

SWIG Awards 2013 : Watercolour, Redhill, Surrey

Studio Engleback, JTP, Cameron Taylor Bedford (now Scott Wilson) for Linden Homes

What: This scheme is for over 520 homes on a former sand washing plant is occupied, the last phase of accommodation is currently being built. Studio Engleback led the environmental design to planning, and wrote a design guide which has been followed; the architects and masterplanners were JTP. An industrial outwash lagoon and a settlement lagoon have been restored. The Gatton Brook, which had been culverted under the plant, was re-established, which along with a Blue Spine is a key component of the site's multifunctional environmental infrastructure. 'Water at every turn' was the team's slogan for the scheme. The Blue Spine takes on 3 characters – a brook, a canal, and reed beds. It issues into the lagoons which are now linked together, and then to the Redhill Brook. Awareness of water is central to this vision – as an attractive setting for homes, filtering and attenuation of surface water, and as a wildlife resource. The restored lagoons buffer between town and countryside. The Blue Spine runs through the centre of the scheme, the restored brook runs around the edge. Ecohomes excellent/code 3 as minimum standard was set in 2004, SUDs and flood zone awareness are part of vision. Planning application made 2006, blue spine started 2010.

Why: The Blue Spine acts as a filter for recycled water from the upper of two lagoons and extends the watery landscape through to the rear of the site. The Gatton Brook is a seasonal stream, exhumed and re-established. These ecological corridors and are full of life, including a large number of newts. Water levels changed when the quarry's pumps were turned off and this was a consideration in the planning of the landscape.

How – Transforming a desolate brownfield site into an attractive place to live and work in, bringing people closer to water processes is at the heart of the scheme in order to value, and better understand this resource. This is done as a linear parkway running through the scheme, as well as a restored brook and lakes that link the town to the nearby Country Park. CABE highlighted the quality of the landscape and restored brook as features that "set this scheme apart." The Landscape Institute is using this project in their latest exemplar guide on housing and green infrastructure.



1. The quarry in 2004
2. The Blue Spine & Lagoons
3. Studio Engleback drawing for restored lagoons & Gatton Brook + link to Redhill Brook
4. Blue Spine 'Brook'
5. Restored Gatton Brook
6. Studio Engleback drawing for the Blue Spine
7. The Canal
8. Restored talings lagoon
9. Studio Engleback sections showing different profiles through restored Gatton Brook
10. Blue Spine 'Reedbeds'
11. Lakeside housing
12. Bridge over Blue Spine reedbeds



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