

Wessex Water Operations Centre

Bath UK

The new operations centre for Wessex Water was built on a former hospital site in Bath, within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the World Heritage City boundary. The aim was to produce an exemplary environmental project which recognised the sensitivity of the site and promoted ecological and sustainable design and construction.

Innovation is central to the project. The detail design promotes the imaginative use of water; the scheme was one of the first in England to use porous paving for car park areas, and integrated swales and soakaways also contribute to water conservation. Semi-mature trees are used as a solar shading system for the building, providing climate moderation as well as visual pleasure.

A further success of the scheme has been the restoration of semi-natural habitats, including extensive rooftop wildflower grasslands with orchids. Care was taken to use and conserve site-specific limestone soils and planting mixes, and to make use of stone excavated on site.

The Wessex Water Operations Centre has won several accolades, including: RICS Building of the Year 2001; British Construction Industry Award for Building of the Year 2001; RIBA Award 2001; RICS Low Energy Award 2002; Civic Trust Award 2003; BREEAM 'Excellent' Environmental Assessment.

Site Area: 2.8 Hectares
Client: Wessex Water
Architects: Bennetts Associates
Engineers: Buro Happold
Overall Project Value: £20 million



Top: Allium strip in the Dry Courtyard
Above: Wildlife pond
Left: Wildflower grasslands; Solar shading semi-mature lime trees