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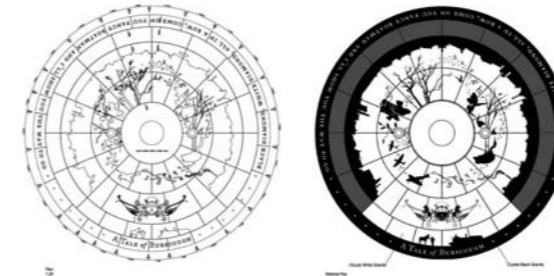


The overview

The Fairytale of Burscough Bridge celebrates modern creative life beyond the city; presenting the successful realisation of a contemporary design project within a rural context. Liverpool based design agencies BCA Landscape and Smiling Wolf have created a bold and adventurous scheme to enrich the sense of identity in the Lancashire village of Burscough Bridge. The scheme involved the creation of a series of new small interlinked squares and pedestrian routes (previously full of parked cars and clutter) - animated with bespoke furniture, paving, artworks, lighting, signage and a village clock.

'The Fairytale of Burscough Bridge' project, which is thrillingly alive with historical nuance and contemporary meaning, is a particularly intense example of conceptualist landscape design. In fact, in an international context, BCA Landscape emerge as among the most emotionally engaged of all conceptual design companies. In this case, Thomson and his colleagues, who included the graphic design company Smiling Wolf, looked into the history of a large Lancashire village between Liverpool and Preston which had effectively been neutered, culturally, by the ever-present A59 road, which thunders through it. Most conceptualist designers gain commissions for stand-alone spaces such as public squares or plazas in cities, or else parks or communal garden areas.

The 'Fairytale of Burscough Bridge' project is unusual for two reasons -- the relatively small size of the settlement, and the way BCAL have extrapolated the scheme throughout the whole length of the village, so that it acts as a series of episodes or, indeed, as a journey of sorts, from Wharf Square to Church Square to the illuminated church itself. One suspects that local people will soon assimilate these interventions into their daily routines, but for the many outsiders who pass through Burscough Bridge, this landscape scheme will shout, 'This is who we are now and who we were then. And that is all a part of what we might become'.



Project: The Fairy Tale of Burscough Bridge

Designers: BCA Landscape + Smiling Wolf

Quantity Surveyor: BCA Project Services

Client: West Lancashire District Council

Collaborators: Lancashire County Council, Burscough Parish Council, Church group and local community steering group.

Area of Project: 0.9 ha

Principal Contractor: Lancashire County Engineers

Principal Suppliers: Stone – Hardscape Products Ltd. Bronze/Zinc – Photocast. Timber – Woodscape.

Completion: April 2008

Value: £1.0 Million

Funding: West Lancashire Investors in Business Regeneration Programme [NWD A]

Text written by: Tim Richardson, landscape-odette. > Images supplied by BCA Landscape, Liverpool



The detail

The design celebrates the fascinating history of the area, expressed in a unique and contemporary style. Inspired by the simplicity and functionality of the canal and railway architecture, combined with the flamboyant spirit, colour, songs and traditions of the canalboats and the people who worked on them. The design team worked closely with West Lancashire District Council, Lancashire County Council, Burscough Parish Council and the local people to achieve a final design which brings about a dramatic change in how the area is perceived by themselves and the outside world – reinforcing a renewed sense of identity and community.

The Fairytale of Burscough Bridge celebrates modern creative life beyond the city; presenting the successful realisation of a contemporary scheme within a rural context. The design team's original research in to the town's rich heritage, unique character and traditional values proved invaluable inspiration for a truly unique and bespoke project. The new Environmental Improvements are instigating a renewed confidence and positivity in the local environment and the viability of local shops. A number of the shops have already been given further face lifts and the Parish group have entered the village in to a national competition.

Hardscape were involved right from the outset in terms of making the design ideas a reality, specifically with the graphical artwork highlighted in the paving around Wharf Square and the intricate carvings on the carved wall next to the bridge. Products used were Tower sandstone slabs and setts and Royal White and Crystal Black waterjet-cut granite Artscape artwork. In terms of a showcase of quality materials, craftsmanship and ingenuity then this project alone demonstrates the true essence of Hardscape in close harmony with award-winning landscape architects and designers.

