain. Her books, including *Tomorrow's Landscape* (1956), *The Landscape of Power* (1958), and *The Landscape of Roads* (1960), were all key in providing practical guidelines for designers involved in various aspects of landscape architecture and countryside planning. She was the first landscape architect to be involved in the work of the Forestry Commission, was second female

president of the Institute of Landscape Architects, acting President of IFLA, and Chairman of Tree Council. She was lead theorist in designing nuclear power stations completing iconic designs such as Trawsfynydd in North Wales, the first power station to be built in a National Park, or Wylfa on the island of Anglesey. Crowe also designed numerous reservoirs, including Rutland Water in Leicestershire in 1968. At the time of its completion time, it was the largest man-made reservoir in Europe. As with Colvin at Trimpley, Crowe also aimed to create a

simple landscape that could merge into the surrounding countryside. As Wendy Powell, long term collaborator of Crowe remembered, 'On one occasion, Crowe asked friends who had visited Rutland Water what they thought of the landscape treatment there; they are understood to have replied: "what landscape treatment, we thought it was all natural!" Crowe was delighted as she believed this was the greatest compliment that could be paid to a landscape architect'.

Recreational Potential

BRENIG, NORTH WALES



1. Brenig Dam, proposed shape of the mount. © MERL, UK 2363.
2. Dam and woodland. © Luca Cuspiely-Knox.
3. Instructions for volunteers. © MERL, AR COL.
4. Before and after views of the reservoir. © MERL, AR COL.
5. Cover of brochure. © MERL, AR COL.
6. Land use plan. © MERL, AR COL.
7. Photo of conifer planting. © MERL, AR COL.

While Trimpley had certain amenity opportunities, another of Colvin & Moggridge's reservoir projects designed by Hal Moggridge, was a trailblazer in its approach to recreation.

Starting from 1970, Brenig reservoir in North Wales was created on high moorland landscape as part of a comprehensive, large-scale scheme comprising of four lakes and the River Dee which necessitated a holistic approach to the relationship between the river and the reservoirs. The land use plan, based on the Planning Authority's policy, considered various recreational opportunities. In his maiden speech to the House of Lords, the then Prince of Wales (now King Charles III) quoted Brenig's landscape report, stating that it 'marked one of the first occasions in the history of reservoir construction that recreational potential had been written into the primary plan' and as he noted, it 'was a great step forward ... [which] should become common practice'.

As Hal Moggridge described, 'Visitors come to Brenig to experience a remote landscape, where man's influence is seen as secondary to nature. The landscape task was to create this illusion in a place which is, in truth, a major engineering site, larger in scale than the subtle hill country around it. Therefore, the principal aim of restoration was to recreate natural textures, shapes and scale across the surface of the engineering works'. In line with this principle, the south-west shore of the reservoir and its long-established coniferous forests were chosen for an area for most recreational facilities, while the eastern shore was kept for walking. The more remote, northern areas with heather moorlands and wetlands of exceptional botanical interest were identified for conservation and to increase wildlife potential, including a new nature reserve in the Water Authority's ownership. During the works in this area, compelling archaeological sites were discovered, that were restored as part of the landscape works for visitors to enjoy.

