



Ashington 'Living Wall' submission
Ivor Goodsite Hoardings competition
Gentoo Construction and Bernicia
June 2015

2015 Event details

Company name: Gentoo Construction

Site registration: 83029

Project Name: Incredible Edible Living Wall

Site address: Elderly Persons Village Development, former Ashington Hospital site, West View, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 ORZ

Event date: Thursday 21st May 2015

Event Location: Ashington

Number of participants: 30 school children and 12 adults

Before



After



What we wanted to achieve

- To promote the image of the construction industry
- To educate children on the importance of health and safety when living near a construction site
- To build awareness of the importance of recycling and sustainability and how people can do this
- Improve the relationships between client, contractor and the community.

Background

Gentoo Construction is currently on site in Ashington on behalf of its client Bernicia, building a 40 bed sheltered living apartment building alongside 26 bungalows, as part of a wider £13m investment to the area.

Gentoo Construction positions itself as an 'Art of Living' construction business which encompasses the thought process behind what it builds, how they build it and who it works with. This means using more efficient and sustainable building techniques, investing in new innovations and ensuring it thinks about protecting resources for future generations. This includes involving communities, getting children engaged and enthused about the built environment and also investing in and caring about the health and wellbeing of its team.

Already praised by CCS for its exceptional community engagement on this site and with a recent score of 45/50, staff from Gentoo and Bernicia were eager to bring the Ivor Goodsite Hoardings Competition to the site.



Engaging with the community

Central First School in Ashington was chosen as Bernicia had already formed some strong links with the school through its various projects in the area. The school is also only a 6 minute walk away from site, so staff knew that many of the children would be passing it on their way into school and this would be the perfect opportunity to get them involved and enthused about what was being built in their community.

Gentoo worked closely with Central First School to create a schools programme in the lead up to creating the hoardings on site.

This started with a school Health & Safety assembly a few weeks before the big day. Site Manager Peter Elliot and Health & Safety Manager, Dave Box, went along to introduce themselves to the pupils and deliver the sessions. They also started to plant the seed of what the children were going to be doing in the next few weeks.

Central First school then handpicked 30 pupils to be involved in the project. These children were picked due to their interests in gardening and art as they attended after-school clubs covering these subjects.



The children were then taken along to the site for a practical lesson on site safety. During the visit the children were able to put some of their training into practice wearing PPE and manoeuvring around the busy site.

The following day, staff from Gentoo went into the school to deliver an environmental workshop that focused on recycling, nature and 'Incredible Edible'. The children really engaged with this and immersed themselves in all the activities. The children were asked to start collecting items such as bottles, plastic plates and other recyclable items that would be included in the hoardings design.

The final workshop was focused on the planting aspect of the design. The session looked at educating the pupils on the basics of what plants need to survive, the different smells and colours of different varieties of plants and of course why plants are so important as a food source to both nature and us. They also then discussed what recyclable items they could collect that could be used to plant flowers. At this session the children got the opportunity to plant a seed of their own and were encouraged to nurture this in the following weeks.



Incredible Edible

Gentoo is part of a fantastic movement called Incredible Edible inspired by the amazing work of Pam Warhurst in Todmorden. The aim of the project is to create community resilience by enabling edible landscapes - local sustainable food production, environmental awareness and healthy, pleasurable eating.

Pam Warhurst, is the co-founder of the Incredible Edible Project which began in Todmorden, North Yorkshire as a community initiative dedicated to growing food locally. The idea is to take over some unused, unloved land and turn it into communal gardens where food can be grown and shared by all for free.

We planned to incorporate this into the design of the hoardings by planting flowers, herbs, lettuce and tomatoes, to help raise awareness of healthier eating, with local schools, site staff and the local community, who will be encouraged to get involved and look after the produce as a way of sharing pride in their local community. It also would encourage the children to take this new passion and advice home to share with their families and friends.

By sharing skills and resources we can all play a part in supporting local communities, businesses and schools to grow and share food and edible landscapes will undoubtedly bring such benefits. The produce from these planters will hopefully be shared among local community groups, the school children to take home or even donated to local food banks.



The event

Before the children arrived, the site was set up with three different stations; bird feeders/nature homes, planting and recycled art/painting.

