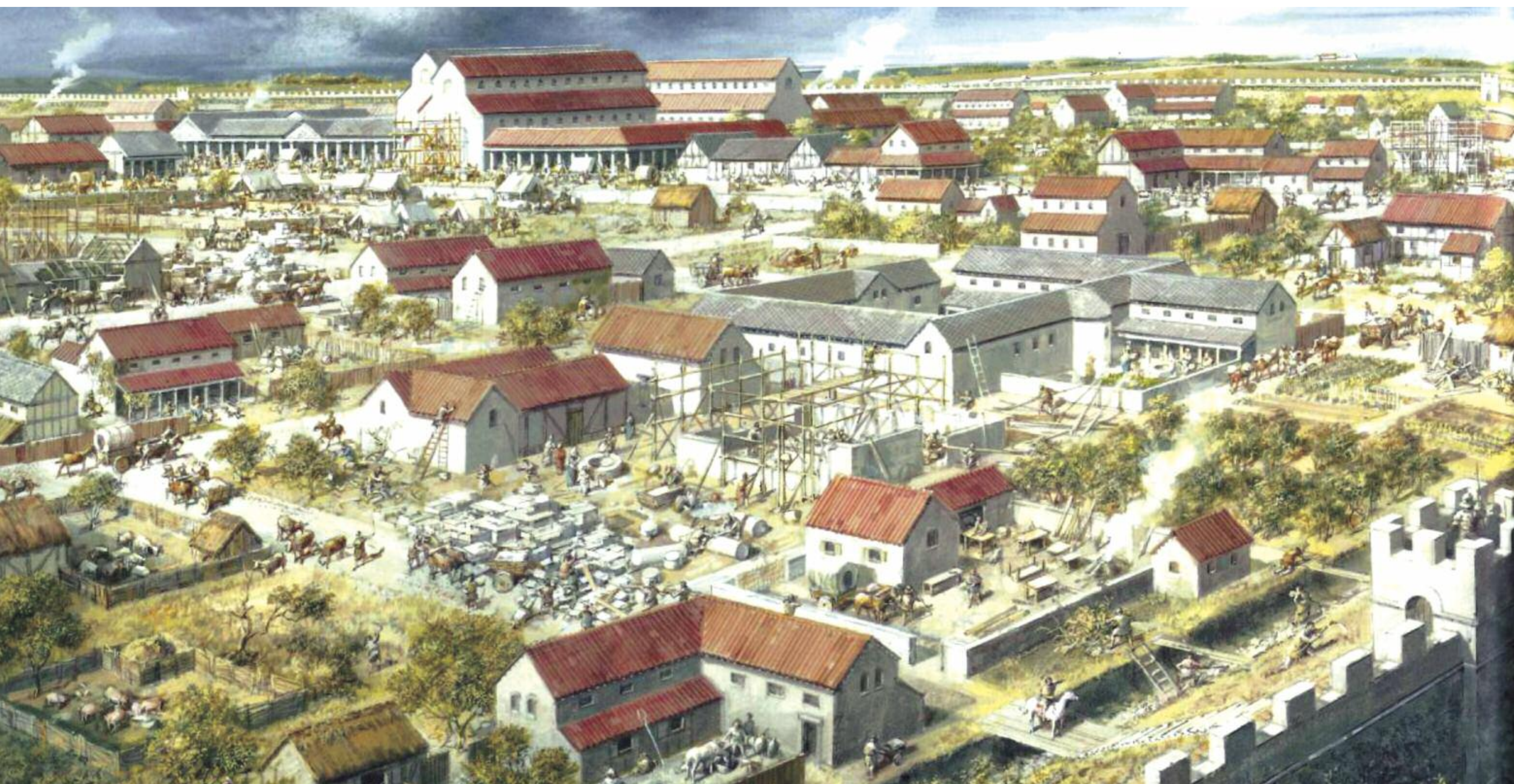


PLANNING LEICESTER

Early Planning

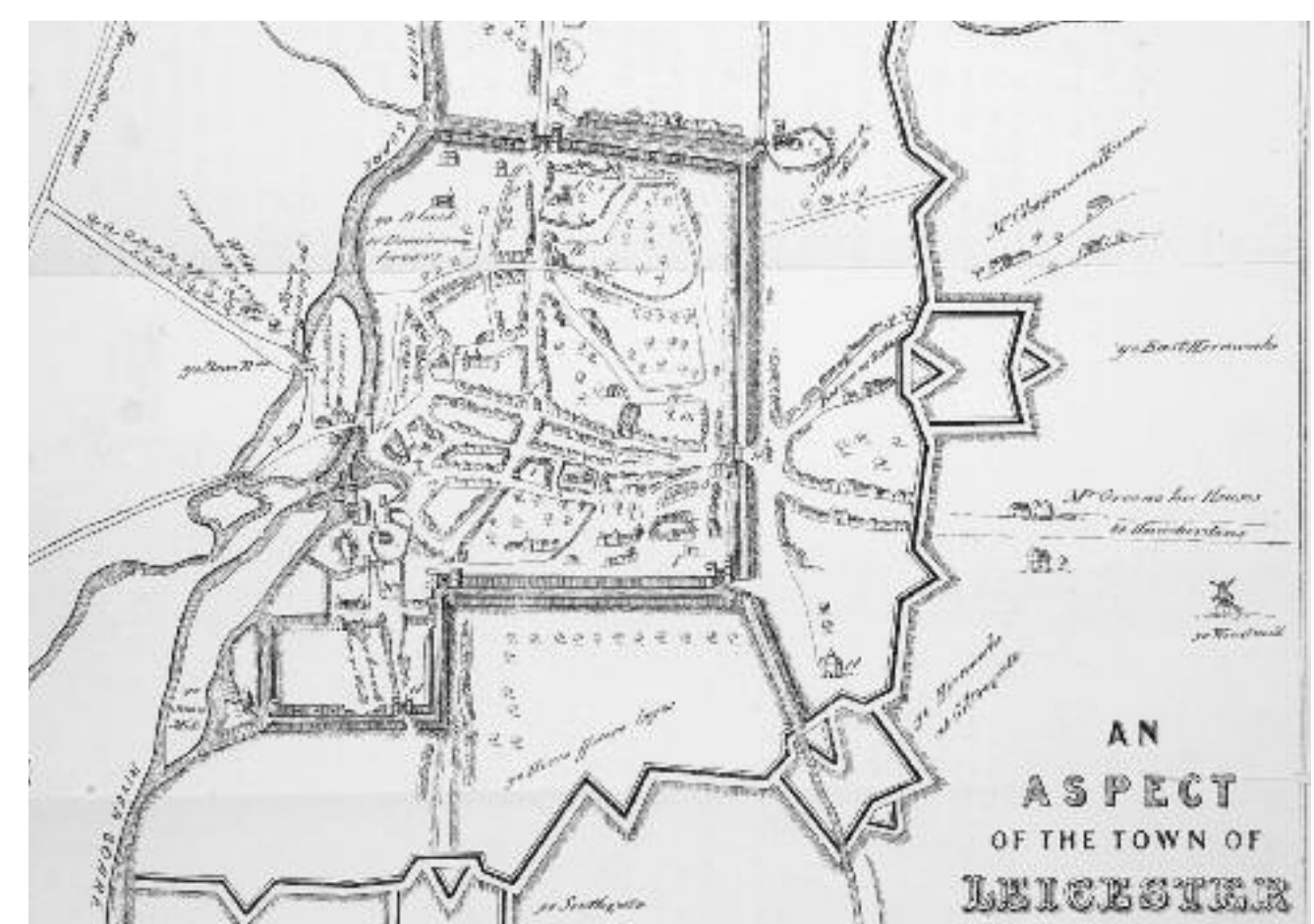


Typical Residential Development Characteristics:

- Generally single storey buildings
- Fairly tight urban grain
- Varied plot sizes within regular block structure
- Varied building lines
- Brick/stone/concrete as dominant materials
- Modest, functional landscaping

Long before the modern conception of town planning was developed, Leicester was subject to planned development. The earliest phase we have meaningful evidence of is the Roman town of Ratae Corieltavorum, with its ordered street network linking key civic buildings.

Following the end of the Roman Empire, Leicester continued to be inhabited and was subject to further phases of development. With relatively low population growth, change was less dramatic than what was to come later. Much of the strategic planning related to ecclesiastical developments or the need to make the settlement secure from military attack.



Top: Drawing of Roman Leicester (Ratae Corieltavorum) from the north-east, as it may have looked during the late 3rd century AD ©ULAS;
Middle: Plan of Roman Leicester ©ULAS;
Bottom: Plan showing Civil War defences of the town in 1645.

