

RG Group Redhill Quadrant Redevelopment
Redhill, UK
RG Group

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Community Engagement Award

Project overview

The building project comprised of the phased replacement of an existing Sainsbury's Supermarket at Redhill in Surrey. Works include demolition of existing store and building and construction of a new build store with 2 layers of car parking above. The store is completed by a shell only construction of a gym and also a turnkey development of a 68 bedroom hotel on a podium slab above the roof car park. There are also S278 works, landlord works, basement car park refurbishment and public realm works associated with the development.

The programme was 103 weeks and completes in September 2017. The development is within the town centre and is part of regeneration of the town. There were 1800 people involved in the project from all backgrounds. The size of the development is 17,297 sqm and the project cost was £40.7 million.

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

It was a brownfield site with no biodiversity in the immediate area however one of the buildings demolished to make way for the project prior to our involvement we discovered used to be a site for nesting swifts

Were there any specific reasons that led to this project?

We were inspired by the Big Biodiversity Challenge and wanted a project where we could pursue community engagement as our one thing for nature. The project is in a built up urban area with not a lot of biodiversity around, we wanted to bring both the site team and local community closer to biodiversity and the impact it has on their lives.



Pupils at Salfords Primary School learning to become bee keepers with their new school hive, Photo RG Group

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

We engaged with RSPB to provide a biodiversity survey and recommendations this resulted in swift bricks incorporated in the new building design and involved staff as swift ambassadors, a competition was run on site for spotting the first swift to nest.

Local schools were contacted, at one we supplied a bee hive, we arranged for a 2 year plan to support the school in hive maintenance, the pupils loved their bee keeper outfits/equipment we supplied and has resulted in numerous projects relating to the hives from art down to science.

Another school was wanting to help their pupils appreciate nature and the food chain. We took a team of volunteers from site along with waste materials and built an allotment for the school. The RSPB then attended the school and gave a talk on what to plant to encourage wildlife and had a Home for Nature trail quiz, this planting was then done with the children. A smaller version was also created on site for the project workers to enjoy whilst the site was running, this provided the workers with fresh herbs and vegetable which were used in the canteen.

We linked up with a further school of older pupils and along with Carbon Footprint and a volunteer group planted native UK trees within their grounds to enhance not just biodiversity but the schools cross country running route and also offset the projects Carbon Footprint. Informative talks on carbon and native planting was carried out at the school.

We feel that multiple species and habitat has been created not just on site but across the greater Redhill area which should continue to have an impact in the future.



Wray Common School with their new allotments planted to encourage wildlife, pupil with Home for Nature scorecard , Photos RG Group

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Summary:-

- Swift nesting long term
- School Allotments long term
- School Bee Hive long term
- School Tree Planting long term
- Site veg/herb patch short term
- Site planters wildlife friendly flowers short term
- Site bee bricks insect habitat short term
- RSPB Home for Nature talks



How would you best describe the project?

Enhancement

Further information

Swift bricks meant early liaison with the design team to incorporate the detail, the costs were equivalent to existing design so no impact, more of a timeline critical process. Installation was by the same team as the rest of the external cladding, we also installed though a calling system to attract swifts to the bricks costs £350 in total.

Tree planting was organised with Carbon Footprint and Tree Buddy, it was completed in a day and involved pupils and a team of volunteers, cost £1850. The allotment planting was completed within a day and involved surplus materials being donated and volunteers from site.

The bee hives is the most complex in terms of process. A hive was moved from the provider (Plan Bee) to Redhill in early Spring when temperatures allowed. An ongoing maintenance and learning process over 2 years has been paid for £10k.

All other items were done in work breaks and with spare materials from site.

Increases have been noted in biodiversity with swifts back nesting in the area, a new bee colony, many bugs and insects around the planting and maturing trees providing new habitat.

The project team and schools involved have all voiced how enjoyable and informative the initiatives have been and as a by product motivation and working environments improved.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

You can get disheartened at news of the ever declining numbers of species/loss of habitat, I wanted to do something which made a difference & brought awareness to a wide group on the incredible beauty and diversity of UK wildlife, whilst UK biodiversity might not seem initially as exciting as more exotic countries hopefully with an insight future conservationists can be inspired.



Native Tree Planting with local school, on site vegetable and herb patch and environmental signage, Photos RG Group