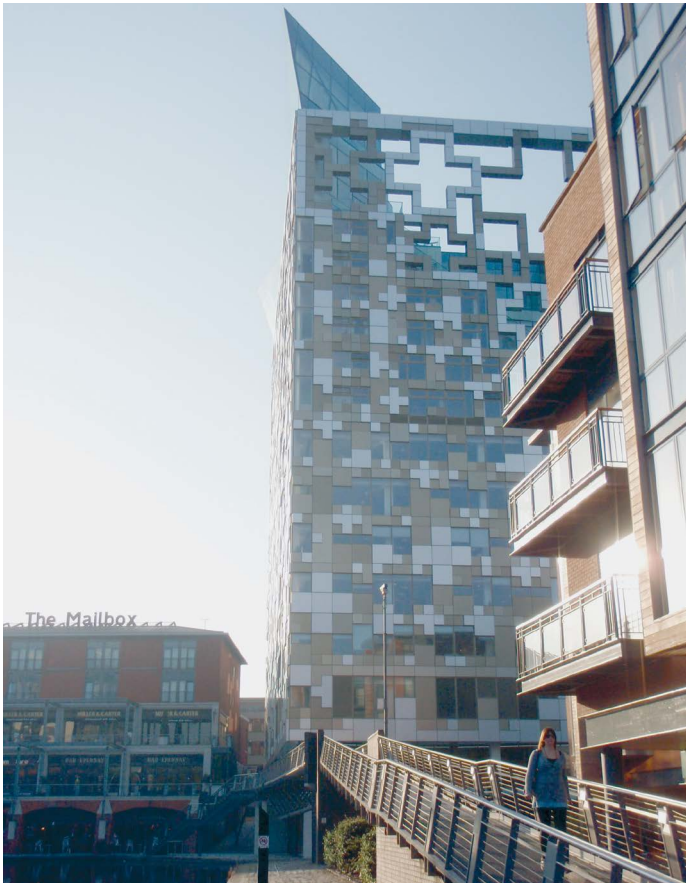


A sense of place - Gas Street Basin



The Cube and the Mailbox.

Birmingham's Gas Street Basin is usually reckoned to be the centre of Britain's canal system. Surely no other 600m straight packs in so much of interest.

The Cube

Approaching from the south along the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, the reach starts at Windy Corner, where the weather can cause problems for narrowboats. Overlooking it is the Cube, built on the site of former working horse stables. The design is so complicated that no contractor would touch it so the designers had to set up their own construction company.

Adjacent is the Mailbox, formerly housing Birmingham's mail sorting office and now occupied by shops, restaurants and the BBC.



Holliday Street Aqueduct.

Holliday Street Aqueduct

Holliday Street Aqueduct is barely noticed from the canal but from the street beneath can be viewed its ornate ironwork.

Gas Street Basin

The basin itself is becoming less conspicuous as skyscrapers rise around it. The Library of Birmingham, the largest public library in Europe, is located by its finish of interlocking rings.

The route onto the Main Line of the Birmingham Canal Navigations passes under a footbridge. When first dug, the Worcester Bar was here, preventing the two canals from coming closer than 2.1m from each other so that loads had to be lifted from one to the other. This concession was obtained by the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal which ran from Stafford to Stourport and didn't come nearer than the far side of Wolverhampton but would have lost some of its Severn traffic to the new canal.

Black Sabbath Bridge

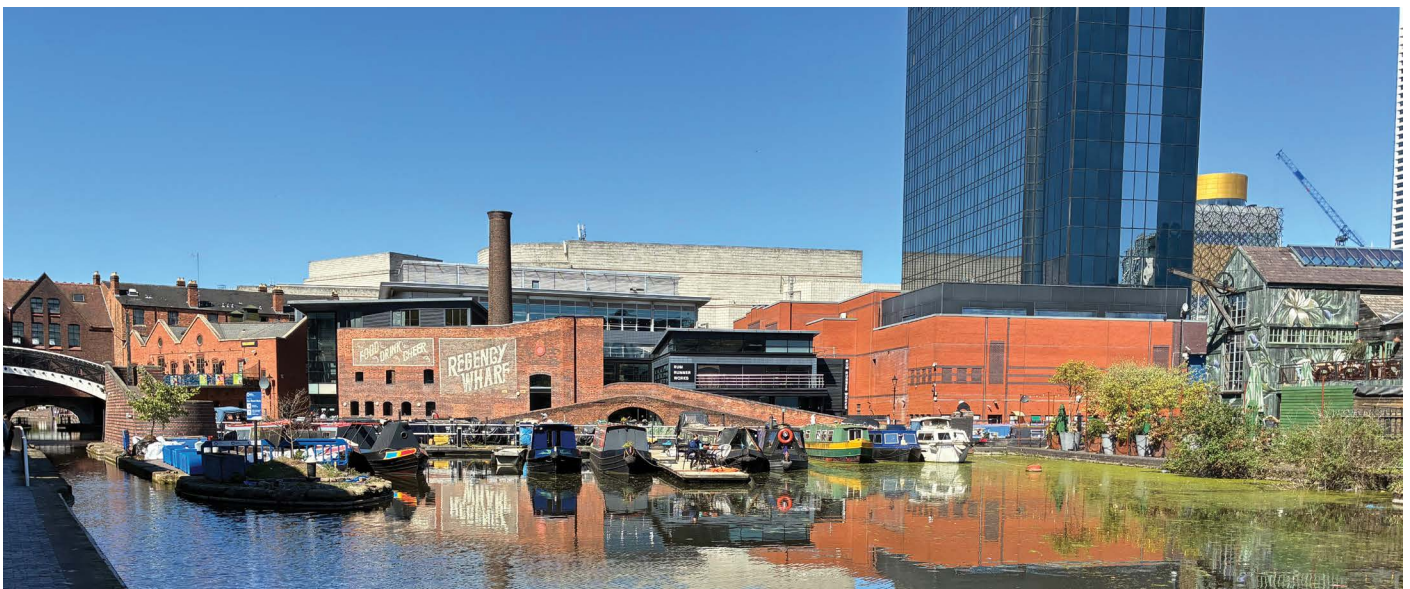
Broad Street and its buildings are carried on what is now called Black Sabbath Bridge, on which is a bench with portraits of the four heavy metallurgists. The bridge has been widened repeatedly, as seen by the various profiles underneath, which have probably caused numerous heads to have been banged over the years.

The International Convention Centre

The International Convention Centre is reached by a footbridge over the canal from various restaurants.

Old Turn Junction

At Old Turn Junction the Main Line bears left, the Ouzells Street



Gas Street Basin, the heart of the British canal system..