



REAL ESTATE CASE STUDY

Paradise: a development without the divide



Paradise marks the latest chapter in Birmingham's compelling history, a place rich in heritage and charm, and a new destination for the city which has been brought forward with a focus on delivering both a financial and a social return.

The 17-acre site brings together commerce and culture in the heart of the city. It seamlessly combines contemporary new workspace with some of the city's most celebrated listed buildings, wrapped around extensive new public realm.

The site was home to the former central library, which opened in 1974 and divided the UK's second city both metaphorically and physically. Located in the heart of the city centre, it served as a structural barrier between the east and the west ends of the city, while its post-war brutalist architecture polarised the people of Birmingham along the lines of those who loved it and those who hated it. With its network of subways, unlit passageways, and the six-lane ring-road that surrounded it, the library complex became, over the many years, a magnet for graffiti and a hub for rough sleepers. By the 2000s, the library was deemed a block to Birmingham's ambition to become a more pedestrianised and sustainable city of the future.



The decision to renovate the site, remove the ring-road and bulldoze the shadowy monument of concrete that was the city library was the first step in breathing new life, and light, into the city core and reconnecting the east to west and north and south with the opening up of new routes.

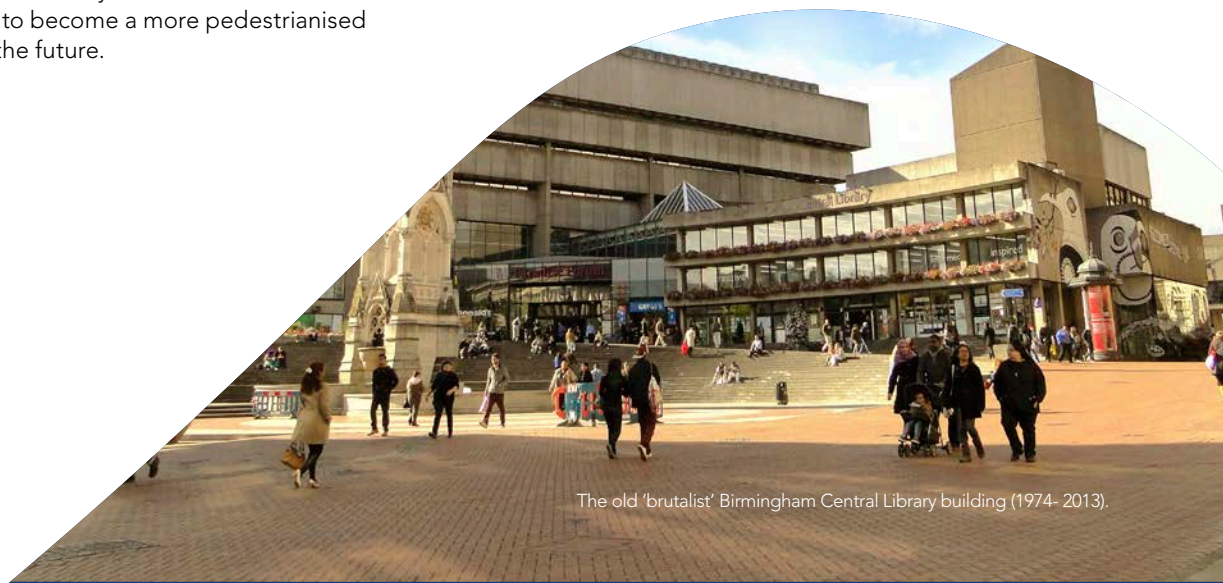
Paradise, rediscovered

Work began on clearing the site in 2015 following the opening of the new Library of Birmingham building in the neighbouring Centenary Square.

The Paradise redevelopment is being brought forward through Paradise Circus Limited Partnership (PCLP), a private-public joint venture with Birmingham City Council. The private sector funding is being managed by Federated Hermes Limited working with its development and asset management arm, MEPC.

Rob Groves, Regional Development Director of Paradise development and asset manager MEPC said:

“The redevelopment of Paradise has created an accessible and inclusive location with welcoming internal and external spaces capable of bringing people, companies and clients together.



The old 'brutalist' Birmingham Central Library building (1974- 2013).



Birmingham enters the ring

While the library was a major obstacle to Birmingham’s progress, the city also needed to improve its city centre transport strategy and ensure it was working for people. The changes seen in recent years have improved pedestrian access across the city and restored dwell spaces and new public realm for people to spend time in and simply enjoy.

Paradise, with 2 million sq ft of commercial space will create the jobs and wealth the city and the region needs to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. By bringing high quality jobs, skills and opportunities to the city, it is significantly bolstering Birmingham’s standing as a major economic hub.

Several international corporates across the finance, professional services and consulting sectors and beyond have already signed leases in Paradise; together these are bringing thousands of roles to the city centre and generating major inward investment opportunities for the region.

While Paradise has helped eliminate some of the physical barriers that plagued this part of the city centre, the developer team was determined to promote an inclusive place that was first and foremost about creating the jobs the city needs.



Paradise, with almost **2,000,000**

square feet of modern, high-quality office space, significantly bolsters Birmingham’s standing as an economic hub.

Shiny buildings for everyone

From the outset, Argent and now MEPC, Federated Hermes and Birmingham City Council saw Paradise as an opportunity to deliver both a financial and a social return for the city.

Rob Groves explains how this ambition is being realised: “Our priority is to ensure that everyone has a stake in Paradise. It’s essential that the local community benefits from everything the development has to offer.”



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The next phase of the development will deliver 370 new build-to-rent homes by 2025, a new 152 bedroom hotel and four further commercial workspace buildings will follow with additional new public realm. New initiatives to engage with the local community are also a priority for the next phase of this ambitious project.

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