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The Octavia Hill Garden by Blue Diamond with the National Trust

Show Gardens



Designed by
[Ann-Marie Powell with the Blue Diamond Team](#)

Built by
[The Landscaping Consultants](#)

Sponsored by
[Blue Diamond National Trust](#)

Pioneering social reformer Octavia Hill (1838–1912), a founder of the National Trust, believed that ‘the healthy gift of air and the joy of plants and flowers’ were vital in everyone’s life. She worked tirelessly to improve urban housing and protect green space, yet today, one in three people in Britain still don’t have access to nearby nature-rich spaces.

Conceptually located on an urban brownfield site, this beautiful, plant-filled urban community wildlife garden is designed to stimulate physical, mental, and social wellbeing. The garden increases urban-biodiversity and encourages visitors to feel they are part of nature by making intimate connections with plants and wildlife.

The garden is built as a series of open-air sitting rooms, where visitors can experience different views and atmospheres. Sloping level changes with wheelchair accessible paths, lead visitors to a planted shade canopy, observation platform, wildlife pond or walking stream, providing multiple opportunities to enjoy the garden wildlife, feasting on the pollinator-friendly planting.

At a glance:

Who is this garden for?

This is a public access garden designed to welcome all

Where is the garden set?

An inner city brownfield site at the end of a row of buildings.

Who or what is the design inspiration?

The life and work of Octavia Hill

A garden structure designed to integrate seamlessly into the garden serves as a habitat hub and focal point for the wider garden. Bird boxes hung within the trees which trail through the space and a hand carved oak retaining wall with habitat panels provide homes for wildlife.

A contemporary wildlife pond and walkable stream add to the habitats of the garden, and fills the space with the calming sound of running water.

In the heart of the city, while a soundscape that intertwines with the undulating rhythms of the garden enhances connections with the garden and provides an experience for visitors who are visually impaired or blind. Spires of *Digiplexus*

Next Garden



[WaterAid Garden](#)

and shimmering *Bouteloua* create a rich planting palette. Several edible species are included in the planting, primarily as food sources for wildlife, and for foraging. All have been included for their ornamental as well as productive values.

Key sustainability points:

- The garden features native and non-native plants working together for biodiversity and beauty
- All plants are grown in peat-free soil
- Low carbon concrete for all concrete formations
- Permeable seating areas and paths formed from UK-sourced reclaimed brick, timber and stone from National Trust properties
- Retaining walls to platform formed with thatch (traditional material used in a contemporary way to encourage wildlife)

Relocation:

The Garden will be relocated to Blue Diamond-owned, RHS Partner Garden, Bridgemere Show Gardens, Nantwich, Cheshire.

More on this garden



[5 Key plants](#)



[Meet the designer](#)



[Hear from National Trust & Blue Diamond](#)



[See the plant list for the The Octavia Hill Garden by Blue Diamond with The National Trust \(89 kB\)](#)



[RHS guide to gardening for wildlife](#)