SMALL INFRASTRUCTURE CASE STUDY:

GLOUCESTER SERVICE STATION

REAR VIEW OF SITE (WESTMORELAND LTD, 2019)
WHAT WAS THE PROJECT?

This site demonstrates that infrastructural design can promote biodiversity and landscape, at the same time as stimulating the local economy.

The story began in 1972 when John & Barbara Dunning, Cumbrian hill farmers, set up Tebay Services when the M6 cut though their farm. They opened a small 30 seat café serving home cooked, locally sourced food. The Dunning’s viewed the M6 not as the death of their farm, but the beginning of a new chapter in how they ran the farm. Nearly fifty years later and they are still family owned working farm and with a passion for, and a pride in, the landscape, people, environment and local produce. Following a failed application by another company on the same site in the 1990s, they applied to develop a Motorway Service Area (MSA) on both sides of the M5 Motorway. The northbound services opened in May 2014, and the Southbound side opened a year later.

ECOLOGY ON SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

"Flanked by an Area of Natural Beauty, it needed to look like it belonged there from the outside, with minimal landscape disruption.” — Sarah Dunning, Westmorland Limited (client)

The site is flanked by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB) and Robinswood Hill, so it was important to minimize the environmental impact and blend the building into the surrounding countryside. The overarching ambition of the scheme is to have minimal impact on its surrounds, reflecting the sensitivity of the wider environment and proximity to the Cotswolds. To achieve this the buildings were designed so that they would not disturb the view, with a 4,000m² green roof to blend the new service station into the surrounding landscape. This green roof was designed to encourage local flora and fauna to flourish. Excavated materials from construction were reused in landscaping. Extensive sustainable drainage was created, consisting of swales, bio-retention areas and filtration strips, which discharge the water into a pond and wetland area.
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT – INTEGRATING HARD INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN AN ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

"We support this scheme confident that its major benefits far outweigh the minor intrusion it would make. It would set a new standard for [Motorway Services Areas] and probably win national recognition as a model." South West Design Review Panel

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty require high standards of design and Gloucester Services offers a prime example of what motorway services can achieve. Pegasus Group conducted the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment which helped to situate the site within the context of the wider area. As a result Gloucester Services are sensitive to the local landscape character and have tried to ensure green infrastructure is utilised to maximum effect to contribute a unique sense of place. Ecological, arboricultural (tree) and topography appraisals created a baseline of information to guide the design of the site in terms of layout, understanding the soil type of the area, identifying any local protected or priority species and habitats that might need to be protected during construction and once the site is in use.

The site was also assessed and designed to achieve BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standard and endorsed by the South West Design Review Panel. The clients, Westmorland Ltd. and the Gloucester Gateway Trust partnered with the Building with Nature scheme to ensure the building benefits wildlife and increases biodiversity. The development was awarded Building with Nature ‘achieved’ status to highlight successful implementation of an ambitious design brief.

ADDING TO EXISTING BIODIVERSITY

“Attracting flora and fauna to Gloucester Services will be an ongoing process. We have planted wildflowers on the roof, we’ve planted an orchard of 250 fruit trees which we hope will yield produce we can sell in our farm shop and we even have our own beehives! The pond will play a major role in attracting the wildlife that will support our biodiversity strategy while providing an attractive feature for visitors.” Rebecca McGilvray, Westmorland Ltd. (Clients)

Pegasus Landscape Design guided the design of the scheme from the outset to ensure that the proposals would have minimal impact on the surrounding area and added to the site. Individual features are linked to improve ecological connectivity, and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features provide wildlife habitat and manage surface water runoff within the boundary of the scheme. The ponds are now home to new species. The site also has bat boxes and raptor boxes for kestrels. The stone wall cladding of the buildings is home to many insects. The site is maintained by two in-house landscape gardeners.

The partnership between a business (Westmorland Limited) and a charity (Gloucestershire Gateway Trust) enabled the creation of a number of community projects, including the ‘growing communities’ project, which works with unemployed individuals, helping them to gain new skills for future employment. From this, over 1000 trees have been planted on site, including an orchard.
LESSONS LEARNT

The applicant found the process of Building with Nature certification helped to refine the plans for enhancing the wetland habitats, and to identify improvements to the long term management and maintenance of green infrastructure features.

The site has won numerous other awards including ‘Outstanding Contribution to the Local or National Economy’ award at Cotswold Life Business & Professional Family Business Awards in 2018. Gloucester Services and Glenn Howells Architects also won ‘Project of the Year’ award, ‘Community Benefit’ award and ‘Infrastructure’ award at RICS Awards, South West in 2017.

The project highlights how businesses and charities can successfully work together, and new developments can give back to local communities and the environment. A site that is designed and constructed well, both environmentally and in terms of well-being, can have a positive impact on attracting wildlife to the vicinity and give customers a pleasant, green environment to enjoy.

Further information:

- Client: [www.gloucestersons.com](http://www.gloucestersons.com)
- Architect: [www.glennhowells.co.uk/project/gloucester-services](http://www.glennhowells.co.uk/project/gloucester-services)
- Planning Consultant/Landscape Architect: [www.pegasusgroup.co.uk/case-studies/planning/gloucestershire-gateway-msa](http://www.pegasusgroup.co.uk/case-studies/planning/gloucestershire-gateway-msa)
- Building with Nature: [www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/gloucester-services-detail](http://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/gloucester-services-detail)
- Overview: [www.buildingcentre.co.uk/project/gloucester-services](http://www.buildingcentre.co.uk/project/gloucester-services)
- Case study summary: [oppla.eu/casestudy/19193](http://oppla.eu/casestudy/19193)