

Cambridge North Station
Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England
 VolkerFitzpatrick Ltd.

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Temporary Award

Project overview

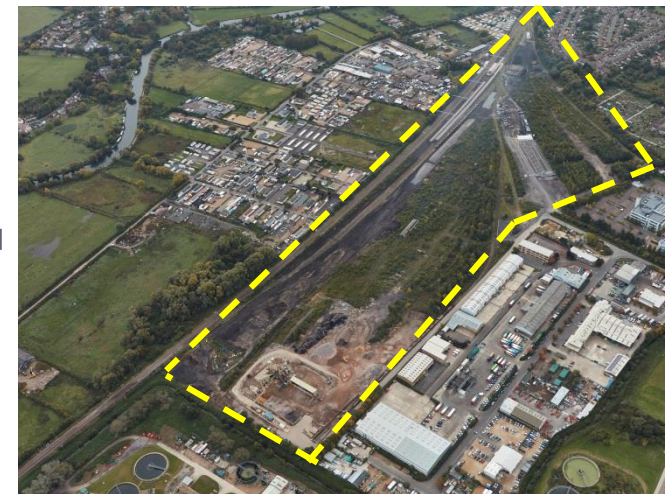
The overall project aim is to provide a brand new station ‘Cambridge North’, including a 2 storey 450 sq.m Station building, platforms and footbridge leading from the building to the platforms. Local freight train sidings will also be re-configured. Two main line platforms and a bay platform shall be built from pre-cast concrete beams and blocks at a length suitable to accommodate a 12 car train. The £50 million building and infrastructure project began early 2015 with look to open the station in early 2017. The site covers approximately 15 ha and the site team comprises of around 50 people. The development also comprises of a new car and cycle park and links to a wider public transport network including cycle, pedestrian and guided busway links. The development is within a suburban setting and is to maintain the rural-urban fringe character of the area within its operational landscape design.

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

The site was overgrown with vegetation comprising of dense scrub and large areas of open ground dominated by areas of broadleaf woodland and ephemeral/short perennial vegetation. The combination of biodiversity provides habitats of ecological value of district importance. It provides a habitat and supporting assemblages suited to invertebrates and plants.

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

The site has 3 planning conditions concerning ecology. Mostly the work mentioned is not a requirement of the 3 planning conditions however some of the work was influenced by the planning conditions set. The translocation was of a species that was not required by the conditions to be translocated.



Aerial photo of the site. Yellow lines to mark the site boundary.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The project team were keen to save as much vegetation as possible throughout the length of the project despite a requirement for some de-vegetation to take place.

The Great Mullein Plant species was identified across this site, this particular species is used by Mason Bees to build their nests from the hairs of the plant. Where de-vegetation has been necessary we have translocated a mixture of seedlings and young adult plants to temporary flower beds on site. The flower beds were constructed using redundant timber sleepers that had been removed due to our rail track works, diverting them from onward disposal. These plants will be translocated into the finished project in an area of full sunlight to meet the optimum growing conditions for the species. Two flower beds have been built one either side of the hoarding allowing for different levels of sunlight throughout the day which allows for the translocation to be more successful, the mullein plants were translocated and replanted on both sides of the hoarding to ensure that at least a few of the plants would survive.

These works have allowed for a new habitat which is valuable to the local flora and fauna. Translocating the plants limits any risk of loss of the plant during development and by prolonging the life of the plant. This could also have a positive effect on the population of Mason Bees in the local area.

These works were replicable and cost-effective. It also provides site beautification with growth of many other plant species in the last few weeks. This was the initiative of and is being managed by the site team with interests to expand the flower bed to create more opportunity for plant growth and providing increased invertebrate habitat opportunities.



Flowerbed before any planting took place

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

Further information

The flower beds were constructed using redundant sleepers on site, the sleepers were painted to improve the attractiveness of the entrance to the site. The flower beds were then filled with soil and the sleepers were fastened together. The beds were first used as the translocation site for the Great Mullein plant species that were found on site. Only smaller Great Mullein plants were used as we had been advised translocation is usually more successful with smaller and younger plants. As we found the plants we dug them out and the soil around them and placed them in a plant pot, the pots were then transferred into the flower bed. A number of plants were placed either side of the hoarding to increase the chance of survival once translocated.

A large number of plants have started to grow in the last month due to the weather so there has been a noticeable increase in biodiversity within the flower beds. The work has helped to achieved a number of site objectives by diverting waste from landfill, reuse site materials and optimise habitats for species found on site.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

The project team were keen to create a temporary area for planting to help improve the biodiversity on site but also to improve site beautification. The redundant timber sleepers seemed like a suitable and cost-effective material to create the flower beds and create an area suitable for translocation.



Flower beds with plants and planting of the Great Mullein