Handyside Gardens



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The story



The Handyside Gardens make up a small yet crucial link in one of London’s biggest and most exciting redevelopment projects ever, the railroad site at King’s Cross. No wonder that even global players like The Guardian and Google were very keen to find themselves a spot here.

Entirely in sync with the reviving district, the Handyside Gardens breathe ecology, sustainability, and social interaction. Sitting on a bench, you look around and see the reflections of that vision. On one side, the ultramodern ArtHouse offers housing accommodation. The renovated train shed on the opposite side was given various new functions: it now houses a grocery retailer, including a cookery school, and an events and cultural space.

In this context the Handyside Gardens are the common bond of this quarter. Though pocket-size, this park has quite an impact on the everyday lives of residents big young and old, students, and entrepreneurs from the neighbourhood. With curvilinear, raised planter beds, integrated seats, and even a meandering rill, this contemporary open space amidst the busy metropolis is the ideal place to relax, eat a sandwich, read a book, or horsing around.

Challenges



The realization of this project faces some specific challenges. Barely 4.5 m underneath the park runs the London Underground. This shallow soil depth, of course, had repercussions on plantation possibilities. Here, the raised Brink planter beds offered a solution to give the architects the freedom they needed concerning plantation choice.

Another, quite specific challenge were the organic form and the variation of sizes of the panels. To enable simple installation on the building site, the panels had previously been made to measure and rolled in the desired shape in our workshop. On the spot, they just needed to be bolted together.

To meet demands on durability, CorTen® steel was chosen for its superior qualities in this field. Not only does the layer of rust protect the panels from damage and vandalism, it is at the same time a respectful wink to the railroad heritage of the site.



Project details

The design of the park echoes the tracks that used to wind through the area, and the plantation was inspired by what was found along the railway embankments.

To translate the design from the drawing table into the park, we closely cooperated with the contractors during production and installation stages. For bespoke projects like this, that proves to be formula for success.

Integrated product

The Wibio Brink appointed itself as the ideal solution. We developed CorTen® steel planter beds in organic shapes and in various heights, which were mounted onto the concrete with triangular supports on base plates. On top of that, Brink was provided with integrated wooden benches to create seating accommodation in the park. Overall, about 300 linear metres of Brink were installed. Underneath the raised planter beds, a drainage layer was installed to prevent the soil from getting soaked.



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Extra informatie

Location: London

Execution date: December, 2015

Architect: Dan Pearson Studio

Solutions

- Raised planter beds
- Public gardens

Products

- Brink