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INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN REPORT (PART A) BULLRING PROJECT

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Bullring project

Introduction

Bullring Centre connects Birmingham's city centre with three axes, two of which are natural extensions of the city's two main shopping avenues to the north. St. Martin's Walk is the third axis. St. Martin's Walk connects Bullring Centre's two retail buildings to St. Martin's Church and the city's three southern markets. Bullring, which was completed in September 2003, has almost 93,000 square metres (1 million square feet) of net internal area (NIA) and 110,000 square metres (1.2 million square feet) of GLA in both open-air and enclosed mall layouts. The public spaces, marketplaces, and cathedral cover 10.5 hectares (26 acres). It changed the city and the shopping centre on the site. The Birmingham Alliance—Hammerson PLC, Land Securities Group PLC, and Henderson Global Investors Ltd.—developed Bullring (Case studies 2008). Birmingham is at a critical point. As climate change becomes more urgent, the City Council wants to achieve net zero carbon by 2030 and carbon neutral as soon as a "just transition" allows. As the city transforms to a zero carbon, clean air environment via its Route to Zero and Clean Air Strategy the rule investment and growth will become increasingly crucial. To support the city's growth agenda, it must build resilience and generate future-focused development that creates zero-carbon, low-pollution settings. The development meets the city's diverse needs: homes to be adaptable and efficient; neighbourhoods to be welcoming, safe, and attractive; places of work to compete with the best in the world; the built environment to reflect local distinctiveness and embrace creativity; leisure and recreation facilities to be diverse and modern; pervasive green infrastructure effectively integrated (City Council 2022).

Community engagement principles

The Birmingham Alliance had to convince local residents and new retailers to participate in Birmingham's rebirth. The developer's ability to provide a viable trading proposition is a major influence in retailer confidence in a plan. Development of commercial centres requires extensive demographic, MOSAIC, and catchment analyses. Despite being Britain's second largest city, Birmingham's retail offer does not match its reputation as a commercial and cultural hub.

Most of Birmingham's key catchment shopped elsewhere in the West Midlands. To avoid harming the city's retail, a concerted approach was needed. The Birmingham Alliance's mission was to turn a neglected portion of the city centre into Europe's most lively quality retail environment, a gathering place, and the city's new civic heart. Before Bullring's revitalization, Birmingham stood fifth in retail space while being the UK's second largest city. It's second. To bring the 7.2m consumers within an hour's drive back to the city, the Birmingham Alliance delivered Europe's largest city centre retail rehabilitation project. Attracting anchor tenants was crucial to Bullring's retail mix. Debenhams had a deal with Hammerson to lease space at Bullring before The Birmingham Alliance was formed. The department store chain returned to Birmingham after 20 years and opened its first 2010 concept shop at Bullring. However, Selfridges captivated the popular imagination. As high-profile tenants go, Selfridges is unmatched. As a "house of brands," the London department store had been renovated. At the same time, the shop launched a series of innovative promos to attract a younger, lifestyle-focused, designer label-conscious customer. Selfridges accepted the challenge of bringing this innovative concept to the UK's second city by commissioning a design. Bullring's design contributed to its diverse tenant mix. The scheme's unique offer came from its open street setting, which attracted shops not usually found in shopping centres. Using Bullring's mall design to cluster comparable branded concepts, Debenhams and Selfridges were placed at opposing ends of the scheme to create "mini-pitches" for merchant categories. To give each trade level a distinct retail mix, the scheme's three design treatments were diverse. Catering and high-street fashion occupied the lowest floor. Young fashion and lifestyle retailing were on the mid-level, while aspirational fashion was on the top level. The department stores followed this approach, making their store levels logical extensions of each mall's retail mix. At its debut, Bullring brought over 70 new

