

Sow the City

1. About us

Sow the City is a community-led, award-winning social enterprise passionate about providing productive and attractive green infrastructure and community greenspace.

The Manchester social enterprise, founded in 2009 by director Jon Ross, has a unique background, uniting commercial landscape architecture practice with staff experience in urban agriculture, ecology, community engagement, and urban regeneration.

Our portfolio spans a wide range of projects including food growing spaces, allotment and wildlife gardens, health gardens, rewilding, nature restoration, green roofs, and health and sensory gardens. Our Green Health Walk at Prestwich Hospital was one of only 6 greening projects in the UK that was selected to represent the NHS at COP26 in Glasgow in 2021.

Our HQ is in just outside the city centre and we know Manchester as well as anyone. We take joy in creative collaboration and have a passion for designing bespoke and inventive spaces that connect people to nature.





Jon Ross MA BSc MIEMA

Born and raised in Manchester, Jon knows a lot about the soil in this part of the country. Having graduated with a masters in environmental management, he has experience of funding, designing and managing a wide range of environmental projects. Jon founded Sow the City with just a few bags of compost in 2009. Since then he has steered the social enterprise into an award winning organisation. Jon is passionate about the potential for nature to improve his home town and loves to grow his own veg when he's not helping other people do the same.



Kieron McGlasson MTCP

Having grown up in the Lake District, Kieron has always been inspired by the natural world and its multiple benefits. After moving to Manchester for university, Kieron spent just short of a decade in the regeneration sector delivering high profile city centre and neighbourhood wide projects. Kieron then discovered the social enterprise sector in a bid to help both people and planet, and began working to build happier and healthier communities in Salford. Joining Sow the City in early 2014 has allowed Kieron to combine his roots, experience and personal interests in across numerous health and environmental projects. His work combines his passions for food growing, environmental conscience and commitment to assets-based community development to help create greener and healthier places.



Catherine Clarke

Catherine comes to Sow the City with over 10 years spent working in the environmental sector, initially starting her career as a volunteer with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) supporting delivery of an urban food growing project and learning practical growing skills on a community farm. This was then followed by further project and event work with YWT on nature reserves and for the last 6 years delivering environmental education with the RSPB to connect children and families with nature.



Ciaran Mcloughlin

Born in Liverpool and raised in Cheshire, Ciarán comes from a long line of gardeners and plant enthusiasts. In his professional life, he has worked in primary education for approximately 10 years supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Ciarán leapt at the chance to join the Sow the City team when the opportunity arose and is employed as a community grower, supporting various schools, groups, and associations throughout Greater Manchester. In his spare time Ciarán can be found tending his own allotment in Blackley, North Manchester, where he lives with his wife, dog and three cats.



Laura Weaver

Laura was born and raised in Staffordshire and has always had a passion and connection to nature. She became an adopted Mancunian in 2012 when she came to Manchester to study Fine Art. Since leaving university Laura has been involved with projects with Scaffold Gallery, Blaze Arts and Step Up, which is where she found her passion for running art sessions and bringing creativity to communities. Laura is the Link Worker for our most recent project Nature for Health and she is the Assistant Manager for the Boiler House



Ladislav Maluch

Lad comes from the Slovakian countryside where he acquired a great wealth of skills in horticulture, market gardening and commercial growing. Having lived in Manchester for over 10 years Lad has been working on improving the mental health and wellbeing of local communities using nature, incl. food growing, foraging, outdoor cooking and nature crafts. Lad has a strong passion for fungi and anything fungi related.



Lucy Moore

Lucy grew up in London but has lived in Manchester for five years, where she has developed her interest in human environment interactions, through studying Geography at undergraduate level and a Masters in Green Infrastructure, both at the University of Manchester. Lucy's placement at the social enterprise 'Urban Growth' contributed to her appreciation of the beneficial impact of nature on wellbeing. She is excited to be part team where she can develop her passion for urban greening at both the community and city scale.



2. How we work

We are a unique collaboration of differing environmental, design and community disciplines that work as a team to enhance both existing and new places. We are based at a community hub called the Boiler House where we imagine, research, sketch, model and detail.

We apply a considerate, holistic, creative and innovative approach to all our work; combining skills and experience from both our professional and personal passions. We focus on creating ecological spaces with natural and recycled materials, horticulture, native plant species, and creating habitats.

