

SIMON FELTON

Central Square or Brindley Place Square is at the heart of the Brindleyplace development which was masterplanned by Argent who acquired the site in May 1993 and created an updated masterplan from an earlier 1991 Farrell masterplan. Chatwin in the 1999 book *Brindleyplace a Model for Urban Regeneration* (edited by Ian Latham and Mark Swenarton) noted this revised masterplan gave a greater emphasis to public spaces as a framework for the development. In David Partridge's chapter in the book he notes that "the masterplan of Brindleyplace is essentially about spaces with buildings around them".

The square was designed by Townshend Landscape who were successful in a mini competition and who responded to the 1994 brief which clearly set the space to be created as a node being required to "act as a natural extension to the sequence of public spaces running through the centre of Birmingham" and "be an integral part of the network of public spaces that would link all parts of Brindleyplace".

Central square was completed by 1995 after its funding was achieved through site sales and development obligations allowing the construction of the square and main site infrastructure. The completed square, albeit with base for the future coffee shop, acted as a statement of intent and the importance of place when creating a space and acting from then on as a meeting place, a space of activity and connection. The success of the space can be seen in the variety of activities that have taken place from cinema to food markets as well as showing live sports and historic UK events. It is never more alive than when filled with people.

A more detailed history of the land assembly and transformation of Brindleyplace can be read at: <http://www.coulsonbirmingham.co.uk/publications/Brindleyplace.pdf>
