

SPOTLIGHT: PILING & FOUNDATIONS

TAKING THE PLUNGE

German piling specialist Bauer Technologies has established itself on the UK piling scene via a series of regional contract wins, before targeting the London market. **NCE** reports.

As German owned Bauer Technologies approaches the end of its piling contract at London's Tottenham Court Road Underground station, it is gearing up to work on two major Crossrail contracts.

These are the advance works contracts for Liverpool Street and Whitechapel stations.

These significant contracts are signs that the piling specialist's plan to re-enter the UK deep foundations market is starting to bear fruit.

Bauer returned to the UK deep foundations market in 2007. Its goal was to form a small company that would perform a very limited number of specialist techniques on more technically complex or major projects. These relate to diaphragm walling, pile walling and large diameter rotary bored piling.

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Technologies managing director Michael Jones. Initial hopes of a quick win on the Olympics were soon dashed, when it became apparent that Bauer had arrived too late.

"In addition we didn't have UK credentials, such as a portfolio of previous UK projects and more importantly UK health and safety statistics," adds Jones.

On hitting these initial difficulties it regrouped and set about building a highly skilled team of UK staff, with the required UK experience. It looked for work outside London, to allow time to develop and grow together away from the most regulated of UK inner city environments and also looked for companies that would give it an opportunity.

"We were lucky that the market was booming in 2007 so there was certainly a need for another contractor at the elite end of the market, and the Bauer name gave reassurance that despite not having a UK track record we were a company that could be relied upon," says Jones.

The first win came in early 2008, where Bauer performed large diameter bored piling and secant pile walling at the Palm Paper Factory, one of the world's largest paper and newspaper recycling plants, in King's Lynn. "This was a great chance for us, the client was German, the consultant was Austrian and



London job: A Bauer piling rig at work at Tottenham Court Road Underground station

they wanted a contract based on the German standard form, with the contract language being German! – I imagine this was not the most enticing prospect for our competitors but we were able to use our parent company in Germany to get the most out of this project."

Two months after winning the King's Lynn job the firm won a diaphragm walling contract for to a circular shaft in Newhaven. A month later it won a £15M piling contract at Uskmouth Power Station in Newport.

"It was certainly a roller coaster first operational year," recalls Jones, "but by the end of it we had a company consisting almost entirely of UK staff, a strict health and safety regime on every site and employees who believed in us." A further win took them to Pembroke Power Station in 2009 for a CFA piling job. Bauer was also invited to return in 2010 to install complex

piles to support a 50 year old jetty.

Bauer then joined forces with Keller Foundations to bid for London Underground's Tottenham Court Road Station Upgrade, as Bauer-Keller Joint Venture (BKJV).

The JV won this project and during the last 14 months has installed the extremely complex OSD piles with multiple liners, permanent and temporary casings at diameters up to 2.5m. Bauer even constructed a D-shaped pile, a pile many in the industry thought impossible to build.

Diaphragm walls are now complete and work on plunged columns ongoing.

"We have a simple policy within Bauer Technologies," explains Jones.

"We aim to be the best at whatever we do whether in tendering, design, health and safety or operationally on site.