

CAMLEY STREET NATURAL PARK

Creating a bold new centre of excellence



London
Wildlife
Trust



Nestled on the banks of the Regent's Canal, Camley Street Natural Park is a magical oasis that gives a home to wildlife right in the heart of King's Cross. It is one of London Wildlife Trust's jewels, and a surprise for visitors who are able to hear wrens sing and watch dragonflies dart in the shadow of an international railway station.

The eyes of thousands of young children widen in delight at this little jungle in the city. We want to keep it that way, but we also want to make it better, and able to flourish in its rapidly changing surroundings.

"What an amazing corner of London, an oasis in the centre of chaos." The Sedgewicks

"We come here as a family all the time. It is such a joy!!"
Michelle, Jason & Liam

"Wonderful discovery. A wild walk in the heart of London."
Veronique

View north over Camley Street, 2014 © Sophie Darlington

London Wildlife Trust has been managing Camley Street Natural Park since 1985.

A former coal drop - where coal brought by railway was loaded onto the canal - the site had become wild by the late 1970s. A 1981 proposal to turn it into a lorry park was successfully fought by local campaigners, led by London Wildlife Trust. The Greater London Council acquired the land, which had been subsequently damaged, and paid for the creation of the nature reserve, designed in liaison with the Trust.

The establishment of Camley Street Natural Park was a landmark step in the development of urban nature conservation in Britain, and showed that it was possible to create a high quality nature reserve from scratch in the inner heart of the city.

The Park is owned by the London Borough of Camden, which has helped to underpin operational costs since 1985. In addition, the Trust has been highly successful in securing a wide range of funding to support, maintain and broaden the appeal of the reserve. As well as being a much-loved community asset, Camley Street receives international acclaim as a place which successfully brings nature closer to people in the city.

It is a haven for wildlife and people seeking to escape the hectic pace of London.

"My favourite animal in the pond was a pond skater because it was really big and it looked like a cockroach, and I found lots of animals in the pond." **Kyle, aged 7**

"I liked pond dipping." **Hayley, aged 6**



Pond-dipping in 1987, in the shadow of the iconic gas-holders

Today the Park sits at the heart of the King's Cross regeneration programme. While the landscape around it has transformed beyond recognition since the 1980s, it has continued to quietly provide a sanctuary for nature and a space for people to learn, volunteer or simply enjoy the tranquillity of their nature reserve, a butterfly's flight from St. Pancras International station.

Camley Street's environs are now changing ever more quickly. A new Camden Council office block rises to the south, and new and refurbished buildings will adorn the canal towpath to the east. Some of the old listed gas holders are returning; once they stood south of the Park; they will now rise to the north. We are already welcoming many more visitors as the first residents of King's Cross Central move in and plans for a footbridge, to connect Camley Street directly with the development, will only increase the footfall. By 2020, 45,000 people will live, work and study within 1km of the Park.



The current facilities of the Park, a timber prefab and outbuildings installed in 1984, are now operating well beyond their lifespan. They no longer serve the Trust's needs, nor do they meet the environmental standards we seek for facilities on one of our showcase reserves.

