

A LANDMARK TRANSFORMATION - MAKEOVER FOR UK'S OLDEST MULTI-STOREY

After 50-years of servicing one of the busiest areas of Leeds city centre, the Merrion Centre Car Park – the first multi-storey car park the UK – was earmarked for refurbishment by CitiPark's parent company Town Centre Securities PLC.



The Problem

The car park was built as a cast in-situ reinforced concrete frame bearing precast concrete deck planks. After 50 years of service the structure was in a poor condition. It had been exposed to water, de-icing salts, airborne contaminants and the constant use of vehicles.

A £13m refurbishment project was undertaken which would last 36 weeks, bringing the car park back to its former glory and give the Leeds community a state of the art parking facility.

The type of barrier protection used within a car park is a key architectural consideration, so upgrading what was now an out-of-date rigid post and spring steel barrier network with a more sustainable, modern system was a priority for CitiPark. **A-SAFE**, whose world-leading array of flexible, high-strength, low-maintenance polymer-based barriers capable of absorbing vehicle impacts, while simultaneously protecting the impacting vehicle and preventing floor damage, were brought on board.

But this would not be a straightforward installation for **A-SAFE**.

The Solution

First, the car park's newly reinforced substrate required a specifically low load anchorage system, which meant the in-house **A-SAFE** Research & Development team needed to design a special base plate for their barriers, with bespoke reduced embedment anchor bolts. This special fixing system provided the barriers with the requisite firm anchorage and also adhered to the low load requirements of the substrate.

Second, it was absolutely essential that the Merrion Car Park remained open to the public at all times. This necessitated a strategic dialogue with the construction contractor, GMI, who would close off separate levels of the car park and roll-in the **A-SAFE**

installation team into these areas when required. The programme lasted from May to November 2014, with **A-SAFE** on-site only during these specific windows of opportunity, as advised by GMI. This level-by-level strategy worked, with the car park managing to remain open and operational.

Of course, **A-SAFE** barriers have benefits beyond a world class installation team. It is inevitable that some car park traffic will scrape or knock into the building's architecture. The subsequent marks can become unsightly and spoil a facility's overall aesthetic. Worse, over time, some barriers will rust, corrode or flake. **A-SAFE** barriers are coloured throughout, so scrapes and impacts do not show. What's more, they are non-corrosive, do not rust or flake and can simply be wiped clean. The savings on manpower, maintenance and downtime are obvious – and the return in investment is quick and long-term.

The Result

Mr Ben Ziff, managing director of CitiPark said: "**A-SAFE** offered a cost effective, sustainable and visually pleasing solution. We wanted barriers that would be strong enough to absorb the impact of a vehicle while ensuring as little damage as possible, if any at all, was caused to a customer's car.

To ensure customer distribution was kept to a minimum, CitiPark committed to no more than 30% of the car park to be out of action at one time over the 9 month refurbishment period. **A-SAFE's** flexible approach with installation helped to ensure that this was adhered to.

Our Merrion Centre car park is now one of the most technologically advanced, user friendly and sustainable facilities of its kind anywhere in the UK. The 50 year building is a beacon of sustainability and we are extremely proud of the end result!"

In all, **A-SAFE** installed over 1,100m of combined Car Park and Pedestrian Barriers with anti-climb mesh infill in the Merrion Car Park. Naturally, all complete installations carry a degree of satisfaction, but playing a part in the transformation of this landmark was a particularly gratifying experience for **A-SAFE** – and one that worked on every level.

Contact us today to find out how we can help you..

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