

**Thomas C. Wales Park
Seattle, Washington**

Landscape Architect:	Site Workshop
Client:	Seattle Parks & Recreation
Engineer:	WR Consulting; John Rundall
Other consultants:	Adam Kuby, artist



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Thomas C. Wales Park transforms 1.3 acres of leftover space into a dynamic urban park. With its integrated art and habitat restoration, the design recalls the latent history of the site. At the same time, the park gestures to its future as a wildlife sanctuary in the middle of the city. And at each step, the project was informed by a multifaceted approach to sustainability.

Located on the eastern edge of the Queen Anne neighborhood, the park's steep slopes and central wetland manifest its history as a gravel quarry in the early 20th century. The site was later used as a municipal materials depot until 1987. The site was replanted with a diverse range of native plants, providing year-round food and shelter for various bird species, as well as to offer seasonal interest with changing colors and texture. What was a degraded, seasonal wetland has become a central feature of the new park, remaining wet throughout the year with improvements to local hydrology.

Development of the park emerged from a collaboration between the landscape architectural team and artist Adam

Kuby. The extensive use of cobble-filled gabions offered cost-effective site solutions, while also evoking the historical gravel quarry. These materials inspired the *Quarry Rings* Installation, a series of five gabion rings that appear to hover throughout the landscape, echoing the arcs of the retaining walls and paths. Each of the gabion rings features embedded nesting cavities for birds and bats.

JURY COMMENTS

The park design generated much discussion among the jurors. Some felt the artwork was too dominant, while others supported its integration in the context of an eco-restorative landscape. Ultimately, however, the jury felt unified in applauding the transformation of the formerly degraded site into a distinctive community and wildlife refuge. Through the use of stone-filled gabions, the design effectively recalls the site's former function as a gravel quarry, while simultaneously adding habitat value through embedded nesting cavities for birds and bats: a beautiful merging of ecology and art.



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