

Cross Bones Community Garden – London Bridge Station

London

Costain Ltd

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Large scale permanent

Project overview

A derelict, old burial ground in Southwark is being restored and transformed into a peaceful green space for the local residents to enjoy away from their urban London surroundings.

The London Bridge Station Redevelopment (LBSR) is working alongside Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) to help regenerate this local funded project by Project staff volunteering over multiple days to go and help with the planting and landscaping works.

This community engagement initiative aims to encourage the increase of biodiversity habitats and create an aesthetically pleasing green space that meets the needs of local community.

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

Prior to the project, the area was run down, behind hoardings and had been closed to the public for years.

The ground was covered in rubble and therefore was not a biodiversity rich area.



Photo: Costain volunteers at brick laying workshop

With a landscape design planned by London Bridge, a maximum biodiversity regenerative space is to be created.

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

The ongoing engagement of LBSR in BOST's Cross Bones garden is driven by the opportunity to be involved in the community whilst working collaboratively with our subcontractors and local charities to help regenerate the local area.

It provides the chance for staff to gain awareness of the importance of

supporting local communities in green infrastructure and implementing biodiversity enhancement plans.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

This project is unique to the area of Southwark however all learning outcomes can be replicated and used across a variety of differing garden initiatives.

The vision for the garden is to provide an ongoing, relaxing green space for the local community.

To ensure the upkeep and maintenance of the new garden, BOSTs, alongside

the local council, have produced an ongoing garden management plan to make sure it is kept in prime condition.

Nevertheless, despite the garden being open to the public, LBSR has an ongoing involvement in the project as the garden development progresses further.

The landscape designed by LBSR was specifically tailored to maximise biodiversity regeneration. For example, how the bricks of the new walls were laid was considered to provide optimal conditions for the nesting of small species within the cracks and crevices.

A pyramid block was also erected to encourage smaller animals to nest and provide a sheltered habitat.

LBSR also ran a brick laying work shop where eight project staff and local volunteers were involved in the brick laying of the new walls and clearing of old ground for the planting of new flower beds.

This activity engaged the project volunteers in understanding the needs of nesting species whilst also providing the opportunity for local volunteers to learn practical construction skills.



Photo: Dry stone wall garden

Bricks that were already found on site were cleaned and reused to construct a new wall for the garden, but also LBSR and its subcontractors donated tools and construction materials to assist in its completion.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Our ongoing commitment to engage with local communities and increasing biodiversity within the area is the drive behind our involvement with BOSTs. LBSR has recognised that the provision of new 'green' spaces is important to the communities needs whilst also leaving a sustainable legacy for future generations to enjoy.