44-45
AD

Iron Age
Ratae
captured by
the Romans

250
AD

Town walls
built

410

End of
Roman rule

1068

Leicester
Castle
built

1143

Leicester
Abbey
founded

1485

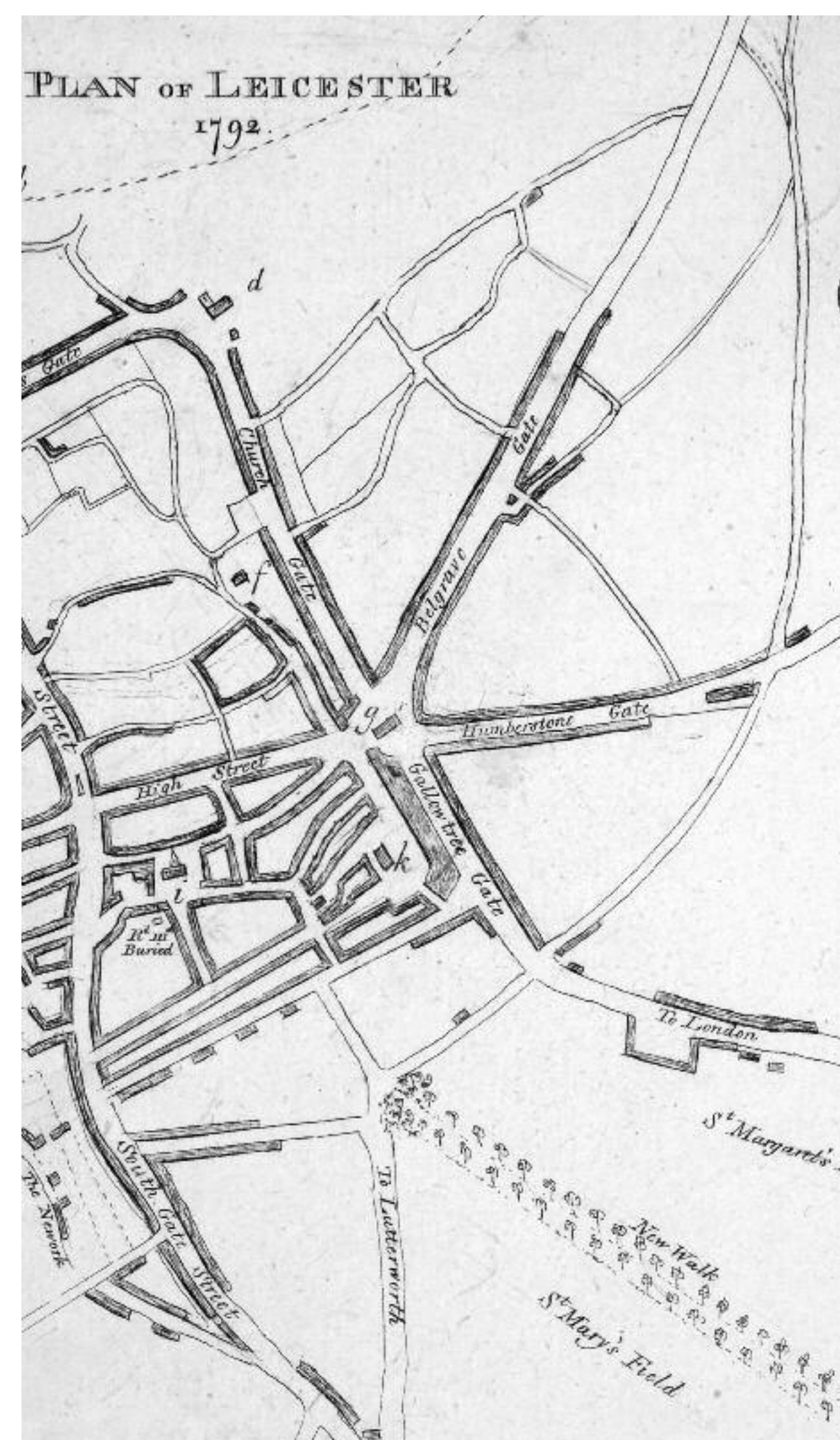
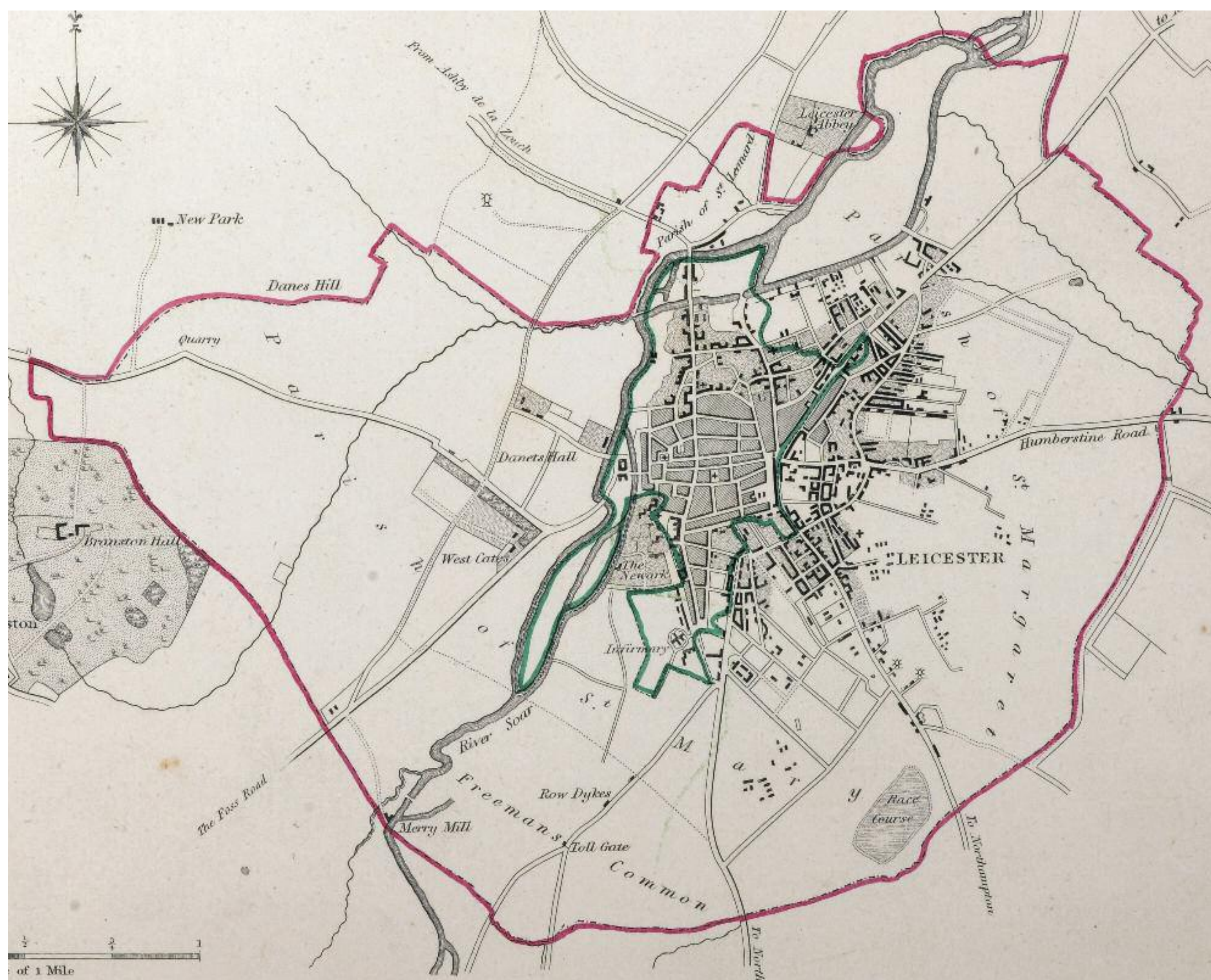
King Richard
III killed

1645

Siege of
Leicester

PLANNING LEICESTER

Growing Pains



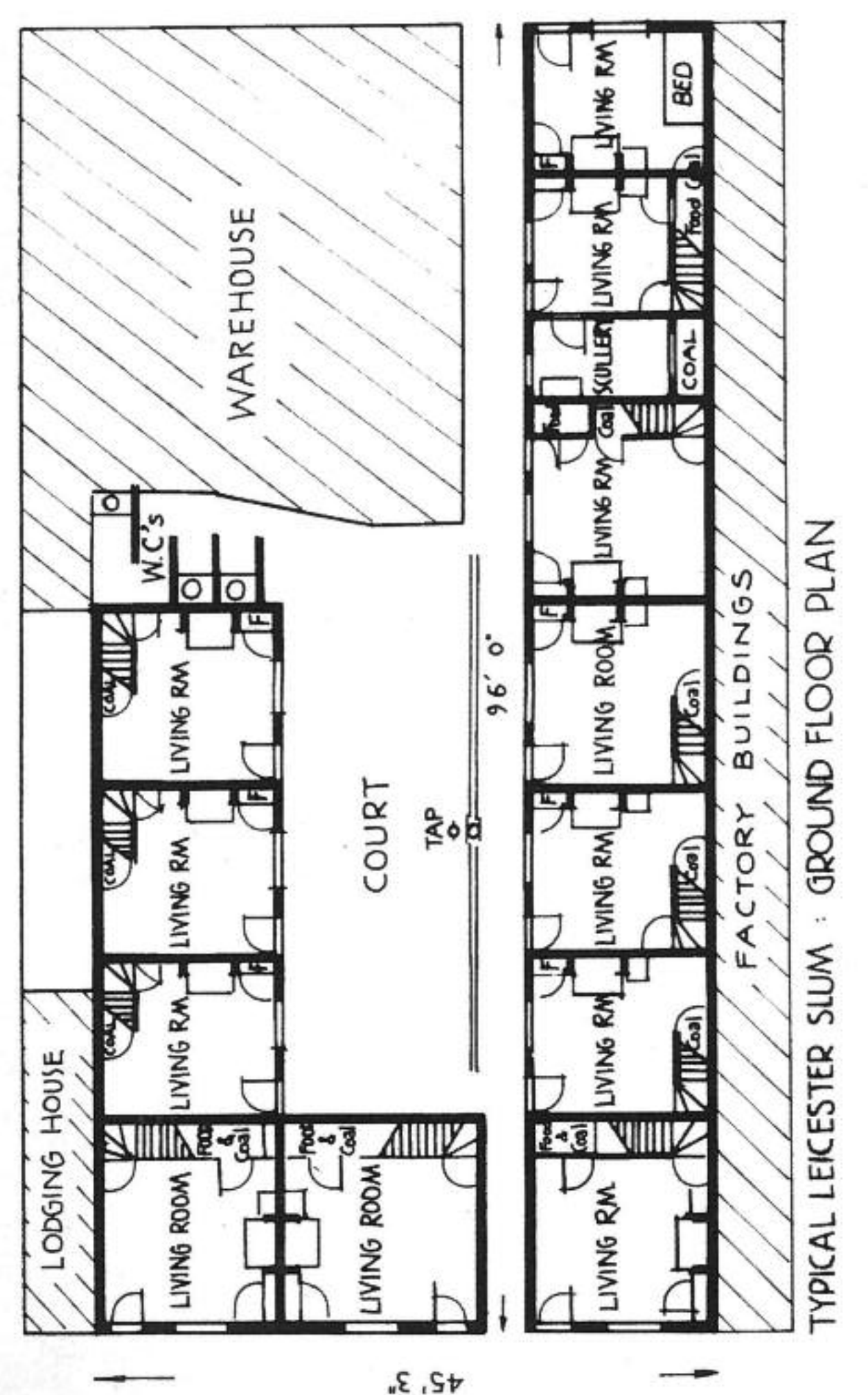
Typical Residential Development Characteristics:

- Generally two-three storey buildings
- Tight urban grain
- Incremental development but fairly consistent plot sizes within fairly regular block structure
- Consistent building lines – close to pavement
- Brick/stone as dominant materials
- Some rear gardens and intermediate landscaped spaces

In the late 18th century the town started to grow dramatically. Following the development of a strategic toll road through the town, Leicester was connected to the canal network in 1793.

Elsewhere, in 1785, a promenade was laid out linking the racecourse to the town core. New Walk, which remains a traffic free promenade to this day, was designed by the Corporation to encourage the expansion to the southeast.

In 1801 the population of Leicester was around 17,000; by 1901 it had ballooned to over 211,000. The Corporation was unprepared for the scale of growth, with much of it in the form of crowded 'slums'.



Top: Plan from 1835 showing expanded town boundary;
Middle: Plan of town from 1792 showing New Walk extending out to the south-east;
Bottom: Typical floor plan of slum courts.

1771

Leicester Infirmary Hospital opened

1773

Leicester Racecourse opened (Victoria Park site)

