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26 November 2010
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Award
Landscaping

Liverpool Canal Link & Pier Head
Public Realm, Liverpool

Owner/Client: *Liverpool City Council* | Architect/Designer: *James Haigh-Streeter of EDAW* | Main Contractor and Principal Stone Contractor: *Balfour Beatty Civil Engineering Ltd* | Other Stone Company/Consultant: *TT Groundworks, Stone Central (NW) Ltd, Marshalls Plc* | Stone Supplier: *1)Marshalls Plc* | Stone Used: *Chinese granites G682, G399, G654, G390 and Portuguese Lapa Grey*

The project

This is the extension of the Leeds Liverpool Canal into the heart of Liverpool with a reconfiguration of the Pier Head to form a truly world class space worthy of its historic location at the heart of this World Heritage Site.

Now a distinctive and vibrant place, the area is a hive of activity as local people and visitors from around the world enjoy the canal, riverside walkway and plaza.

This hard landscaping scheme is of intricate detail, using bespoke natural stone to create a unique public realm area with masonry seating, steps, cladding, parapets and performance space. Natural stone was selected as a sustainable solution with its long design life negating the need for frequent refurbishments of the space, which is costly to both the public purse and the environment. The finished scheme sets a precedent in the capabilities of natural stone.

The crease lines at the water's edge are highlighted with warm-toned stone chosen to complement the façades of the Three Graces buildings. As they approach the canal basins, they splay out to dramatic effect, creating a series of seat walls that accommodate the change in level, elegantly morph into flights of steps, then finally re-converge to continue their journey through the space.

In addition to being sculpturally attractive, this inbuilt seating is robust and much less vulnerable to vandalism than traditional benches, while embodying a high degree of refinement and craftsmanship. Stone is also used in the canal wall claddings, copings and abutments.

Providing a contrast, circa 7,000m^2 of mid-grey, varied-tone granite paving forms a rich pattern and texture that takes its inspiration from the variety of stone sizes used in the surrounding historic docks. A gradation of five module sizes are used, with large flag stones in open expanses blending to cobbles in areas requiring an intricate finish or where the surface is required to take particularly high weights such as river wall maintenance cranes.

A subtley varied palette of mid-grey granite not only highlights these unit changes but masks surface dirt. The effect is the creation of a rich patina across the plaza surface. All pavements were designed to take vehicular loadings.

There were more than 900 individual components in the 22 unique granite seat walls alone, ranging from 1,500kg per unit down to 30kg. Many of the components were produced using CNC machinery, carving seamless transitions into large elements to give a sense of identity to the space while remaining sympathetic to the surrounding built heritage. Computer modelling was used to design the abutments and copings in a most effective way, reducing waste and cost.

Judges comments

This project is impressive in scale and attention to detail. The designers have used a limited palette of materials, restricting themselves to granite in mid grey and buff, which has lent the scheme a homogenous, restrained look without it becoming bland. The levels change elegantly and the intersections are beautifully detailed. The scheme responds naturally to the environment and the design appears unpretentious and unforced. It is a well thought out scheme.

The quality control is good and the standard has been maintained throughout this large site. The new work flows and links in with all the original buildings.

Simple, effective and wearing extremely well.

Resurfacing of Base Court

Hampton Court Palace, Surrey

Highly Commended

Landscaping

Natural Stone 2010 awards

Owner/Client: *Historic Royal Palaces* | Architect/Designer: *Dante Vanoci and Marc Wiese* of Purcell Miller Tritton Llp | Main Contractor: *Mansell Construction Services Ltd* | Principal Stone Contractor: *A T Knott & Sons Ltd* | Other Stone Company/Consultant: *Robin Sanderson, Oxford Archaeology* | Stone Supplier: *1)HF Bonfield & Son 2)Gallagher Group* | Stone Used: *1)Purbeck limestone 2)Kentish Rag*

The project

Little evidence of the Henrician paving scheme had survived but there were physical remnants and a photographic record of a scheme by Christopher Wren circa 1700 and it was agreed that Wren's scheme should form the basis of the new design entailing not only repaving works but also the conservation of existing paths, enhancing disabled access, improving the power, services and IT-infrastructure, and protecting the archaeology.

