

**THE WILD GLADES, The Glades Shopping Centre  
Bromley  
LASALLE INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT**

**BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: *Community Engagement***

**Project overview**

The Wild Glades project has turned a major shopping centre, The Glades in Bromley, attracting over 4 million visitors a year, into a place where wildlife flourishes on the outside, and ecological engagement and learning is celebrated on the inside, becoming a beacon for sustainability in action!

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

The focus of biodiversity gains has been the green roof alongside a main entrance to the shopping centre. This had been largely forgotten after its creation as a planning requirement. It was species-poor, with only 10 main species of grass and forb. Vacuum sampling indicated an impoverished fauna, with no pollinating insects present, no molluscs or other ground-dwelling invertebrates and small numbers of aphids and Braconid wasps. The nearest formal beds and planters, at ground level below the roof, were dominated by evergreen shrub varieties with little or no flowering herbaceous planting and therefore minimal supplementary foraging value for wildlife.

**What were the reasons behind this project ?**

Wild Glades is inspired by LaSalle’s ‘4 Pillars’ of sustainability and ESG: net zero carbon, reduce/reuse/recycle, social value and rewilding. The project focusses on social engagement and biological enhancement as ways to optimise the built asset and its grounds, boosting local biodiversity AND enriching the visitor experience at The Glades. This adds interest, education, and opportunities to collaborate on local environmental action, for shoppers, tenant businesses and the neighbouring community, in turn delivering increased footfall for the store, wider impact in its locality, and greater contact between the management teams and the life of the city around them (including schools).



The Wild Glades Festival poster 2021:



Hunting wasp (*Cerceris*) found on the green roof  
September 2020

### What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The 4 parts of Wild Glades are: 1. an audit of rewilding opportunities from top floor car parks to ground floor plazas; 2. week-long free pop-up natural history museum built into a vacant unit within the shopping centre, attracting thousands of visitors including local schools, conservation organizations and community volunteers; 3. first rewilding project, a 200m<sup>2</sup> green roof, revitalised with new planting and features for birds, bats and insects; 4. Wild Glades online biodiversity festival run during the March 2021 lockdown with content from national and local contributors reaching over 80,000 viewers and 71 schools and all still available on The Wild Glades website: <https://www.theglades.co.uk/wildglades/> including film of the green roof project itself.

The roof rewilding delivered new wildlife resources, boosting pollen and nectar, fruit and seeds, adding 50 new foodplant species, nest boxes for house sparrows and house martins, bug boxes and timber 'biototems' for solitary bees and wasps and their associated communities; micropools to catch rainwater and sandpiles for warm, bare-ground habitats. The project was visited by Bromley Council as a case study in the new borough sustainability strategy, helping us to make Wild Glades a transferable approach.

Wild Glades has engaged with staff, customers, businesses and the wider Bromley community. The roof garden is promoted directly from a main access, increasing possibilities for wildlife encounter for visitors. The work has involved The Glades management, security staff and maintenance teams at every stage, helping to make it happen and keeping the project part of the store conversation. The pop-up museum, and the online Wild Glades Festival both took the messages embodied by the roof project and developed them into a natural science masterclass for all ages and this has led to a growing partnership between the shopping centre and local organizations, in particular the 'Greener Cleaner Bromley' group.



Adding new seeds and biototems to the green roof, and surveying invertebrates September 2020



The Wild Glades Pop-Up Natural History Museum October 2019

### Further information

Wild Glades has followed the original rewilding and social impact audit commissioned by LaSalle. Direct action for wildlife and sharing this ambition with a network of stakeholders is the foundation of the project. Enriching the ecosystem of the shopping centre's urban habitats and enriching the ecosystem of local organizations, companies and communities that surround and permeate the centre, have been LaSalle's twin strategic objectives. Already there has been measurable change in both. A survey of the green roof just months after improvements found nesting solitary bees and wasps, ground bugs (heteropteran) and visiting dragonfly and butterfly species together with the rapid germination of new flower-rich sward. Surveys later in 2021 will add further data and this will be repeated annually. Similarly, there is a new vitality to the way in which The Glades communicates with tenant businesses and its customers, driven by new content and a focus on engagement, sharing stories, successes and ambitions on the shared themes of sustainability, rewilding and positive change. The key lesson from the project is the critical importance of a determined local management team keeping up persistent positive pressure. The connection between strategic goals and real change on the ground can be weak; The Wild Glades has shown how it can be strong. Entering The Wild Glades for a Big Biodiversity Award has been a great way to celebrate what has been achieved so far, look forward to what is still to come, and to thank everyone who has contributed to this fantastic project.

### Project Team

- Client / funders: **LaSalle Investment Management, The Glades Shopping Centre**
- Other design team members: **Arc Consulting, Bewonder,**



Installing combined planters and bee nest boxes at the Glades green roof

11:00 am

### How to Make... Wild

#### Tiles!

Plants, trees and wildflowers – all textures, shapes and patterns to explore! In this short film, ceramic artist and potter, Sue Paraskeva shows us how to make simple ceramic art... with nature as inspiration.  
With Sue Paraskeva



The Wild Glades online festival March 2021:

**What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?**

The Wild Glades project and the ecological enhancements and wide-angled public outreach it has delivered, have been a very important project for LaSalle, and for The Glades centre itself. Firstly, we wanted to show how a major company can successfully move 'beyond compliance' and into positive social and ecological impact in its approach to the environment it manages. Secondly, we wanted to demonstrate that imaginative work for wildlife and community can not only be integrated into effective asset management but can become a significant advantage in a competitive business field, boosting ESG performance and opening new opportunities for investment.