NEW WALK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

GRAHAM POTTs

The New Walk is the subject of a plan, in general terms an admirable one, for its main aim is to preserve as far as possible the unique character of the Walk. The initial proposals involve neither great innovations nor extravagant expenditure, yet the plan is both sad and ironic, sad because it has taken the decay of parts of the New Walk to force us to acknowledge what the City Planning Officer says in his report:

"New Walk is widely known and recognised nationally as a fine historic example of a pedestrian promenade, linking squares and urban spaces of pleasing character and forming an attractive environment".¹

And it is ironic because the character we are now so anxious to protect and enhance by planning, was entirely the result of chance. At no period in the development of New Walk did anyone have an overall plan of action. In this paper it is proposed to outline the history of New Walk and to show how the various interested parties produced from their individual schemes this "attractive environment".

I. 1785-1840

New Walk was originally known as Queen's Walk and was laid out by order of the Corporation in 1785, who

"Ordered unanimously That ground not less than six yards nor more than Ten yards in breadth of the Gallow field, from the Gate leading into the land in the occupation of Mr. William Watts, by the side of the south-east hedge to the Gate leading into the Turnpike road beyond the Harborough Turnpike be appropriated for a public walk".²

The purpose of the Walk was to provide alternative access to the old Race Course, and also, more importantly, to provide an area for quiet promenades with fine views across the open country of the then un-enclosed South Fields. The land taken for the Walk lay along the boundary between South Fields and St. Margaret's Field, which had already been enclosed, and the Walk was intended to act as a buffer between the privately-owned plots in St. Margaret's Parish and the land the Corporation hoped to be able to develop in St. Mary's Parish. The expense of constructing the Walk was borne partly by the Corporation who paid for the labour and allowed gravel to be dug from the Corporation pits, and partly by a public subscription of £250 which paid for the trees and shrubs.³

The establishment of this promenade is often taken as a mark of the public spiritedness of the unreformed Corporation in providing a valuable amenity for the town. It is possible that ulterior motives were also present.
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Throughout the eighteenth century the Freemen had been fighting with the Corporation over the administration of South Fields. As early as 1708 the Corporation had decided upon inclosure as the best course of action. This had failed to mature, and various schemes were tried through the century to inclose portions of the land without a full inclosure award. The laying out of New Walk can be seen as another move in the Corporation's efforts to control the South Fields. Also the laying out of a road in the open fields, even a pedestrian road, gave an incentive for residential development at a later date which would greatly benefit the Corporation. Full agreement with the Freemen was not reached until the Inclosure Award of 1804 and until then the Walk remained entirely rural in character.

The Inclosure Award of 1804 satisfied the Freemen, but it gave the Corporation exactly what it wanted; it gained control of most of South Fields, 452 acres; its piece adjoined New Walk, and so was nearest to the existing town. The Freemen's Common and other allotments were in the remoter parts of the Fields. The Commissioners had been specifically forbidden in the Act from interfering with New Walk in any way, except to allow for its extension, and a few minor extensions were made. To defray the costs of the inquiry and certain fencing and drainage requirements, the Commissioners ordered the sale by auction of parts of the land amounting to about 12 acres. Ten of these plots fronted on to New Walk and extended on the East side from Welford Place to the site of the present Roman Catholic Church. From the size of the plots, ranging from 634 square yards to 2,507 square yards, and from the provision of a carriageway at the rear of the plots running into Welford Place, it is obvious that they were intended for building development. The first official breach in the policy of keeping New Walk undeveloped had been made. Nine of the plots were sold by Public Auction and the tenth, and largest, by Private Treaty. Of the eight persons who bought land, two were members of the Corporation and two more were related to members. They paid between £70 and £150 for their plots, with those nearest the town fetching better prices than larger ones only a few yards further up the Walk. These sales meant that all land to the east of New Walk was in private hands, for farther south the land adjoining the Walk lay in St. Margaret's Field and had been sold up after the inclosure of 1764. It was now possible to develop all along that side of the Walk.

The Corporation certainly envisaged building development in the area for they accepted a report of the South Fields Committee that plans involving Bowling Green Garden should include part of South Fields: “because it will be prudent in the Corporation so to mark out their Streets and lots in Bowling Green Garden as not to now to destroy or injure any plan which may be hereafter proposed for building”. The development envisaged here would have been to the west of New Walk in newly laid out streets, but it would have destroyed the prospect from the Walk which was an important aspect of the Walk's charm.

