



### WATER FEATURES

Donald Gibson, who was appointed City Architect and Town Planner in 1938, had designed a series of sunken pools that would run through the open shopping areas. These 'tranquil pools' were intended to complement the sunken circus area situated in the Central Precinct (see image below). Cuts in funding and slow progress with the construction work forced Gibson to simplify his plans for the pedestrian shopping areas. Today it is still possible to find prototypes for Gibson's water features. The best examples of these early designs can be found in the courtyard of the old Planning Office on Jordan Well. Although the water has been drained out of the remaining sunken pool, it is still possible to imagine the influence that this design would have had on the open areas of the precincts. The thriving Weeping Willow, situated at one end of the pool, is also a clear indication of how water and greenery might have been more fully integrated into the city centre.



### Fountain

There is little known about the small fountain situated in the courtyard of the old Planning Office. Like the sunken pool, this fountain was most likely built as a prototype for a number of water features planned for the precincts and green areas of the city. Exactly how far these plans were developed and where the fountains were to be situated remains unknown.



The example shown in the image on the right shows the fountain jet placed off-centre. This asymmetry is in keeping with the floor design for the Arcades and similarly demonstrates how water features, like patterned tiles, stairs and car parks, allowed the city architects to be more experimental in their designs.



### The Lower Precinct

The ceramic tile mural, designed by Gordon Cullen, was commissioned in 1957 by the City Planning & Redevelopment Committee on the recommendation of Arthur Ling, chief architect to the corporation, to illustrate the spirit in which the reconstruction of Coventry was undertaken. It was made by Carters of Poole and restored and relocated in 2002. One of the sections clearly depicts Coventry's post war architecture including the Cathedral designed by Sir Basil Spence.

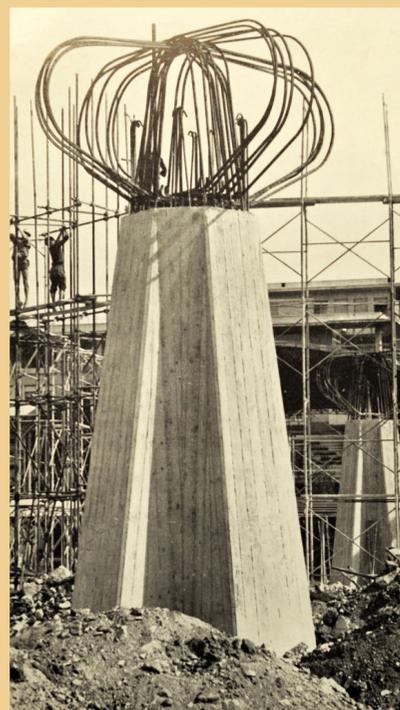
The section of Cullen's mural that is shown on the front cover of this guide was used as a key reference point for the floor mural in the Arcade (right), in particular the choice of colours that Carters of Poole had used only one year earlier for the large abstract sections of the Lower Precinct mural.

The image below shows some of the sketches for the Arcade mural. These test murals, that use smaller ceramic tiles, can be found in the courtyard of the City Planning Offices on Jordan Way. These works could be viewed from the offices of the city architects and discussed as the plans for the redevelopment were being completed.



### Broadgate Fountains

Two monumental Italian style fountains, situated on either side of the statue of Lady Godiva (1949) in Broadgate, underwent the first stages of construction in December 1969. The concrete bases were removed a few months later. The fountains were intended to complement the stone carving of Lady Godiva but plans to complete the large-scale concrete fountains were met with resistance from the Veterans Committee who petitioned for their removal. This, combined with dwindling funds for redevelopment work to civic buildings, forced the council to abandon plans for their completion.



Examples of Coventry's patterned ceramic tiles can be found in the Shopping Arcade (1958), the Lower Precinct (Gordon Cullen, 1958), and The Planning Office courtyard on Jordan Well (1960). These formal arrangements of ceramic tiles allow us to think, to remember, to educate, to communicate and so to make possible connections with the past. The examples listed in this guide remain as a source of Coventry's vitality and we must enlarge and enforce it as we move to a new urban form.

### The Shopping Arcade

The Arcade floor tiles were completed in 1958. Although Coventry had suffered from a shortage of qualified bricklayers in the 1950s, some of the work force involved in the post-war rebuilding of the city centre were trained in the art of tiling, new glazing techniques and graphic design. The Arcade is testament to the team of craftsmen drafted in from other construction sites across the city. Of particular significance is the arrangement of coloured tiles running down the center of the thoroughfare. Each of the repeated modular arrangements is made up of two dark blue squares (3x3) intersecting two larger brown rectangles (5x4). At either end of these rectangles is a line of three blue tiles pointing out towards either end of the Arcade. These distinctive forms are in keeping with the modernist tradition and demonstrate a direct link between the guilds and the abstract art works of the period.

### TILES



### Redevelopment

A new master plan for Coventry City Centre will guide the next 15-20 years of development and is intended to transform the city center. The master plan, which was unveiled in Millennium Place on November 15th 2013 resulted from a year-long collaboration between the architects, Coventry City Council and three private sector partners. The master plan vision is valued at more than 1 billion pounds.

Community input has been a critical component in helping to shape the master plan since the redevelopment plan was commissioned to create a new heart for the city. From the earliest design meetings, the people of Coventry articulated that they would like to see the city center become a new walkable environment with Venetian style canals, bridges, gondolas and a new bell tower, yet remain sensitive to the city's history. The first draft of the master plan will be presented on the Millennium Screen in Millennium Place between November 15 - 31 December 2013: 07.30, 10.00, 12.30, 15.00, 17.30, 20.00, 22.30.

# COVENTRY



# A GUIDE