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BIRMINGHAM LIBRARY

Rooftop Gardens

The Library of Birmingham was commissioned by Birmingham City Council and designed by the internationally acclaimed Dutch architects Mecanoo Architecten. The Library has two outdoor terraces level 3 and level 7, both accessible by the public and have contrasting atmospheres and qualities.

Read Case Study



Table with project details: VALUE (£1.04m), DURATION (12 months), LOCATION (Central Birmingham), ARCHITECTS (Mecanoo Architecten), CLIENT (Birmingham City Council), MAIN CONTRACTOR (Carillion)

- Key Features: 2 Roof terraces, Teardrop shaped GRP planters, Granite paving on pedestals, Iroko benches and bar, Edible planting

- Key Stats: 9,000 Plants, 48 Bespoke curved GRP Planters, 1,300m² Granite paving, 400m³ Soil and polystyrene fill, 130lm Timber benches



- Project Challenges: Simplify the design to reduce the number of GRP moulds, Drainage issues lead to the paving floating, Maintaining the site when busy with public visitors, Installing all the electrics and lighting, Getting the materials loaded out prior to cranes leaving, A lot of curved cutting on the paving

Project Challenges

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- Award Winning Project: BALI Principal Award Winner (2013), Winner (2014), Shortlisted (2014), Highly Commended (2014)

The building's circular pattern of the metal Frieze honours the city's industrial heritage and the terrace (level 3) is laid out in patterns derived from the facade design. The bespoke teardrop and semi-circular grp planters (supplied by Europlanters), boarded by curved Iroko clad seats guide you through these different spaces and provide the opportunity to wander over the terrace. The granite paved terrace boasts a performance space, a children's playspace, a bar area and other seating areas.



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The planting scheme on level 3 is inspired by the English 'knot garden' theme with raised flowerbeds enclosed by evergreen hedges, filled with culinary herbs and fragrant cottage style garden plants. Several small multi-stem trees punctuate the space and provide height and movement, and a mixture of evergreen and perennial plants are used in the more wind-exposed spaces.

An allotment style edible planting area was also commissioned for the terrace with the aim of the produce being harvested and used within the library kitchens. This part of the scheme is to provide an educational facility where schools and local groups can gather to learn what can be grown successfully on a roof terrace. These raised beds have graded levels of planting from the path towards the centre of each bed, maintaining the formality and geometry of the 'Knot Garden' and encompass fruit trees, fruiting bushes, herbs and annual vegetables / salad leaves. Over 3500 plants planted on this terrace.



The theme for the planting on the level 7 terrace was a 'natural garden' which is in direct contrast to the formality of level 3. Winding paths guide you through the circular-shaped seating areas which are surrounded by a carpet of ground cover plants used for the more extreme weather conditions, and which were chosen to attract birds, bees and insects. Over 5,500 plants were used on this terrace.

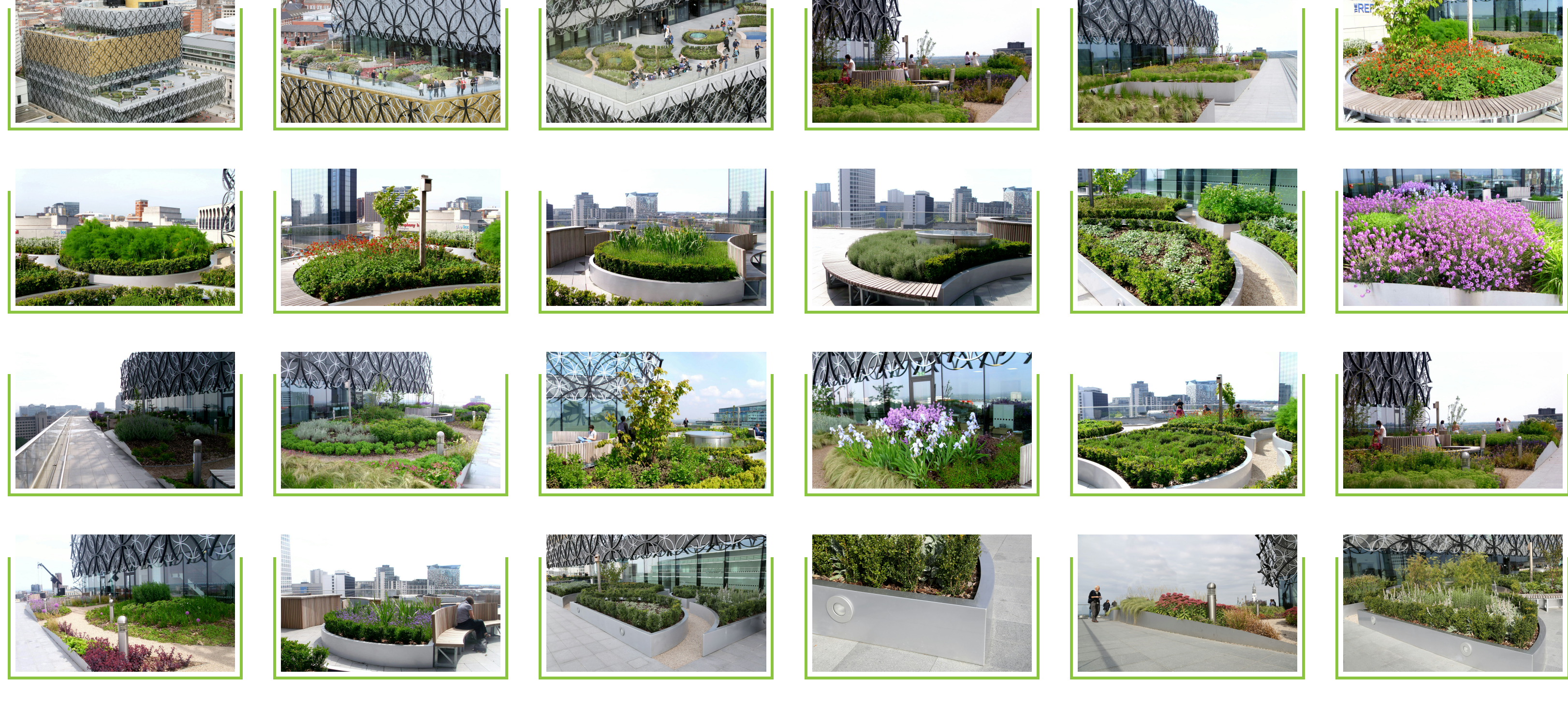
Each terrace has three bird boxes positioned within the shrub areas out of reach of disturbance in the future of attracting Starlings, Robins and Blackbirds, also three insect boxes have been positioned across both terraces to help with the biodiversity of the gardens and aid natural pollination of the plants.

Frosts are pleased to have been presented the Principal Award in the Green Roofs category at the 2013 national BALI landscaping Awards for the Library of Birmingham Project.

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BIRMINGHAM LIBRARY GALLERY

A look at the project through our photo and video gallery



Contact information: Frosts Landscapes logo, social media icons, address (Liscombe Park, Leiscombe Central, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 0JL), phone (0845 021 9001), email (info@frostslandscapes.com), and a Contact Us button.

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