

Case Study

Swiss Cottage, London



The Challenge:

To develop a series of visually attractive and functional architectural features around the prestigious Visage development in London's Swiss Cottage.



The Approach:

Harmonise design features to allow fully bespoke items to share common platforms – reduced overall cost and production time.



The Product:

Central, public-access water feature. Six tree grilles and two ventilation shaft covers that complement the visually sensitive surroundings.

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Swiss Cottage in the London Borough of Camden, has undergone a major redevelopment that has seen the creation of a series of landmark public and residential buildings. Named SWISS, the development has benefited from a range of visually striking bespoke stainless steel landscaping features that are the creation of built environment specialist, ACO Building Drainage.

SWISS is the culmination of an ambitious Public Private Partnership between Camden Council, the house builder, Barratt, and the commercial developers, Dawney Day. In addition to 'Visage', a prestigious residential development of luxury apartments and penthouses, the area has gained a new leisure centre, a doctor's surgery and an affordable housing scheme. The 1960's library by Sir Basil Spence has also been restored, a new theatre constructed and a park with attractive walkways has been created.

The focal point of the park is new water feature that, in addition to creating an impressive visual display, is designed for public access. The structure is based around a sloping, shallow tray of 'bush hammered' granite. Approximately 10m wide, 40m in length and with a depth of 20cm, the surface remains non-slip when wet.

Water flows into the feature at the high end through two mechanisms that can be used individually or in combination. Both designed by ACO Building Drainage, the first is a stainless steel header chamber with an open top that allows water to flow out and evenly down the granite surface. The second is a series of seven variable pressure water jets that throw water arcs down the granite slope. Set into the vertical wall above the header chamber, the jets are illuminated on each side to create stunning night displays.

Around the walkway areas, ACO has installed a series of stainless steel tree grilles. Designed to produce an attractive appearance that complements the trees' setting, the structure of the grilles allows sections to be removed to accommodate trunk growth. Finished with a 'heelsafe' grating, the installed grilles are perfectly safe for pedestrian use and can be readily removed for cleaning and ongoing maintenance.

Two large, floor level ventilation covers have also been designed and installed. The first lies across the entrance to the Visage residential building and the second along one wall of the new leisure centre. As both areas are extremely visually sensitive, an all stainless steel design was proposed with a high grade brushed finish. To harmonise appearance with the tree grilles, identical heelsafe gratings were used but in this instance with a more robust supporting structure that could safely span the larger void.

"By using common platforms across a number of the installations, we have been able to manufacture high-impact, visually strong individual designs that do not carry the price tag that is usually associated with bespoke features," says Martin Fairley, Division Director at ACO Building Drainage. *"It also allows for faster production and simpler installation on site – a key factor when meeting the tight scheduling requirements of such a diverse development project."*

In Brief:

- Landmark, prestigious private and public development in the heart of London.
- Striking, multi-functional water feature forms central focus for the site. Designed for direct public access.
- Range of bespoke landscaping features manufactured entirely from high grade, high performance stainless steel.
- All features easy to maintain and adapt to local changes.