Sow the City can project manage everything—from budgets and schedules, to community engagement. We create professional designs that blend hard landscaping with soft planting and sculptural elements.

We specialise in transforming derelict and contaminated land in urban environments. We plan for the future—providing planting plans with wildlife and edible planting so your garden will change and grow over time and contribute to a sustainable city.

We can provide advice on funding options and run volunteer days with local community groups to reduce the cost of constructing gardens and engage the local community. We can run workshops and events to increase engagement with the project. We are curious and like researching both the physical and social history of places. We scrutinise old maps and plans, hunt for clues on site and in photographs and integrate our findings into our proposals.

We communicate the spirit of a place, heritage and physical nature through the spaces we design. We like pens and paper and scissors, we like being out and about exploring and crafting places for all.



3. Our vision

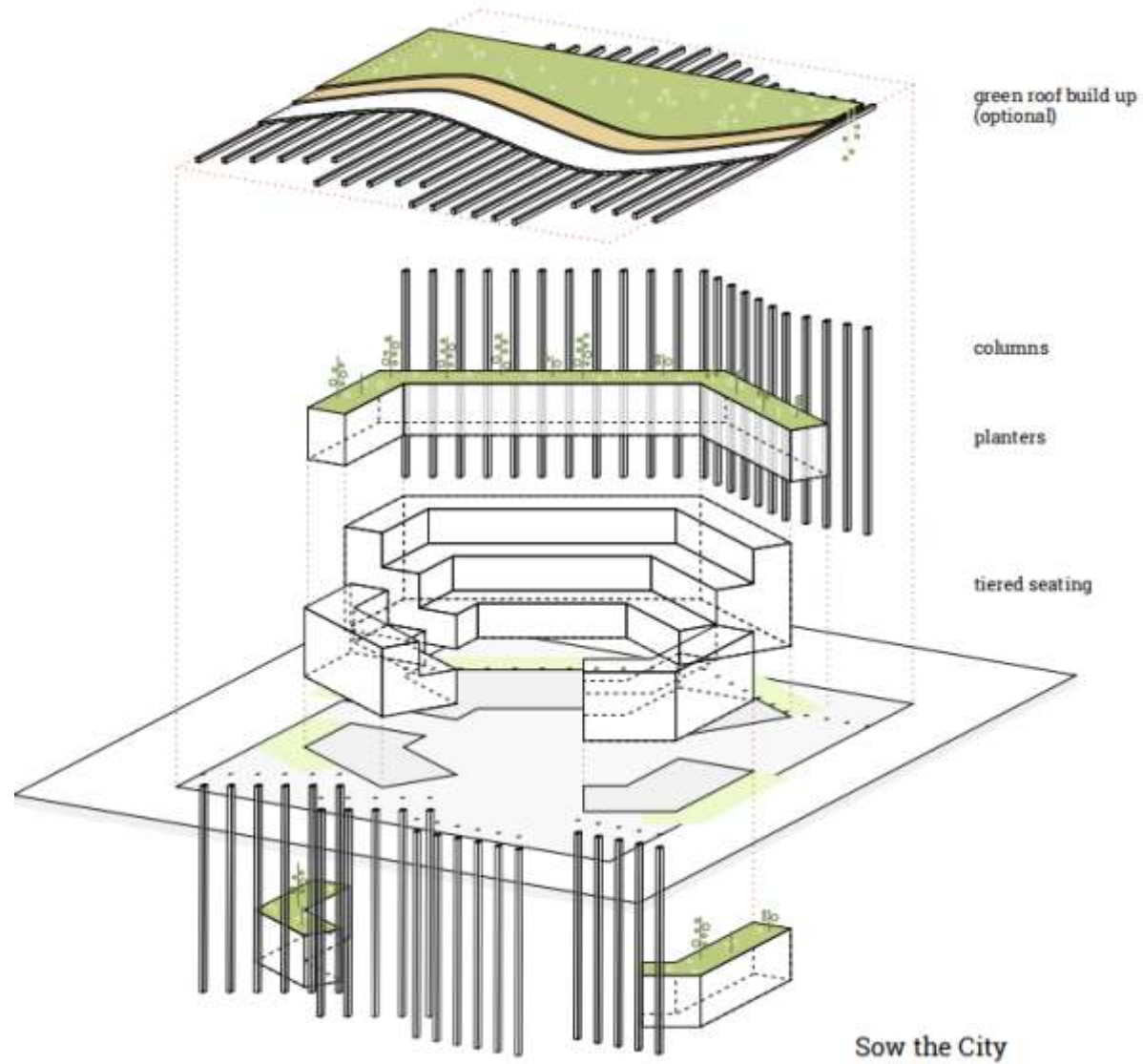
- 1 Urban fruit tree planting to provide shading, food and reduce air pollution.
- 2 City centre dwellers grow food on roofs and balconies.
- 3 Jobs created through food enterprise.
- 4 Urban parks and nature reserves used as places to forage for free food.
- 5 Green infrastructure used as green setting for investment and economic regeneration.