retailers to Birmingham. Since then, Bullring Link, the 6,600 m2 redevelopment of the former Wades furniture store building, has brought more retail entrants to the scheme. The final 20 store spaces allowed a variety of independent operators and specialist shops to contribute to Bullring's success. Bullring's opening was projected to syphon retail activity from other districts of the city. This inclusive strategy centred on sharing the Bullring vision. To achieve this, a robust consultation procedure and a broad public awareness drive were carried out. The Birmingham Alliance promoted itself through public speaking, focus groups, direct marketing, and a cutting-edge website linked to construction webcams. Bullring Magazine, a professionally produced publication, was also issued during crucial project stages. The magazine featured lifestyle features, comments from the project's consultant teams, construction progress, job opportunities, and updates on new retailers opening at the scheme. Marketing Birmingham and Birmingham Forward were encouraged to actively assist Bullring's development. Rotunda One Five, based on the 15th floor of Birmingham's famous Rotunda office tower, owned by The Birmingham Alliance, organised school and community programming and exhibitions. At milestone phases, site tours and public open days were held, and weekly one-on-one meetings with important press and broadcast media created substantial media coverage. Bullring's marketing and PR campaign was a UK shopping destination development success. The initiative generated more TV, radio, and trade publication coverage than any previous retail scheme. Bullring's public art scheme illustrates the Birmingham Alliance's inclusive attitude. Commercial public art is nothing new. The Birmingham Alliance funded a £2 million public art campaign for Bullring. It aimed to attract local and international artists and designers. The results were overwhelmingly positive. Birmingham's new mascot is a twice-life-size bronze bull at Bulling's main entrance. Miniature two-inch reproductions sold out in two days after public demand. Bully is on The Birmingham Post's masthead (Hammerson 2006).

Planning and design

Bullring's permeability and the way new open spaces and walkways throughout the three primary trading levels have been planned to link into the city centre and constitute an extension of Birmingham's premier retail pitch are key design elements. Jon Emery, Hammerson's U.K. development director, says Bullring's design incorporates the site's 19.5-metre (64-foot) north-to-south gradient to give each trading level a ground-floor entrance. The centre's return to Birmingham required breaking the concrete collar. However, four spectacular bowstring trusses were used to bridge across the road and railway tunnels below to suspend new buildings. The city's two main retail streets and St. Martin's Walk in the Bullring are seamlessly connected by this architecture. The new pedestrian walkways in the

mall, St. Martin's Walk, the church, and market districts replicate traditional street patterns and restore stunning city views, especially of St. Martin's Church. The rotunda, church, slope, two train stations, and road improvements added to the obstacles. The outcome was a three-story shopping centre. The Birmingham Alliance also developed a new road for cars and a bus and taxi tunnel beneath that connects the two train stations. The mall's two buildings, one on either side of St. Martin's Walk, step down the slope. It seems more like a city block than a mall because each is portrayed differently. Modern stone architecture is used. The property is crisscrossed with pedestrian streets, part of which are covered by the "floating" 7,000-square-meter (75,000-square-foot) glass roof, termed the "Sky Plane." Mall buildings contain the glass-roofed roadways. Birmingham's skyline may be seen via the glass roof. The northern square, where the old city meets the new and seven streets converge, was designed as a meeting place; St. Martin's Walk, the central promenade; and a space to the south near the church reached by a sloping street to the lower level, where civic and cultural events are held. The train station mall is open 18 hours a day, but the squares and pedestrian streets are open 24 hours a day. One under the centre, one above the indoor market, and one stand-alone parking garage contain 111,500 square metres (1.2 million square feet) and over 3,000 parking spaces. The 39-month construction included a 12-week delay due to a broken water main above the railway tunnels. Despite this, the development opened three weeks early. 57 Birmingham-new stores and 19 eateries and cafés are in the three-level mall. Because of the slope, each level—but not necessarily each tenant—has outside access. For the correct tenant mix, certain businesses were designed to be 6.5 metres (21 feet) wide. Rents exceed £322.91 per square metre. All three levels of Selfridges and Debenhams, the mall's anchors, have entrances.

It was planned to employ each retail floor differently. Volume fashion, big-box businesses, and a food court occupy 40% of the lowest floor, which has deep apartments. The Debenhams end of the middle level has lifestyle shopping like health care, a travel agency, and a mobile phone store, while Selfridges has mainstream women's fashion. High-fashion stores are on the upper floor. To attract clients, destination shops are situated at dead ends on each floor. Each shopfront is designed by the Birmingham Alliance's design consultant to help retailers maximise their location (Uli Development 2008).

