

## Eurovia Surfacing

# Resurfacing by Royal appointment

Colourful asphalt surfacing has been renewed with great success beside London's most famous residential address, Buckingham Palace.

Millions of tourist footfalls and hundreds of thousands of vehicles passing Buckingham Palace had, by the summer of 2010, taken their toll on the surrounding footways and carriageways. Asphalt had cracked and crazed, occasional potholes were causing concern for walkers and motorists, and the distinctive red coloured surfacing was starting to fade.

Efforts to renew the quality and appearance of the pedestrian area in front of the Palace and roads in the local vicinity led The Royal Parks agency and its consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff to commission surfacing contractor Eurovia to come up with a suitable resurfacing treatment and carry out the necessary works.

Eurovia specified a 40mm thick Fibrovia stone mastic asphalt (SMA) surface course, manufactured and supplied by Eurovia Roadstone, for the pedestrian area linking Buckingham Palace to the Queen Victoria Memorial. The Fibrovia material included a 10mm red aggregate from an approved

source with a red pigmented binder. The pigment was supplied by chemical specialist Lanxess.

For the carriageways beside the Palace, a 40mm thick red pigmented hot rolled asphalt (HRA) surface course was used with 20mm pre-coated red aggregate. Use of the two different surfacing materials was required

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to provide a subtle distinction between footway and highway for the safety of pedestrians and motorists.

Eurovia completed its £400,000 contract in under two weeks during September 2010. Work directly outside the Palace gates was carried out throughout consecutive nights to ensure that tourists congregating outside the Palace during the day could continue to watch

the Changing of the Guard and take photographs of the building without disruption from surfacing activities.

"This was a challenging contract because we had a tight programme and had to get the quality of the finish just right," says Eurovia Surfacing's Operations Manager Paul Kidd. "We planned meticulously to ensure that deliveries arrived in The Mall on schedule, and I am delighted to say that everything went to plan.

"We applied a Grand Prix 'pit stop' mentality to our work to reduce delays. Everyone on site knew exactly where they had to be, and at what time. The team really pulled together and we completed the contract with a day to spare," he adds.

Work began at 8pm on the evening of Monday 6 September with the planing and removal of 80mm of the existing surfacing from the pedestrian concourse between the Palace front gates and the Queen Victoria Memorial. Eurovia then immediately installed a 40mm layer of a 10mm SMA Binder course in readiness for the red Fibrovia.

The following night's activity involved two planing and paving teams working simultaneously to plane out asphalt and replace binder course around both sides of the Queen Victoria Memorial. One team started on Constitution Hill to the north of the Palace and worked towards the Memorial, with the second crew operating along Buckingham Gate to the south.

By choosing to double up on resources during the second night's work the Eurovia teams were able to pull ahead of the original schedule. Throughout the highway renewal

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works, roads were reopened to traffic at 5am the following morning.

Final surfacing operations commenced with the laying of the red Fibrovia SMA to the pedestrian concourse in front of the Palace gates. This was achieved using two paving machines working in echelon to minimise the number of visible joints in the finished product. "Using a red Fibrovia SMA for the pedestrian areas offered the client more durability," Paul Kidd adds. "Getting two newly laid surfaces to blend in with one another and colour match with existing finishes was a challenge in itself."

Hot rolled asphalt and pre-coated chips were laid and compacted to all trafficked areas, both into the Palace and around the Queen Victoria Memorial.

The use of HRA used to be a popular method of surfacing, but has fallen out of

favour in recent years, as stone mastic asphalt type materials have grown in popularity.

Paul Kidd adds: "The move away from traditional HRA and chips has contributed to a decline in the number of people who possess the necessary skills and experience to lay this type of material to a very high standard. It is a labour intensive process and requires an experienced team of operatives to get the right finish. A 'right first time approach' is absolutely essential," he says.

Fortunately for Eurovia, the company still lays a large amount of HRA for many key clients around the country, including Worcestershire and Wiltshire county councils and an increasing number of London boroughs, such as The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. HRA not only requires an experienced team to lay the material but a great deal of planning and supervision is

necessary to ensure the highest quality can be maintained throughout.

Prior to the start of highway works beside the Palace, Eurovia carried out technical investigations including coring of the site along with a number of production plant trials with the Lanxess pigment to colour match the materials. These investigations and trials were critical to the success of the contract, particularly necessary because of its high profile location.

Eurovia's recent resurfacing contract was not the first time the company had carried out major highway works in the vicinity of Buckingham Palace. In September 2009, the contractor relaid asphalt along the full length of Constitution Hill on behalf of The Royal Parks, working with Parsons Brinckerhoff. The company also resurfaced Horse Guards Parade on the other side of St James's Park in 2008.

The Royal Parks' Works Project Manager Caroline McDonagh says she is very pleased with the outcome of last autumn's resurfacing. She also notes that not a single complaint or negative comment has been received from the public. "If a project is scored against the number of complaints received, this scheme is a huge success," she says.



Eurovia's night work allowed tourists to view Buckingham Palace unobstructed by surfacing operations