In fact, all plans were delayed until 1811 when the Inclosure Award was finally approved and implemented. In 1812 the South Fields Committee was reconstituted to manage the Corporation estates, and, six months later,
the first sales of land were approved. It was these, and subsequent, sales together with the laying out of King Street, Princess Road, Regent Road, Hastings Street and University Road that permitted the development of good-quality housing in the northern tip of South Fields. How did these developments affect New Walk? The making of King Street between 1811 and 1813 involved the purchase of some of the plots sold by the Inclosure Commissioners as it cut right across the Walk. Also, until adequate carriage access had been constructed at the rear, building was bound to be restricted. Wellington Street was laid out in 1812 on the east and Princess Road in 1815 on the west. The latter had a strict prohibition on the sale of land between New Walk and the new street except for use as gardens. So, after 1812, building development was possible along the east side of the Walk. R. A. McKinley and Janet D. Martin writing in the Victoria County History suggest that New Walk set the tone for the surrounding area with its handsome Regency houses. Yet this is not the case. The map of 1828 published by J. Fowler shows very little building in New Walk apart from the terrace of houses running south from the Roman Catholic Church, today numbered 22-48, while it shows considerable building at the town end of King Street, the beginnings of development in Princess Road, and the Crescent, incorrectly dated by Pevsner as 1810, but more probably built around 1820. New Walk was in fact lagging behind because of the policy of the Corporation which was not reversed until 1824.

In 1824 the Corporation gave permission for the development of New Walk for building on the basis of a report of the South Fields Committee stating:

“That the Committee is of opinion that the Corporation should grant to the Proprietors of the Ground lying Eastward of the New Walk the privilege of opening communications with the New Walk for the purpose only of a Footway on the condition that those proprietors do not permit any building to be erected but what shall front towards the Walk and not nearer than ten yards from the New Walk, and the Corporation to retain the power of stopping up such communications if they shall be used in such manner as to occasion nuisances to the Walk or unreasonable annoyance to the Public frequenting such Walk”.

and requiring the proprietors “also to make an Iron Palisade fence along their whole front, to be erected on their own ground outside the Corporation ditch”.

This document makes it clear that the Corporation was making some effort to prevent New Walk being developed as the surrounding streets were. Building permission was granted late to New Walk and then was hedged with conditions vague enough to allow the rejection of any scheme on the grounds of “nuisance” or “unreasonable annoyances”. Considering how long the building plots had been in private hands it is surprising that permission was delayed, especially as several of the owners concerned had direct access to the Council. The pressure to build is perhaps measurable in terms of the number of buildings completed between the date of permission being granted and the date of the survey for the 1828 map.
From Fowler’s map we can see that the development was not a logical progression up the Walk from Welford Place. Most of the building is found to the south of the Roman Catholic chapel, and that building to the north of it, tends to front Wellington Street rather than New Walk. Running south of the chapel there is the terrace of houses now numbered 22-48, various other buildings on separate lots running to Waterloo Street, but with some gaps, and one block on the other side of Waterloo Street. Why was building proceeding more quickly south of the chapel? A possible reason is that the bulk of the land north of the chapel was owned by the Corporation, for they had purchased some plots from private owners in 1805 and they may have been disinclined to develop even after 1824. Where the land was privately owned, south of the chapel, the incentive to show a profit through development was presumably greater.

The first building in New Walk that can be accurately dated was this Roman Catholic chapel. Begun as soon as Catholics were permitted to build churches of their own in 1817, it was completed in 1819. The land was given by a local man, Mr. Richard Raby, and funds were given by the earl of Shrewsbury and other patrons. This would appear to breach the prohibition on building on the Walk, but the chapel fronted Wellington Street and did not gain an access to New Walk until 1886. South of the chapel, deeds deposited in the Leicester City Archives enable a fairly complete picture of the development to be compiled.

The land involved lay within St. Margaret’s Parish, and Joseph Craddock received slightly over four acres lying on the border with St. Mary’s when St. Margaret’s Field was inclosed. In 1765 he sold this land to Samuel Bankart for £322 10s., and it remained in the Bankart family until 1825. During this time the land appreciated in value as one son of Samuel sold his share to his brother for £1,250 in 1803, and in 1811 John Bankart bought all the four acres from his brother for £3,675. He bought the land presumably expecting to exploit it after the Inclosure Award was authorised. When building permission finally came, John Bankart sold his land in small plots in 1825. He sold 933 square yards for £288 13s. 4d. to William Higginson, on which stand numbers 36-42; 1,410 square yards for £423 3s. to Mr. Barston, on which stands number 60; 1,000 square yards for £294 14s. to Richard Catlin, on which stand numbers 62 and 64; and 190 square yards for £54 4s. to the Reverend Samuel Wigg, on which stands number 84. On these plots the purchasers promptly built houses, the single houses being owner-occupied, and the others being let. It is reasonable to assume that Bankart owned all the New Walk frontage from Waterloo Street down to the bend in St. Margaret’s parish boundary, which would mean down to the Roman Catholic chapel, and that all the property was built at about the same time except where gaps are shown on the map. The chapel purchased 409 square yards of land for a priest’s house in 1824 and may well have purchased it from Bankart also.

