



The Barbican NW podium project

The Grade II listed Barbican Estate is a unique architectural gem within the City of London. It was constructed between 1969 and 1980 restoring a bomb damaged part of the City. The architects Chamberlin Powell & Bon planned it as a network of pedestrian precincts above and separated from traffic. This enclave contains the renowned Barbican Arts Centre, residential towers and blocks, a school, college, commercial premises, gardens and lakes. The materials palette is primarily high quality exposed aggregate concrete for walls, and brindle clay pavers for the pedestrian podium. Maintaining the quality of the surroundings requires a continuous programme of upkeep and replacement.



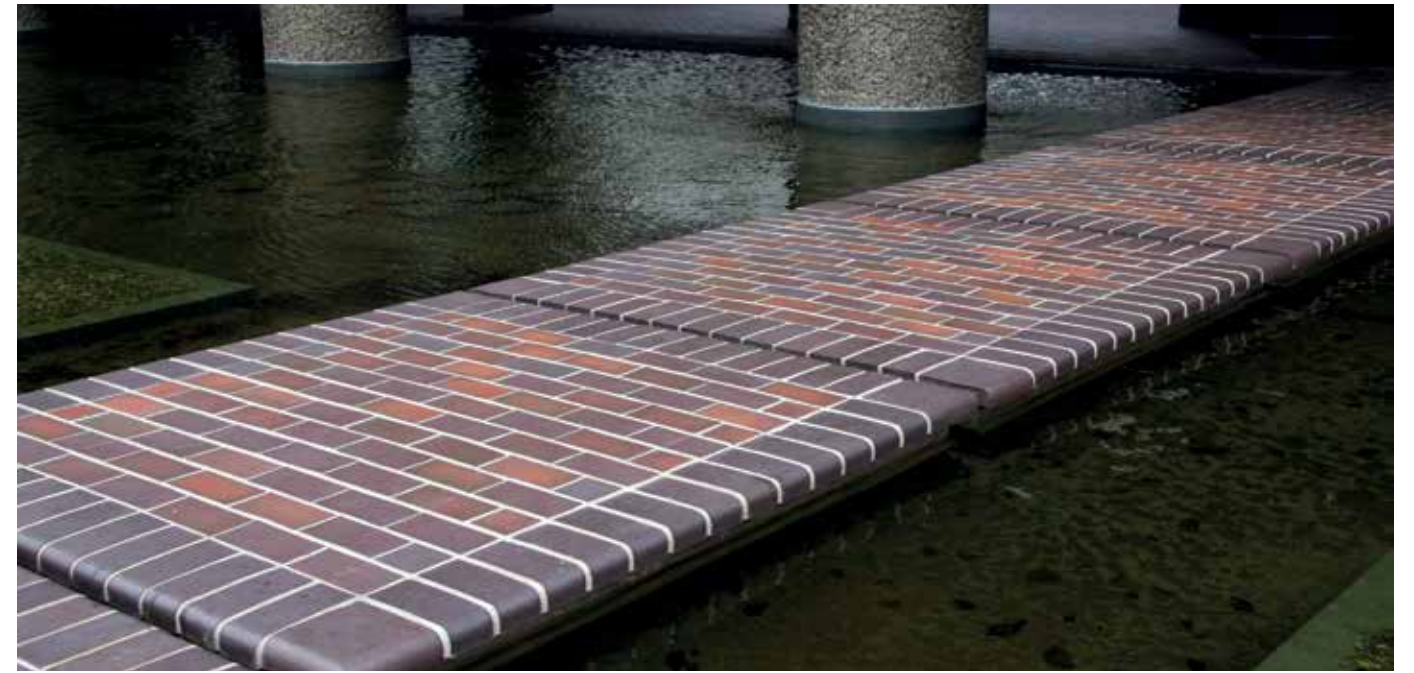
Renovated bridge across the lake at Beech Gardens



Ketley Clay paving at Barbican NW Podium

By late 2011 the City of London concluded that a comprehensive replacement of the paving was required to address reoccurring problems with the waterproofing of the pedestrian areas, raised over commercial premises. Bickerdike Allen Partners was appointed to prepare a scheme to strip the existing deck, re-waterproof and repave a first phase in the North West podium. All paving and landscape features were carefully detailed to meet listing criteria, reduce dead loads on the slab and ensure longevity of replacement elements.

The replacement materials had to be an exact match to the original Etruria Marl Hawkins brown brindle clay pavers which are no longer manufactured. In the absence of any UK manufacturer of 18mm thick clay pavers, BAP were fortunate to discover that Ketley Brick was considering establishing a new production line for quarry tiles. Working together to meet the Barbican's requirements, Ketley established production of an Etruria Marl 18mm thick



Clay quarry tiles in 3 Staffordshire colours



Tiled amphitheatre seats in Beech Gardens



paver and were able to meet all the exacting requirements for colour variation, high slip resistance, flatness and volume production. Through dialogue with planners, a mix of 3 Staffordshire colours was selected, reflecting the colour palette around the estate and giving a fresh, more vibrant appearance to the podium area. 7400m² of fully bedded new Ketley pavers and paver specials in a mix of 40:40:20 Blue Brindle:Brown Antique:Brown Brindle, were laid, also replacing patches of waffle tiles previously used for slip resistance. Great attention was paid to watersealing movement joints, upstands, insulation, and keeping screeds dry. All were sources of previous decay in the paving and substrates.

Volkerlaser, the principle contractor, had the exacting task of maintaining public access and ensuring the continued amenity and safety of surrounding commercial and residential occupants. Successful liaison with residents and the City of London throughout the contract period from November 2013 to May 2015, ensured continuity of the work. Knotts, the paving sub-contractor, met the challenge of matching existing bond patterns over large areas of flat paving. The careful execution of replacement features, such as the tight curves of plant bed edges, and the Beech Garden amphitheatre and pond, gives the scheme its particular quality and aesthetic appeal.

The scheme demonstrates the enduring appeal of clay pavers whose rich colours provide a warm focus amidst the surrounding concrete structures of the estate. This has set the standard for further parts of the Barbican podium paving to be renewed in future years.

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