

Syd Bishop & Sons Near Graduation

Syd Bishop & Sons Ltd, the long-established demolition specialists renowned for their ‘watch it come down’ company slogan’, is nearing completion of a year-long project to demolish the former University of East London and make way for more than 1,000 new homes.

Kent-based demolition specialist Syd Bishop & Sons Ltd is nearing completion of a 12-month contract to demolish the former University of East London to make way for 1,042 much needed new homes in Barking, Essex. The contract has required the demolition of around 20 individual buildings, the majority of which were four or five storeys in height, and called upon the company’s full range of demolition and recycling equipment and experience.

Delicate Demolition

Covering an area of 10 hectares, the former University of East London site was partially housed upon the Beacontree Estate, the world’s largest corporation housing estate when it was built shortly after the First World War.

The University was relocated from this site in 2006 to its new location in London’s Docklands, although some activity continued at the former site until May 2007. However, a condition of this relocation was that the former site should be redeveloped to help fund the new facility. A further condition was that some of the original listed buildings, primarily the retraining centre, were to be retained and converted into flats and apartments. According to Syd Bishop & Sons Ltd director Tom Bishop, this required some delicate demolition work. “We literally had to cut away some adjoining university buildings whilst leaving the listed structures untouched,” he says.

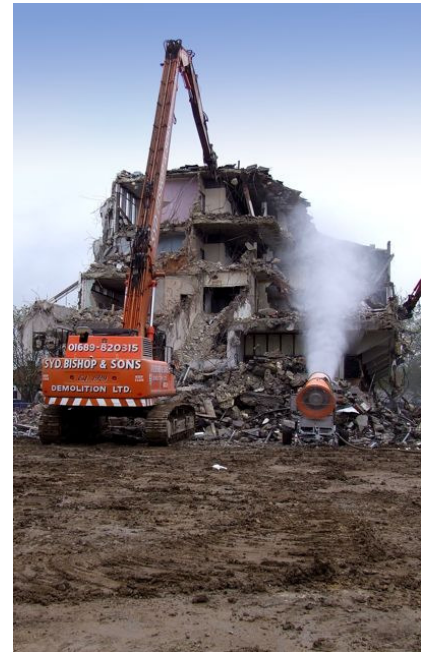
Utility Challenges

In addition to the need to retain some key structures, the project also threw up some major utility-related challenges. “There were three electricity sub-stations on the site, one of which was still in use. In addition, the site was criss-crossed with gas mains and no-one knew exactly where they were,” Bishop explains. “some of the gas mains never had meters and there was no way of cutting them off. In the end, they had to be sealed from outside the perimeter of the site. The process took months.” A further challenge was the close proximity of existing housing and the need to control both noise and dust. “Thankfully, we received just one complaint about noise during our time on site and that related to a generator which we quickly replaced,” Bishop adds. “We used a DustBoss system that not only minimised dust

but, I think, helped us through the planning process as this had previously been a major concern.”

The demolition began with soft strip and asbestos removal programmes at the start of the year. Since then, Syd Bishop & Sons Ltd has demolished approximately 20 buildings, retaining the construction and demolition waste arisings for on-site processing and re-use.

With most of the buildings standing four or five storeys high, the company called upon its extensive fleet of Hitachi demolition specification excavators including a ZX600 equipped with a 36 metre boom, and a ZX400 fitted with a 24 metre boom. Both units were also equipped with Verachttert VT pulverisers. At the western edge of the site there is a ZX 470 fitted with a huge 4 m³ capacity bucket that is charged with digging out the foundations. The reinforced concrete is then broken down by a ZX280 armed with a Komac hammer. Tom Bishop reports that the ageing concrete is so brittle that the cab windows on the ZX280 have been protected with Perspex screens to prevent breakage from flying chips.



All concrete arising are processed by an Extec C-12 crusher that is loaded by yet another Hitachi excavator, this time a ZX250. “All the recycled material is reduced to a 25 mm fraction and stockpiled for piling mats and sub- base for the new development,” Bishop says. “waste from the demolition works that are not required to be left on site will be transported to our main recycling facilities at Longfield, nr Dartford, from there, waste will be separated via picking stations, water baths and various machine applications, thus reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.”

Academy Central

With building work scheduled to commence later this month on what will ultimately be known as Academy Central, work is now rapidly approaching completion in time for a full handover to a joint venture company comprising Taylor Wimpey plc and London and Quadrant Housing Trust.



“This has been a remarkably well organised site, and the client is delighted,” Tom Bishop concludes. “Despite the problems with the remaining utility infrastructure and initial concerns over the delicate nature of some of the demolition works, everything has run according to plan and there have been no problems or setbacks.”

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