1793

Leicester Navigation (canal) opened

1826

County Jail opened

1832

Leicester & Swannington Railway opened

1835

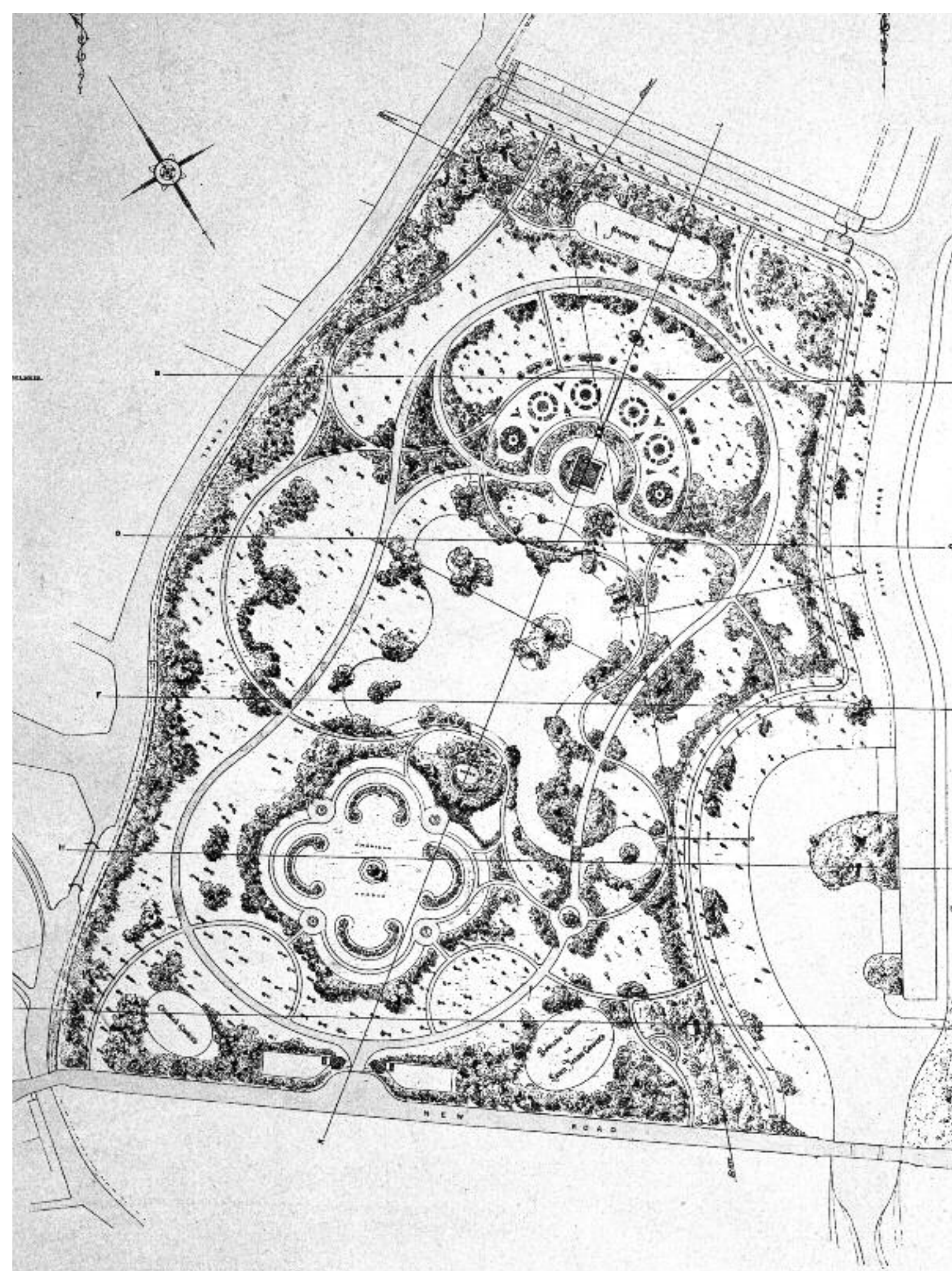
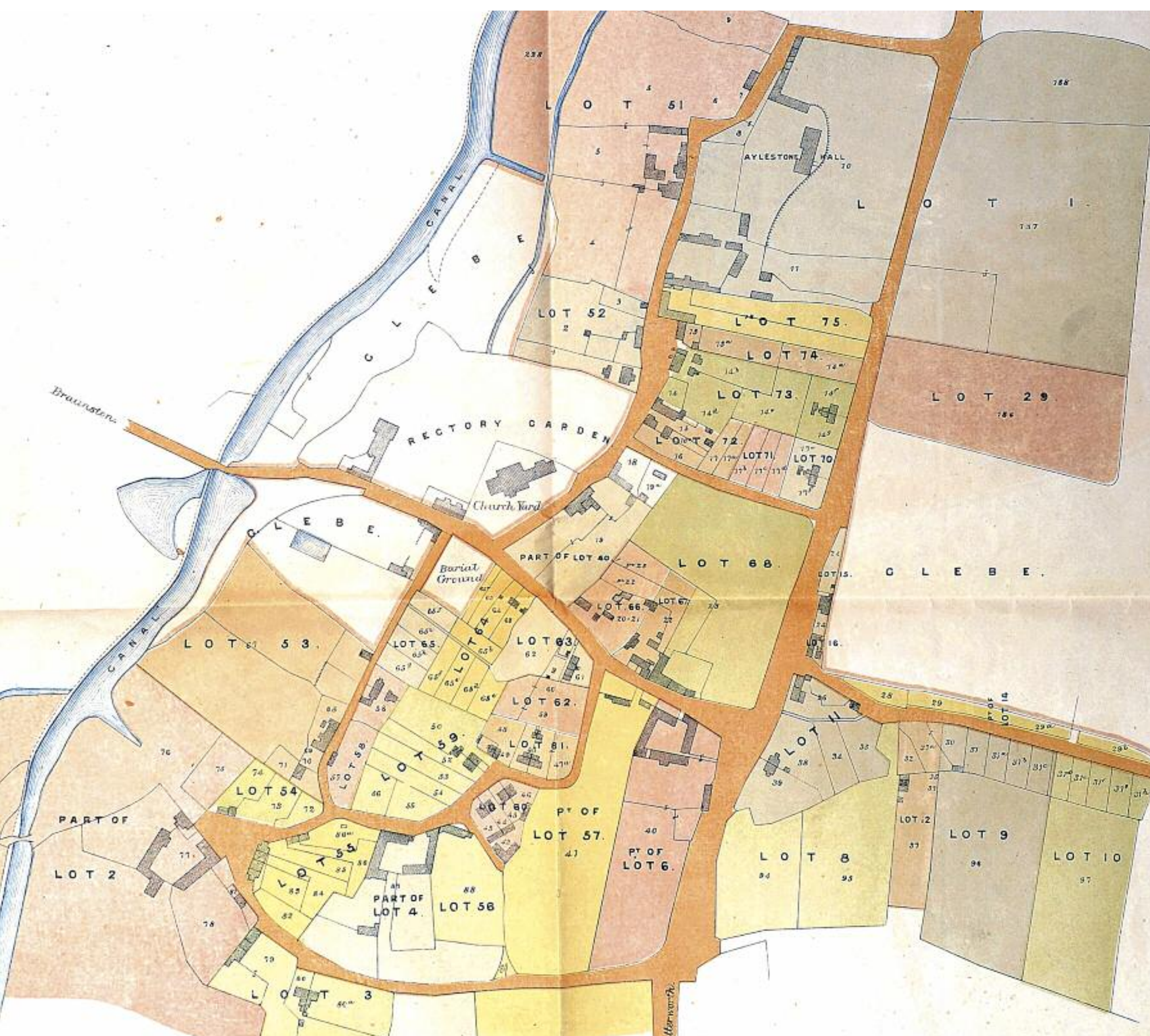
Municipal Corporations Act – key development in creating local government framework; town boundary

1840

Leicester Campbell Street opens as the first passenger train station in the town

PLANNING LEICESTER

Civic Development

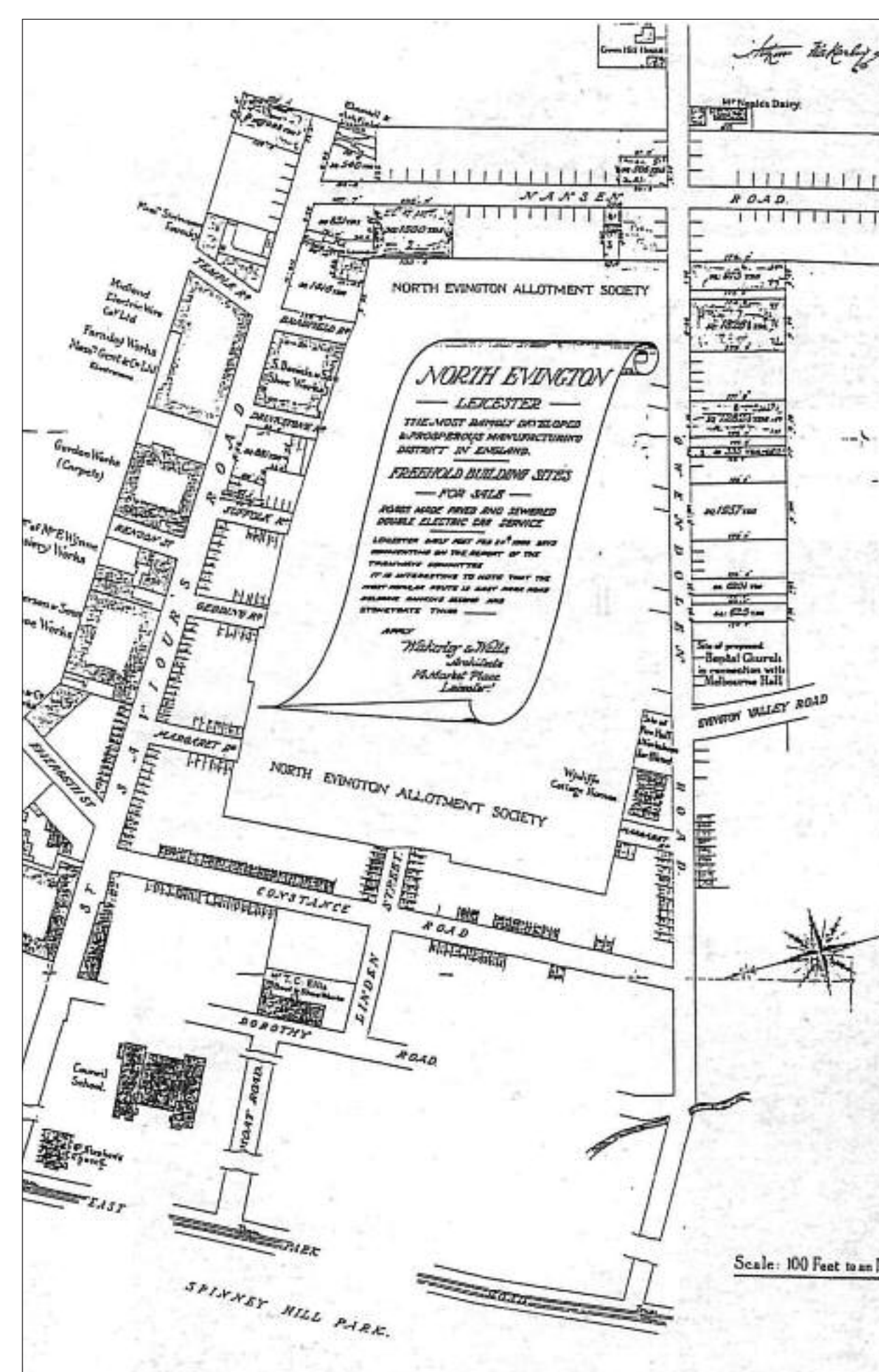


Typical Residential Development Characteristics:

- Generally two storey buildings
- Tight urban grain for terraced streets, looser urban grain for larger villas
- Consistent plot sizes within developments, but varied block structure
- Consistent building lines, close to pavement for terraced streets, large set back for detached villas
- Brick as dominant material
- Small rear gardens for terraced streets, large front/rear gardens for larger villas, formal parks

Following a cholera epidemic in 1847, the Public Health Act of 1848 helped set more of the foundations for town planning, not least in encouraging public open space. Leicester was one of only two places outside London to appoint a Medical Officer of Health in the years that followed.

The Corporation was increasingly active in developing infrastructure for civic development, such as public parks, and in developing by laws that set minimum standards for new housing. More generally, some locals, such as Arthur Wakerley in Evington, began developing land in a much more comprehensively planned way.



Top left: Foreman Sale Plan from 1869 of Aylestone;
Top right; Plan from circa 1877 for Abbey Park;
Bottom: Plan of building plots in North Evington in 1906.

1848 + 1875

Public Health Acts

1849

Welford Road Cemetery and New Walk Museum opened.

1870s

First major allotments and public park developed (later renamed Nelson Mandela Park).