What is interesting is the way in which Bankart divided his land up and so threw away any opportunity of planning the building to an overall design. This explains the variety of designs opposite the Museum, but it seems to
J. Burton

Map of 1844
contradict the terrace of 14 houses numbered 22-48. Yet the records suggest that even this was not built in one single operation for a single owner. William Higginson bought the land and built the four houses that stand virtually in the middle of the terrace. Separate deeds exist for number 22 and for numbers 46-52 (the last two have been demolished; a brick garage dated 1951 stands on the site) which although incomplete in their details suggest they were always separately owned. Possibly the various owners co-operated in the development because it proved cheaper for all to employ the same builder. Possibly the first few were built, and subsequent construction followed the pattern of the original to achieve unity or to keep up with fashion. These can only be guesses, but if correct, why did the developers, only a few yards further up the Walk, decide upon individually-styled villas, or pairs of villas, and not a terraced development? The fact that the finished development is aesthetically successful was quite incidental to the plans of the developers.

After the burst of development following the granting of permission to build, it is more difficult to trace precisely when the houses were built and who built them. The map of the town published in 1844 by J. Burton shows the state of development in the Walk by that time. North of the Roman Catholic chapel remained virtually undeveloped except for the construction of Park Street, bordered by cottages, and one new building on the site of the present Catholic church. It remained more convenient presumably to front on to Wellington Street, as the properties tended to be for business purposes, and so the lower end of the Walk came to be considered unsuitable for residential building. The map also shows the construction of several houses on the western side of the Walk. There are some thirteen houses and the Proprietary School below Waterloo Street and just across the street Waterloo House, “stuccoed with incised Soanian Greek patterns on pilasters and some Greek honeysuckle decoration”. The Corporation must have reversed its decision about building on the Garden Plots between the Walk and Princess Road, but I can find no record of when this was done. The reason, though, is fairly obvious. Once building had begun in the Walk it was pointless to curtail it, providing the amenities of the promenade could be protected, and the introduction of gas lighting in 1832 into the Walk, with the express permission of the Corporation, seems to mark the point at which the increasingly residential character of the Walk was fully accepted. The building on the west side of the Walk is difficult to date accurately. The style of the houses is Regency, and they are among the ones which the modern plan is most anxious to preserve, though the style is not a good guide to their exact date, nor can we assume that the development progressed logically up the Walk from the town, for gaps were left nearer Welford Place to be filled in many years later. Only the Proprietary School can be precisely dated as it was opened in 1837. The building was designed by J. A. Hansom, who also designed Birmingham Town Hall and the Pork Pie Chapel in Belvoir Street, in a grandly classical manner. The land was bought directly from the Corporation who placed quite detailed requirements upon the design of the school involving the nature of the facing material and the design of the
railings. Whether this sort of detailed control was exercised over all buildings in the Walk, or merely over one so large as to be an embarrassment if improperly treated, is not clear. In this case it did mean that the Corporation had approved the building that they were to take over in 1849, as the Museum at a cost of £4,300 for its purchase and adaptation.21

The sale of land in South Fields continued regularly throughout the period of the unreformed Corporation and some of these plots fronted New Walk. There is some evidence that these sales were not all strictly legal. The Commissioners, inquiring into the state of the Corporation before the Reform Act of 1835, were met with blank refusal to answer questions about land sales even though the accounts only included about half the land that could be seen to be in private hands. There were also suggestions that the money from the sales had been used in the 1826 election battle and that Councillors bought land at artificially low prices only to resell at market value to show a comfortable profit. Needless to say, the Corporation records are far from explicit on any of these matters. The Reformed Corporation continued the sales mainly to redeem the debts of their predecessors. On 1 June 1838, the Leicester Journal advertised, “Valuable Building Lots. To be Sold by Auction. Several lots of building land adjoining New Walk and Regent Street... most delightfully situated for the erection of genteel residences”.

This is the earliest reference found by the writer to the character of the new area, and it was a character it tried hard to maintain in spite of threats from two developments. The first was the sale of land in 1828 for the County Gaol at a price of 5s. per square yard which the Corporation had fixed four years before.22 This seems to have had little effect. The development of King Street, Upper King Street and surroundings streets went on during, and after, the construction of the Gaol, and included the Crescent Cottages of 1836 with its neat solution to the problem of a triangular site, and Trinity Church of 1838.23 Originally the latter was to be £4,000-worth of classical preaching-box designed by Sydney Smirke (brother of the more famous Sir Robert who designed the British Museum), but the simplicity was impeded by the “peculiar notions” of Thomas Frewen who paid the bill and altered the designs.24