Standards

Promotion, Administration, Tenants, and Outcomes

Bullring's marketing and PR campaign has garnered television, radio, and trade magazine coverage. More than 1,400 press stories and 21 radio and TV networks covered the launch. Opening day saw 276,600 people, 4.8 million people visited Bullring in the first month. Bullring will preserve its name, but the alliance will change its image. They presented photographs of the development and had 2,000 construction workers on site every day. The strategy was to convey information (what happened, what worked, and what didn't) throughout. The Birmingham Alliance and the three partners were used to market the scheme's vision. Business-to-business and business-to-consumer routes were taken. Birmingham Alliance's brand was created. After construction began, the developers abandoned this strategy since consumers were more interested in the product than the builder. Brand Bullring followed. Bullring Magazine, a four-issue professional publication, covered numerous project details. The alliance's ties with the city council and civic organisations to promote the wider rehabilitation of the area were also covered in typical issues. Articles on advertising, possibilities for marketers to exhibit their brands, investing, jobs, prospective tenants, public spaces, architecture, and more. Tours and a website were also created. The public was invited to view the project on "open days" (the last two weeks before opening). The partnership held a citywide festival on opening day to celebrate the city centre's restoration. After Bullring opened, some worried the city would become a ghost town. Only 19 of Bullring's 140 shops have transferred from elsewhere in the city, and their vacant sites were almost all occupied by other shops. The city's retail space increased by 40% after Bullring's reconstruction. Unemployed people got 70% of the 8,000 new jobs. Interviews and resumes were improved by the alliance. Bullring Centre's freestanding electronic touch displays, and ceiling plasma screens provide information on retailers, local events, news, travel, and shopping. Technology connects retailers and centre management. The two anchors have 50-year leases, while most tenants have 15. 97% of the facility was leased at opening. One year after opening, Bullring was entirely leased (Uli Development 2008).

Consequent Impact of Bullring

Bullring has brought more than just shopping back to Birmingham. Since opening, Bullring has spawned thousands more jobs. As more retailers open outlets in Birmingham, the retail business has grown.

Hoteliers in Birmingham claim a boost in weekend business. Weekend hotel occupancy rates in the city jumped 8% in the first year after Bullring opened. Public transport use has also increased. 60% of Bullring tourists take buses and trains, and train operators have seen a 7% rise in utilisation. Bullring has also benefited other Birmingham retail destinations, with 60% of visitors saying they had visited, or intended to visit, House of Fraser, Marks & Spencer, Pavilion Central, and the Mall Pallasades. Birmingham's outstanding retail pitches along New Street, High Street, Union Street, and Corporation Street have also experienced a recovery in retail lettings and an improvement in the retail offer to match Bullring's. Bullring attracts 670,000 visitors every week, exceeding estimates. The system had 38 million visitors in its second year, up 12% from its first. Bullring has transformed Birmingham into a shopping powerhouse, and its unique building has become its new symbol. Birmingham Alliance remains dedicated. The Birmingham Alliance and Urban Splash are transforming Birmingham's cylindrical 20-storey office tower, The Rotunda, into a landmark residential development to complete the Bullring jigsaw. All 232 flats were sold off-plan before the 2008 refurbishment. Bullring's success as a full urban district with places to live, work, shop, and be entertained depends on the new development. The Birmingham Alliance refurbished Moor Street, an Edwardian station near Bullring. After 16 years, the 1930s-style ticket office reopened. The station will reopen in 2007 to connect London Marylebone to Bullring and Birmingham. Large-scale regeneration is expensive. Overall, The Birmingham Alliance's completed projects cost nearly £600 million. It also took long-term dedication. Not just the development partners but all project consultants and, most importantly, Birmingham. Bullring was ten years in the making. Changes were inevitable, but its core principles—vision, partnership, diversity, and design excellence—remained firm (Hammerson 2006).

Conclusion

The project created almost 8,000 jobs, and Bullring has added thousands more since opening. As more retailers open outlets in Birmingham, the retail business has grown. Clean Birmingham canals. Upgraded towpaths encourage city residents to stroll and bike along waterways. The new East side City Park adds green space.

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