

Street Tree Award: Highly commended Bankside Urban Forest

The Awards highly commended Bankside Urban Forest as a wonderful example of an inspiring public space strategy which puts people, partnership working, creativity and urban greening at its heart.

Since its launch in late 2007, Bankside Urban Forest has planted over 250 trees through a range of place making projects across Bankside's neighbourhood in Central London. It is coordinated by Better Bankside BID on behalf of a range of partner organisations.



Image: The Skirt of the Black Mouth pocket park, commissioned by Tate Modern in 2012 behind their gallery in Bankside has brought a new public space, framed with beautiful London Plane trees back into the public domain on Sumner Street.

Donald Hyslop, Chair of Better Bankside, and the Bankside Urban Forest Steering Group said 'Bankside Urban Forest is an important strand of Better Bankside's ambition for Bankside to be one of the best neighbourhoods in the world to work, live and visit. We are delighted, on behalf of our all our Bankside Urban Forest partners, to receive this recognition from the Mayor of London and the Forestry Commission.'

Deborah Collins, Director of Environment and Leisure at Southwark Council said: 'I am delighted that Bankside Urban Forest has been formally recognised in the London Tree and Woodland Awards. The initiative demonstrates the value of partnership working in helping to deliver long term change to Southwark's public realm in the north of the Borough. This not only brings benefits to residents, businesses and visitors to the neighbourhood, but brings multiple environmental benefits to this area of Central London.'

Bankside Urban Forest

Launched in 2007, and coordinated by Better Bankside, Bankside Urban Forest brings together a partnership of local businesses, Southwark Council, residents, community groups, developers and statutory agencies to help coordinate improvements to the network of streets and spaces across the neighbourhood. The flexibility of Bankside Urban Forest as a long term strategy allows for a range of public space projects, both temporary and permanent, to bring positive change to this urban environment, knitting new developments and projects into the existing urban fabric.

Projects like the Union Street Urban Orchard (2010) and Thank Goodness for Trees (2009) demonstrated how creative and imaginative approaches to tree planting can foster long term change and ownership within communities. Tree planting funded through the London Tree and Woodland Grant Scheme, both on street and in adjacent housing estate amenity land was also instrumental in the successful transformation of Redcross Way (2009-2012).

In 2011 a green infrastructure audit was undertaken of the Forest area, and this has helped identify more sites for tree planting and other urban greening measures in the neighbourhood. In 2013 an apprentice gardener was recruited to the programme to help with practical maintenance of greening projects, and is currently training to become one of Southwark Council's first tree wardens.

Future projects are focussing on the transformation of key streets leading away from the riverside to encourage greater footfall and exploration of the area, as well as focussing on bringing greater vitality to some of the routes that run parallel to the riverside, including Park Street, Southwark Street and the 'Low Line' which will transform the access road that runs along the base of the rail viaducts that characterise parts of the neighbourhood.



Images: (left) Thank Goodness for Trees tree planting event with residents from Sumner Estate (2009) (right) Street tree planting on Redcross Way as part of the Redcross Way transformation (2009-2011)

Further information

Project information:

- Valerie Beirne, Bankside Urban Forest Manager, Better Bankside
yb@betterbankside.co.uk / www.banksideurbanforest.org.uk / @banksideforest
- The [RE:LEAF Partnership](#)
- The 2014 Awards were organised by the Forestry Commission and Mayor of London, with support from a range of RE:LEAF partners
- We are grateful to the following organisations who provided financial support for the 2014 awards:

