

BARBICAN PODIUM - LIFE ON THE WOODLAND EDGE

CREATING THRIVING PLACES FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

OVERVIEW

'The Barbican Podium: Life on the Woodland Edge' aims to adapt the City of London's largest public open space to be more welcoming to people and nature, to be climate resilient, to be accessible for everyone and to protect the Barbican's historic fabric for generations to come.

As an icon of 20th century urban form, the Barbican Estate's aging podium system is now in urgent need of repair. This is a unique and technically complex opportunity to rethink how we adapt our historic buildings and public spaces to meet the needs of society and environment both today and in the future. Driven by the City of London's climate, biodiversity and conservation objectives a more climate resilient, accessible public green space will be created.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In the 1960s, The Barbican Estate's Architects Chamberlin, Powell and Bon sought to: 'create a monument to hope in architecture that was centred around the belief that the things we build can help us live better, more equal, and more vibrant lives'. This vision is as pertinent to society today as it was then and became central to the design ethos of our scheme. Through community and stakeholder engagement and concept development we set ourselves clear objectives to guide our work:

1. Help create a more climate-resilient urban landscape
2. Maximise green amenity functionality
3. Allow the repair of the podium
4. Create a Safe and Accessible environment for all
5. Conserve the essence of the Barbican's heritage for future generations
6. Create an attractive, immersive, and legible public realm with a unique character
7. Create a maintainable and financially viable public space

DESIGN OUTCOMES

Following extensive consultation, a broad design team have developed design proposals for the podium shown in the accompanying plans and visuals. The design promotes nature as an artform; it balances a multi-layered habitat structure and artistic forms that reference the historic architecture adjacent with a healthy and playful public amenity space.

To achieve this, the design introduces:

- An increase of the greening area by over 70%, made up of 40 trees and a world-class horticultural strategy.
- A net gain in biodiversity by over 240%.
- The use of innovative microclimate modelling to inform a design that provides resilience to future urban heat risk and surface water flooding.
- Play, exercise and art trails.
- Exemplary rain and storm water management.
- Improved accessibility all user groups.
- A reconfiguration of a link building within the space to provide more legible, visually connection and safer routes across the estate.

The scheme is currently awaiting planning and listed building consent and due to start on site in 2024.

Illustrative Masterplan



A Multifunctional Green Space

