



The Lee Valley Ice Centre | Photo source FaulkerBrowns Architects

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MELTED ICE FROM SKATING CENTRE TO AID WETLAND HABITATS

 ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

Developers of the Lee Valley Ice Centre want to help the heritage sites, nature reserves and gardens within the 10,000 acres of parkland

Spotted: Designed for around €32.6 million by UK-based architecture firm FaulknerBrowns, the two new Olympic-sized ice rinks within the Lee Valley Ice Centre will replace the previous 36-year-old rink, located next to the 26-mile-long Lee Valley Regional Park. The architects hope that by potentially doubling the capacity of the rink to 557,000 visits per year, they will be able to bring attraction to and aid in the conservation of the heritage sites, nature reserves and gardens within the 10,000 acres of parkland.

Moreover, the site itself hopes to help in the conservation of surrounding land; the design will include sustainable features such as high-performance insulation, rooftop solar panels and reed beds, which will filter used melted ice from the rinks into new wetland habitats. The centre can also be rotated, providing a gateway into the neighbouring marsh, and helping to create natural movement within the green spaces.

The visual design also pays tribute to the surrounding landscape: a pavilion structure attaches the building to the landscape; its base forms a podium insulated with cladding panels; and the cladding creates two environmentally-controlled “fridges” wrapped by a copper-coloured metal band, which create the illusion of a building floating within the landscape.

Altogether, the architects predict that with a combination of proposed landscaping and the ice filtration system, a biodiversity net gain of 35 per cent will be created. The design is currently awaiting second-round approval from the Greater London Authority.

Written By: Holly Hamilton

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Takeaway:

As we all become more aware of the need to conserve our natural surroundings, architecture has had to adapt to increased consciousness. Indeed, by applying conservation efforts to a place of leisure, with ice at the centre of both, the architects are paving the way for a new kind of double-edged strategy within a future design. It is likely that in the next couple of years, most architectural firms will follow suit.