

Ironmonger Square Coventry



Ironmonger Square, Elizabethan Mix Sandstone, Geo Benches, Birco Drainage

Challenge

Many local authorities are looking at the ways to attract shoppers, tourists and businesses back into their town and city centres and any regeneration should involve careful consideration of the hard landscaping products.

Coventry City Council was looking to revitalise one of its main shopping districts and create an attractive area, which would enhance the lifestyles of visitors and local residents. This was part of a £3.6m regeneration scheme designed to breathe new life into the area, for which Marshalls' products were specified for the creation of a new plaza called Ironmonger Square. The council's vision was to create an area where markets could be held and

entertainment and exhibitions could be staged. They also wanted to create a pedestrian-friendly, attractive public space, where shoppers and visitors could spend time relaxing and socialising in pleasant surroundings.

The key challenge faced by the council was ensuring that the hard landscaping complemented the combination of old and new buildings that surround the square. With a centuries-old timber frame building on one side of the square and modern high street stores on the other, this was no easy task.

The council's design drew up plans for a bright, airy 'plaza' with a distinctive character, which would involve a complete re-design of the area. In addition, major highway alterations were carried out to reduce a busy road across the square to a single bus and taxi lane, with a restricted speed limit, to create a safer area for pedestrians.



Marshalls

Creating Better Landscapes

Solutions

Marshalls' landscaping products and the technical expertise offered by the company played a vital role in achieving the scheme's objectives. The architect specified 4,600m² of Elizabethan Mix Sandstone paving from Marshalls' Natural Stone range for the main square. This range is renowned for its strong aesthetics and is often used by local authorities and for commercial projects where the client wants to create a contemporary feel and add character and distinctiveness to the area.

The attractive 'shot blast' textured finish of Elizabethan Mix Sandstone also creates a slip-resistant surface to enhance pedestrian safety. This range is also known for its durability, with a life expectancy of at least 40 years, offering a cost-effective, long-term solution for the local authority.

Marshalls' Blister Concrete Tactile paving was specified to create a safe crossing place on the bus and taxi route that crosses the square. BSEN 1339:2003 Blister Tactile fully complies with The Disabled Persons Act 1981 and DDA 2004, which means it meets with Department for Transport guidelines and recommendations, by indicating the edge of the road to people who are visually impaired. The Blister Tactile paving was specified in a complementary grey, which contrasted with the Blue Grey to Brown of the Elizabethan Mix Sandstone to ensure it could be seen more easily, therefore enhancing pedestrian safety.

Marshalls also supplied its Conservation Kerb and Conservation Setts in Silver Grey as the council wished to minimise the carbon footprint of the development, wherever possible. Both products are made from 48 per cent recycled materials and the Setts were used to graduate a change in levels to avoid the need for a step.

The company's Birco Drainage System was specified, as it is sufficiently robust to withstand the weight of vehicles driving onto the surface on occasions when the square is used to stage events, but is also particularly well suited for a pedestrianised area. The system has been designed with narrow drainage channels to avoid the possibility of slim-heeled shoes becoming caught within the slots.

The aesthetic appeal of the area is further enhanced by Marshalls' street furniture. This included seven sleek, contemporary-styled hardwood and steel benches, which were specified from the GEO Woodhouse range. The benches are constructed from high quality materials to offer durability and low maintenance for the local authority. Marshalls' GEO Woodhouse range is renowned for offering a contemporary, fully co-ordinated lighting and street furniture system with simple, unobtrusive lines making it suitable for both historical and modern settings. The range also includes bollards, planters and litter bins to standard designs or bespoke requirements.

The scheme was designed by design engineering specialist Mouchel, in association with Coventry City Council's urban design team, with Marshalls working closely with Mouchel to finalise the specification of the paving products.

Mark Sheppard, Infrastructure Manager for Mouchel at Sutton Coldfield, says: "Marshalls offered an excellent service throughout the planning, design and construction of the project. Their support and advice with regard to the selection of appropriate materials and street furniture helped the client to select the most appropriate materials, colours and textures for this historical part of Coventry. Marshalls' team were always on hand to answer queries and offer advice during the design stage, as well as supplying material samples to enable discussion with various stakeholders and council officials. All in all they made a great contribution to the success of the project."

Tarmac Nationals was the main contractor responsible for installation of the paving. The company was aware of Marshalls' reputation for providing technical assistance and invited them to attend the pre-construction workshops, along with Coventry Council and members of the design team. Once the client had selected the stone, Marshalls advised the contractor on a suitable depth of paving material to meet the requirements of the scheme.

One of the challenges on the project was that it was vitally important that retailers and shoppers had access to the area whilst the landscaping works were being carried out. As construction was due to take place during the autumn, it was essential that the works were completed prior to the busy pre-Christmas period. Marshalls worked closely with Mouchel and Tarmac Nationals to ensure that the paving products were supplied and installed in time for Christmas, keeping disruption to retailers and their customers to a minimum. As part of this, deliveries were scheduled to avoid busy times during the day.

Marshalls' Commercial Manager Dave Stanger explains: "High quality, attractive paving such as was used on this project plays a vital role in creating the kind of environment that encourages people to visit and spend time in city centres. By careful selection of paving materials and appropriate street furniture, local authorities find they can actually increase the prosperity of the city by attracting more visitors and shoppers. This has certainly been the case at Ironmonger Square and has helped to boost business for the nearby shops, cafés and restaurants. It was also important to achieve just the right balance between creating a contemporary look, whilst complementing the historic shop frontages."



