

Olympic Park soil strategy remains a draw for green space professionals

Written by Luke

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Tim White, Senior Associate at soil and landscape consultancy Tim O'Hare Associates, was one of two presenters at the April CPD meeting of the South East England Regional Group of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, which took place at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Tim's presentation - The appraisal and characterisation of urban soils and the Olympic Park soil strategy - proved a major draw for ICF members and followed a morning tour of the Olympic Park site with Dr Phil Askew and Chris Moran of the London Legacy Development Corporation. Immediate Past President of the Landscape Institute, Sue Illman, also presented at the event.

During the planning and construction of the Olympic Park, Tim O'Hare Associates was responsible for designing, overseeing the installation, and monitoring the seven different soil types required to support a range of planting environments on the park, from highly fertile topsoil for perennials to low fertility soils for the wildflower meadows. The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is now an exemplar for other schemes on former industrial urban land where the soil has been remediated and/or augmented to create suitable topsoils.



he first part of Tim White's presentation covered the problems that can be expected with urban

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soils and the things to look out for including compaction, variability, inclusion of foreign matter (bricks, concrete and glass), chemical contamination and poor drainage. In the second part, Tim gave an overview of the Olympic Park soil strategy for landscape construction on the site, which included the design of a soil remediation strategy whilst working within challenging programme constraints in terms of drainage, sustainability, etc. Tim O'Hare Associates also designed specialist topsoil for swales and wetland areas and tree sand for the planting of trees in areas of hard landscaping.

Tim White BSc MSc MISoilSci CSci and Tim O'Hare Associates are currently working on a number of projects involving surveying and analysing urban soils, including for the Royal Parks.