The other development was potentially more serious. It involved laying a railway line right across South Fields for the Midland Counties Railway Company. This scheme was steadfastly opposed by the Corporation on the grounds that it would reduce land values in the area and, as it was the major landowner, greatly affect its financial position. It is perhaps this opposition that explains the fact that building continued in New Walk even on sites likely to be greatly inconvenienced by the railway. The first plan was submitted in 1833 showing the proposed line running south of Regent Street and showing only two properties south of Waterloo Street. The one owned by John Taylor is shown on the 1828 map and the one next door owned by John Lawson must have been built shortly after. In 1835 the Company submitted a revised plan showing the line passing through Lawson’s property to the north of Regent Street. Lawson had already built another property described in the Plan as a “House with out offices, Yards, Garden, Stables and gig House” on the original site of the line. This 1835 plan was finally authorised and the line was opened in 1840. Yet the 1844 map shows six or
seven other properties close to the line that were built either while the plan was under discussion or after the railway was definitely to be constructed. Waterloo House is one of these buildings for its site is marked as grassland on the 1835 Railway Plan. The Corporation may have persuaded builders that their opposition to the scheme would prevent the railway being built, or possibly men like Lawson hoped to get good compensation for the demolition of their property, or, more likely, the social desirability of New Walk was already strong enough to resist the intrusion of the railway. Certainly elaborate precautions were taken to screen the cutting from view with shrubs on the bridge so that even today one is not immediately aware of the line. A final act of confidence in the area was the building of Lower Hastings Street, whose houses on the south side back directly on to the tracks, which was not started until after the railway was built.  

II. Social Structure, 1840-60

Having traced the development of New Walk into the 1840s it might now be convenient to consider in more detail what sort of area it had become. As the advertisement already cited suggests it was generally considered, together with its surrounding streets, to be an area of superior residential development. A Polish refugee described it in 1847 as follows: “New Walk with sixty houses, surrounded with little gardens, the only solely respectable street in Leicester”. Quite apart from the pleasures of living in the Walk, it remained a popular and fashionable promenade and a start was made on providing seats under the trees. Cook’s Directory to the town published in 1849 asserts similar views as he specially praises the arrangement of New Walk and notes that a greater proportion of the town’s aristocracy lived there than in any other area of the town. Cook was presumably anxious to rectify his oversight in the 1843 Directory when he left out New Walk completely, even from his list of street names.

If we turn from generalised opinion to the accurate information collected by the Census Enumerators we find confirmation of the views noted above. The figures show approximately three-quarters of the heads of households have independent or professional status or are substantial business men. (See Table 1.)

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TABLE 1
SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF NEW WALK FROM CENSUS FIGURES (1841-61)
(a) Terrace built between 1824 and 1828. Part of Nos. 22-48. Bay windows are additions of 1870s.

(b) Nos. 62 and 64. Built 1825 on land of John Bankart. Land = £299 14s. od., Houses = £1,000 approx. Relatively opulent detail on pilasters and moulding on cornice.
The Census figures show a fairly stable picture despite the variants in the figures for individual categories caused by the smallness of sample involved. They suggest an area of comfortable respectability rather than of outstanding wealth. Doubtless there would be exceptions if family documents were available to study, but in general the size of house in New Walk, though comfortable, would not have attracted the very wealthy and the building of large, ostentatious houses would have been unacceptable in the Walk. For these reasons, therefore, we find few very large families, and although only 5 per cent of households did not have any servants very few had more than one. It is also worth pointing out that between 15-20 per cent of households contained a lodger to help meet expenses and the Independent Ladies often shared their home with friends of similar age and means for the same reason. This basic pattern of social structure was maintained in each Census despite the great mobility of the householders. Only 13 per cent of the heads of household recorded in 1841 were recorded in 1851 and only half that number were recorded again in 1861. A possible reason for this mobility may be the proportion of rented properties in the Walk which was high, especially at the bottom end.

It is interesting to compare the official figures of the Census compiled with Government authority with those compiled privately for Cook’s Directory of 1849 which are given in the last column. In the directories the absence of an entry for the profession of a person named may be taken to mean having a private income, for business men are cross-referenced in the business section and can be traced there. The result is that the social exclusiveness of the area is exaggerated. So Census figures and Directory figures cannot be directly comparable, a factor to be borne in mind after 1861 when Census figures are unavailable and Directories provide the only source of information.