Elizabethan Mix Sandstone and Geo Benches

Benefits

Marshalls' paving products are widely known for the part they play in enhancing town and city centres, creating places where people want to spend time relaxing or shopping and contributing to the continued prosperity of such places.

The improved pedestrian facilities in Ironmonger square and on several streets nearby have encouraged local people and visitors to walk to the area, as well as making greater use of public transport, which fits in with the council's policy to reduce carbon emissions. In addition, a new space has been created for public events, which is helping to enhance people's pride in and enjoyment of the area.





The landscaping of the area has been well received by local restaurants and cafes which been able to introduce alfresco dining into the area, as the paving has provided an exceptional and attractive seating area outdoors. The project therefore continues to enhance the experience of shoppers and visitors to Coventry, whilst boosting trade for the surrounding businesses and adding to feelings of well being for local people.

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Elizabethan Mix Sandstone and Birco Drainage

<p>Client: Coventry City Council</p> <p>Contractor: Tarmac Nationals</p> <p>Engineer: Mouchel</p> <p>Architect: Coventry Council</p> <p>Specialists Involved:</p>	<p>Marshalls Product Used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabethan Mix Sandstone • Conservation Kerb – Silver Grey • Conservation Setts – Silver Grey • Blister Tactile Paving - Natural • Birco Drainage • GEO Woodhouse Benches • Woodhouse Balustrade - 316 Stainless Steel 		
			

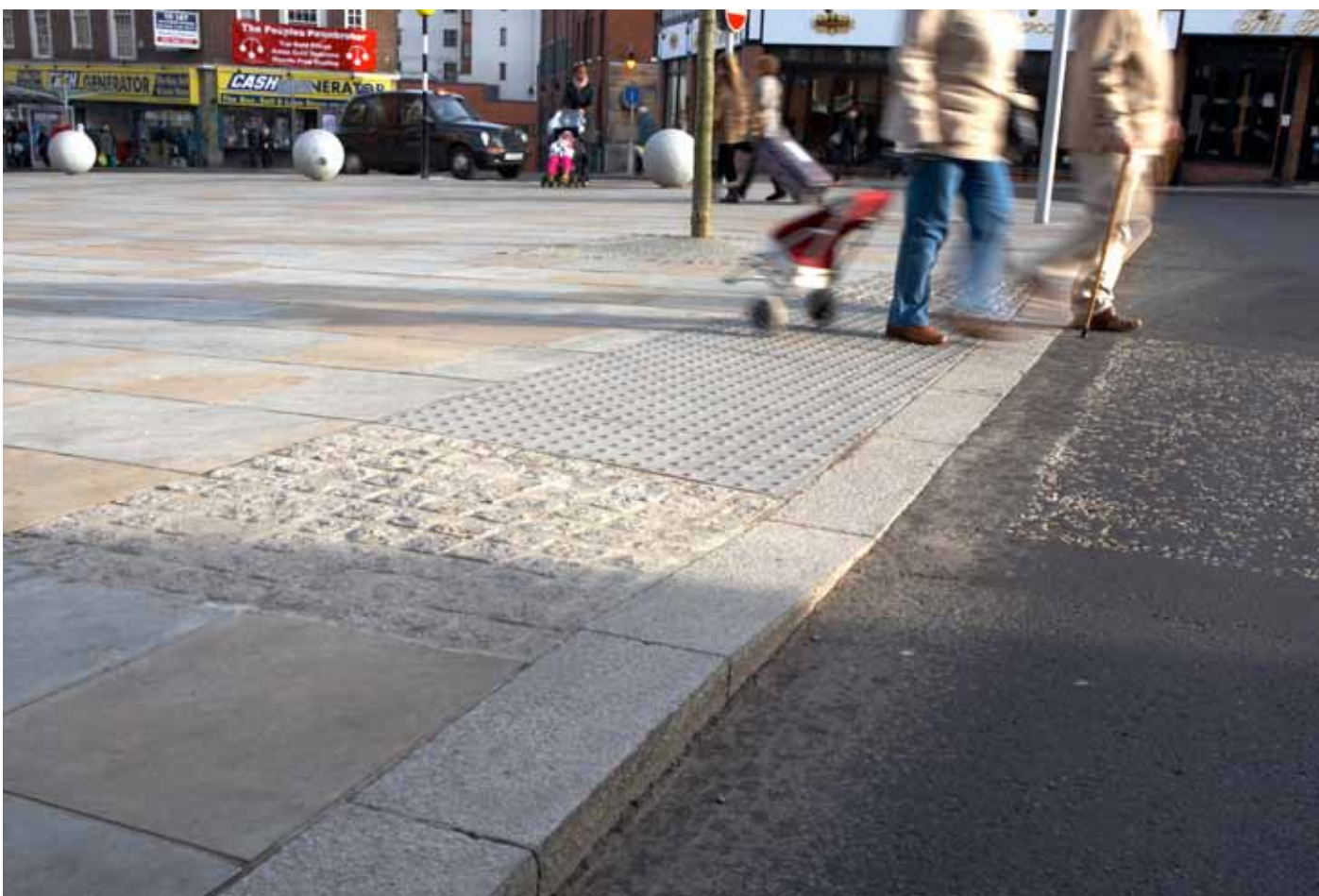
Geo Bench



Birco Drainage



Conservation Setts, Tactile, Elizabethan Sandstone



Conservation Setts, Blister Tactile Pacing

Elizabethan Sandstone



Blister Tactile Paving