1874

First Horse drawn tramways started operating

1880s

Sewage network created, including Abbey Pumping Station

1889

Leicester became a County Borough

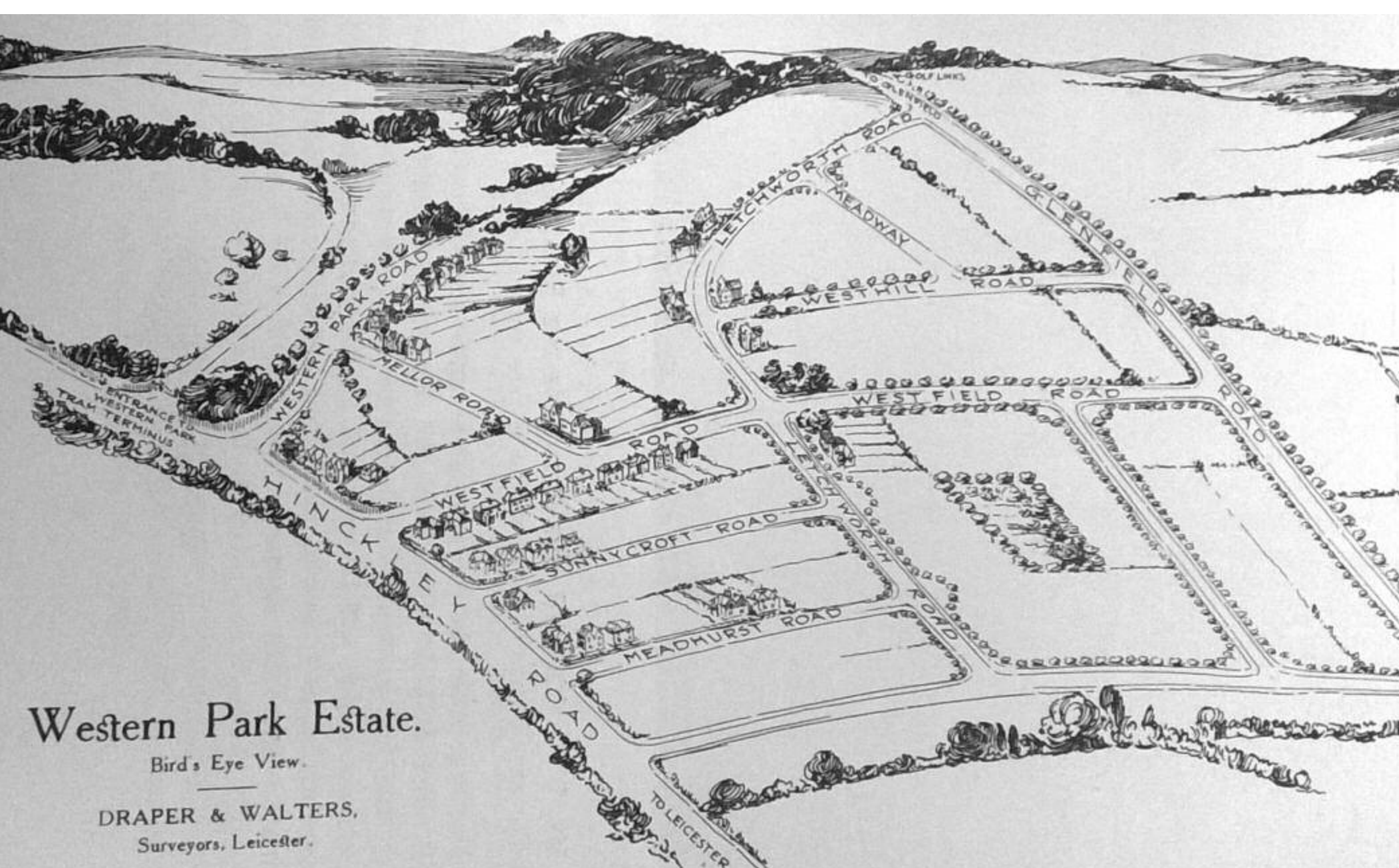
1892

Town boundary expanded to include Knighton, Aylestone and Belgrave

PLANNING LEICESTER

Town Planning

Established

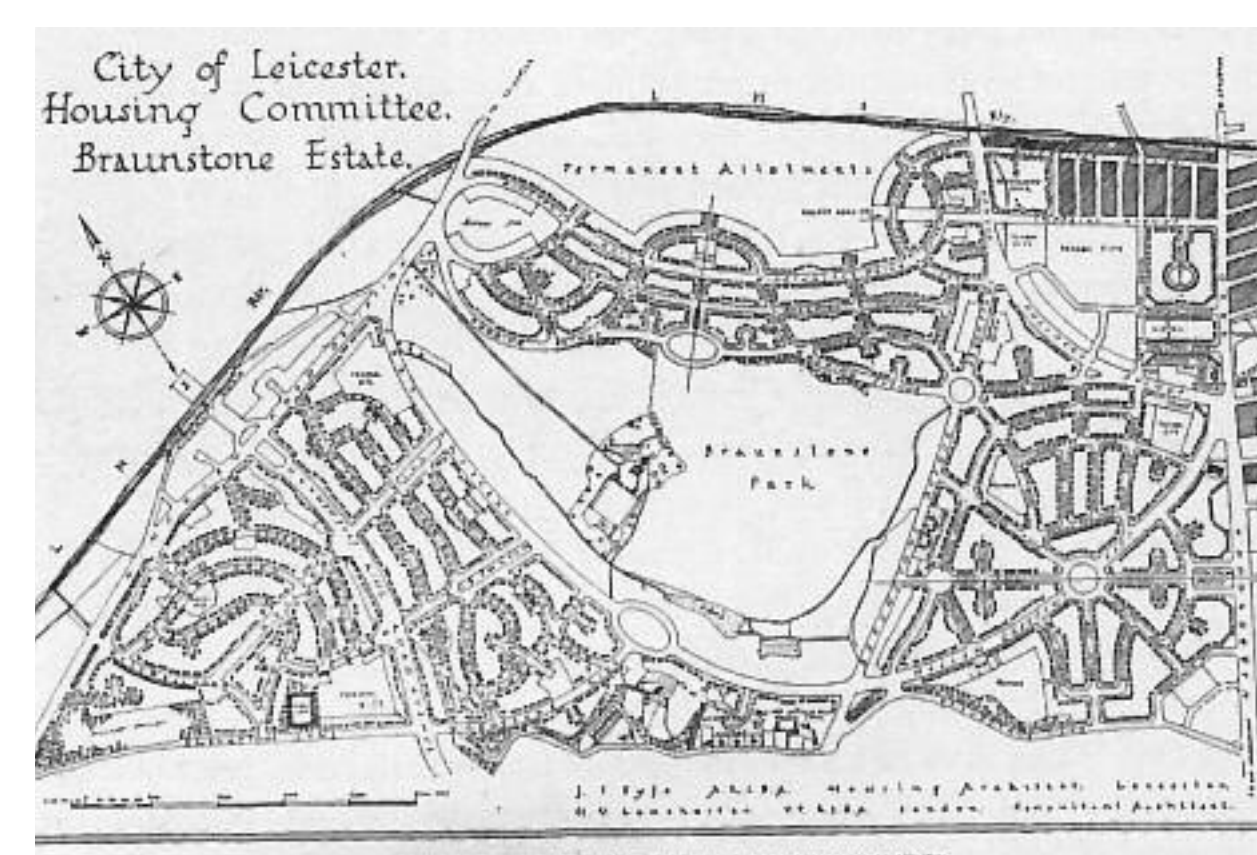
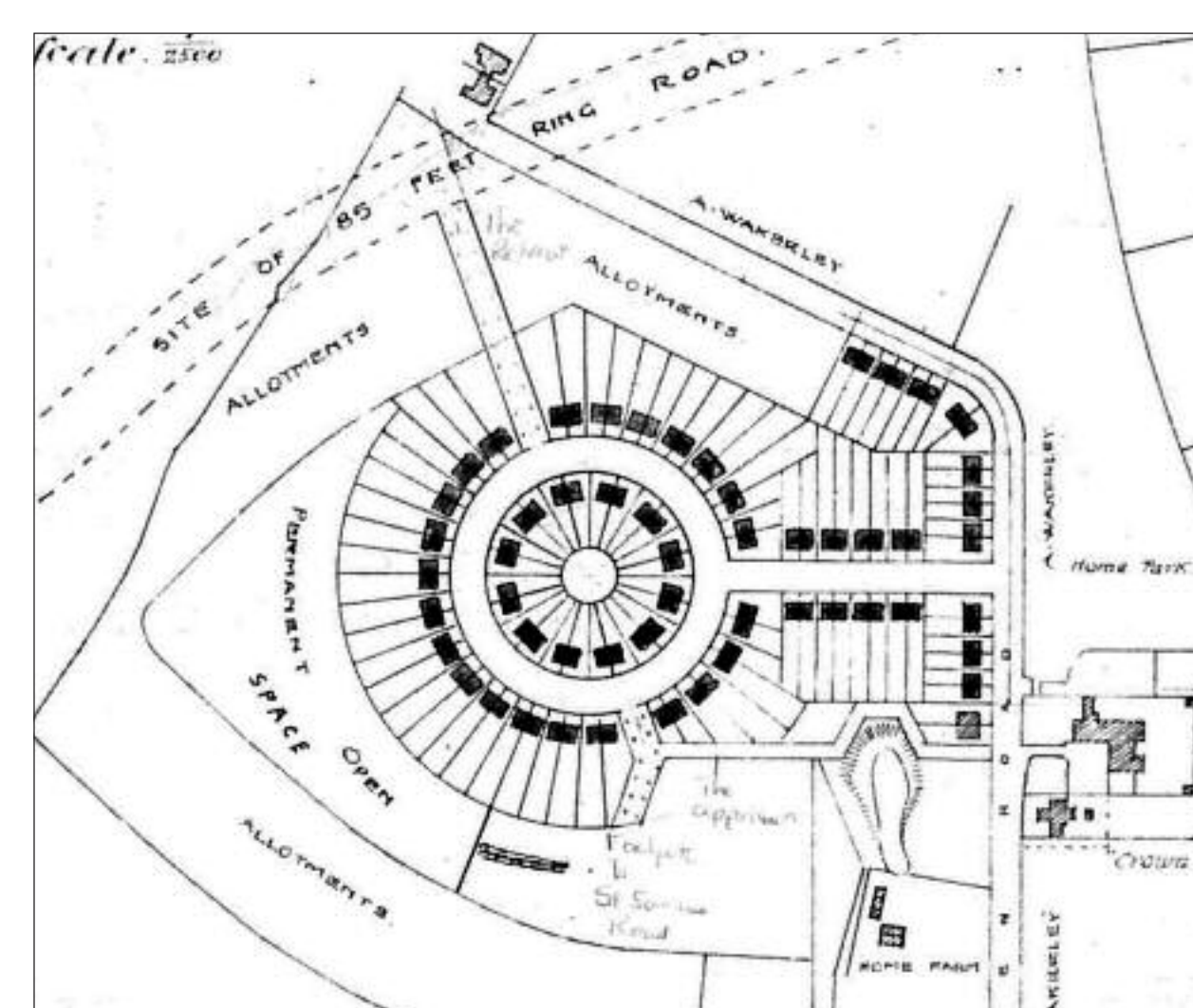


Typical Residential Development Characteristics:

- Generally two storey buildings
- Relatively tight urban grain
- Variety of blocks designed around series of green spaces and ordered road network. Consistent, larger plot sizes
- Generally consistent building lines behind front gardens, although variation in setbacks follows a set pattern in places
- Brick, often coated with paint/render, as dominant material
- Front/rear gardens, some intermediate landscaped spaces and formal parks, limited parking provision

The early 20th century saw the first development of town planning legislation nationally and attempts at adopting a strategic plan for Leicester locally. Much development was still uncoordinated as urbanisation continued apace.

Influenced by the likes of Ebenezer Howard and emerging pressure groups, such as the Garden Cities Association, various linked developments occurred in Leicester. A cooperative housing venture from Anchor Tenants Ltd developed land to the east of the old village of Humberstone between 1907-1915, while the Corporation bought land in Braunstone to develop holistically from 1927, supplementing housing with new shops, schools, churches and public transport.



Top left: Sale plan of Western Park circa 1905
Top right: Plan from 1923 of £299 houses;
Middle: Plan from 1931 showing The Circle;
Bottom: Plan from 1926 for the Braunstone Estate.