III. Development, 1840-1900

By the 1840s New Walk was established as a good residential area in spite of the railway, and yet the development of the Walk was only half complete. The continuation of building is a little easier to trace than the earlier development because of the establishment of a Sanitary Committee in 1849 which had the power to approve all plans for new buildings or extensive alterations to existing ones. The accumulation of submitted plans, now in the City Archives, affords fairly detailed knowledge of the addition to New Walk after 1849. The first striking thing is the very small amount of buildings in the 1850s; only two buildings were constructed. One was the Tepid Baths of Mr. J. P. Clarke who lived in the Walk and owned a cotton-thread factory employing 250 people. He built the baths, in 1849, on the site of the present Roman Catholic school, and they served the town until the provision of public baths some thirty years later. Subsidised by the Corporation so that cheap baths could be provided, over 94,000 visits were made in eighteen months from March 1849 to September 1850. The other building was also in the lower part of the Walk,
the important terrace opposite the Roman Catholic church which was built in 1852 (numbers 7-17). This substantial terrace filled a major gap in the Walk—built of red brick, but faced with grey, of three storeys with service quarters and kitchens housed behind the main block, the terrace was built for Mr. J. Hames, a hosiery manufacturer who lived in New Walk and had his factory in Wellington Street. The style of the building was doubtless intended to fit in with the existing houses, but in contrast to their quiet frontages the terrace is dominated by a heavy porch in rusticated stone which introduced the first note of Victorian coarseness into the Walk. After this there was no further building for ten years. The only possible reason for the gap in building is the number of houses in New Walk recorded in the Census as empty. If it was temporarily difficult to dispose of existing properties no one would invest in further developments until demand improved. This is notably unlike the position elsewhere in Leicester where the 1850s saw considerable expansion.

Reference has already been made to the piece-meal nature of the development in New Walk and the lack of unifying control. The reason lay in the practice of selling plots of land for development rather than developing and selling the houses. The result is that there was little opportunity for planned development until the 1860s when New Walk experienced the nearest thing it knew to comprehensive development at the hands of William Rushin. Rushin was a builder who first appears in the Directories in 1846 with premises in Albion Hill. By 1870 he was in partnership with a Mr. Cox, and they are described as joiners and builders operating from Campbell Street; his son assisted the business as a brick and tile manufacturer. By then the family lived at 61 London Road. Apart from his houses in New Walk, Rushin built in De Montfort Street, especially on the south side, where stables he built with distinctive round lights are still to be seen, and he built a terrace bearing his name only a short distance south of De Montfort Street, in London Road.

In 1862 Rushin deposited plans of two villas which are now numbers 106-8. In 1865 he deposited plans for numbers 128-130. Between number 106 and 130 are fourteen houses broken by De Montfort Street. Of these houses plans are available only for numbers 112-118, although two plans shown in the index are missing from the collection, and these were built in 1863. Everything suggests that Rushin developed all these properties in logical sequence up the Walk, for all are to the same design. The only problem arises with the properties on the corners of De Montfort Street and New Walk which front on to De Montfort Street. Rushin deposited eight plans for buildings in De Montfort Street between 1858 and 1861, so probably the New Walk properties are a continuation of this development. Also the elevations facing New Walk of both the corner properties are exactly similar to all the others in the series. The main frontages show different treatments: Belmont House, built originally by Rushin as a boarding school, has steps and a portico in classical style; the house opposite has an asymmetrical front in brick with only one bay and far more elaborate decoration than is to be found elsewhere in the development.
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Even though Rushin was building over an extended frontage he did not build to a master plan, or construct all the villas at the same time. Instead his villas are in pairs, except for number 110 which the smallness of the site made a single house, and Belmont House which was built for a different purpose, and these pairs were, apparently, built separately. The reason for this is, probably, lack of capital. It is likely that he had to dispose of his completed villas before he could safely invest money in building more, as was common among small builders in this period. The pairs of villas all follow the same plan drawn up by the builder’s son, William Rushin, Junior. They are of three storeys and have bay windows on ground and first floors. The entrances are to the side with a tall window directly above. The kitchens and service quarters were in two-storey blocks behind the main building, directly behind the main entrance and hall. The removal of the service rooms allowed for a dining room and parlour on the ground floor with the main drawing room on the first floor together with a study. The buildings are of brick with quoins, porches and window mouldings picked out in plaster. The general effect is solid, comfortable, but unspectacular. Very little about them is extravagant; identical mouldings support the cornice of every porch and some bays are made of wood, though this may be later work as these bays tend to be wider. Today most of these buildings have been much altered to make them suitable for office accommodation, and this has involved the introduction of new windows without regard for the original design, but when first erected they must have represented a very desirable good taste. And it was a good taste that was not obviously Victorian. With the exception of the bay windows, the treatment of the façade was essentially eighteenth-century in the general proportions, the treatment of the other windows and in such plaster embellishments as quoins. Rushin’s development was a subtle compromise between the demands of the purchasers for fashionable housing and the aesthetic demands of New Walk for new buildings that harmonised with the existing designs. Belmont Villas, as they came to be known, demonstrate that the Victorians were capable of producing domestic architecture as worthy of preservation as the Regency terraces which initiated building in the Walk.

