

East Cross Route/A12 Flyover, Mabley Green, Hackney Redwood Path SINC, Hackney, London

CVU/TfL

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Medium Scale Permanent

Project overview

CVU working for TfL conducted a landscaping highway project on the central reservation along the highly urbanised East Cross route / A12 flyover in Mabley Green, Hackney. Detailed landscaping plans for the project were completed following a Phase 1 ecology assessment. The land was in a very poor state with dense scrub and invasive species found on site.

The project involved the project manager, ecologist, public realm officer and construction team.

The construction of the works took place between Oct 2015 and Dec 2015. The area of ground affected was 0.85ha.

Project Costs:

Phase 1 habitat survey - £834
Toolbox talk from ecologist - £306.60
Bat boxes - £119.80
Landscaping & Giant Hogweed removal - £33 414.55
TOTAL £34 401.95

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

The site is an island that is isolated from surrounding habitat by the east and west bound carriageways of the A12. The site has areas of;

- dense scrub,
- immature broadleaved trees
- semi natural broadleaved woodland
- Badgers habitat
- Giant hogweed
- Some common bird species present on site (pigeon & magpie)



Stand of Giant Hogweed at the edge of the site

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

The works are part of the continued effort by TfL to meet their environmental objective of “Maintaining and, where possible, enhance the quality of London’s natural environment”. TfL with CVU have employed a Public Realms Officer to help identify opportunities to complete ecological enhancements

throughout the TfL central network with the aim of;

- improving ecological areas
- improving customer experience within London

The aim of the project was to also to support Hackney’s Conservation Policy by using the Biodiversity Checklist for development. This allowed the project team to make choices for enhancement in line with Hackney’ policy objectives.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

This solution is replicable and this approach is being used as a blue print for other schemes being completed on the TfL network.

The long term management has been considered by adopting minimal & low level maintenance techniques requiring little input on an ongoing basis – see below.

This is an innovative approach by TfL & CVU as efforts are focused into improving small pockets of natural habitat on the central network by looking at soft landscaping solutions in favour of traditional hard solutions. The approach also supports the objectives of the local authority aims through support of their BAPs.

The ecology report made a number of recommendations that supported a number of local and broader environmental and ecological agendas. These measures were adopted and included;

- Eradication and removal of Giant Hogweed
- Habitat creation through the installation of loggeries and improving the current ‘low’ potential on a number of mature trees for roosting bats through the installation of bat boxes
- Boarder planting regime to include native trees and hedges



Successful growth of spring growing pollinator bulb flowers

- Focusing on the landscaping of the edges of the site and not to be intrusive in the existing woodland area including the existing badger sett.
- Planting of low maintenance native woodland species bulbs in the east half of the site to encourage pollination, provide colour, and contribute to woodland biodiversity. For example, species such as *Cornus alba*, *Viburnum opulus*, and *Galanthus nivalis* are used throughout the project. The RHS considers these species to be ‘Perfect for Pollinators’, such as bees and butterflies.

What were the biodiversity measures taken? (Cont'd)

These simple initiatives will enhance the area through the additional habitat created and the species planted. The removal of the Giant Hogweed will also make the area safer to the public. The addition of the loggeries and bat boxes has supported Hackneys BAP objectives.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

Further information

The installation was completed by CVU landscape contractors. Due to access limitations of the location it was not possible to engage in locals to help with the improvements. The installation was a very typical landscaping led operation with attention to the needs of the site. In particular;

- **No** heavy machinery was used in the wooded area
- **Works** were completed in Oct – Dec 2015 to avoid nesting season
- **An** ecologist gave the operatives a tool box talk and marked out areas indicating sensitive areas such as the badger sett

The initial results through the improved aesthetics (removal of litter and rubbish, new plants, trees and scrubs) have had a real positive impact within TfL and CVU with further schemes identified for improvement. On a long term basis this will mean that in future schemes will be given much more consideration to sustainable design which can contribute positively to tackling climate change and protecting & enhancing the local environment.

A further visit to the site is intended later this year to assess the impacts of the works and it is hoped that the enhancements will result in a net ecological and environmental improvement.



Bat Box installed on mature oak.

Further to this CVU have realised the benefit of this work and have installed a bee-hotel and wildflower garden in their South Norwood depot. These works were completed by the operatives at a very low cost to the contract with all works completed on a voluntary basis.

The initiatives identified above also support the 'Making a B-Line for London' Partnership - <https://www.buglife.org.uk/campaigns-and-our-work/habitat-projects/making-a-b-line-for-london> an initiative that encourages the conservation of pollinating insects in London and on UK basis. Future projects will support this initiative.



What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

The team wanted this area to be a gateway to Central London and symbolising what we stand for and want to deliver in future projects across the capital, which is being environmentally friendly, bringing about sustainable solutions, and creating a city that we can be proud of to live and work in for many years to come..