



Award Category: Design Excellence sponsored by Salus

Project: Watford Parade (north)
Hertfordshire

Client: Watford Borough Council / Hertfordshire County Council

Project Team: BDP, Urban Flow, Artelia, Aggregate Industries



The £4.3m regeneration of The Parade in Watford town centre is an ambitious public realm scheme and has transformed the area into a key civic space with the flexibility and capacity to accommodate a variety of outdoor events and attract a wide range of visitors throughout the day and evening.

The scheme covers 15,000m² and is in a key location due to its close proximity to a number of important cultural destinations including the Palace and Colosseum theatres, the library, leisure centre, West Herts College and the Town Hall. The site is also home to a large pond that has been in place for over 100 years and is an iconic part of the town's identity and history.

In response to an extensive public and stakeholder engagement process, the design approach aimed to make the area more family friendly, create a stronger connection between the cultural quarter and town centre, set a benchmark for the quality of the public realm, and create a vibrant, diverse and distinctive area known as the 'top of the town.'

Key design features include the pond, which has been transformed with a redefined shape, variation in the edges, a new filtration system, and a feature bridge and decking area.

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Other features include a new major events space for 2000 people, a new street layout creating a shared pedestrian and cycling space. New street trees are integrated throughout the scheme, alongside new energy efficient lighting, benches and coordinated street furniture.

Judges comments:

“What impressed the judges was the juxtaposition of the simplicity of materials and the complexity of the process that the designers had to go through to get to this excellent example of a new public realm. The new spaces will transform this part of the Town centre and hopefully will act as a catalyst for renewed activities along this route and the continuing improvement of the rest of the Town Centre.”