

Royal Hospital for Sick Children Edinburgh, Scotland

Brookfield Multiplex

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Temporary award

Project overview

The new Royal Hospital for Sick Children is located in a suburban area on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The project has an estimated value of £150m and is due to be completed next year.

The biodiversity initiative 'All welcome: humans, insects and birds' was developed as a challenge to all site staff, to come up with their ideas to make the site: i)attractive to visitors, ii)attractive to wildlife and iii)demonstrate to operatives that their ideas are valuable by interacting in a positive way.

A total of 22 submissions were received with a wide range of interesting ideas. Four winning ideas were selected, combined and installed at a cost of £410.

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

Low biodiversity. Originally only concrete hard standing from the temporary site accommodation. Last year we began the biodiversity 'garden' with our entry to the BIG challenge 2015. This year we have built on that project.

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

There were no specific conditions with regards to BREEAM or planning conditions. We undertook this project for the reasons stated: i)attractive to visitors, ii)attractive to wildlife and iii)demonstrate to operatives that their ideas are valuable by interacting in a positive way.



Photo Description: One of the four planters

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Entry forms were sent out to all contractors on site and printed copies were handed out in the site canteen during one week. Completed forms were collected and the ideas were judged based on their i) biodiversity credential, ii) practicality, iii) uniqueness. The judges decided that instead of one winner being chosen, the four best entries would be combined: 'Wall Garden', 'Paul's Planters', 'Welcoming space', and 'Hanging Baskets'

Four wooden packaging crates were reclaimed from the construction site and filled with waste offcuts of insulation panels. The top sections were then filled with compost / soil and planted with a mixture of insect-friendly plants. Inspiration from the wall garden was taken by positioning climber plants including roses next to the site hoarding to enable plants to climb up over. Four hanging baskets full of insect friendly flowering plants were positioned strategically around site to make the most visual impact to visitors. A selection of lavender and other bee / butterfly plants were used to enhance the likelihood of attracting insect visitors. A fact sheet of plant information was produced and attached to each planter to inform people of the time of flowering, colour of flowers, names of plants etc.

The project is innovative in the way it combines various forward-thinking and cooperative ideas: leveraging the bright ideas of workers, declaring several winners rather than one 'winner', reusing waste materials, attracting insects/birds and welcoming human visitors by showing them construction sites can be attractive places to be. The habitat extends the smaller 'biodiversity garden' of hanging hard-hat 'baskets' from the BIG 2015 submission. It is now visited by insects, bees and birds have all been seen in the area, which has created a net gain in biodiversity.



Visitors welcome

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

Further information

Four wooden packaging crates were reclaimed from the construction site and filled with waste offcuts of insulation panels to build up the levels. The top 300mm were then filled with compost / soil and planted with a mixture of insect-friendly plants. **We used the knowledge of a 'green fingered' operative and the local garden centre to select suitable plants.** The climbing plants provide coverage of the hoarding and produce flowers in spring. They have been positioned to grow over the top so they will be visible outwith the site. Four hanging baskets full of insect friendly flowering plants were positioned strategically around site to make the most visual impact to visitors and to enhance existing habitats. A selection of lavender and other bee / butterfly plants were used to enhance the likelihood of attracting insects and birds. All plants will be watered using the rain water harvesting water butt which was installed as part of BIG Challenge 2015. All plants will be watered using the rain water harvesting water butt which was installed as part of BIG Challenge 2015. A fact sheet of plant information was produced and attached to each planter to inform people of the time of flowering, colour of flowers, names of plants etc.

Long term we have educated members of the site team of the benefits of biodiversity. Visitors have witnessed that construction sites can be positive and welcoming places to work and that we care about the local environment.

Next time, ensure you have enough soil as it meant an extra trip to the Garden Centre. **It's better to have too much than too little because all the root balls must be well covered for the plants to survive.**



Growing across the wall

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

To build on the progress achieved last year for the BIG Challenge 2015. Interacting with operatives to make the site a better place for wildlife and overall more attractive place to work.