- 6 Allotments created to increase urban food production and decrease food related carbon emissions.
- 7 Urban soil protected and quality improved through proper care and management.
- 8 Schools, hospitals and public buildings used for growing food and horticultural therapy.

- 9 Unused public land developed into permanent or 'meanwhile' food growing sites.
- 10 Farms in and around the city used to provide locally sourced seasonal food for city dwellers.
- 11 Food growing at home in gardens and yards.
- 12 Community gardens and allotments created to provide local food and build stronger, more cohesive communities.

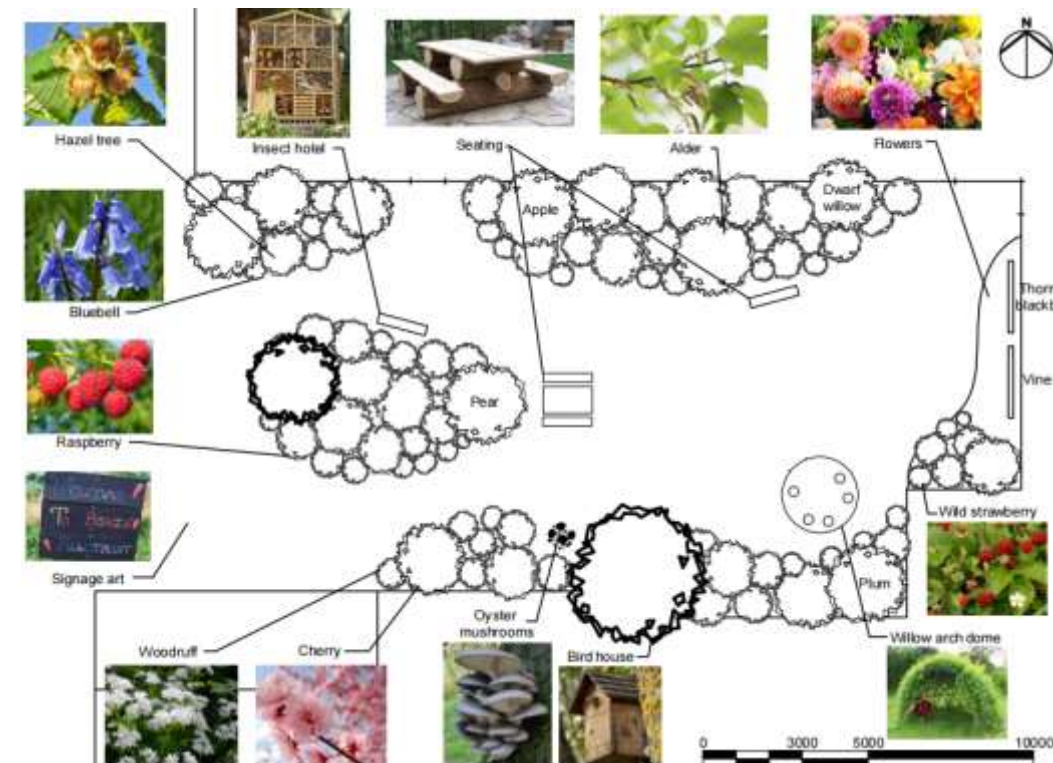
4. Our projects



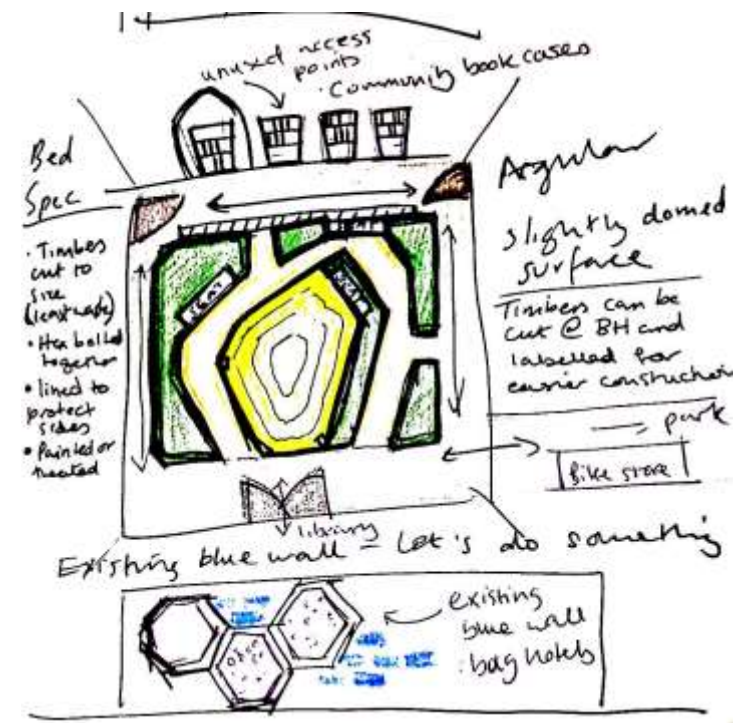
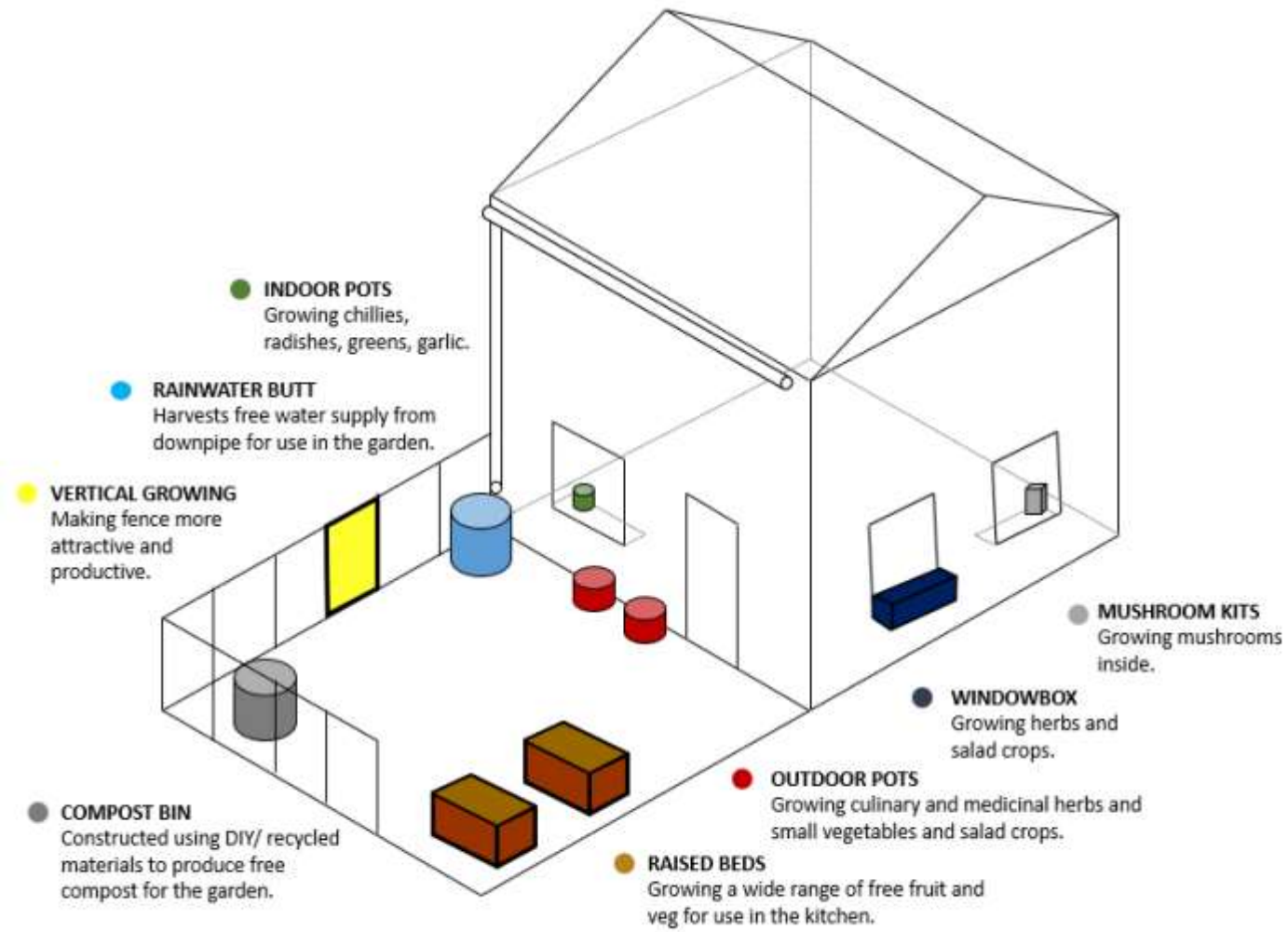
Outdoor Classroom Amphitheater. Client: Lewis St Primary School



