

**BOURNE BUSINESS PARK RIVERSIDE GARDEN
WEYBRIDGE, SURREY**
LaSalle Investment Management

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: Small scale

Project overview

An area of 6,500 sq m of greenspace enhanced to provide high-quality habitat features for biodiversity gain and maximum opportunities for wildlife encounter for the expanding business community in a new BREEAM ‘Excellent’ office complex. The riverside garden combines conservation woodland management, foodplant landscaping, nest and roost space provision, viewpoints and seating.

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

Previously vacant warehouses, disused grounds and cleared brownfield. The planning application for Bourne Business Park focussed on high-level building performance, formal landscaping with high amenity and conservation value and green-grey interventions; such as sedum-roofed bin stores. LaSalle’s objective was to achieve BREEAM ‘Excellent’ for the built environment and to extend original development brief principles to the wider spaces along site perimeters, augmenting greenspace, ecological functionality and creating a shared environment for the Bourne business community where biodiversity is made visible ‘on the doorstep’ (*Biodiversity 2020 strategy*) and gains for wildlife are prioritised (*A Green Future 25 year plan*).

What were the reasons behind this project ?

Bourne met, exceeded & extended our own corporate standards for sustainability (LaSalle 10 Point Green Guide). Inspired by BIG and the 25 year plan, we focussed on biodiversity, the human health effects of wildlife encounter & the overlooked opportunities for significant ecological net gain in development settings. Going beyond the requirements of our planning permission & our own high standards for the built environment, we recognise a social responsibility for the wellbeing of our tenants & the local ecosystem that we influence & share; demonstrating ways in which both can be achieved through techniques of green-grey infrastructure management and design.



Bourne Business Park



Green roof planting on store buildings

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Bourne Riverside Garden is a new approach for LaSalle, which we intend replicating across our investment estate: blending formal landscaping with ancillary greenspace to create a seamlessly graded shared environment for people and wildlife. We have supplemented the landscaping specification with foodplant species providing pollen, nectar, foliage, seeds and fruit plus structural overwintering habitat (e.g. hollow-stemmed plants) and a new honeysuckle green wall.

The riparian woodland has been opened up through reduction in sycamore canopy and wet and dry deadwood features created from the cut material and older timber from previous site works. Dead Elm has been cut back (brash retained in habitat piles) to create 'windows' onto the river directing wetland wildlife such as Beautiful Demoiselle and *Helophilus* hoverflies into the flowering path borders to feed/hunt and be visible to our tenants and visitors. These patches also lighten our section of the river Bourne (previously overshadowed and cold), improving conditions for freshwater biodiversity and submerged and bankside flora, an enriched area connected to the wider water environment.

Nest/roost boxes for little owl, woodland songbirds and bats have been spread along the river corridor. A locally important Schedule 1 species, kingfisher, has been heard within the site (perhaps responding to lightening and fish activity), we will extend light patches and install fishing perches in 2018/19. LaSalle will involve tenants in the project as much as possible, part of our welcome and ongoing care, incorporating the riverside walk into the calendar of Bourne Business Park events and activities; arranged and managed for our tenant businesses. LaSalle also owns the opposite bank of the Bourne river which has been bequeathed to the local council as accessible open space. This extends the benefits of our site conservation works and gains for biodiversity to the local community.



Beautiful Demoiselle Calopteryx virgo in the Bourne Riverside Garden



Deadwood habitats, honeysuckle green wall and dayflying moth Pyrausta aurata on nectar bed planting.

Further information

The Bourne Riverside Garden has been created over the past 12 months. We have integrated the landscape management of formal grounds with greenspace, drawing wild characteristic of the riparian corridor into the margins of the office buildings and spreading areas of high-value designed forage planting into the woodland edge. This programme of 'melding' connected managed spaces has included thinning sycamore-dominated canopy, creating deadwood habitats, lightening the river channel in a series of 'windows' and installing roost and nest boxes to overlay the path and glade network created. We have instituted an annual biodiversity audit in July to monitor key measures of ecological gain (e.g. species total, river dragonfly diversity, nest box use, riparian plant species) and improve conservation management and interventions accordingly. We will also be monitoring the legacy of these works for our tenant businesses, in their satisfaction with the working environment, their participation in environmental activities and for LaSalle in uptake and retention of office space influenced by these responses. BIG, its ethos and the examples of previous shortlisted and winning projects, has helped us, and continues to help us, in directing our focus on the interface between built and planted spaces and teaching us the lesson that repeated small changes can generate great benefits for people and wildlife! Our advice to anyone considering a BIG application is, do it! It has helped us as a team and a company to extend and improve our own sustainability standards and open new opportunities for positive change.

LaSalle Project Team

- Andrew Derry, Development Director
- James Smith , Business Space Director
- Sophie Carruth, Head of Sustainability, Europe
- Suzy Kidman, Bourne Marketing Manager
- MacGregor Smith, Landscape Architects
- ARC, Ecology Consultants

What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Bourne Business Park is an exemplary scheme for LaSalle, meeting the highest standards of building performance and efficiency. But we realised that there was more to be done, beyond the requirements of our planning permission and our own corporate sustainability guide. We wanted to make the external environment at Bourne as valuable to the health and wellbeing of our business community as its internal quality. BIG, and its portfolio of successes, helped us to see that by imaginatively pursuing gains for biodiversity we could build a space that was good for people and good for wildlife in equal measure.



*Andrew Derry, Development Director,
LaSalle, on the Riverside Walk*



Bourne Business Park: