

THE RIBA CABE PUBLIC SPACE AWARD

This new award is sponsored by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space. The £5000 prize is presented to the architects and landscape architects of the best RIBA Award-winning public space in the United Kingdom, and recognizes the valuable contribution that a well-designed public realm makes to the quality of the built environment and to our daily lives.

The judges were Sarah Gaventa, director of CABE Space; Tony Edwards, architect and landscape architect at Place; and Tony Chapman, RIBA head of awards. They went to see a shortlist of three buildings:

OLD MARKET SQUARE, NOTTINGHAM, BY GUSTAFSON PORTER.

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, LONDON SE1, BY ALLIES AND MORRISON; LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: GROSS. MAX:

MASTERPLANNER: RICK MATHER ARCHITECTS.

ROYAL OBSERVATORY GREENWICH, LONDON SE10, BY ALLIES AND MORRISON.

The winner was OLD MARKET SQUARE, NOTTINGHAM.



OLD MARKET SQUARE NOTTINGHAM .GUSTAFSON PORTER

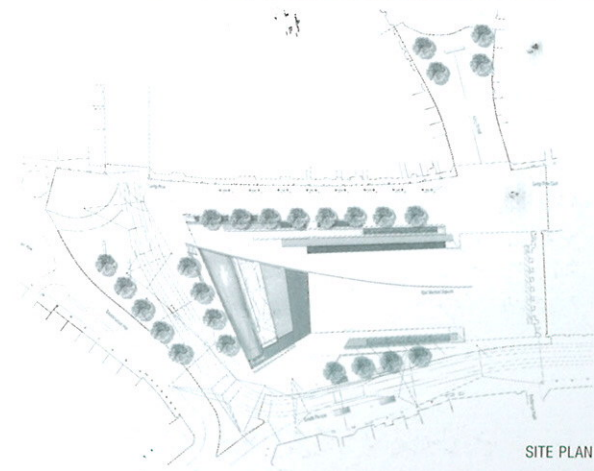
With a history dating back eight hundred years, this reorganized space retains its own distinctiveness and sense of place through a sympathetic response to existing site conditions. The old square was laid out in 1929 in strict geometric alignment with the Council House. Its listed design has acted as a deterrent to public access, with many steps, low walls and poor lighting dissuading most people from crossing the area. The new layout is less structured, providing a more fluid, inviting public space with access for all.

The design responds sympathetically to level changes on the site to provide bands of terraces and ramps leading to and from an extensive water feature. The terracing provides flexible seating and integrated planting, encouraging Nottingham residents and visitors to spend time enjoying the many activities hosted by the square, from markets to sporting events, concerts and seasonal ice skating. The water feature uses the varied characteristics of water to provide visual and acoustic benefits, with jets, a reflecting pool, sheet water flows and cascades attracting young and old: some come to admire their city in the reflecting pool, others to get wet. Limited tree planting offers larger-scale seasonal interest around the perimeter of the site, while stepped planters allow the city to demonstrate its award-winning horticultural skills. The presence of traffic and trams on two sides links the square to the wider area without compromising the visual integrity of the central space. The new square is also doing much to rid the city of its violent image, with improved lighting encouraging twenty-four-hour use.

This calm, quiet design allows the surrounding buildings both to complement one another and stand out individually for their architectural character, enhancing the area's distinctiveness and sense of place. At the same time, the community has clearly given life to the square, with diverse activities and human interaction acting as a constant cabaret and source of visual excitement. Achieving a successful balance between creating its own identity and providing a flexible space for public amenity and civic events, the new square is a worthy first winner of this important new award.

72 .THE RIBA CABE PUBLIC SPACE AWARD

CLIENT NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER ARUP
QUANTITY SURVEYOR DAVIS LANGDON
LIGHTING DESIGNER SPEIRS & MAJOR ASSOCIATES
CONTRACTOR BALFOUR BEATTY CIVIL ENGINEERING
CONTRACT VALUE £7,000,000
DATE OF COMPLETION APRIL 2007
GROSS INTERNAL AREA 11,500 SQ. M
PHOTOGRAPHERS DOM HENRY (OPPOSITE LEFT); DIRK LELLAU (OPPOSITE RIGHT, TOP AND BOTTOM); JAMES NEWTON (PAGE 71)



73 .THE RIBA CABE PUBLIC SPACE AWARD

SITE PLAN