Alleyway for Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Concept. Client: Hubbub/ Manchester Climate Change Agency



Poet's Estate Forest Garden. Client: Jigsaw Homes

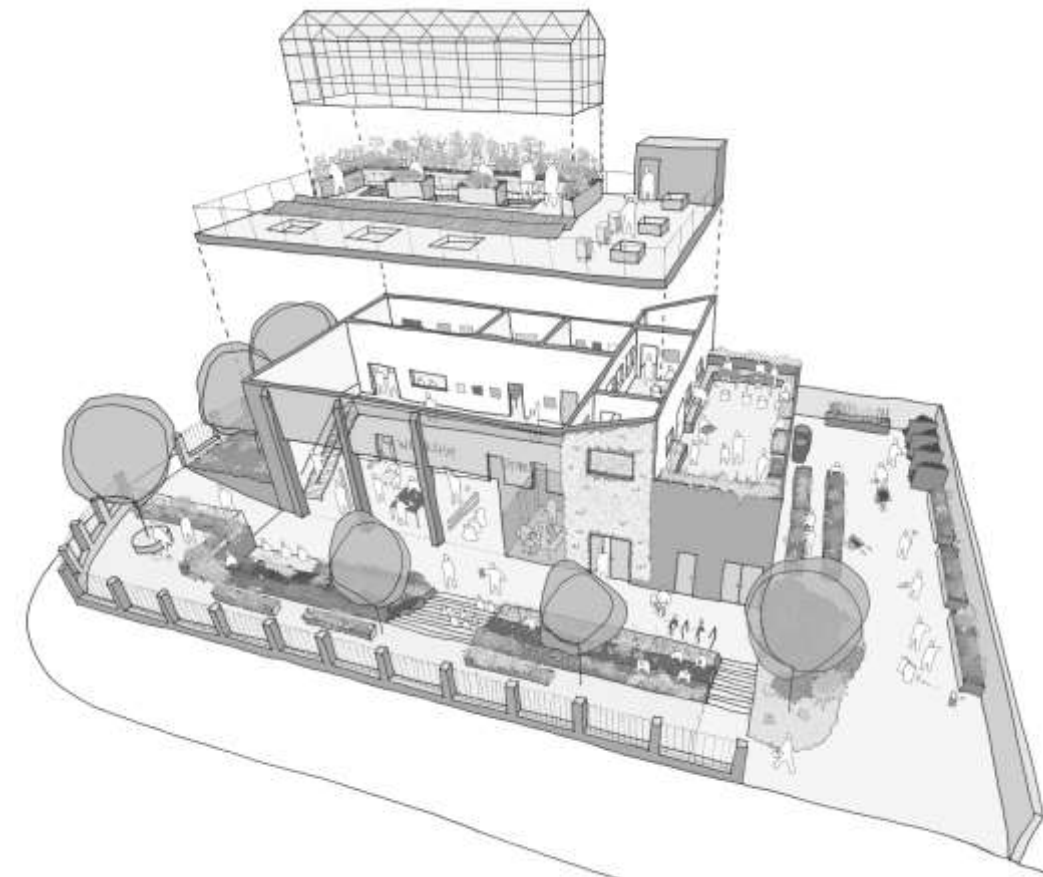


Powerhouse Quad Allotment and Wildlife Garden. Client: Young Manchester

Housing First Rehoming Project. Client: Shelter



Green Space and Ecology Review Client: Manchester NHS Foundation Trust



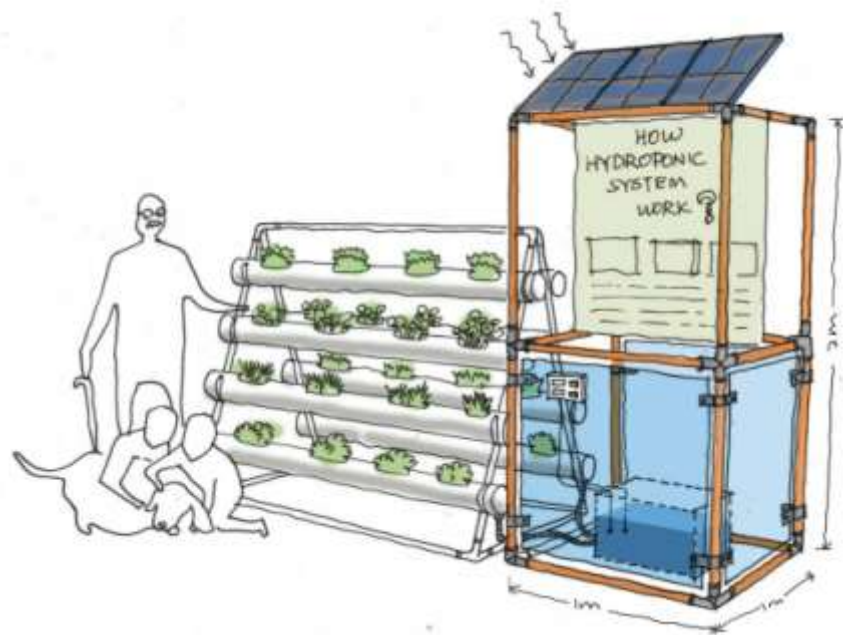
Boiler House Concept Drawing. Client: Boiler House/ Sow the City



Boiler House Green Roof. Client: Sow the City



Green Health Walk. Client: Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Trust



Allotment of the Future Hydroponics Powered by PV. Client: Marketing Manchester



Wildlife Garden Client: Ashton-Upon-Mersey School



Castlefield Viaduct In Our Nature Garden. Client: National Trust



Printworks Green Roof. Client: Printworks Manchester



Castlefield Viaduct In Our Nature Garden. Client : National Trust



Wellbeing Garden. Client: Guidance Hub Cheetham Hill



Boiler House Centre, Moss Side. Moss Art Installation Client : Young Manchester



Allotment of the Future Hydroponics. Client: Marketing Manchester



School Allotment and Wildlife Garden. Client: Ladybarn Primary School



Red Door Allotment Yard. Client: Bury Times

5. Services

We are a small team of environmental professionals and landscape designers.

We work on projects ranging in scale, complexity and budget aiming to achieve benefits to the community who will use and enjoy them and for local wildlife and sustainability.

Our services include:

Urban agriculture

Habitat restoration

Green infrastructure

Green roofs

Planting design

Construction details

Landscape design

Workshops for clients and community groups

Co-design

Project management

Where it adds value we collaborate with consultants including architects, engineers, ecologists, planners, plant nurseries, artists and makers, developers and community groups.

We have experience of engaging and working with local councils, housing associations, charities, schools, NHS hospitals and hospices.





Sow the City regularly works with a number of brilliant freelance ecologists, landscape designers, contactors, nurseries and suppliers from around the North West. Calling on our network freelancers allows us to bring in more expertise and resource were required.

An architectural rendering of a modern building's interior. The space is characterized by red brick walls and large, multi-paned windows with dark frames. The ceiling features prominent red horizontal beams. On the right, a wide, light-colored staircase leads upwards. In the foreground, a person in a high-visibility orange vest is kneeling on the floor, working with a large black wheel and a white bucket. Another person in a white jacket is walking up the stairs. In the middle ground, two people are standing near a large window, looking out. The scene is brightly lit, with strong shadows cast across the floor.

Sow the City

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