

Project of the Year Winner 2015

Phase 1 Restoration of Bletchley Park



Authenticity has been the focus of this project throughout. The team describe the restoration of Bletchley Park as a 'once in a lifetime heritage project' – more about paying tribute to people and their contribution to the history of our nation, than the nuts and bolts of project management.

By 1991 Bletchley Park was unoccupied and threatened with demolition. A preservation trust raised £3m and then added a £5m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to transform this world-class heritage site into a new centre of education, learning and community activities.

The interpretation and translation of the Bletchley Park story was a pivotal part of the non-tangible vision for the project. Sympathetic integration of modern services and technologies to achieve effective displays within the buildings' historic character was a serious challenge.

Project Managers, Artelia, provided clear leadership to a great multidisciplinary team effort. Collaboration was at the heart of the project from effective engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including high profile trustees, conservationists, AV specialists through the design and construction team. Collaboration was key to achieving the successful HLF Round 2 submission for the Trust.

At the heart of contractual arrangements sat an innovative procurement model using a two stage tender process, and cost/programme certainty was achieved through a pain/gain model.

The team applied a range of conservation and innovative techniques to retain as much original building fabric as possible – difficult given the extent of asbestos and poor state of repair. In Block C, demolishing the post-war brick partitions by hand was an onerous task for which a remotely operated robot was deployed allowing the job to be completed sensitively and safely. The brickwork repairs carried out using traditional techniques are barely noticeable. Floorboards, joists and skirting boards, which had decayed beyond repair were replaced using reclaimed war-time timbers.

The iconic, once derelict, codebreaking huts sit in a landscape that has returned to its 1940's appearance in terms of the buildings, and the storytelling in the interpretation. The re-orientation of the site has diverted traffic away from the historic core of the site, improved the visitor experience and can service up to 2,500 visitors per day, with disability access, WC provision and wayfinding all improved.

Bletchley Park is not just environmentally but also socially and financially benefitting the local community. There are self-draining surfacing carparks, wild meadow planting, bat boxes and badger-friendly environments, while low ambient temperature heating is used in the huts and a barely noticeable insulated roof has been used on Block C. The trust has negotiated travel deals with local train companies, runs an apprenticeship programme, provides opportunities for volunteering and employs an expanding workforce.

Judges comments

This project demonstrates a complete and strong collaborative working regime, underpinned by an excellent procurement strategy. The project team through their commitment and dedication embraced the ethos of Bletchley Park during the second world war, successfully connecting the past with the future. An excellent cost matrix system which used a pain/gain approach culminated in cost certainty for the client

A defining project whose quality alongside an harmonious and unified approach greatly adds to the historical fabric of this country and its outstanding contribution to the second world war.

Project Contract Value:	£7.8 million
Type of work:	Conservation, repair and refurbishment
Approx M²:	3,025 (huts/block)

Finalists

- Five Pancras Square, Kings Cross (Kier Construction)
- Guy's Hospital – Light Cloud Artwork & Chimney Extension (James Engineering Construction (Alfreton) Ltd)
- Guy's Tower Retrofit (Penoyre & Prasad)
- Hammersmith Flyover Strengthening and Refurbishment (Costain)
- Molesey Weir B Refurbishment (Team Van Oord Ltd)
- Phase 1 Restoration of Bletchley Park (Artelia)
- QEII Bridge Expansion Joint Replacement (Connect Plus Services)
- Asset Recovery Programme South East (Team Van Oord Ltd)