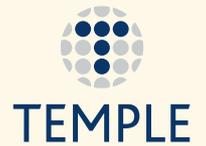


Sustainability Winner 2015

The Big Parks Project

Sponsored by



Lewes District Council's Big Parks Project provides a gateway to exploring the South Downs National Park. The £2.1m community-led project (funded by Southern Water and Bovis Homes) incorporates 30 acres and includes a central activity café, children's playgrounds, new cycle paths, skate park, and sports facilities. In response to public feedback and the design team's aspirations, this project is designed to educate and be enjoyed by all sections of the community, using a mix of highly visible renewable energy technology and durable low-maintenance construction materials.

The Gateway Café (previously an old maintenance building) is the Big Park's main visitor attraction and its long-term economic viability is key to the client's vision and success of the project. Even with a tight budget, the team agreed that integrating sustainable technologies was fundamental to meeting the project targets and these were given priority during the value engineering process. Both the M&E and architectural solutions ensure the café benefits from low running costs, energy efficiency and longevity and incorporates: a biomass boiler, fuelled with locally sourced pellets – a key visual feature to support learning; PV panels; a solar panel; LED lighting and solar shading with external canopies.

The original structure is externally insulated and over-clad with locally sourced sweet chestnut – a naturally durable, fast-growing, replaceable tree that optimises the natural thermal mass in the high-density masonry. All materials were chosen to not only reduce the carbon footprint of the construction process, but for their durability, reduced maintenance costs and potential for recycling.

The café has an EPC rating grade A. This grade is given to buildings achieving 0 – 25 points (the lower the better) – the café was awarded just 10 points. This is impressive for a retrofitted building, which would typically achieve a B rating, and is a testament to the integration of sustainable design and renewable energy technology with the original structure.

The area is of significant archeological importance, so underground drainage was not possible. Sustainable permeable gravel allows rainwater to drain through to the ground below, allowing water to infiltrate on-site, rather than being diverted for energy-hungry off-site treatment.

The project provided good learning opportunities for the whole team and Crofton ensured that a junior engineer played an important role in delivering the project, developing experience and skills for the future. Representatives from other councils are visiting Big Parks to understand how to build similar schemes and acknowledge that it is a considerable achievement for Lewes District Council.

An incredible 5,000 people attended Big Parks opening in March 2015, demonstrating the power of the two-way dialogue between the team and community and how engaged everyone is with the project.



Judges comments

This entry overwhelmingly met all category criteria with excellent community buy-in and a low energy building, rebuilt from poor initial stock. A holistic, long-term sustainability approach.

Opened up a gateway to the South Downs from a former derelict site with excellent community engagement, considerable consultation and thinking about the long-term legacy. Great focal point for the community and facilities for local business to thrive.

Demonstrates value of long-term thinking built on good leadership from the Council, strong stakeholder engagement and a practical, common sense approach to environmental aspects.

Project Contract Value:	£2.1 million
Type of work:	Retrofit
Approx M²:	335

Finalists

- 119 Ebury Street (David Morley Architects)
- 9 Cambridge Avenue (Francis Construction)
- eco-classrooms – London Diocesan Schools (eco classrooms)
- J Murphy & Sons Limited (J Murphy & Sons)
- Sunbury Lock Refurbishment Works (Environment Agency)
- The Big Parks Project (Crofton Design)
- Wilmcote House, Portsmouth (ECD Architects)