

## Broadgate Circle Improvement - London, UK

Essay by Calista Asher

Broadgate Circle is found at the heart of the Broadgate Estate in the north east corner of the City of London. The Circle covers an area of 4,150m<sup>2</sup>, adjacent to Liverpool Street Station. It was originally completed in 1987, as the first open-air ice rink in Britain. However, “for the first few years of its existence, it remained an isolated pitstop featuring a lonely post office and golf shop.”<sup>1</sup> Then in 2015, there was a major refurbishment of the building, with plans to open the lower levels and simplify circulation to draw more people into the space” while maintaining the building’s original “iconic form.”<sup>2</sup> According to Broadgate’s website, “by lowering its centre in 2015, Broadgate Circle was transformed into a must-visit food and drink destination.”<sup>3</sup>

The primary objective of this renovation project “was to reinvent the way people are drawn into the space by introducing a clear set of entrance and exit points.”<sup>4</sup> Arup and Partners were able to accomplish this by enhancing the southern entrance, adding three new double-width staircases which “allow for easy movement between ground and lower ground levels,” and improving sightlines across the space by lowering the elevated circle.<sup>5</sup> These changes have dramatically enhanced the amenity and civic provision, whilst celebrating the original qualities of the Circle, such as the “54 travertine columns rising to an impressive 14m in height.”<sup>6</sup> Construction of this project mainly included “a strip-back to structural elements and reorganising shopfronts and terraces, according to M3 Consulting.”<sup>7</sup>

In addition to lowering the center of the Circle and improving the circulation, Arup and Partners has also “significantly improved the efficiency of the centralised environmental systems which contribute to greatly reduced CO2 emissions” by “replacing and enhancing its wall and facade performance.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the retail units have all switched to utilising a centralised landlord operated services system, in order to further optimize Broadgate Circle’s sustainable performance, and robust and regular maintenance will improve the longevity of the equipment, reducing waste and replacement.<sup>9</sup>

Due to the varied mix of events the circle is designed to facilitate, including musical performances, pop up retail, theatre, cinema screenings, outdoor sports, etc., Arup and Partners designed the drainage, lighting, planting and maintenance infrastructure to be “fully-integrated, enabling the space to be transformed effortlessly from function to function, day to night.”<sup>10</sup> For example, halo lighting is integrated into the open steps of the Arena, to illuminate the steps, as well as into the handrails of the terraces and decks, and “projection technology is integrated into the design of the perimeter columns to enable images to be projected onto the Arena floor.”<sup>11</sup>

Sources for this Paper:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.broadgate.co.uk/art/architecture/broadgate-circle>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.m3c.co.uk/projects/use-sector/urban-realm-and-masterplan/broadgate-circle>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.broadgate.co.uk/art/architecture/broadgate-circle>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.arup.com/projects/broadgate-circle>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.m3c.co.uk/projects/use-sector/urban-realm-and-masterplan/broadgate-circle>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.arup.com/projects/broadgate-circle>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

