

PARK ROAD AND MARY STREET (AREA 4)

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My pathway runs along roads from Moseley, South Birmingham, located three miles outside the city centre and is a key route to the city centre itself through Balsall Heath. The pathway starts at the Co-op Garage and Tipu Sultan Restaurant (1) Moseley and diverges north-west off the Moseley Road down Park Road and on into Mary Street, Balsall Heath. The road runs downward towards town from the hill that Moseley sits on.

Towards the top end of Park Road is the Birmingham Buddhist Centre (see 2 for Shrine Room). View 3 is from the road outside the Buddhist Centre. In this part of the route the houses vary from large Victorian detached and large terraced houses as well as more modern flats and apartments (4).

The roundabout where Park Road becomes Mary Street is shown at view 5. Once in Mary Street onward downhill towards town, the houses are closer together and more modest overall, though still varying in size. A filigree balcony decoration on a Mary Street terrace (6) is a distinctive local feature.

Following the gradient round the bend and further down the street, a spectacular and atmospheric panorama opens up for the traveller (see 7 in which the Rotunda and St Martin's of the Bullring landmarks can be clearly seen, as well as much city centre development, as evidenced by the number of cranes in the shot). The same view of the night skyline is shown in 8.

The Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara sits on the corner of Hallam Street tucked into the otherwise residential houses on the street (9). This temple has been sited here since 1960.

The last shot is the junction of Mary Street where it meets Edward Road crossing laterally, with Mary Street continuing ahead up to the junction with Balsall Heath Road (10). The building to the right with high chimneys used to be the Wagon and Horses public house. St Alban's church tower in Highgate can be seen in the background.

I confess to having used this route as a rat-run for many years whilst living in Moseley, to get to and from work, variously in town, across town or at Five Ways to avoid the traffic on the Moseley road. I have loved the atmosphere, sights, sounds and views of this route, which

was a tram route in former times through both Park Road and Mary Street and on into town. Nothing quite says 'Birmingham' to me more than travelling along this pathway towards town.

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