Purbeck limestone and Kentish Rag are the most commonly used paving materials in the palace's variety of cobbled courtyards and these materials were specified for the reconstructed surfaces.

Setts and loosely broken Purbeck limestone (a grey and pale selection of Thornback, Rag, Whetson, Freestone, Feather, Cap, Vyebit and Downsvien) and Kentish Rag were sourced. The new stone mix with its varying colours and textures blends in with the existing setts.

All new paving was laid in a loose bedding of recycled concrete and crushed limestone. This alternative bedding and jointing technique was derived from historic – but in Britain almost forgotten – loose laid paving traditions. These traditional techniques reduced the need for deep sub-base excavations in an archaeologically sensitive site. They also allowed water to percolate into, and evaporate from, the ground via the loose jointed bedding, as well as reducing the carbon footprint of this project and any future repair schemes. It has already proved self healing when cracking appeared as a result of surface movement at soft spots in and around the archaeology.

Judges comments

The innovative use of a traditional technique integrates the old with the new so well. The workmanship is stunning, particularly in the way trip hazards have been eliminated while the percolated drainage takes the strain off the sewers making, this a particularly sustainable project. The large areas of broken paving composed of a variety of stones set within loose limestone jointing creates an overall effect that is poetic. The original and new paving have been married together so well it is impossible to distinguish between them. The incorporation of falls must have been a nightmare and to achieve consistency like this shows tenacity and experience on the part of the craftsman.

St Martin-in-the-Fields

Trafalgar Square, London

Commended

Landscaping

Natural Stone 2010 awards

Owner/Client: *St Martin-in-the-Fields* | Architect/Designer: *Eric Parry of Eric Parry Architects* | Main Contractor: *Costain* | Principal Stone Contractor: *Stonewest Ltd* | Other Stone Company/Consultant: *Stone & Ceramic Ltd, Harrison Goldman Design Consultancy Ltd, Taylor Pearce Restoration Services Ltd* | Stone Supplier: *1)Albion Stone Plc 2)Haysom (Purbeck Stone) Ltd 3)Grupimar 4)Stone & Ceramic Ltd 5)Marshalls Plc* | Stone Used: *1)Portland Whitbed 2)Purbeck 3)Nero Impala 4)Caliza Paloma 5)Haslington Yorkstone*

The project

St-Martin-in-the-Fields comprises the Gibbs-designed 18th century church (Listed Grade I) along with its crypt and three buildings in the north range (listed Grade II*). The burial vaults were designed by John Nash and built in the 1830s.

The stone plinths to the churchyard railings had been badly eroded by the rising pavement levels, so most had to be replaced with new solid Portland stone. Many blocks of the vermiculated boundary wall were heavily corroded and needed replacing. This involved skilled hand carving by masons from templates for the vermiculation detailing.

The widened Church Path was paved with new Yorkstone (Haslingdon) paving. The new pavilion plinth is clad with curved black South African Nero Impala granite with picked and honed surfaces. The light well has large format, solid blocks supporting a raised steel handrail. Both plinths have carefully swept bases set flush to the falls of the new pavement.

In the churchyard, the original 1830s Yorkstone paving slabs have been reinstated with a central podium, including one slab measuring more than 3m square. Around this are new benches made in grey Portuguese granite and engraved for the benefactor. The Baker memorial fountain was reinstated close to the new Yorkstone steps to Adelaide Street.

Judges comments

The area just north of St Martin-in-the Fields has been given back to the public realm with the presence of the building below identified by the entrance staircase and a light well. The pavement stone work and the wall surrounding the light well are beautifully detailed and particularly well executed. The paving is of an extremely high standard with every detail carefully resolved. The new stone streetscape has linked the adjoining historic buildings together and given the open space a real presence.