1909 + 1919

Housing & Town Planning Acts

1917

Tudor Walters Commission report

1919

Leicester gains city status. Establishment of Housing and Town Planning Committee by

Arthur Wakerley – who was first Chairman

1932

Town & Country Planning Act

1935

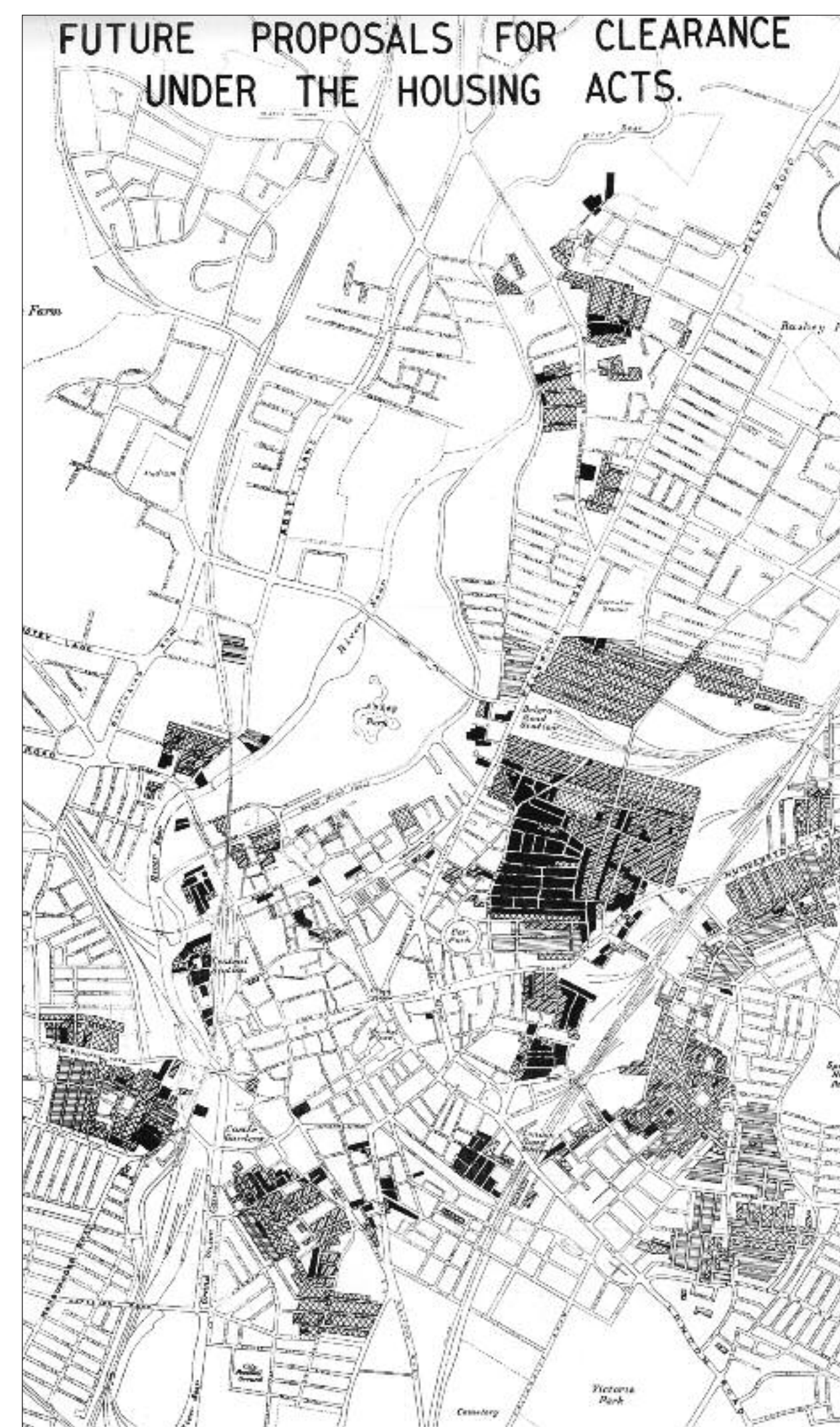
Town boundary expanded to include Evington, Humberstone and Braunstone

1938

Frank Cottrill employed by Leicester Council – one of the first field archaeology posts in country

PLANNING LEICESTER

Post-War Planning

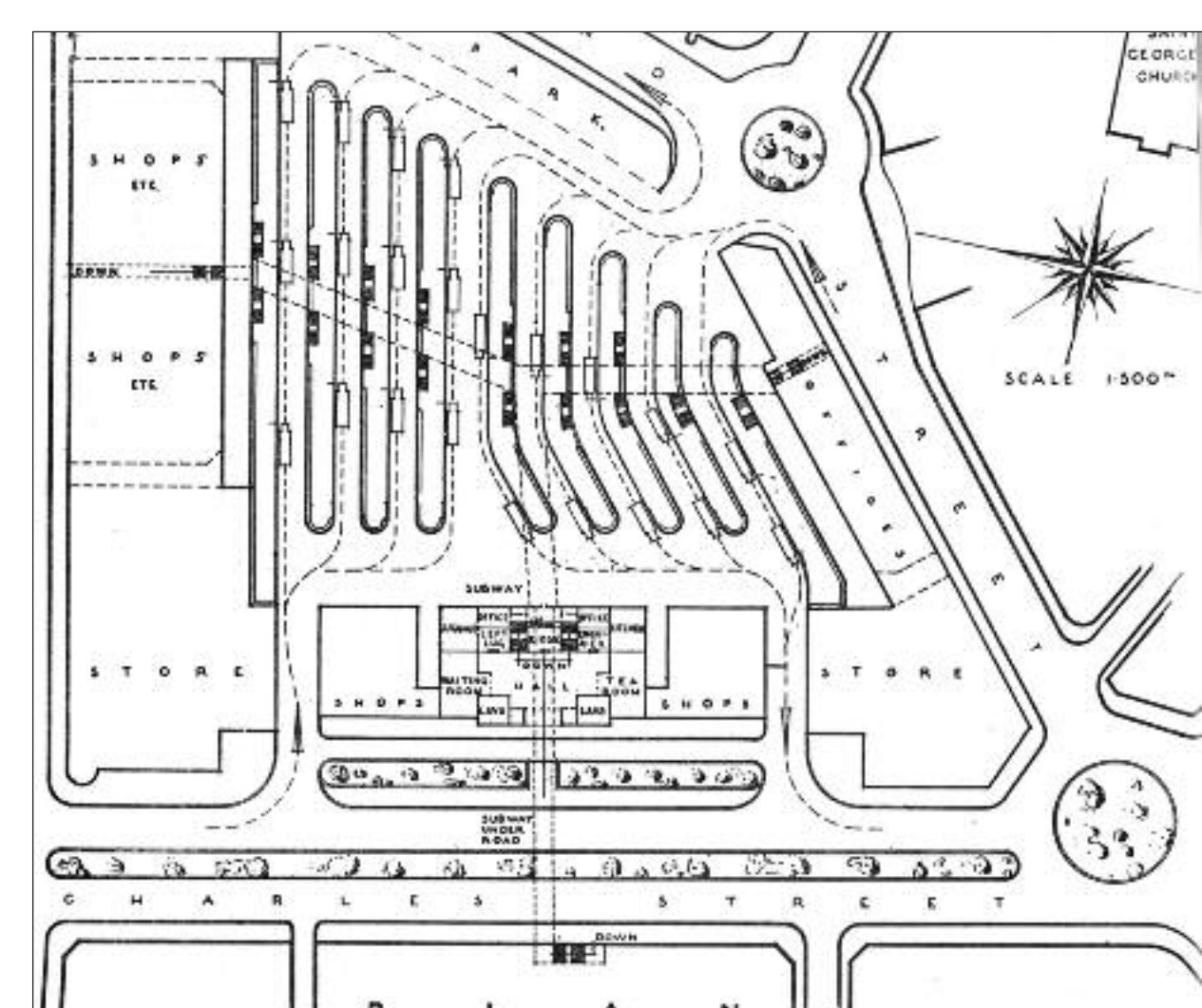


Typical Residential Development Characteristics:

- Generally two storey buildings, with some bungalows and single storey prefabs
- Intermediate urban grain
- Variety of blocks designed around series of green spaces and ordered road network. Consistent, medium plot sizes
- Generally consistent building lines behind front gardens
- Brick, render and mock-Tudor style timbering as dominant material
- Front/rear gardens, some intermediate landscaped spaces and formal parks, modest parking provision

Although World War II significantly curtailed development activity in the city, the success of strategic planning during the conflict and a commitment to domestic renewal post-war had significant impacts on planning in Leicester. A new national development control regime that required developers to acquire planning permission for an extensive range of works was introduced.

There was a revival of the pre-war house building programme by the Corporation with the development of estates in areas such as New Parks, Thurnby Lodge and Stocking Farm. Slum clearance programmes continued apace, whilst private development of housing in the suburbs resumed.



Top left: Model from 1956 of proposed highways scheme on London Road;
Top right: Plan from 1952 showing proposed clearance of 'slums';
Middle: Plan from 1949 for new bus station off Charles Street;
Bottom: Plan from 1952 showing zoning of residential and industry.

