

# WEST 8 WINS LONDON BERNIE SPAIN GARDENS DESIGN COMPETITION

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West 8's 'pollinator garden' is the winner of the design competition to upgrade the northern section of Bernie Spain Gardens on London's South Bank, announced on 10 May 2018. The announcement is a major step forward in the transformation of the Gardens. The competition, launched at the end of 2017, was run by the social enterprise owner and manager of the gardens, [Coin Street Community Builders](#) (CSCB). West 8 was one of five shortlisted competition entrants, the others being Bradley-Hole Schoenaich Landscape, J & L Gibbons, Kinnear Landscape Architects (KLA), and Reynolds Design.

## **The design**

West 8's design features two illustrious pollinator gardens at its heart enclosed by an intimate garden-like setting complete with a custom-designed gardener's pavilion. The 'pollinator gardens' feature an abundance of nectar and pollen-rich flowers. Creating the ideal habitat for foraging, shelter and nesting for birds, bees, butterflies and moths throughout the seasons. With spectacular colourful and scented floral displays, the garden features native floral diversity and provides a valuable resource for declining pollinator populations, currently at risk due to habitat loss, introduced diseases, pesticide poisoning, and pollution. It will be here that residents, workers and visitors can spend time and interact with nature.

Along the South Bank Riverside Walkway, the gardens are part of a world-class public realm used by thousands of visitors. Here, several gently curving seating alcoves provide natural gathering spaces, a unique aspect towards the River Thames and an elegant buffer between the more intimate atmosphere of the inner gardens.

The new gardener's pavilion will be fundamental to establishing a sense of stewardship. Inspired by the traditional garden shed, this classic structure is given a contemporary twist. Rendered in a combination of wood and glass, it features several custom designed rooftop beehives.

The design's strong botanical, educational and community focus, fully embraces the garden's unique context, and pays homage to the legacy of Bernadette Spain, a local campaigner on health and housing provisions in the 1970s, after whom the gardens are named.

Of their win Adriaan Geuze, design director, West 8 says: "Bernie Spain Gardens are a sleeping beauty that will become an adored haven not only for flowers and pollination but also for people. The participation of the local community will be an integral part of the revitalisation and future success of the upgrade of the northern garden. "

"The seasonal pollinator gardens will become a meeting point for the area's diverse community of residents, office workers, and visitors. The design vision for the Gardens is deeply rooted in the English DNA of creating gardens. It will be a horticultural display garden and an educational landscape for children and for everyone who does not have access to a garden" adds Adriaan.

### **Transformation**

This upgrade will transform the garden from its current function as a pedestrian thoroughfare into an idyllic garden, its charm will fascinate residents, workers and visitors throughout the seasons. The bold yet elegant design with its botanical heart and robust high-quality materials balances seasonality and romance with careful attention to functionality and flexibility.

### **The competition panel**

The selection panel, chaired by **Paul Finch**, programme director at World Architecture, included **Sue Foster** (Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods and Growth), and **Sandra Roebuck** (Divisional Director for Planning, Regeneration and Enterprise) for the London Borough of Lambeth; **Rob Smith** and **Kfir Yefet** (board members of CSCB); **Iain Tuckett** and **Alison Pinner** (respectively group director and deputy group director of CSCB). The competition was organised by **Ted Inman** (chair of Jubilee Gardens Trust).

CSCB's group director, **Iain Tuckett**, says "The Panel unanimously recommended the appointment of West 8 to take forward its proposals. It was also the scheme that had greatest public support. The Panel were impressed by all the designs, each team responded with a different but credible response to the challenges of our Brief. We can only commission one team to take its proposals forward but all five teams showed ingenuity, imagination and real care in developing and presenting their proposals. We look forward to working with West 8 to create the pollinator garden."

### **Process and next steps**

CSCB and West 8 are working to refine the brief in the light of points raised and public feedback during the competition process. A reference group of residents is to be established which will include one or more horticultural training practitioners. This will ensure good local engagement and advice on community input and horticultural training opportunities. Then next stages of design and consultation will be undertaken with a view to submitting a planning application by the end of 2018.

more information: [Bernie Spain Gardens](#)