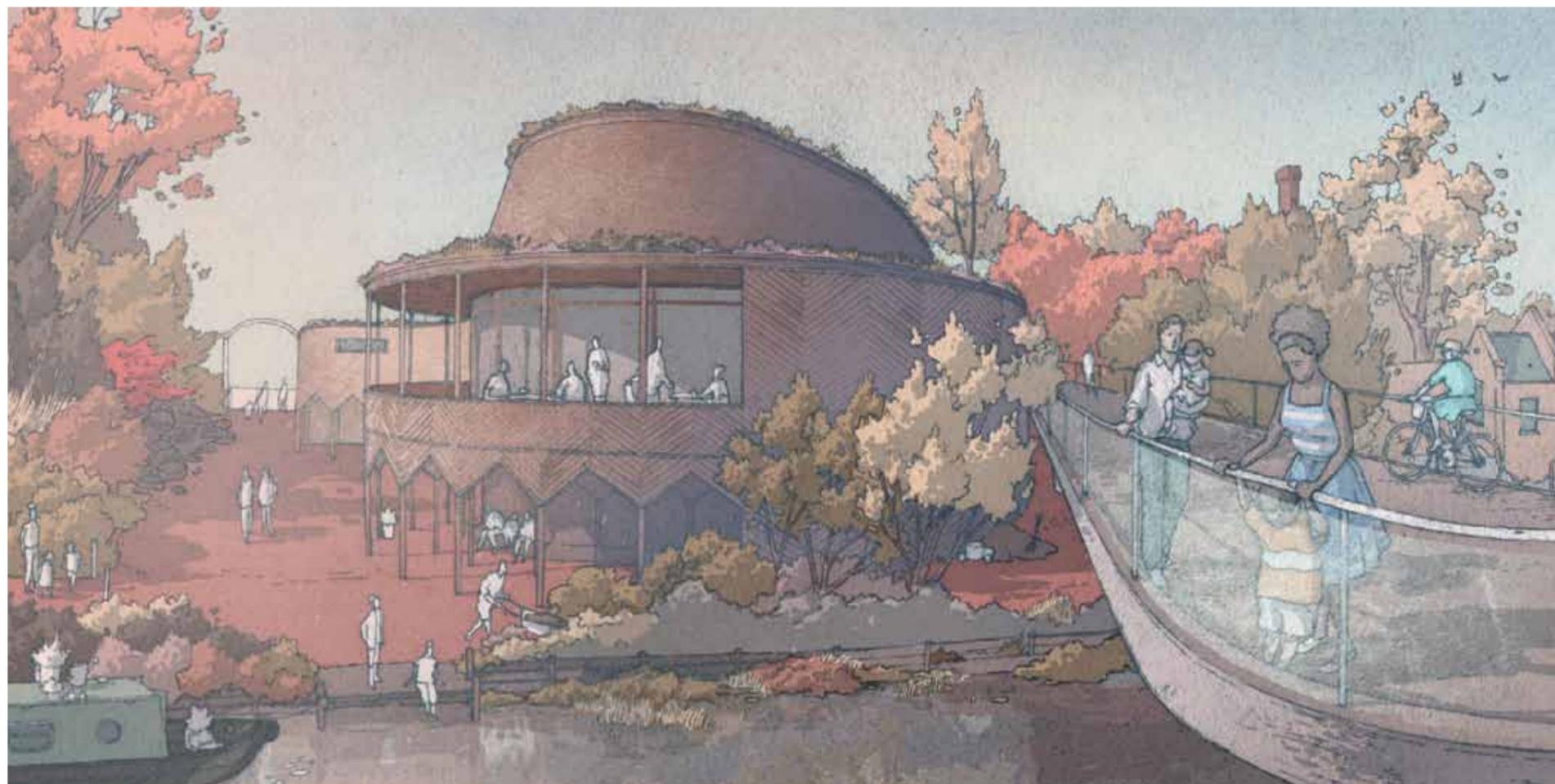
We now need to ensure that Camley Street can continue to play a key role in a revitalised King's Cross, in a way that respects the wildlife and nature that finds a home here.



The classroom in 1984



Bird's eye view of the future Camley Street Natural Park (artist's impression)



London Wildlife Trust's vision is for Camley Street to be the best place to experience nature in central London; we need your help to achieve this.

You can support us to build a new state-of-the-art, ecologically-sensitive building to provide resources for our staff, volunteers and visitors. This needs to house a flexible space with information and facilities which will reinforce Camley Street's importance as a destination to both enjoy and learn about nature in King's Cross. We need a building that will provide a resource for the many local and corporate volunteers who give us their time, energy and enthusiasm, and which will provide an inspirational place in which our staff can work safely and securely.

The future building (artist's impression)



London Wildlife Trust aims to raise sufficient resources by 2017 to build the new visitor centre and make this nature reserve an outstanding centre of excellence.

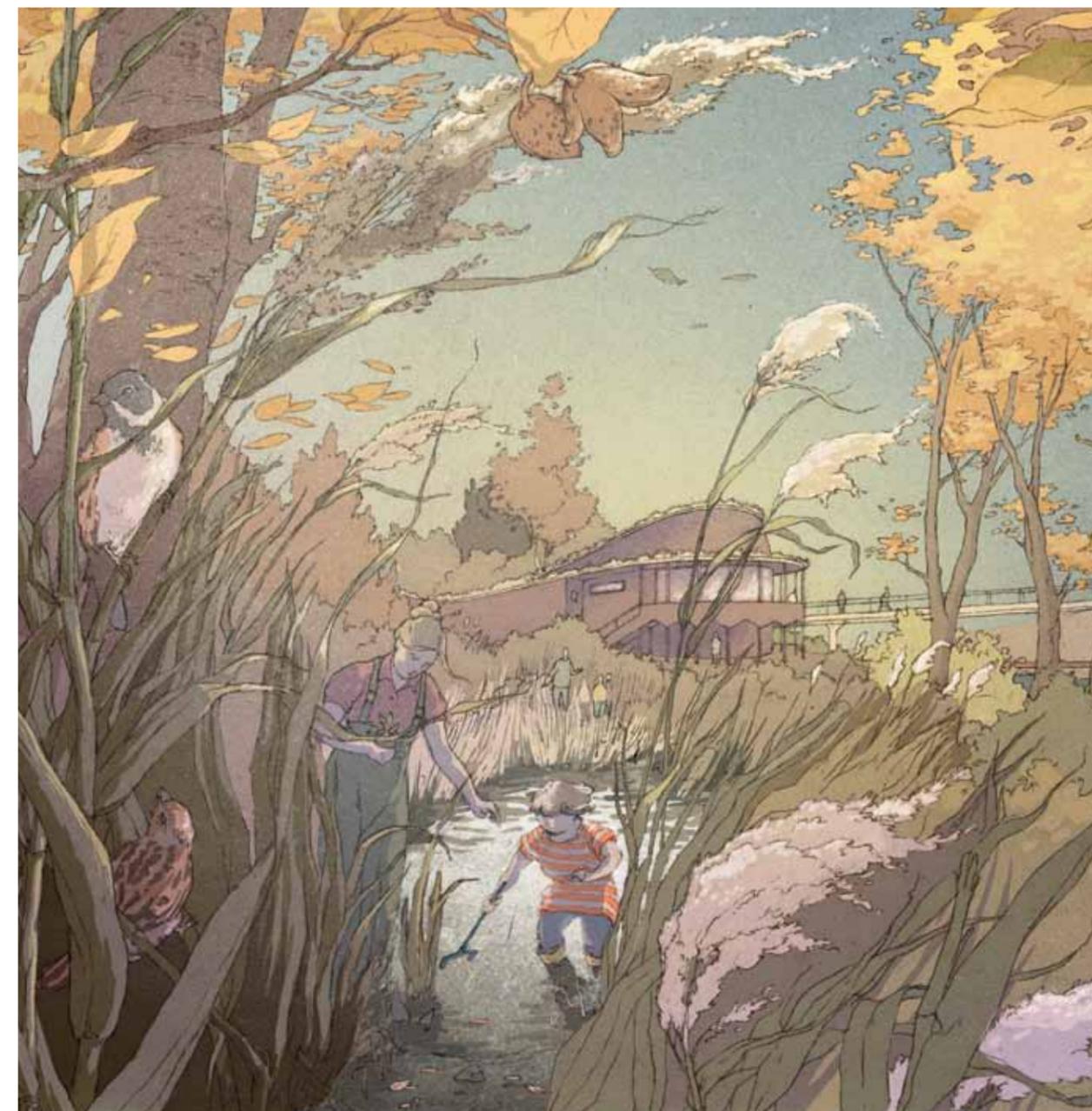
With your help Camley Street Natural Park will be a wild haven where:

- children can have their first experience of nature, getting muddy pond-dipping and hunting for mini-beasts;
- people will access our community learning, helping them to acquire new skills;
- people from all walks of life can escape from city stress, and experience some of London's amazing wildlife.

With your support, we will secure this special corner of King's Cross for Londoners, for the future.

"Fantastic! I hope this lasts forever!"

W. Chipperfield, Thomas Bingham Chambers





Broad-bodied chaser © Penny Frith

Come and learn more about our work at Camley Street
www.wildlondon.org.uk/reserves/camley-street-natural-park

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Protecting London's
wildlife for the future