

Number One Portsmouth Portsmouth, Hampshire Osborne

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Temporary

Project overview

The building project is valued at £36 million. It will take 92 weeks to construct the 576 bed, 23 storey student accommodation building. The site is located in central Portsmouth adjacent to the town centre and train station. This urban setting is flanked by a busy road acting as a main bus route into the town centre and train station. It is expected the maximum number of operatives will not exceed 150 per day. The footprint of the building occupies 95% of the total land; horizontal space is a premium.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

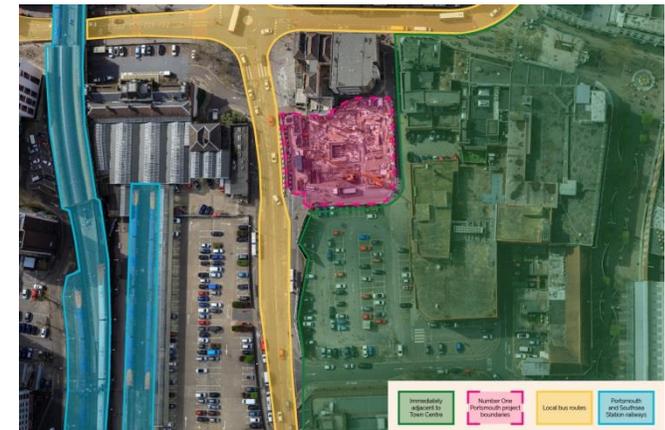
When we took possession of the site the existing building had been demolished. What remained was recycled crush material with no visible ecology present.

Were there any specific reasons that led to this project?

This biodiversity enhancement project is not a requirement of BREEAM or planning conditions.

We aimed to improve the biodiversity of this low ecological valued site, utilising the project's temporary structures to benefit the local community and site workers.

This idea has been developed to exploit the nearby busy road and bus route. Our hoarding runs both sides of this road and has been festooned with biodiversity enhancements and threatened species information posters to create a Biodiversity Engagement Zone to inspire and engage the passing public. This zone will leave a biodiversity educational legacy that will continue far beyond our construction period.



Top : Aerial view of site. Pink: Number One Portsmouth, Yellow: bus route, Blue: Portsmouth & Southsea Train Station, Green: adjacent town centre. **Bottom**: Taking advantage of available space with Meadow Wildflower and Lowland Heath planters on top of our hoarding

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Horizontal ground space is limited on the project hence our biodiversity enhancements are mounted to our hoarding. The enhancements are focused on supporting threatened species and habitats, whilst complimenting the Biodiversity Engagement Zone. They consist of planters containing pollinators including Wildflower Meadow, Ivy Green Walls and Bug and Bee Hotels. All installations are fed using organic fertiliser reusing UK chicken farm waste; leaving visiting bees unaffected.

It became apparent from the Hampshire County Council's Biodiversity Action Plan that Lowland Heath is a declining priority habitat due to harmful agricultural and land management practices. We have highlighted the plight of Lowland Heath by recreating this habitat using Gorse and Bell Heather in planters and locating informative posters below visible to the public; this forms part of the Biodiversity Engagement Zone. The solutions put in place are practical, easy to maintain and sustainable due to their low cost, utilisation of site waste materials and drought resistant planting.

Through a combination of Ivy Green Wall and planters and an additional 13m² of habitat has been created on a very constricted site, a valuable gain in an urban area. We were delighted to find Bees, Beetles, Hover Flies, Spiders and Ants occupying the newly created habitats. Site workers and the public are often spotted reading the posters. They have been a biodiversity conversation starter and have inspired some to carry out biodiversity enhancement in their own gardens.

The simple solutions are easily replicable as they are low cost by using site waste materials that are readily available and utilise little horizontal spaces so would also work on confined sites.

The installations are managed by a Biodiversity Champion. Plans have already been made to donate the installations at the end of the project to local schools and a habitat area adjacent to the Portsmouth and Southsea Station.



Ivy Green Wall on gates, Wild Meadow Flower Planter, Bee & Bug Hotels & Hardhat Planter, Spider on our Pollinator Plants.

How would you best describe the project?

Enhancement

Further information

The Bee and Bug Hotels and Planters were built reusing site waste materials such as FSC timber shuttering and cardboard packaging.

The Bee and Bug Hotels are mounted on the ivy green hoarding benefiting from both sun and shade. The Ivy Green Wall is mounted on the gates providing additional privacy for the site whilst reducing noise and dust and adding greenery for the local community. Both are also inside the welfare hoarding for site staff to enjoy whilst on a break; observing the insect and bird activity. The Meadow Wildflower and Lowland Heath planters are on top of the hoarding to take advantage of unutilised space and full sun conditions.

The installations are frequently visited by a variety of fauna, demonstrating we have met our aim to enhance local biodiversity.

The project will leave a biodiversity educational legacy. During the project's life cycle, many local residents and commuters would have seen the installation and read our posters. School visits have been conducted and pupils have made their own Bee and Bug Hotels by reusing our site waste materials. As a result they will understand the plight of Solitary Bees, insects and Hampshire County Council's rare habitats and species and how they can be supported and protected.

The BIG Biodiversity Challenge has helped focus the project to explore quick, easy and economic solutions to support and enhance local biodiversity. This knowledge has now provided a benchmark for our future projects.



A Portsmouth resident interacting with our Biodiversity Engagement Zone.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

We wanted to show how easy it is to enhance local biodiversity by transforming a barren space into a natural habitat from reused materials; creating an enjoyable and healthy area. We also wanted to leave a biodiversity educational legacy by engaging with our construction works and the local community.