

# Best Practice Consultancy

**Working with a client such as Durrell it is not surprising to find both the local and global environment as topics on each and every meeting agenda.**

Appointed as Project Consultants in September 2008 to manage Durrell's regeneration programme, local company Rowney Sharman quickly undertook some significant work to address the Trust's environmental concerns as part of the potential build programme with animal welfare sitting firmly at the top of that list.

The phased regeneration presents numerous environmental challenges including the construction of the new visitor centre which has recently gained planning permission. At a workshop hosted by Rowney Sharman with Durrell's internal 'green team' discussion took place regarding sustainable construction and after some significant research the option of a rammed earth wall was agreed upon.

Rammed earth is an ancient form of construction, usually associated with arid areas. There remain many examples of the form around the world, giving evidence that rammed earth is a successful and durable way of building.

As a traditional form of construction, it is once again becoming popular amongst environmentally conscious architects owing

to its very low embodied energy and ready availability. Examples of rammed earth walls can be seen throughout the UK; the best known being at the Eden project visitors centre. The wall is constructed in five steps:

- Build framework
- A layer of moist earth is compressed with a pneumatic backfill tamper
- The next layer is added
- Successive layers are added and compressed
- The framework is removed to expose the rammed earth wall.

The first of its kind in Jersey, the rammed earth wall at Durrell will be constructed using locally available samples of soil, selected by a local geologist. This soil will ensure compatibility with the project and its natural surroundings whilst also encompassing the existing granite wall surrounding the park behind.

The natural colours and surface of the wall will afford a true visitor experience from approaching the refurbished visitor's centre to entering the main park.

The next environmental challenge will be the redevelopment of the gorilla enclosure which it is envisaged will increase the welfare facilities for these well-loved animals by 50%.

The proposal includes a new visitor viewing platform constructed under a tented canopy and in order to ensure minimum impact on the natural environment, the existing ground profile is being incorporated into this new area. A planning application has been submitted for this phase of the regeneration programme.

Through its client consultation and advice service and with an attitude reflected within its own office environment, Rowney Sharman is the only Project Management Consultancy to have registered and gained Member status on the Island's Eco-Active Business scheme.

