



A Soil Resource Survey to determine the quality of soils that will be displaced by planned improvements and building works at RHS Garden Wisley has been undertaken by leading landscape and soil consultancy Tim O'Hare Associates (TOHA). The development of the Welcome Building, construction of the National Centre for Horticultural Science & Learning and new Horticultural Service Yard are part of a wider £160 million investment in horticulture by the RHS.

The National Centre for Horticultural Science & Learning in the south of the RHS' flagship garden is to be completely redeveloped, and three new learning gardens which focus on food, wellbeing and wildlife will be created. The changes requires existing soils to be removed and stockpiled prior to construction, but subject to the results of the TOHA survey, the soils will be re-used in these key landscaping projects.

It is hoped that the survey will identify soils suitable for new planting beds around the new visitor entrance, the Welcome Building and once that work is complete, a range of horticultural developments, including the planting of an avenue of over 100 cherry trees, terraces and fine lawns. Low fertility soil for wildflower areas and soils offering good drainage for other planned gardens will also be required.

Senior Associate at TOHA, Tim White, carried out the survey and is optimistic that the soil can be put to good use: "The exciting developments planned for RHS Garden Wisley call for a range of soils and it makes absolute sense to utilise what is already available on site. That said, once we have determined the nature of those soils and how they can be used to best effect around the garden, it is vital that they are managed carefully throughout the entire construction period to avoid degradation and inter-mixing. The Soil Resource Survey is only the very start of the process; a comprehensive Soil Management Plan will be needed to ensure this element of the project is a complete success."

The project will commence this summer with the upgrade to the Welcome Centre; the Hilltop redevelopment will commence in 2019.