



CITY QUAYS GARDENS PROJECT



CLIENT

Belfast Harbour Commissioners

PROJECT LOCATION

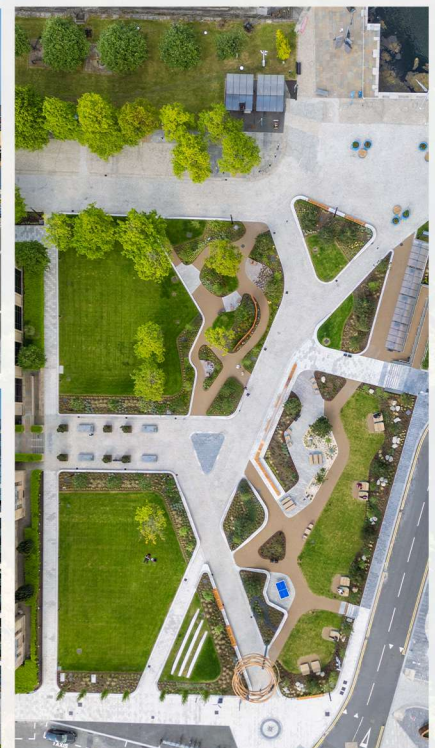
Belfast Harbour

PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR

Northstone Materials Limited

COMPLETION DATE

May 2025



CITY QUAYS GARDENS PROJECT

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City Quays Gardens project represents a £3 million investment by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners to transform an existing 2-acre car park next to the iconic Harbour Office into a vibrant public space. This project is part of the first phase of the City Quays Development Masterplan and aims to create a new 'green' urban garden for the City Quays area.

With a strong emphasis on sustainability and environmental excellence, City Quays Gardens is set to achieve 'One Planet Living' ecological accreditation, making it the first in Northern Ireland. The design incorporates eco-conscious features and establishes new habitats for wildlife, thus enhancing biodiversity.

WORKS ON THE SCHEME INCLUDED

The gardens merge the maritime and industrial heritage of the surrounding area with sustainable design principles. Key features include:



Initial work involved stripping away several hardstanding areas, including asphalt and concrete, which were then transported to our quarry facilities for recycling. Additionally, a large section of granite fantailed cobble paving was removed, cleaned, and repurposed as paving stones in the new footpaths.

A new drainage system was installed, featuring a 20,000-litre rainwater harvesting tank that collects stormwater for reuse in plant watering and cleaning operations. A 2-kilometre ducting network was also established to facilitate new street lighting throughout the site.

We constructed 2,500 square meters of new footpaths with various new and reclaimed surfaces, including:



The site features several illuminated commissioned artworks inspired by the maritime and industrial history of the Belfast Harbour, this includes:



In addition, Northstone delivered two contractor design items: the bespoke gateway structure and the Birds Nest and Swing Seat Sculpture. This included overseeing the structures from design to fabrication and subsequent installation on-site.



OUR CHALLENGES

The City Quays area was built on a brownfield site close to the River Lagan, resulting in dramatically varying ground conditions. Challenges arose while excavating the deep drainage network and installing the nest structure's foundations. Issues included groundwater, old timber piles, previous building foundations, and a granite harbour wall buried since Belfast's expansion in the early 20th century.

Through continuous communication with the design team, adapting proposed changes, and diligent excavation efforts by our subcontractors, we successfully navigated these challenges and completed all necessary work.

Despite the project's size and complexity, strong relationships with various design teams, project management, our client, the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, and the invaluable experience of our subcontractors enabled Northstone to deliver a stunning product that will rejuvenate this rapidly expanding area of Belfast.