There was also a refreshment tent where the children would sit and have their breaks and lunch. The youngsters arrived on site around 9am and were greeted by the Site Manager and given a brief health and safety talk and a run down of the day's events.

Split into three groups of 10, each group took turns of moving around the different stations and then helping to construct the hoardings as the day went on.

On the painting station, recycled plastic plates, paint pot lids and food trays were used and the children painted flowers, bugs and animals which would help make up the mural on the centre of the hoardings. Small stones and pebbles were also painted as bugs that would go along the row of Astroturf laid down in front of the hoardings. The children took their finished designs to the site joiner and helped him attach them to the hoarding. The flower heads went on the end of recycled hose pipes that had previously been attached to the hoardings and the bugs or animal faces were then dotted around.



On the bird feeder and nature homes station, the children were given a choice of the different bird feeders they could make. Recycled bottles were prepared with feeding holes and filled with seed mix and pencils pushed through two holes to make the stand where the bird would land to feed. For the second design children mixed seed with fat and pushed this into scooped out oranges hung by string.

Once the children had finished making the bottle or fruit feeders, they helped to make bird houses and a bug hotel. The bird homes allowed the children to have a go at safely using hammers and drills to construct the home.

The bug hotel required old pallets and the children digging around for stones, sticks, leaves and anything that could be found– along with some bugs! The children thoroughly enjoyed this activity and got really enthusiastic especially when bugs were found.

The planting station was split into bottle planting and pallet planting. The bottles were already prepared with planting and drainage holes and the children had to fill it with soil and select a plant to use. They then wrote their name on a lollipop stick so when they revisit the site, they can identify which was their bottle and see how much it had grown.



On the pallet planting, children were shown the option of flowers, herbs, lettuce, tomatoes and chillies they could plant and took turns in filling the pallets with soil and then planting what they had chosen in the correct area to create a living wall.

Those children that expressed more of a creative interest also got involved in painting various parts of the hoardings including butterflies, ladybirds and snails that really added to the overall design.

The site team got really involved in the design also and came up with a great plan to attach a drainpipe along the top of the hoardings with watering holes so when it rains, all the flowers, herbs and plants can be watered effectively. They also relocated a water butt along side the hoardings to make future watering of the living wall easier.

Click below to see a video of the children on the day ...

<https://youtu.be/aF9-SJTaLwU>



 Jennifer Scullion @msjennjennPR · May 20

Look who just arrived @gentoogroup ready for our @IvorGoodsite hoardings event with @BerniciaGroup tomorrow!



← 5 ★ 2 ...

 **Bernicia Group**
@BerniciaGroup

⚙ Following

Our Deputy Chief Exec visited the kids hard at work on The Cheviots hoardings! Fantastic! @gentoogroup @IvorGoodsite

← 5 ★ ...



 Ashleigh Coombes retweeted



Jennifer Scullion @msjennjennPR · May 21

@davedixon919 down with the kids making birdfeeders! @gentoogroup @BerniciaGroup



 CCScheme @CCScheme · May 21

.@msjennjennPR @gentoogroup @BerniciaGroup Fantastic efforts, it looks great already!

← 2 ★ 2 ...

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Ivor Goodsie @IvorGoodsie · May 21

.@ash_coombes @BerniciaGroup @gentoogroup Looks great so far! Well done!

← 3 ★ 1 ...

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Kids create a living wall

BY TEGAN CHAPMAN
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Pupils from an Ashington first

school have created an 'Incredible Edible' living wall as part of a national competition.

Central First School pupils

were invited along to the site of the former Ashington hospital to help create the wall making bird feeders, bottle gardens, filling pallets with herbs, lettuce and strawberry seeds and finishing off the day making a bug hotel.

The living wall idea was chosen after the school had benefited from environmental and plant workshops from Bernicia and Gentoo staff.

Bernicia's John Johnston said: "The incredible edible living wall is a great example of the benefit we committed to create through The Chevots Development and the extent of its positive impact for the area."



Bernicia's John Johnston with some of the youngsters.

CREATIVE

School kids make Ashington site incredible

School children from Year's 3 and 4 of Central First School in Ashington and their teachers, along with staff members from Bernicia and Gentoo.



Jennifer Scullion
27 MAY
2015

















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