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- Award-winning and Stirling Prize shortlisted
  - Urban regeneration high density housing scheme
  - Exemplary public realm with precast concrete paving
  - Careful detailing carried through to completion
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# TRAFALGAR PLACE LONDON



# INTRODUCTION

Originally part of the 1970s Heygate Estate, the site comprised 105 dwellings in four blocks.

These uninspiring buildings sat in isolation among sparse 1960s landscaping, albeit including mature trees, many of which have been retained. This part of the estate has been replaced by 235 high-quality homes – of which 25% are affordable housing – forming the first phase of a wider £1.5 billion, 28-acre regeneration scheme to upgrade and reconnect the area with Elephant & Castle.

The resulting housing scheme provides an exemplar for high density development – and, in particular, the related external spaces which help define the project – recognised by various accolades including the Mayor’s Award for Planning Excellence at the London Planning Awards. Trafalgar Place was also shortlisted for the 2016 Stirling Prize, having won London and National RIBA Awards.

This case study focuses on the high quality public realm at the heart of the scheme and the key role of around 3,500m<sup>2</sup> of precast concrete hard landscape, designed and executed with exceptional care – a result of the close working relationship between landscape architects Randle Siddeley and the Interpave member paving manufacturer.

***“The delightful landscaping manages to achieve safety, defensible space and robustness, whilst still feeling open relaxed and comfortable. It is excellent to see landscape carried through to completion with such conviction”***

– RIBA Awards Judges



Photo: Randle Siddeley



Photo: Randle Siddeley



# URBAN DESIGN

Working in conjunction with architects dRMM and developer Lendlease and based on Grant Associates' masterplan, Randle Siddeley's design develops a framework divided into nine specific character areas.

Randle Siddeley commented: *"Our designs embrace car-free outdoor spaces and include tree lined residential streets, attractive new squares serving as central community spaces, vegetable growing gardens, biodiverse green and brown roofs, natural play areas to ignite young imaginations and species rich rain gardens."*

Trafalgar Place occupies a triangular site between busy Rodney Road and the quieter Balfour Street, which meet at the south-east corner of the site. The design links both roads, as Randle Siddeley explained: *"The intent was to create a robust and legible network of streets and routes connecting the character areas throughout the development. A hierarchy of streets for pedestrians and cyclists helps to define the character of the development and assist orientation. This hierarchy is key in providing usable spaces and defining the types of activities and experiences within the streets."*



# STREETSCAPE

The main site entrance from Rodney Road is announced by a generous Garden Square.

This square turns and opens out onto Paragon Way, a new tree-lined street forming the central spine of the scheme and connecting through to Balfour Street. A Rain Garden and Bio Swale along Paragon Way form part of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) collecting water from the roofs, podium and street.





Garden Square and Paragon Way, together with other access ways to dwellings, are characterised by high quality concrete block paving set out in patterns using five different sizes for visual richness. With a combination of three shades of grey, the paving blocks have been shot-blasted for a sparkling, textured surface.

Natural granite kerbs complete the paving throughout the project. Both detailing and execution are consistently high quality throughout, with integrated up-lighting and tree-grids, and manhole covers inset with block paving to ensure continuity.

In contrast, Victory Place – which runs the length of the north site boundary – is defined by a large number of existing mature London Plane trees giving a quiet, almost woodland feel. This is home to a community ‘woodland play area’ with ample seating, adjacent to private access points to homes. Here, a different, less formal, ‘rumbled’ concrete block paving style was used in warmer rustic colour tones.



Photo: Georgina Viney



Photo: Georgina Viney

# PODIUM LANDSCAPE

At first floor level, over enclosed car parking, a communal courtyard garden serves residents.

This has access from the communal entrance cores, individual ground floor properties or via gated steps from the street level Garden Square. The podium courtyard layout has been created as a flexible, usable space at the heart of the development, including a play area and extensive seating.

Concrete flag footpaths provide level access around the courtyard linking the various spaces that are generated by raised Corten steel planters of varying heights. The concrete flag paving incorporates up to 60% recycled and reclaimed materials, with granite aggregates providing exceptional performance and durability. A bespoke version was also created for the project using a double process to expose more aggregate, giving a contrasting finish to the main polished flag paved areas.



Photo: Georgina Viney

## Acknowledgements

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**Grant Associates**

**dRMM**

**Lendlease**

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[www.hodsons.com](http://www.hodsons.com)

## Paving Essentials

Precast concrete paving and kerbs offer distinct, modular units and designed variations in colour, texture and shape. They can break up areas, adding visual interest and a human scale not possible with monotonous, formless materials such as asphalt.

Interpave manufacturers continue to develop a growing palette of styles, shapes, colours and textures to meet current demands in urban design, matching – and often exceeding – the visual qualities of materials such as stone. It is generally unrealistic on cost, availability and accessibility grounds to specify locally extracted stone that may have been used in the past, while imported stone fails to meet sustainability criteria. In contrast, precast concrete paving from Interpave manufacturers can meet requirements for 'local materials', both in terms of aesthetics and sustainability.

**Essential requirements for paving materials, from the Manual for Streets and other guidelines, can be summarised as follows:**

- visually attractive and able to deliver distinctive local character
- capability for visual or tactile differentiation between distinct areas
- durable and maintainable with reliable product supply
- accessible to all with consistent slip and skid resistance
- well drained to avoid standing water and compatible with SuDS
- sustainable – in the widest sense.

**More information on how precast concrete paving is uniquely placed to satisfy all these requirements can be found in *Planning with Paving*, via [www.paving.org.uk](http://www.paving.org.uk).**



# Interpave

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