1940

Barlow Report published

1943

1944

1947

Town & Country Planning Acts

1949

Last tram service in city

1951

Festival of Britain

1952

Leicester City Development Plan adopted

1956

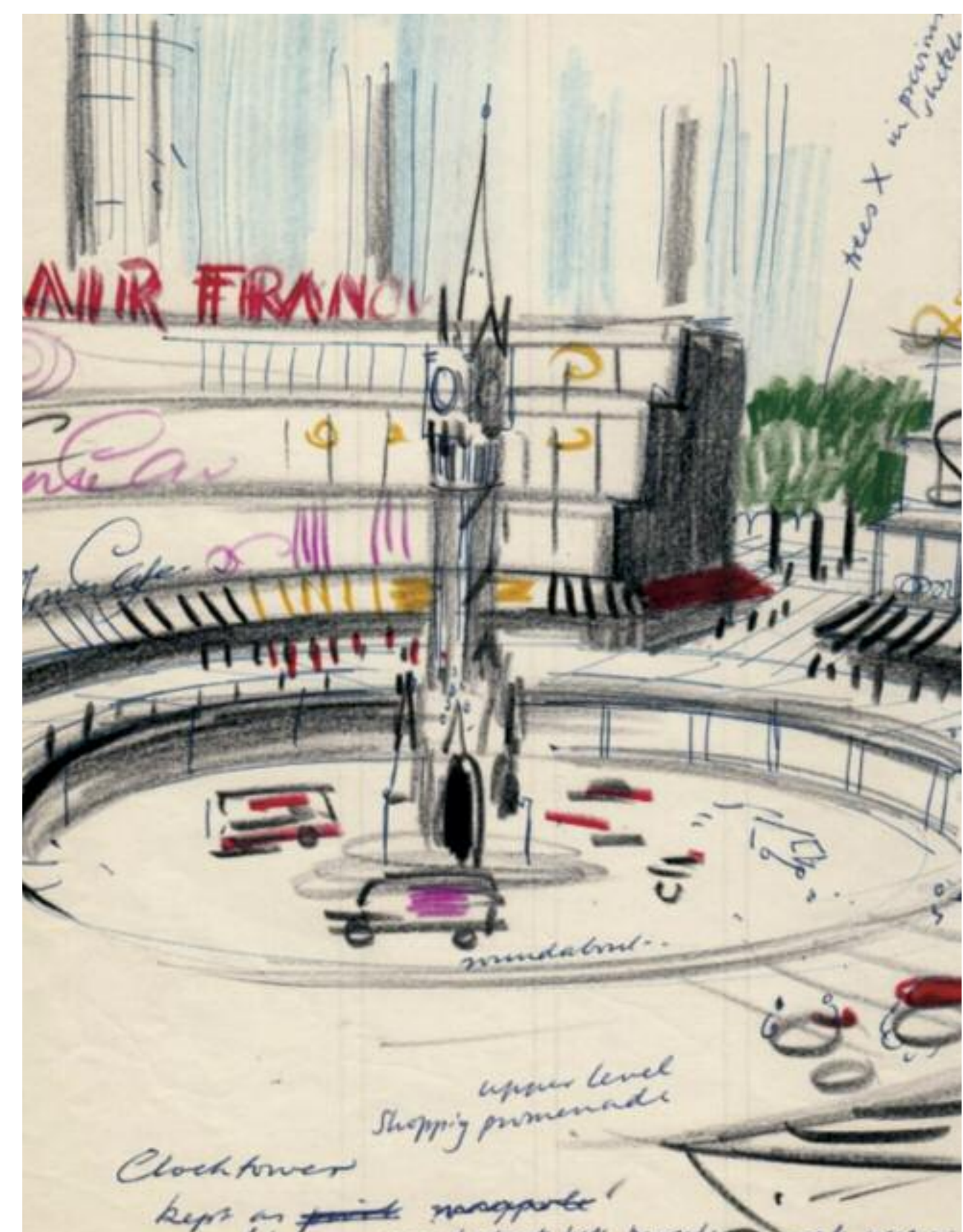
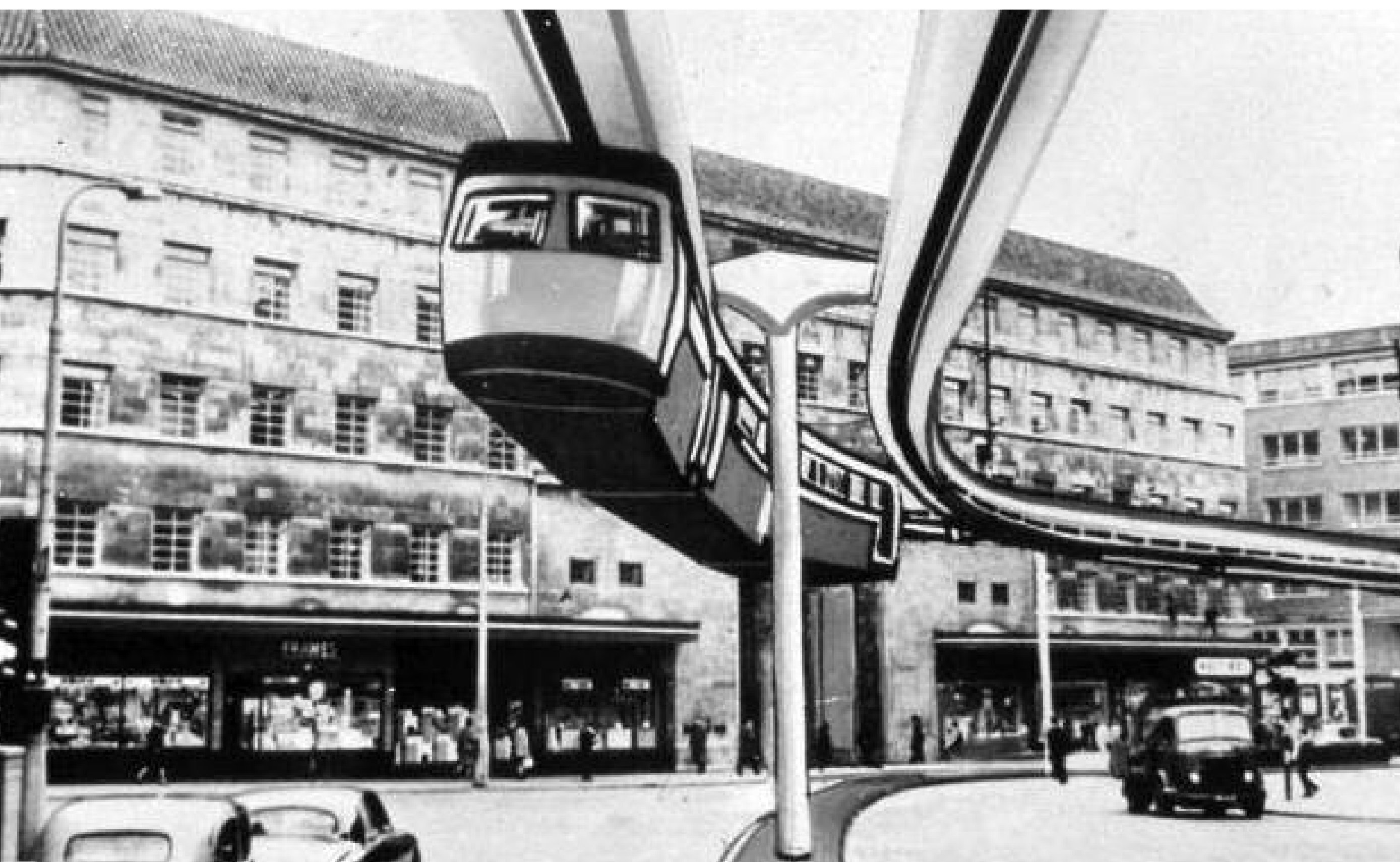
City/County Development Plan

1958

Inner ring road construction began

PLANNING LEICESTER

Visions of Modernist Planning

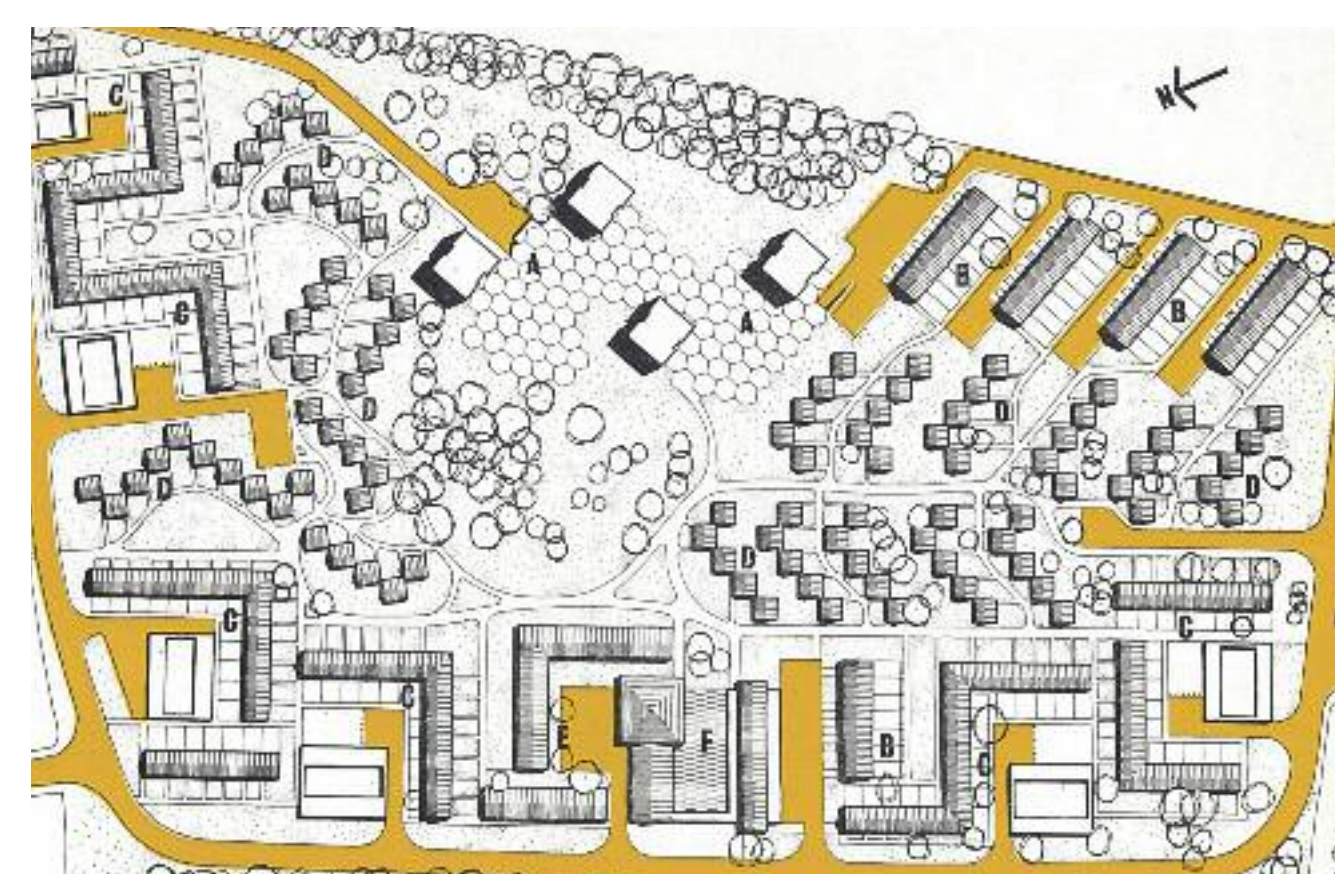


Typical Residential Development Characteristics:

- Generally two-four storey buildings, with some bungalows and some high rise towers
- Loose urban grain
- Irregular block structure characterised by blocks of flats set back away from road network. Large plots for blocks of flats
- Varied building lines behind gardens and communal landscaped spaces
- Light coloured brick, concrete, composite panels as dominant material
- Large areas of intermediate landscaped space, with some formal parks and private gardens, more extensive parking provision

The 1960s has been characterised by some historians as the 'golden age of planning'. This reflects the confidence of the age where bold town planning schemes were seen as the solution to wider challenges in society. In 1962 the city set up its first dedicated planning department and created the post of its first Chief Planning Officer: Konrad Smigielski.

Ambitious plans were developed in the city in response to a paradigm shift in urban mobility, with exponential growth in car use threatening the viability of traditional street patterns. A new monorail network was planned, which would have linked a new town at Beaumont Leys with the city.



