

## **INNOVATIVE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW PROJECT**

**DESIGN AWARD WINNER**

### **Bullring** *Birmingham, United Kingdom*



**Owner/  
Development Company:**  
The Birmingham Alliance

**Management Company:**  
Pappas Properties LLC

**Architect:**  
Benoy

**Consultants:**  
Jones Lang LaSalle  
Lunson Mitchenall  
Cushman & Wakefield  
Healey & Baker  
Gardiner & Theobald  
The Waterman Partnership  
WSP Group  
Donaldsons  
Chapman Taylor  
Charnwood Edge

### **Architectural Revolution**

*B*ullring is the scene of what some are calling an “architectural revolution.” The new Bullring pulls together the city’s fragmented retail components and returns Birmingham’s city center to the market town it was way back in the 12th Century. It is yet another example of the urban redevelopment trend circling the globe.

The \$300 million redevelopment of the 26-acre Bullring is regarded as a milestone in the city’s retail renaissance. The 1.2 million-square-foot project has been repeatedly cited as the catalyst for the city’s transformation into a world-class retail capital of the 21st Century, combining two department stores and a total of nearly 150 shops, cafes and restaurants into a dynamic retail package. The department store duo of Selfridges and Debenhams is joined by a tenant roster dotted with names like Borders, New Look, TK Maxx and The Link.

The aim of Bullring’s design was to redress and eliminate the negative perceptions of a previous 1960s structure, and in the process create an environment that while totally new, would knit with the existing fabric, grain and scale of the city. Bullring’s three principal levels all link with and connect to the existing city center.

Classic materials such as stone, metal, glass and timber blend with a drawing from Birmingham’s historic street patterns to accomplish that mission. Those street patterns are borne out by Bullring’s series of traditional squares, street and open spaces, giving Birmingham a feeling reminiscent of the best of contemporary continental European cities with their boulevards, squares and active street life.

And Bullring is dramatically capped off by the spectacular SkyPlane, a 100% glazed, 76,000-square-foot over-sailing glass roof with no visible means of support. Rather than joining the facades symmetrically, as in traditional shopping center design, SkyPlane allows all the individual blocks and areas to take on a different architectural treatment, creating the mix and variety normally associated with an open-city, open-street environment.

Construction presented several challenges. Work was undertaken in a busy city center location bounded by two major railway stations and other transportation venues. Public access had to be maintained across the site at all times. Ultimately, it all came together in a dynamic venue marking a new era of retail-led regeneration for British cities.