Rushin’s houses were the first in New Walk to break away from the flat classical frontage articulated with pilasters and mouldings, and they set a pattern followed by all subsequent builders as the Walk was quickly developed as far as University Road. In 1865 Mr. Latchmore had a single villa built with a double-bay front, of brick with plaster dressings, but of four storeys, which is now number 140. In 1867 William Burton, a local architect, attempted to apply the Rushin style to a three-villa group, numbers 132-138, without really solving the problems caused by a loss of symmetry, in spite of employing more elaborate mouldings. And finally in the same year Shenton and Baker designed number 142, which is of three storeys with an asymmetrical bay, for Mr. Paul, a Town Councillor and Justice of the Peace. All these later buildings are really just variants upon Rushin’s original design and all depend upon the bay window rather incongruously applied to a Georgian-style front. But the fashion for bays was not confined to new
buildings. Many of the plans preserved are for alterations to existing properties. Most are for the provision of improved sanitary arrangements, the addition of extra bedrooms or occasionally a stable at the rear, but many took the opportunity to add a bay window while the builders were busy. These added very little to the actual size of the room, though they would have increased the appearance of spaciousness, and must have been built largely for the sake of the external appearance of the house and out of a desire to be fashionable. The first recorded one is at number 19 in 1872, followed the next year by number 32 almost opposite. Number 32 set the trend for that terrace for number 22 followed in 1878, calling in Burton to design it, and numbers 36 and 38 in 1881. These are the only recorded ones, but today most of that terrace sports a bay. Others that can be dated are for numbers 98 and 100 in 1874 and 1876 respectively. The first was designed for yet another Bankart by Paget and Goddard and this led Bankart's neighbour to employ Goddard, now practising alone, to design one of the same specifications. The effect of these bays is to destroy the balance of a distinctive terrace built in the 1840s, whose chaste and elegant details are dwarfed by the bays. The other properties in the group added bays still later in a different, and supposedly more classical, style. Unrecorded bays were added to many houses including number 84, which has a bay mentioned in an auction catalogue of 1896, and even some in Victoria Terrace, numbers 27-45. That so unsuitable an addition could be made to this terrace is perhaps a measure of how fashionable the bay window had become. Yet the terraces of Museum Square and De Montfort Square escaped similar additions and look better for it.

Another new factor which can be noticed in the 1860s is the introduction of non-residential property into New Walk. There had been schools and the baths for some time, but industrial premises began to appear. In 1863, permission was given to extend printing offices which were numbered on the plan as 4½ New Walk, and Wright's Directory of 1864 notes a printing factory attached to number 4 owned by Ward and Company. The extension was granted presumably because the original works fronted Wellington Street and were merely extended on the same site. Also in 1863, a warehouse was built below the Roman Catholic chapel. This made a concession to the character of the Walk by presenting a classical façade of brick with false windows and oval fanlights under a roof line scalloped in something like Dutch gables. This oddity has since been demolished. In 1873 a warehouse for J. W. Hodges and Company was designed by Shenton and Baker which filled the whole site from New Walk to Wellington Street and included provision for an engine house. This intrusion of industrial premises into New Walk was inevitable because of the way the land between New Walk and Granby Street and London Road had been developed with poor quality housing and business premises. Wellington Street may have been the front entrance, but New Walk had to put up with the influx of business accommodation that has continued ever since. It is worth noting that while some warehouse plans were disapproved of it was always for some technical infringement rather than their general unsuitability for the area.
The rest of the building done in New Walk in the nineteenth century was either infilling the few gaps, or was in one of the adjoining areas like Upper New Walk or West Walk. These new areas of building have much more stridently Victorian houses mainly dating from the 1880s. They are built of hard red brick, and show much use of tiles, strongly emphasised chimneys and steeply pointed gables. They are usually detached and asymmetrical and much larger than the earlier houses. In New Walk itself the later houses pick up the gables motif and it becomes the fashion symbol that the bay was before. In 1873 Mr. Keites had a villa built, but this no longer remains. It was possibly on the site of the present number 6 built in this century. Shenton and Baker designed extensions to the Museum which were opened in 1876 and which cost £7,500 met partly by the Corporation and partly by public subscription. In 1878 Shenton and Baker built numbers 2 and 4 on the site of a rejected warehouse in brick with bay windows, but with steep gables. Close by is the Sunday School Centenary Memorial Hall, designed at no fee by J. Tait and described in Spencer as “in the Tudor style of architecture, of red brick and freestone. The most conspicuous feature of the front is a semi-octagon projecting entrance porch, surmounted by a panelled mullioned and transomed oriel window”. The building cost £2,800 and was opened in 1882. It is now defaced into a warehouse. The Roman Catholic school almost opposite was opened in 1886 and it reflects the change in architectural styles for it has little in common with the buildings a little higher up.