Top left: Drawing of proposed monorail through Charles Street
 Top right: Conceptual sketch of potential new development around the Clock Tower
 Middle: Conceptual sketch of Gallowtree Gate
 Bottom: Rowlatts Hill Estate plan

1960

Leicester & Rutland
The Buildings of
England (Nikolaus
Pevsner) published

1961

The Death and Life of
Great American Cities
and The concise
Townscape (Jane Jacobs
and Gordon Cullen)
published

1962

City Planning
Department
established –
2nd in country

1963

Traffic in
Towns report
(Colin
Buchanan)
published

1964

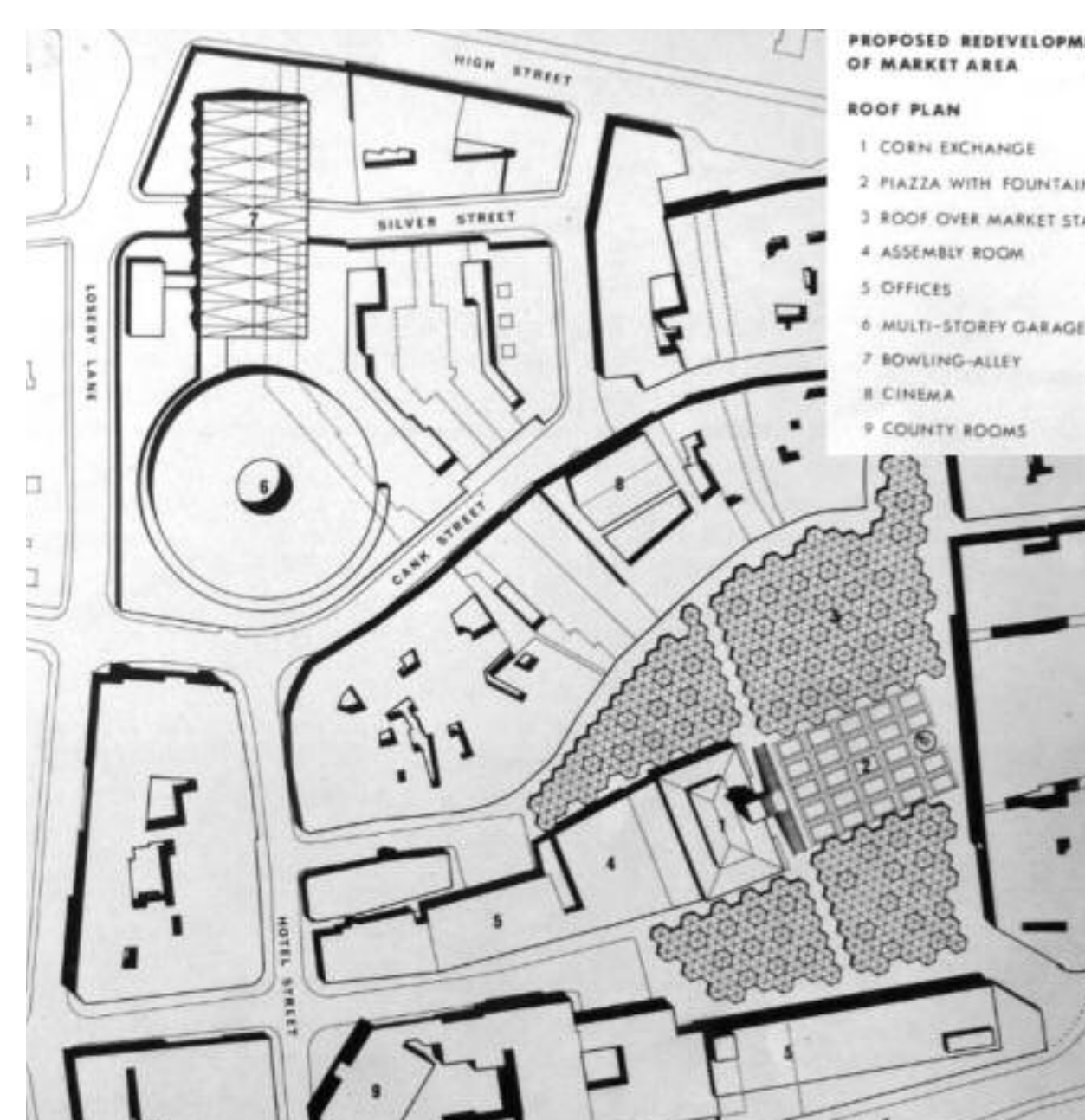
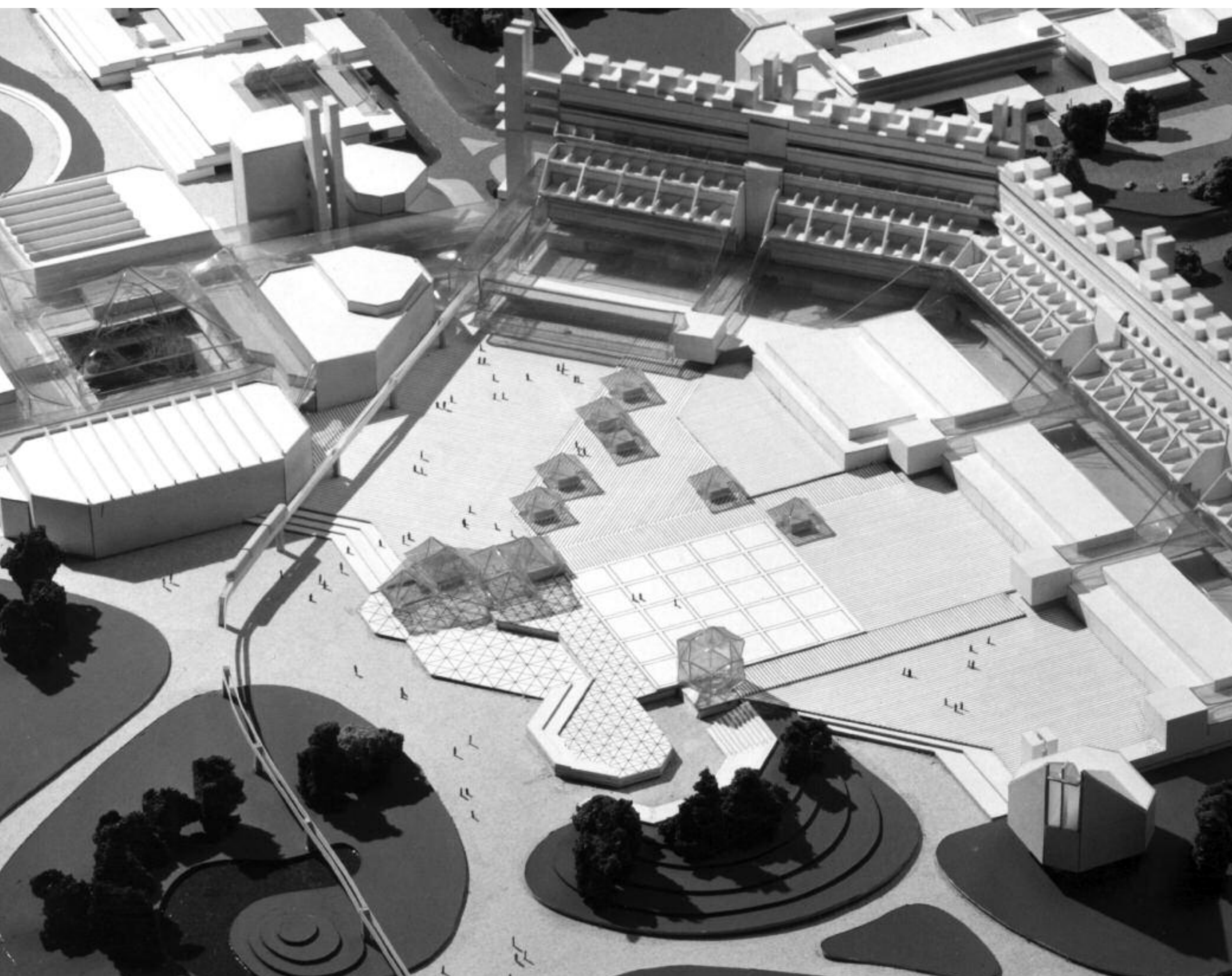
Leicester Traffic
Plan published –
1st in country

1965

Planning
Advisory
Group
report

PLANNING LEICESTER

Visions of Modernist Planning



Alongside dramatic changes to the highway network, extensive investment was planned in new housing, commercial development and further slum clearance. Many of the plans were never realised, but some were – including the controversial development of the ring road in the historic western side of the city centre and the slum clearance that facilitated the building of the St Matthew’s and St Mark’s Estates.

Alongside some of the more futuristic design styles, the period also saw the development of national legislation to better protect heritage. In 1969 the first three conservation areas were designated in the city at New Walk, Castle Gardens and Greyfriars.



Top left: 1960s model of Beaumont Leys Town Centre;
Top right: 1953 plan for Belgrave Gate;
Middle Plan of proposed market area from 1963;
Bottom: Model of ‘regenerated’ city centre.

1967

Civic Amenities Act – establishment of conservation areas

1968

Section of M1 motorway through Leicester completed

1968

Town and Country Planning Act - establishment of Structure Plans

1969

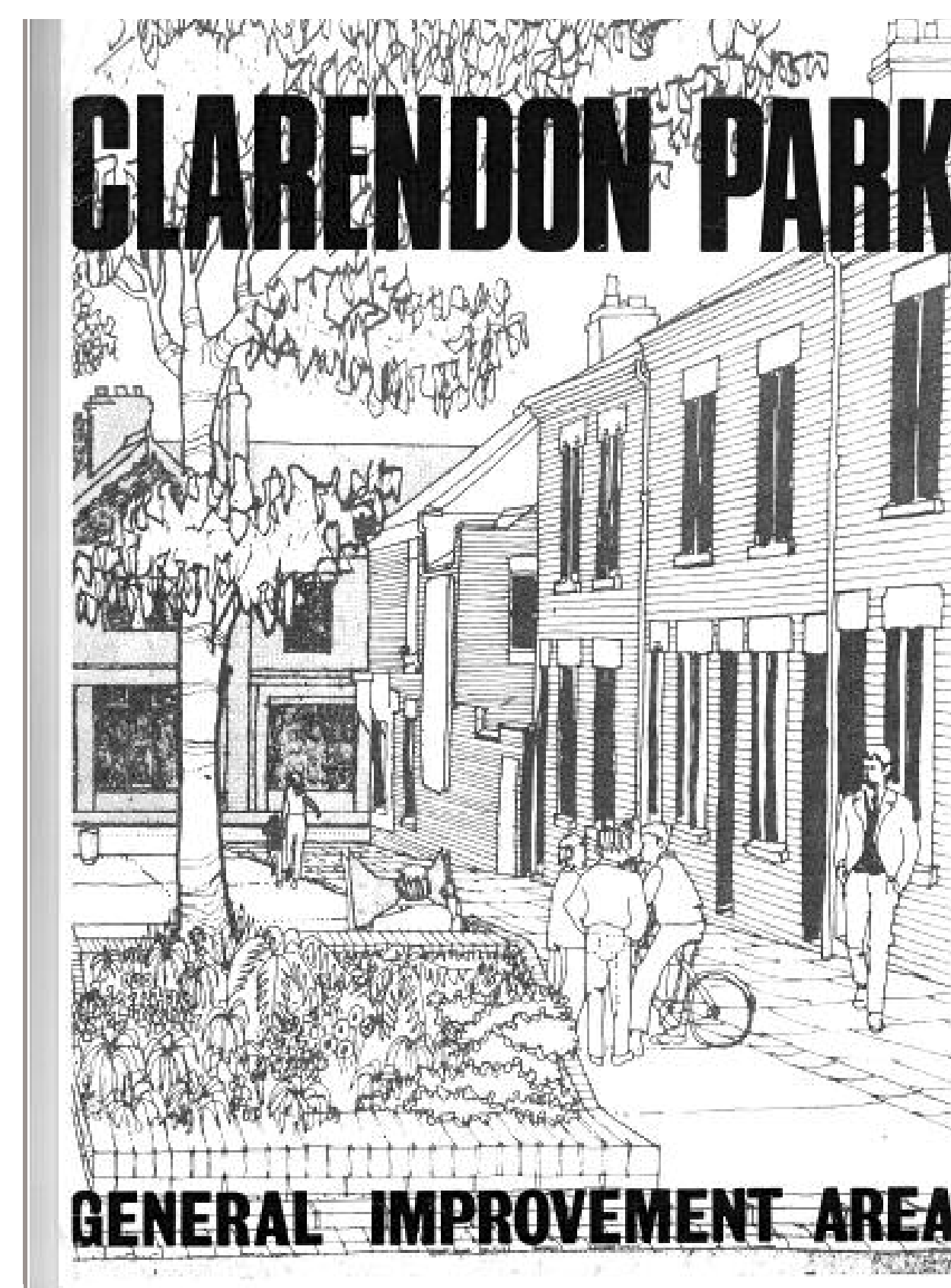
Skeffington Report; Housing Act and Leicester/Leicestershire Sub-Regional Planning Study published

