

WEST LAUREL HILL'S NATURE SANCTUARY

BALA CYNWYD, PA

Project Size: .68 acre | Certification: SITES Gold

THE Sustainable
SITES
Initiative®



West Laurel Hill is a valuable asset providing a legacy of support and comfort to the community. The site not only provides an interment option, but also acts as an environmental oasis creating a powerful connection between nature, people and communities. West Laurel's innovative design and development strategies are supporting ecosystem services and elevating the value of land and its impact on human health and wellbeing across the area.



WATER

Native plants established as part of an assisted ecological forest succession design and a large rain garden allow water to more effectively soak into the ground. The rain garden itself can accept up to 5,700 cubic feet of water in a 24-hour storm event. No irrigation is required due to the native plant palette, restored soils and meadow, and forest successional plantings.



SOIL + PLANTS

During the restoration process, invasive plants were removed by grazing goats and the burial site and a buffer zone were cleared out to offer an opportunity for newly re-introduced native plants to re-establish on the site. Topsoil was also removed, screened and amended with organic compost and returned to the site for the new plantings and green burial sites.



MATERIALS

A large amount of material was reused from the existing landscape debris that was stored on site or within the larger property. The rough-sawn benches were collected from work elsewhere in the cemetery and will be replaced with boulders harvested within the project site. Stone used to construct the memorial wall and edging for the pathways were also excavated from other projects within the cemetery.



HUMAN HEALTH AND WELLBEING

West Laurel Hill Cemetery, home to Nature's Sanctuary, has been on the nation historic register since 1992 and connects people to nature with quiet strolls through the forest and adjacent Cynwyd Heritage Trail. A large community volunteer base and family members of loved ones buried here are dedicated to assisting with maintenance and the honey beehives located within the site.

A background image of magnolia flowers in bloom, with a stone building visible on the left side.

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CERTIFIED: SITES GOLD, JANUARY 2018

SITES SCORECARD SUMMARY

POSSIBLE
POINTS

POINTS
EARNED

	POSSIBLE POINTS	POINTS EARNED
Site Context	13	5
Pre-Design Assessment + Planning	3	3
Site Design		
Water	23	17
Soil + Vegetation	40	16
Materials Selection	41	20
Human Health + Well-being	30	14
Construction	17	13
Operations + Maintenance	22	13
Education + Performance Monitoring	11	7
Innovation or Exemplary Performance	9	0
TOTAL POINTS	200	108

13

5

Pre-Design Assessment + Planning

3

3

Site Design

Water

23

17

Soil + Vegetation

40

16

Materials Selection

41

20

Human Health + Well-being

30

14

Construction

17

13

Operations + Maintenance

22

13

Education + Performance Monitoring

11

7

Innovation or Exemplary Performance

9

0

TOTAL POINTS

200

108

CERTIFIED = 70 | SILVER = 85 | GOLD = 100 | PLATINUM = 135

SITES is administered by Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) and is based on the understanding that land is a crucial part of the built environment. The certification program creates regenerative systems and fosters resilience; ensures future resource supply and mitigates climate change; transforms the market through design, development and maintenance practices; and enhances human wellbeing and strengthens the community. SITES-certified projects can help reduce water and energy demand, improve air quality and promote human health and wellbeing. [Learn more at sustainablesites.org](https://www.sustainablesites.org)