

## Three Brindleyplace Office Building Birmingham, UK (1996 - 1998)

- Client: Argent Group plc
- Construction Cost: \$22 million USD
- New Construction
- Project Size: 120,000 sq ft
- Awards: British Council for Offices Awards, Best Office Building 1999; Birmingham City Council Department of Planning and Architecture & Building Control, Built-in Quality Award 1999

Brindleyplace is a master-planned, mixed-use development in the city of Birmingham with office buildings, shops, restaurants, housing, leisure buildings and with the Oozells Street School restored as a gallery. Designed by different architects, the buildings follow the master plan which produces an urban pattern of streets converging around two public squares and the canal front.



Three Brindleyplace is the office building we have designed. Its massing is additive: it presents a civic front on the side of the square and steps down to three storeys towards Birmingham canal. The tower rises as if embedded within the urban block and serves as a landmark for the entire Brindleyplace development. The main entrance leads through a double-height arcade into a lofty foyer, which in turn opens onto the central seven-story glazed atrium.

The atrium is the very heart of the building revealing at once its organisation in plan and section. It has an ashlar stone base with an arcade at ground floor, a columniated middle, and a top loggia surmounted by the glazed roof. The aim here has been to project a light post-and-spandrel structure in contrast to the solidity of the external masonry, thereby revealing the two constructional principles of bearing wall masonry and steel frame structure at work. At each office level, lifts open onto broad balconies overlooking the atrium. The 13 metre floor plate and 2.7 metre floor-to-ceiling height provide excellent working conditions with ample natural light and the potential for natural ventilation.

The building has a steel frame with external walls in self-supporting brick and ashlar stone construction. All architectural projections and rusticated surfaces are in reconstituted stone. Windows are detailed in metal and roofs are in terne-coated steel sheeting. Generally the elevations are organised into three sections: a rusticated base, a middle and an attic floor. Cornices, window surrounds and string courses all lend the building a sculptural character, ornamental profiles underline its constructional reading, while motifs like anthemia, reeds, roundels and acroteria are used as punctuation devices or to soften the skyline.