



# Top secret Soviet maps of Brum revealed

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## IT'S Birmingham – but not as we know it.

New maps laying bare the smallest detail of the city's streets have been revealed.

But the place names of Erdington and Castle Bromwich are unlikely to be recognised by any Birmingham family – because the Cold War-era documents were produced in Russian for the might of the Soviet Union.

The never-before-seen maps, more detailed than even UK Ordnance Survey (OS) charts of the same period, were compiled by the Soviet army using satellite images, aerial photographs, local knowledge and information fed by spies from 1950 all the way up to 1997.



А а (A)	З з (Z)	П п (P)	Ч ч (CH)
Б б (B)	И и (I)	Р р (R)	Ш ш (SH)
В в (V)	Й й (Y)	С с (S)	Щ щ (SCH)
Г г (G)	К к (K)	Т т (T)	Ъ ъ (-)
Д д (D)	Л л (L)	У у (U)	Ы ы (Y)
Е е (E)	М м (M)	Ф ф (F)	Ь ь (-)
Ё ё (YO)	Н н (N)	Х х (KH)	Э э (E)
Ж ж (ZH)	О о (O)	Ц ц (TS)	Ю ю (YU or YU)
		Ч ч (CH)	Я я (YA or LA)

The maps reveal the location and purpose of structures of possible military importance and

Spy games: The Cold War map focuses on Birmingham's industrial areas around Erdington and Castle Bromwich and has a key to what the Russians believed each building was being used for (left).

also include the width of roads, the height of bridges and the depth of rivers, details which were all left off OS maps of the time.

Russell Morris, from a company called Russian Maps, compared OS maps of Erdington and Castle Bromwich with ones produced by the Russians.

Mr Morris said: "There are some obvious industrial and communication areas highlighted on the Russian map in black along the A47 or Fort Parkway. But the Russian map legend also indi-

cates these could be military areas as well. The Ordnance Survey advises that buildings were present, but does not indicate the usage. The detail on the Russian maps appears superior."

The Soviets mapped out 103 major UK towns and cities, forming part of the most comprehensive global survey ever attempted. But despite such attention to detail, the originals were left on train carriages in Latvia and Estonia by the Soviet Military as they fled following the collapse of the state in 1991.

The documents were bought by companies which sold them on to American companies and then on to Russian Maps.

■ To look at the maps of Birmingham, log on to [www.russianmaps.co.uk](http://www.russianmaps.co.uk)  
 ■ What do you think? Email [letters@birminghammail.net](mailto:letters@birminghammail.net).

