

ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

There's a buzz on this estate

Mini-model of Heygate Estate created for insects

By Emma Ailes

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THERE IS a buzz in the air over the unveiling of a new mini model of the Heygate Estate made just for bees – christened The Beegate Estate.

Working from a bird's eye photograph, The Garden Museum has produced the bee-autiful scale version of the estate, complete with tower block windows.

It is hoped it will soon become a hive of activity as a home to hundreds of bees, as well as lacewings, ladybirds and other insects.

Jade-Lauren Cawthray of The Garden Museum managed the building of The Beegate. She said: "We came up with the idea when they saw another organisation had made a replica of Trelick Tower for insects.

"We thought 'we could do that for the Heygate' - it's a sort of a tribute to the utopian ideal that was the Heygate Estate.

"We have no idea how many insects it will house – it could be hundreds, maybe even thousands.

"We've drilled special holes into it, where solitary bees who don't live in hives can lay their eggs.

"Children from Fairley House Primary School have finished off the model with a nesting of leaves and twigs. They are keen to make some insect cars and roads as well

"The insects should get on fine living together – it's similar to what the Heygate's architect Tom Tinker intended with different people all living together... although ladybirds do eat aphids, so there may be some competition.

"We're planning a survey in the



Jade-Lauren Cawthray and museum intern Ben Scotland with the Beegate; and (inset) the original Heygate Estate

spring to see how many insects move in."

Guerrilla Gardener Richard Reynolds of the Elephant and Castle Urban Forest, who has worked with the museum on the project, said: "I'm delighted that this magical place is inspiring such creativity and interest in urban wildlife."

Like its namesake, construction of

the Beegate development was bugged by several setbacks and delays, Jade admits.

"Construction of this was quite a process and in the end it was delayed by a month... although thankfully it hasn't cost us millions!"

Built in the sixties, the Heygate Estate was home to more than 1,000 households.

Only a handful of residents still remain, several of whom have been invited down to visit their replica home for a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday morning.

But the resident insects had better have a plan bee - like the Heygate, the Beegate estate is not forever. Bugs that set up home there will have to be moved when the Garden

Museum's exhibition From Garden City to Green City finishes next year.

Until then, Jade hopes the attraction will encourage more people to get involved in urban wildlife.

She added: "We have some materials left, so we welcome ideas from people for future developments."

www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

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