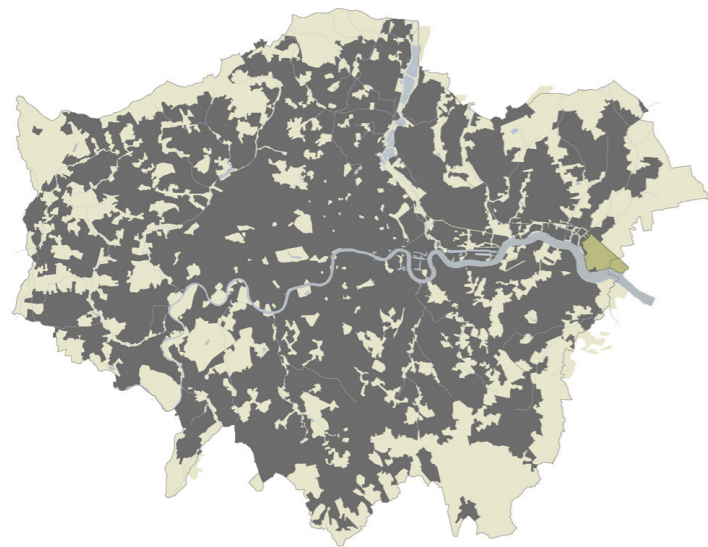




aerial view from the west showing relationship to the Thames



Rainham Marshes shown in the context of Greater London



'before' view taken during the Channel Tunnel Rail Link construction - 2004



new classroom facilities within their marshland setting



'after' view showing one of the informal path on the western marshes - 2014



new path, reedbeds and footbridge on the western marshes

H159
Rainham Marshes
 London (United Kingdom), 2014

board 1 of 3

PREVIOUS STATE

Rainham Marshes is sited on the eastern edge of London and forms part of the Thames' natural floodplain. The marshes have a history of agricultural use dating back at least to medieval times. The land was originally salt marsh and was used for the grazing of cattle and sheep. More recently the site was owned and used as a training ground and rifle range by the British Army. Neighbouring sites, particularly along the Thames, have been developed by industry. The site has long been recognised for its value to wildlife, especially migrating bird species, but the landscape also supports rare plants, mammals and insects; the site is designated a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' the highest level of habitat designation in the UK. From the 1980's the army no longer had a use for the marshes and the land was sold-off. Part of the site was bought by a wildlife charity, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and part by the local authority, the London Borough of Havering. Throughout its period of military use the site continued to be grazed and the traditional marsh landscape flourished. From the mid-1990's grazing ceased and the site's grassland habitats rapidly fell into decline. As of 2003 there was effectively no public access to the site, apart from a limited section of the Thames foreshore.

AIM OF INTERVENTION

Rainham Marshes offers an experience of wild nature accessible to the whole of London's urban population. The project aims to make the site attractive and accessible to a wide range of visitors while protecting and enhancing its rich wildlife. Work began with a masterplan study set up by the London Development Agency in 2003 for which LANDROOM were the design lead. Following the masterplan, a package of detailed design work was carried out for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds on their reserve on the eastern marshes. Later design phases were commissioned by the London Development Agency and the London Borough of Havering. All design work has been carried out in close consultation with public bodies responsible for wildlife protection, including the Environment Agency and Natural England. Local consultation on design proposals was carried out by the local authority. Public funding for the project was provided through local development agencies, with further contributions from the European Regional Development Fund, the Veolia Havering Riverside Trust, the Greater London Authority and the London Borough of Havering.