

St Oswalds Place
Vauxhall, London
 St James Group

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Small scale permanent

Project overview

St James has provided funding for the mixed-use project from the regeneration of Albert Embankment which will see the property on St Oswald's Place redeveloped into eight family sized homes across 3 floors for social rent as well as a new classroom, café and office space on the ground floor for Vauxhall City Farm.

The build value is £1.8m and the land is located in an urban area 5 minutes walk from Vauxhall station and the River Thames.

The site was previously occupied by four derelict houses in a very poor state of repair. The allotments next door are owned by Lambeth Council and used by local residents to grow plants and vegetables.

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

The site itself was very run down and derelict, supporting no biodiversity and located between allotments owned by Lambeth Council and Vauxhall City Farm.



Photo: Planters on site

It is within an urban area, 5 minutes from Vauxhall station and the River Thames. The allotments were also run down and lacking facilities for residents.

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

There were no conditions requiring us to carry out this work and the measures were driven by St James staff, as we are keen to engage with the local community and promote biodiversity where possible.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The site team have put in place several measures to increase biodiversity in the area and raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity amongst school children, who now use the allotment to learn about nature and grow vegetables to promote healthy eating. St James has;

- Built and paid for a greenhouse for children to grow plants throughout the year. The site manager laid the concrete base himself.
- Built a bug hotel which local school children have been using to learn about the importance of insects. This was made out of old pallets which

- were collected on site and put together by the site team. Once completed, local children were involved in the 'fit out' and decided to name it the 'Hilton Hotel'.
- Installed rainwater butts for the re-use of rainwater for watering of plants.
- Built a fence to segregate planting areas and provide a clear walkway.
- Collected organic waste from the site canteen for compost and also volunteered time and skip facilities to clear an area of land for the planting of vegetables.
- Engaged with school children and allowing visiting groups, allowing them to view the site from a safe area and learn about construction.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information

We feel the objectives of this project have been more than met and though it is difficult to note any long term increase in biodiversity, we believe it can only have helped.

This being not just in the allotment area, but also in raising awareness amongst children which they will hopefully pass on to their friends and family, leading



Photo: Rainwater harvesting

to wider benefits to biodiversity.

If we were to do this again or advise other projects, we would definitely recommend involving school children as we surprised by how much they enjoyed designing the bug hotel, growing their own food in the allotment and learning about insects and wildlife.

We hope to replicate this on other projects where possible.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Due to the nature of this project the site team have been very fortunate to build a close relationship with Vauxhall City Farm and the local community.

Our motivation is the satisfaction we get from seeing the children using the allotments to grow their own food and learn about nature.