

# CASE STUDY



Blue Boar Contracts works as part of a team to carry out major restoration works on Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee park

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Howard Price – Partner, Ashmead Price Landscape Architects



# Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Park

Overlooked by the famous 238ft high crooked spire of All Saints Church, Queen's Park Lake in Chesterfield lies within a park which was established for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897. As the focus of much of the town's leisure activity since Victorian times, it is the home of Chesterfield Cricket Club and also includes a boating lake and extensive gardens.



Over the years as the park had been developed and modernised, much of its original Victorian character had been lost, so way back in 1998 the Borough Council put plans in place for a major restoration programme. The aim of the project being to bring the beautiful 1890's Victorian recreational park, which was designed by William Barron, back to its original condition. John Ramsey, Landscape Development Officer for the Leisure Services Section of Chesterfield Borough Council takes up the story:

"We went through a major public consultation process and also applied for funding from Heritage Lottery Fund. This took a long time, but we finally secured a grant of £2.8m, to which the Borough Council added a further £1.2m, bringing the total value of the restoration to £4m in total. Once the funding was secured we were able to start work and the whole project was carried out between the Summer of 2004 and the Summer of 2005" – just over a year in total!

With the Borough Council at the helm, a steering group was set up which consisted of the council's architects and civil engineers, plus management contractors Wild Goose who project managed the entire process, incorporating some 15 to 20 separate elements. Also heavily involved were landscape architects Ashmead Price who looked after around half of these elements, covering various areas of the project including the lake, the paths, drainage works, replanting and the construction of other new facilities such as children's play areas. Howard Price, Partner at Ashmead Price explains further:

"We identified that the lake needed de-silting as part of the restoration work – and in the process of researching suppliers for lake edge restoration materials I came across Blue Bar Contracts. They seemed to offer exactly the de-silting services we needed so I recommended to John that they were added to the tender list. Ultimately they were successful in winning the business based primarily on price, but also on their ability to do the work that we required.



Blue Boar worked closely with us when start dates slipped due to unforeseen circumstances – and still brought their part of the work in on time and to budget despite the shifting timescales. What they do is not easy, but they were a very good company to work with and performed well in an area that is generally quite unpredictable.”

The ‘unforeseen circumstance’ to which Howard refers became apparent when Blue Boar went through the usual process of getting the silt analysed. This is done to ensure that it is suitable for re-distribution onto farm land to provide agricultural benefit, as generally happens with most projects of this type. However, due to Queen’s Park boating lake being in an urban setting, there were trace contaminants present. This meant that, whilst the silt would be perfectly harmless to use within the park, it could not be placed onto agricultural land.

The normal outcome of this type of situation would be to send the silt to land-fill – but this is very expensive, so Ashmead Price and Blue Boar worked together to find an alternative solution which would solve the problem efficiently. This involved re-using the silt within the park as part of the landscaping process at the head of the lake. John continues:

“The de-silting work began in November 2004 and was completed by the early part of the new year, with 2100m<sup>3</sup> of material being removed from the 5 acre lake in total. Blue Boar used excavators on floating pontoons which could be moved about the lake as required to carry out the dredging works. The silt was then taken to the head of the lake in barges where it could be re-used as planned. We did not even have to remove the fish first, which was a real plus point for us”

Once the de-silting work was complete, Blue Boar Contracts also helped the Borough Council with some lake edge restoration work, including the installation of formal stone bullnose kerbs and stone ‘rip rap’ - which consists of random stones placed around lake in the style of the original Victorian design. They also installed planted coir rolls around the islands and in key locations around the lake edge to provide a more stable, yet still environmentally friendly, edging structure. John concludes:

“Howard at Ashmead Price had a very clear idea of what he wanted to achieve with the lake - and Blue Boar were able to meet those requirements with no problems at all. They were also able to use their knowledge and experience to make other recommendations at the start of the project which were not part of our original specification. Taking all of these factors into account, Blue Boar were a very important part of the jigsaw in what was an enormous project for us”



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