ROTUNDA SQUARE (AREA C)

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The Bullring in Birmingham is almost as old as the city itself, the market having played a central role in the development of the city from the 12th century right through to the present day. Its marketing activity has made it a natural focus point where roads and paths converge to give the perception of a centre of Birmingham. This central point has brought thousands of people together for centuries. Traders, artisans, travellers, and local people from all across the world came here giving Birmingham the title "City of a Thousand Trades".

Since the Middle Ages the centre of Birmingham has been subject to constant change, with new buildings gradually replacing their predecessors. The iconic Bullring, however, has transcended time.

Allegedly a place where the practice of bull-baiting took place, it is still unclear whether the name originally referred to the area or to the ring to which the bull was tethered. The site now has a very clear identity of its own. A monument to Birmingham in its own right. Because of this long history of constant change, this is a monument that has not become invisible as many others have due to their familiarity to the casual passer-by. It has rewritten its own identity to remain in tune with the everyday people of Birmingham and stands head and shoulders strong and resilient like a bull.

The bull is now a meeting place in the city and its symbolic meaning has changed over time. The use of the bull in the opening ceremony of the commonwealth games illustrates this. The bull, like the everyday working people of the city had, in the past, been misused and abused. Bulls were ill-treated in the bullring as were everyday people who worked in the sweatshops of the industrial Midlands.

Released from the shackles of oppression, the bull, like its people, is now a symbol of reconciliation, peace, and happiness showcasing Birmingham's cultural richness in a setting of civility and conviviality in the 'super-diverse' context of Birmingham.

What is not to love?

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