

Massive Living Wall Palace Hotel, London

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After that story about cities most vulnerable to [coastal flooding](#) hit the internet, it seems like everyone has water on the brain. But sea level rise isn't the only thing that buries cities underwater.

Because cities are mostly buildings and streets, the land's natural ability to absorb rainwater is interrupted by sealed roofs and parking lots. By covering [the entire side](#) of the Palace hotel, Victoria, in thousands of living, breathing plants, the City hopes to harvest some of that water before it hits the streets.



Image via Rain Communications

Standing at 350 square meters (approximately 3,700 sq. feet) with over 10,000 ferns, herbaceous plants and 16 tons of soil, the [living wall](#) is London's largest by far. Designed by Gary Grant of Green Roof Consultancy, the wall was designed to attract wildlife such as bees, butterflies and birds to the urban environment as well as conserving water.

“The living wall is irrigated using rainwater harvested from the roofs and stored in tanks before being fed through the wall, from which it evaporates,” said Grant [in a statement](#). “In this sense the project is a sustainable drainage system.”

According to the Environment Agency, there are now around 534,000 properties in London on the Thames floodplain, and one in four in London are at risk of flooding. The wall, and others like it, are just one of the tactics London mayor Boris Johnson is promoting to combat flooding in the capital. Other sustainable urban drainage systems—or SUDS—include permeable pavement and retention basins.
