

News

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Rathbone Market goes Green with Rooftop Allotments

An East London regeneration scheme is proving its green credentials once again with the launch of 35 rooftop allotments. Residents at Vermilion in Canning Town (the first phase of the Rathbone Market scheme) will be able to 'grow their own' thanks to the 3m² plots which have been made available for rent this week.

English Cities Fund – a joint venture between Muse, Legal & General Property and the Homes and Communities Agency – has joined forces with local gardening experts from the neighbouring Canning Town Caravanserai to encourage residents to get their green fingers dirty. The plots can sustain a variety of plants and provide everything from herbs and salads to vegetables and flowers, including cabbages and carrots.

Amy Rene and Jessica Segree from the Canning Town Caravanserai, planted a show plot and gave interested residents a demonstration of how to get the most out of an urban garden.

Amy said: "We're passionate about gardening and helping people to use every available space to grow their own produce and live more sustainably. It's fantastic that the residents here at Vermilion will have the chance to do just that with these allotments and, being on the roof, they get an amazing view while they're digging and planting!"

Pauline Sangster, residential sales and marketing manager for English Cities Fund said: "The allotments are a great addition to the development for residents who have or want to develop their gardening skills. Not only does it mean people can grow their own veg, salad and even flowers, but it is also a healthy and relaxing activity. It is quite unusual for a residential scheme to have on site allotments and large green spaces, let alone a development so close to Canary Wharf, so we're expecting high demand for plots."

Resident Lizzie Bowen, 62, moved to Vermilion just three weeks ago from North Harrow and is considering taking a plot. She said: "I think it's a fantastic idea to have allotments for residents to use. We've come from a house with a big garden and I would like somewhere to grow something of my own.

"I'm very keen to get involved with the community and this could be a good way of getting to know people. It was lovely to meet the ladies from the Caravanserai and I'd like to find out more about their project and go along to see what they are growing."

Urban allotments are proving ever more popular as the number of people choosing to grow their own produce increases, either to follow a sustainable ethos or to save money. Within the London Borough of Newham there is a waiting list of more than 10 years, with upwards of 1,400 people wanting an allotment of their own, but only around 60 plots change hands every year.

Being able to grow their own produce will not only allow residents to cut down on their shopping bills but will also benefit the environment in reduced food miles and the increase in green space in the capital. Improving opportunities for people to grow their own is one of the policies championed by the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority.

The raised beds will be fed with rainwater harvested from the roof of the building, which forms the first part of the £150 million Rathbone Market regeneration scheme. Vermilion is also home to a

self-sustaining eco-garden complete with rainwater fed pond and a living wall which screens out noise and pollution from the nearby A13.

The development has been built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and the gardens and allotments are part of a commitment to offsetting the carbon emissions generated in construction. Designed by Churchman Landscape Architects, the garden areas are complemented by building components such as low energy lighting, AAA appliances, double-glazing and an energy efficient CHP heating system.