1969

Urban and regional planning; a systems approach (J. Brian McLoughlin) published

PLANNING LEICESTER

Sustainable developments

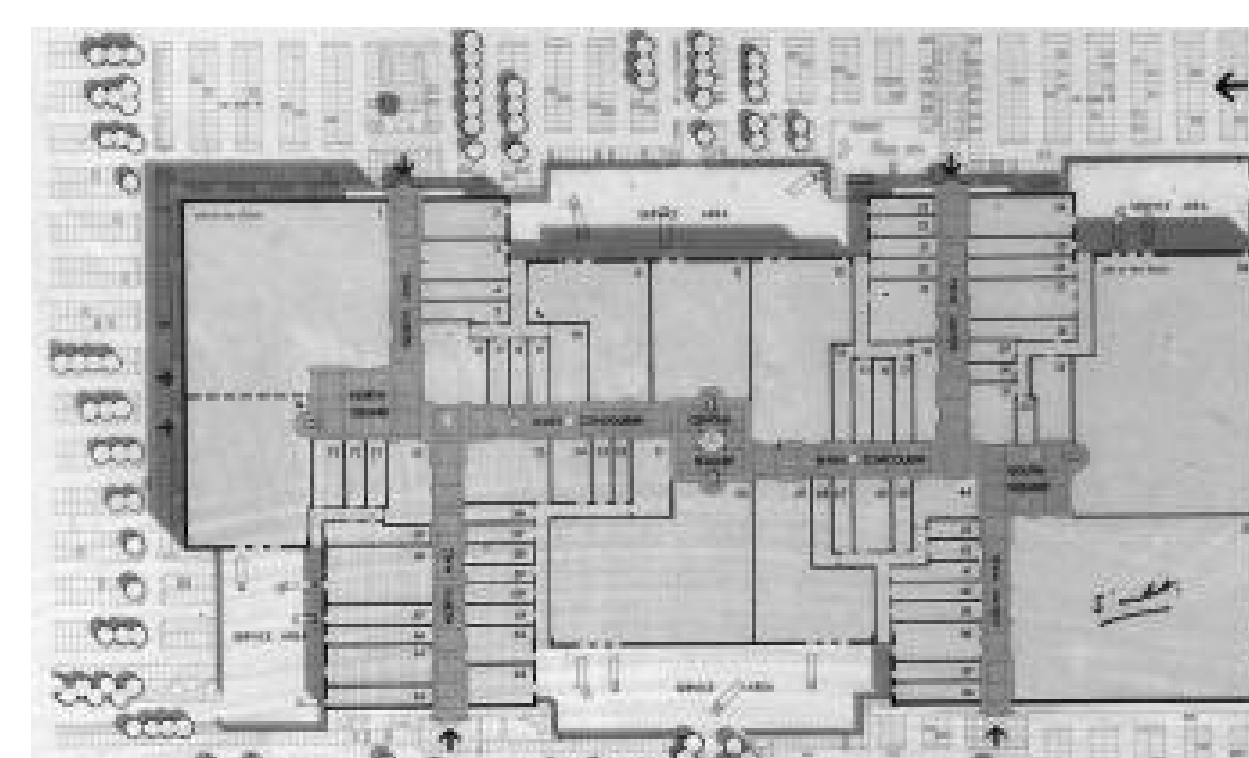


Typical Residential Development Characteristics:

- Generally two-three storey buildings
- Tight urban grain
- Varied block structure reflecting varied land parcels of sites. Irregular structure of cul-de-sac streets. Fairly consistent plot sizes
- Fairly consistent building lines behind front gardens
- Brick/stone as dominant materials
- Front/rear gardens, limited intermediate landscaped spaces, smaller formal parks, more parking

As the city continued to expand in this period some of the orthodoxies of modernist town planning were found wanting and urban renewal was increasingly focussed on enhancing existing assets, rather than comprehensively replacing them. Following the passing of the Housing Act in 1969, the Leicester Housing Committee created plans for various General Improvement Areas, such as upgrading the housing stock in Clarendon Park.

Innovative new approaches to streets included pedestrianisation schemes in the city centre and home zones in Highfields. Some of this was related to enhancing the retail offer of the city centre to combat the threat of peripheral retail development by the M1.



Top left: Model of proposed 'woonerf/home-zone' for Worthington Street in 1984;
Top right: Clarendon Park General Improvement Area document cover from 1971;
Middle: 3D mock-up of Co-op plans for new retail centre off the High Street in 1981;
Bottom: Out-of-town retail plan from late 1970s /early 1980s.

1972

Local Government Act – major overhaul of way local government is organised; John Dean became Head of Planning in Leicester

1974

Leicester Council replaces Leicester Corporation

1975

First pedestrianisation of city centre streets (Gallowtree Gate)

1976

Leicestershire Structure Plan adopted

1978

Inner Urban Areas Act – shift in focus towards urban regeneration

1978 –

1988

Eight Local Plans adopted for different parts of city

PLANNING LEICESTER

Sustainable developments



DESIGN NOTES
EXTERNAL AREAS **1**

Paving the Way

Problems of access for disabled people and people with limited mobility often begin outside the building. A poorly designed and maintained environment can place just as many obstacles in the way of access as an inadequate building.

Such obstacles can appear so great to some disabled people that they become reluctant to venture out at all.

Every effort should therefore be made to provide an external environment which will encourage disabled people and others with limited mobility to go out and about.

Pavements and Footpaths

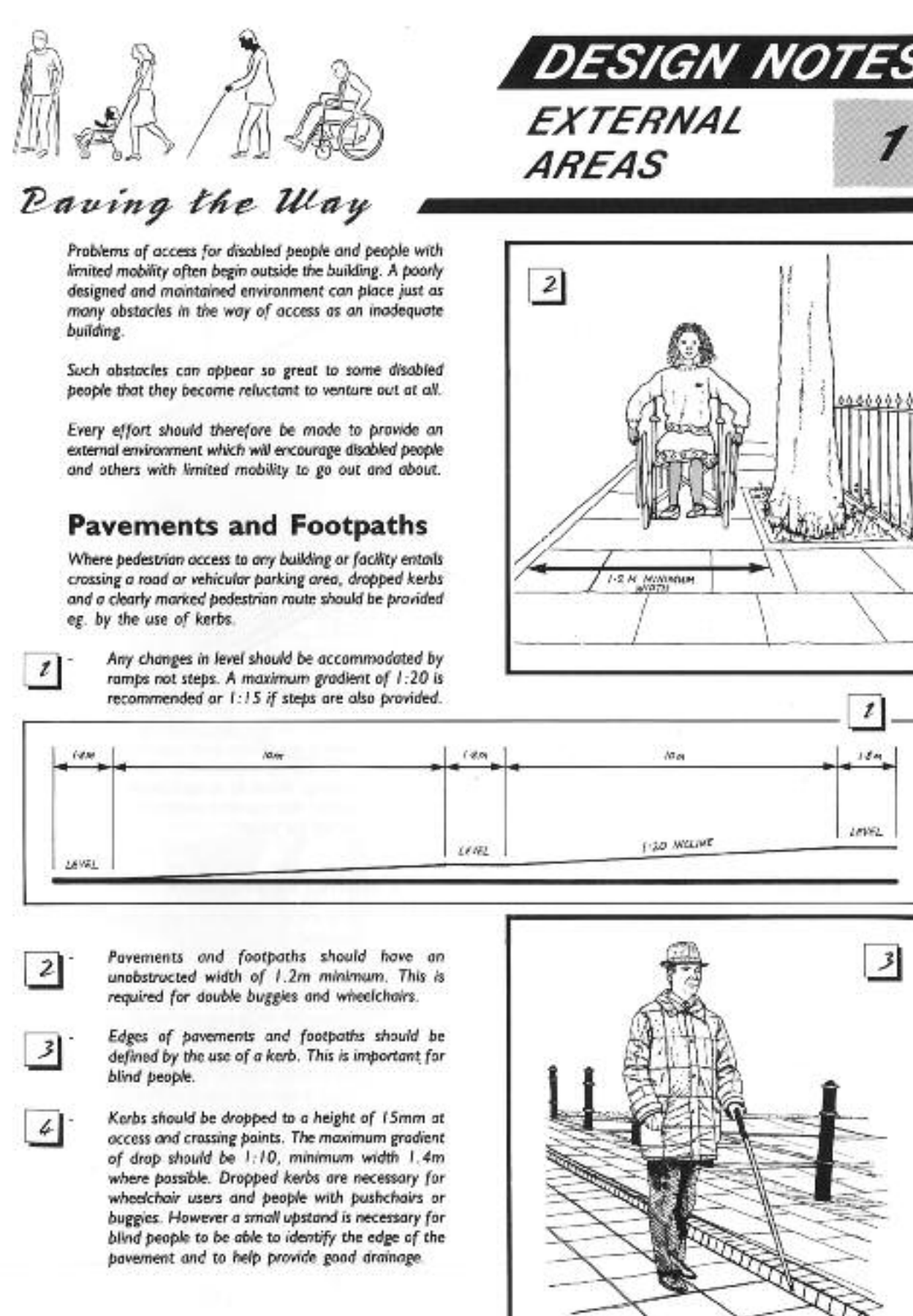
Where pedestrian access to any building or facility entails crossing a road or vehicular parking area, dropped kerbs and a clearly marked pedestrian route should be provided eg. by the use of kerbs.

1 Any changes in level should be accommodated by ramps not steps. A maximum gradient of 1:20 is recommended or 1:15 if steps are also provided.

2 Pavements and footpaths should have an unobstructed width of 1.2m minimum. This is required for double buggies and wheelchairs.

3 Edges of pavements and footpaths should be defined by the use of a kerb. This is important for blind people.

4 Kerbs should be dropped to a height of 15mm at access and crossing points. The maximum gradient of drop should be 1:10, minimum width 1.4m where possible. Dropped kerbs are necessary for wheelchair users and people with pushchairs or buggies. However a small upstand is necessary for blind people to be able to identify the edge of the pavement and to help provide good drainage.



In this period, Leicester came to the forefront for developing protection and proactive enhancement plans for the natural environment. One of the first Council's to employ a full time ecologist, ground-breaking work in managing flood risk, allocating land for community buildings and inclusive design also took place.

In 1989 the multi-award winning Leicester Ecology Strategy was published. One aspect of this was the creation of the Riverside Park, which won the prestigious Europa Nostra Award in 1989. Much of this work helped contribute to the city being designated Britain's first Environment City in 1990.

Leicester set the standard for embedding inclusive design into the planning system in the 1980s. The Council were the first in the UK to employ a Disabled People's Access officer in 1981 and one of the first to establish a Disabled People's Access Group.



Top left: Europa Nostra Award in 1989;
Top right: Paving the Way content (1990);
Middle: Site plan for Highcross Shopping Centre;
Bottom: Riverside Park exhibition.

1990 Leicester was designated Britain's first Environment City

1991 Shires Shopping Centre opened

1994 City of Leicester Local Plan adopted

1995 Western Bypass completed

1997 Leicester City Council becomes unitary authority

2006 City of Leicester Local Plan adopted

2008 Highcross Shopping Centre and Curve Theatre opened

PLANNING LEICESTER Into the Future



In the new millennium town planning remains fundamental to both driving and managing sustainable development in the city. There is a significant amount of continuity between planning now and the activities that have taken place in the previous century, with continuing efforts to regenerate areas of the city that have seen their former uses change and new urban extensions planned.

The 'Connecting Leicester' programme is stitching together disparate elements of the city centre through enhanced streets and spaces, while award winning approaches to reducing flood risk continue to create attractive new public spaces in the city. Planned over several decades, a major urban extension at Ashton Green continues to be progressed with innovative use of masterplanning, while the city continues to develop best practise in a wide range of areas.



Top left: 3D model of city centre regeneration;
Top right: 3D mock-up of proposed neighbourhood centre at Ashton Green;
Middle: Land use masterplan of Ashton Green;
Bottom: Plan for landscape enhancements along River Soar.