



A 14' Dublin Cobble medallion adds visual interest to the driveway of this striking home.



When searching for a stone to complement the brick exterior of a home they were building in HighGate, Queen City Development Group turned to the experts at Blue Max Materials.

Manufactured Materials that are Solid as a Rock

By Theresa Klecker • Photography by Charles Umberger

The Natural Look

When Queen City Development Group, LLC is building a new home or tackling an extensive renovation project, they have one simple philosophy. “We wouldn’t build it if we weren’t willing to move into it ourselves,” explains Jeannette Bugg, who along with her husband founded the land development and residential construction company in 2003.

So it was only natural that when Bugg was told the stone she had carefully selected to complement the brick exterior of a custom home in HighGate was no longer available, she took time to find an ideal replacement. That’s when her masonry contractor, McGee Brothers, Inc., referred her to one of their preferred resources - Blue Max Materials.

Blue Max has long been a staple of discerning homeowners and contractors alike. “We try to establish a solid rapport and ongoing relationship with builders and their masons. We recognize that their clients are ultimately our customers as well,” says Blue Max President Michael Bishop. Blue Max Materials is well known for its vast array of landscape and hardscape materials - ranging from proprietary soil blends and pure mulches to premium Belgard pavers and the distinctive Landmark manufactured stone. What adds to the attraction is the company-wide emphasis on outstanding customer service.

Landmark stone is the direction in which Blue Max Sales Representative Chris Sackinger steered Bugg. “Landmark stone offers the look of a natural stone without the weight,” he explains, citing its 30-year warranty. “Landmark’s number one advantage is its versatility,” agrees Frank Boggs, sales manager for Landmark. “It’s lightweight, so it’s easier and less costly to install. The variety of styles and colors are typically greater than what you would find readily available in natural stone.” Lines range from the deeply chiseled, rough-hewn surfaces of

the Limestone Collection to the smooth contours of River Rock. “It really elevates the look of a house and differentiates it from its neighbors,” Boggs says.

That’s exactly the effect Bugg sought to achieve with her firm’s first two homes in HighGate – each residence is approximately 5,000 square feet and priced just under \$1 million (a price hard to come by for new construction in the prestigious Union County neighborhood). “Using the Landmark stone products allows us to watch our costs without sacrificing quality. The result is a totally custom look for each of our homes,” she explains.

For the first of the HighGate homes, Sackinger showed Bugg several of Blue Max’s 5’ by 8’ Landmark sample panels, which led her to the Mountain Ledge Sienna collection. “Once we selected the stone, our brick masons built a 2’ x 2’ mockup on the front of the house. The sample helped confirm the stone’s color compatibility with the existing brick. We also refined the stone application, reducing the grout lines several times before we achieved the look of natural dry stacked stone,” Bugg says. The stone now graces the front entrance and bay, as well as wing walls and key accents above windows... a beautiful compliment to the rich tones and decorative application of the brick.

As someone who also coordinates her firm’s extensive renovation projects, Bugg was impressed with Landmark’s practicality. “These are easy products to work with – ideal when retrofitting an older home,” she says. “You can actually remove siding and replace it with Landmark stone, whereas you would be limited with natural stone because of its weight,” Bishop adds.

Bugg also liked the fact that Landmark (due to its light weight) could be used indoors, making it a viable decorating



The Mountain Ledge Sienna collection from Landmark captures the distinctive look of a natural dry stack stone in a lightweight material that's easy to work with.



Belgard pavers in varying sizes add a rich touch to this home's rear terrace at a price that compares favorably to stamped concrete.

option for a fireplace surround, kitchen accents, or even a wine cellar. "Landmark is sold in 10' to 12' cartons so that you as a customer don't have to buy 100' of stone to complete a space," Bishop explains. "Those small handi packs can easily be carried inside, whereas large pallets can't. Plus, you buy no more than what you need – making this product a great choice for smaller interior projects."

Blue Max seeks similar advantages in all of the products they offer. "Blue Max is first of all a very well-run company that's a one-stop shop for landscaping and hardscaping supplies," Boggs says. "Availability is almost immediate on their products, and, thanks to their relationship with Blue Max Trucking, contractors can have it all delivered."

Accessibility was a bonus for Bugg. "I prefer not to have huge quantities of materials at the construction site until the subs are ready to start. It's always been very easy to work with Blue Max. Materials are available with a three- to five-day notice, and the staff is responsive, knowledgeable, and has my best interest in mind. In fact, during the stone selection process, I asked a question that led us to Belgard pavers as a material option to use with our driveways and rear terraces."

"Blue Max is the largest independent Belgard dealer and probably the largest distributor of Oldcastle products, which include everything from pavers and retaining walls to mulch," says Scott Robinson, Belgard Territory Manager. "We have a strong partnership with Oldcastle, Belgard's parent company," explains Bishop. "Most of our sales reps have toured the Belgard manufacturing plant, and Oldcastle representatives have been here several times to conduct training

sessions." This training results in an in-depth product knowledge that benefits all Blue Max customers.

Sackinger pointed out features that position the Belgard brand at the forefront of the paver market. Oldcastle is a leader in paver research and development, introducing new advances annually. The pavers can easily support vehicular traffic – and their appearance is very natural. "Our batch and blend technology sets us apart," Robinson agrees. "Our colors are beautifully mottled. For example, Belgard's Fossil Beige pavers are comprised of three individual colors that are blended so no two pavers look exactly alike." Pair that with a surface that is virtually maintenance free, at a price that Robinson says "compares reasonably to stamped concrete," and you have a winning combination. "If they are properly installed by an Authorized Belgard Contractor, the pavers are guaranteed for life," he adds.

Those advantages led Bugg to select Belgard pavers for use throughout the landscaping of her homes in HighGate, including the back patio, a soldier course of pavers along the driveway and at the front apron. A dramatic 14' diameter Dublin Cobble medallion flares out from the front entrance, adding visual impact to the driveway.

The end result of the partnership between a regarded manufacturer, a knowledgeable supplier, skilled contractors and a discerning builder is visible in these two HighGate homes. "Working with Blue Max Materials and utilizing the Landmark and Belgard products allows us to deliver a high-quality home with reasonable construction costs," Bugg says.

*For more information on Blue Max Materials, visit www.bluemaxmaterials.com or call 704-821-2426.
For more information on Queen City Development, visit www.queencitydevelopment.com or call (704) 719-2100.*

