

C11933 Royal Mail Nine Elms London

VolkerFitzpatrick

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Temporary

Project overview

Volkerfitzpatrick Limited have been commissioned to construct the new distribution office for Royal Mail located in Wandsworth SW8. Works undertaken by the Special Projects Division of VolkerFitzpatrick involve demolition of existing derelict buildings and units before constructing a 55,000 sq. ft. delivery office and 67,000 sq. ft. multi-storey car park both designed to be BREEAM Excellent. Works commenced on site in March 2016 with an anticipated completion date of May 2017 and at a cost of circa £13m. The site is positioned off of the A3036 (Wandsworth Road) within an urban area of high industrial activity. Residential buildings are positioned to one side of the site. VFL took possession of the site in January 2016 and used the time before commencing works, along with our client to liaise with surrounding businesses and residence to ensure minimal disruption during our works.

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

As an area of high industrial activity it was lacking any biodiversity on site with no Flora or Fauna present. High amounts of noise, dust and traffic movements.

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

With such a grey landscape for surrounding residents the VFL staff felt it would be good to brighten up the area. The VFL staff came up with the idea of using Hard Hats from each contractor on site as hanging baskets. Each hard hat was to be provided by VFL with each company paying a sponsorship of £100 per hat to have their logo attached. All proceeds were then given to our chosen charity CRASH.



Pensbury Street at commencement

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

This scheme can be replicated on any construction site and is a bit of fun. The innovative twist on this particular initiative is the sponsorship for each hard hat / planter by the subcontractors on site. This not only generates cash for a charity of our choice, it creates competition between the subcontractors and ensures the flower 'baskets' are well maintained.

On completion of the project, the contents of the flower baskets will be planted on site in agreement with Royal Mail and their final landscape design otherwise donated to a local primary school as part of a community engagement initiative.

Our chosen charity CRASH assists homeless and hospice charities with construction related projects.

They do this by offering:

- Free of charge professional expertise
- Sourcing building materials and the technical knowledge to use them
- Awarding cash grants

Well designed and expertly built environments have a positive effect on how we all feel and behave. This is especially true for homeless, vulnerable or sick people and those who care for them.



Pensbury Street showing Hard Hat hanging baskets in place.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

Further information

The hanging baskets were produced/planted off site and brought to site once complete and mounted at ground level via brackets to pre painted timber posts. Once fitted the post with hard hat basket attached were lifted in to position and fixed. To avoid any collisions from passing vehicles we decided to mount these at a high level. All plants are watered daily by our staff and will change to suit seasonal planting. Our objective was to provide a welcoming street surrounding our site that would please the surrounding residents whilst in turn raising money for charity. This has worked better than we hoped and all sub contractors have been very forth coming in their sponsorship with friendly rivalry encouraged over the quantity of hard hats purchased.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

To show our surrounding neighbours that we are here to improve the area and not cause disruption and that this applies throughout the entire duration of our works. We see biodiversity and nature as a vast improvement and can work extremely well within the built environment.



Aerial photo of site taken during demolition works