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This study examines the conceptual, ecological and structural elements that contribute to the development of sustainable urban habitats. It is argued that the establishment of genuinely sustainable urban environments has been hampered by the lack of a clear and agreed definition of sustainable practices amongst building professions. Consequently, this has contributed to the maintenance of fuzzy ideology and practices regarding sustainability within built environment professions. This study reviews the threads that connect genuine aspirations for sustainable habitats within built environment professions and university design departments. It considers the reasons for the perceived lack of creativity when amalgamating relevant native species, ecological diversity and landscaping materials within UK city centers. The paper discusses the possible causes for the 'play it safe' approach to the design of green spaces, cites institutional and commercial innovations and outlines the potential for viable ecological design projects.