One surprising gap that was left in the Walk was immediately opposite the Museum. It was filled in 1887 with numbers 66-70. The site already contained a factory and warehouse fronting Wellington Street and so there was little interest in building houses so close. The property, now the Civil Defence Headquarters, is utterly unlike its neighbours, and was built with little concern for the appearance of the area. The last nineteenth-century building in the Walk is St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church originally built in London Road in 1869 but transferred to New Walk in 1893. The architect was A. R. G. Fenning.

IV. Social Structure, 1840-1900

The building development of the Walk has been traced to the end of the century and to conclude the paper will examine the social structure at this time. An attempt has been made to establish some information concerning the value of properties in the Walk, to see if it acts as a measure of the desirability of the houses. The evidence is very sketchy, relying on such deeds as happen to have come into the possession of the Local Authority and thence to the Archives. The general picture is of a steady rise in value through the century, checked only by the 1914-18 War. For example number 84 was built on a mortgage loan of £200 on land which cost £54 4s. in 1825. The property remained in the Wigg family through a series of financial crises that involved increasing the loan by stages to £400 by 1881, so the value of the property must have risen to cover the larger sums. In roughly the same period the rateable value of the house had nearly doubled from £13 10s. in 1837 to £25 in 1885. And a series of quick sales at the end of
the century saw the price increase at each sale by approximately 10 per cent to a price of £600 in 1896. A similar story is shown in houses in the terrace numbered 22-48. In 1829 numbers 36-42 were built with a loan of £1,000 on land which cost £288 13s. 4d. Sold in 1836 for £1,600 and again in 1873 for £1,725 they would appear to have barely kept their real value yet one house was sold in 1881 for £650 which seemed to be about the accepted price for one of this terrace to judge from other deeds. Not everyone made a profit on their deals. John Swain paid £730 for the land for number 60 in 1830, even though it had only cost £423 in 1826. When he sold his completed house in 1853 he only received £680. Likewise numbers 62 and 64 which were mortgaged for £1,300 in 1829 only realised £1,170 in 1849. Both these properties may have felt the effects of the railway development temporarily depressing prices. Numbers 62 and 64 were finally sold in 1895 for £1,850. To some extent these prices merely represent the change in the real value of money and they may also just reflect the movement of the whole of the Leicester land market. The trend seems to be towards the value of properties quietly appreciating through the century; a trend that receives additional support from a consideration of social status of the occupants of the Walk towards the end of the century.

**TABLE II**

**SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF NEW WALK FROM DIRECTORIES (1870-82)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Hunter 1870</th>
<th>White 1877</th>
<th>Wright 1882</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gentlemen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies of Independent Means</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners of Businesses</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Men</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers of Religion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradesmen</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks, Agents, Travellers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Houses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified or unclear</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures show that changes in social structure were proceeding slowly. The reduction in the numbers of people living on private incomes is to be expected. Similarly the smaller proportion of business owners can be explained by the attractions of rival areas, like Stoneygate, which were more fashionable to the wealthy. The new inhabitants were increasingly local tradesmen and professional men, so while the area might lose social exclusiveness it lost little in terms of the wealth of its inhabitants. It is discernible that an increasing number of these professional men ran their businesses from New Walk, rather than living there and having offices in town. There are fewer solicitors and more doctors, dentists and teachers working from their homes. The other notable trend is the increase in the number of apartment houses which was to continue into the present century.
NEW WALK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Throughout the nineteenth century New Walk retained its social desirability regardless of the changes within the Walk itself or elsewhere in Leicester. Indeed it retained it more completely than its neighbouring streets which started with exactly similar advantages. The reason for this lies largely in its character as a pedestrian thoroughfare. It was insulated from the general trends of the land market through being unique, and throughout its life it always had a charm no other part of Leicester could match, a charm remaining to this day and still rightly prized.

NOTES
2. Hall Book 29 April 1765. Also reprinted in G. A. Chinnery, Records of the Borough of Leicester, volume V (Leicester 1965), 1089. All references to these records refer to the number of the document concerned.
5. V.C.H., IV, 166.
6. All information in this paragraph from Leicester South Field Inclosure Award 1804 in L.R.O. Also V.C.H., IV 373.
11. I have used the modern road names throughout to avoid confusion and to facilitate identification of features which still exist. The following road names have been changed since the streets were first laid out: Princes Street and Upper Princes Street = Princess Road Regent Street and Upper Regent Street = Regent Road Hastings Street = Lower Hastings Street Occupation Road = University Road Calvary Street incorrectly marked as Occupation Road on Burton's Map of 1844)
17. Kimberlin, Return of Catholicism, 19.
18. N. Pevsner, op. cit., 159.
23. Re-named Holy Trinity Church by a High-Church incumbent in 1878.
25. Information from Plans submitted by Midland Counties Railway Company available in the County Record Office.
32. V.C.H., IV, 394.
The following records have been deposited during the year ended 31 March 1969:

**PARISH RECORDS**

1. *Ashby-de-la-Zouch (Holy Trinity)*: register of baptisms 1858-1911; registers of burials (3 vols.) 1860-1958; registers of marriages 1860-1905; service registers (5 vols.) 1858-1957

2. *Bottesford*: registers of baptisms, marriages and burials (4 vols.) 1563-1721; registers of baptisms and burials (2 vols.) 1722-1811; register of baptisms (2 vols.) 1812-53; register of burials (3 vols.) 1812-1912; register of marriages (3 vols.) 1754-1837; service registers (7 vols.) 1846-1931; marriage licences (17) 1867-1941; faculties (15) 1789-1950; Churchwardens' account book 1783-1945; Parish Funds account book 1918-27; Vestry minute books (2 vols.) 1829-37, 1865-85; glebe terriers 1788, 1823; ground plans of Bottesford church (2) 1846-48; papers concerning church restoration 1846, 1895, 1922-31; papers concerning recasting and rehanging of bells 1791-92; papers and deeds concerning Earl of Rutland's, Dr. Fleming's and Dr. White's Charities 18th-20th cents.; bastardy papers 1750-1819; settlement examinations 1724-85; settlement certificates 1704-93; removal orders 1711-1825; apprenticeship indentures 1714-1809; conveyance of site for a school 1854; papers and deeds concerning Belvoir Coffee House 19th-20th cents.; letter from convict at Fentonville to his parents 1879

3. *Burton Lazars (addn.)*: faculty 1900

4. *Freeby (addn.)*: faculties 1893, 1951

5. *Frisby-on-the-Wreak*: faculty, 1946; glebe papers 1898-1921; papers concerning dilapidations 1848-99; Churchwardens' vouchers 1848-1921; papers concerning the graveyard 1895-1925; National School Managers' minute books (2 vols.) 1894-1949; National School receipt and payment account books (3 vols.) 1880-1945; charity papers 19th-20th cents.

6. *Great Glen (addn.)*: registers of marriages (2 vols.) 1754-1837; registers of baptisms and burials 1788-1812; registers of baptisms (2 vols.) 1813-98; registers of burials (2 vols.) 1813-1921; Preachers' book 1919-27; Churchwardens' account book 1773-1919 (with vestry minutes 1906-19); faculty for restoration of the church 1875, and papers relating to dilapidations 1886-1934; papers relating to the benefice and glebe land 1835-1856; Overseers of the Poor account book (4 vols.) 1811-67; apprenticeship indentures 1728-1835; removal orders 1820-24; Surveyors of the Highways accounts 1778; Charity papers 19th-20th cents.; Upper Glen enclosure award 1759, Lower Glen enclosure award 1760; School managers' minute books (2 vols.) 1891-1918; Cash books (3 vols.) 1870-1904; plan and elevations of school, n.d.; sale plan of Glen and Stretton estates 1819

7. *Great Stretton (addn.)*: register of marriages 1814-22


9. *Lutterworth*: miscellaneous papers including a report on the church by G. Gilbert Scott 1866

10. *Melton Mowbray (addn.)*: registers of baptisms, marriages and burials 1719-1800; draft registers (3 vols.) 1827-43; registers of banns (11 vols.) 1823-1950;
leicestershire record office

11. Muston: registers of baptisms, marriages and burials (2 vols.) 1561-1778; register of baptisms and burials 1778-1811; register of baptisms 1813-77; registers of marriages (2 vols.) 1778-1836; faculties 1874, 1946, 1947; particular of glebe land 1872; Churchwardens' account books (3 vols.) 1664-1930 (including Constables' accounts 1669-1728); Constables' account book 1816-40 (including Churchwardens' accounts 1920-37); Overseers of the Poor's account books (2 vols.) 1666-1786 (including Surveyors of the Highways accounts 1666-1719 and Churchwardens' accounts 1730-88)

12. Oadby: registers of baptisms, marriages and burials (2 vols.) 1653-1752

13. Shangton: registers of baptisms, marriages and burials (2 vols.) 1580-1812; register of marriages 1755-1801 (including banns 1787-1859); register of marriages 1816-29; faculty 1930; Churchwardens' account book 1876-1951


15. Seinford: register of baptisms, marriages and burials 1741-88; register of baptisms and burials 1784-1812 (including a transcript of registers now missing 1556-1739); register of baptisms 1813-1909; register of burials 1813-1923; register of marriages (4 vols.) 1754-1837; vestry book 1845-1909; Churchwardens' account book 1796-1906; Overseers of the Poor's account book 1745-91; school account books (2 vols.) 1876-1903

16. Sysonby: papers re Dalgleish trust for the repair and maintenance of the church 1916

17. Welby: faculty 1948

PARISH COUNCIL RECORDS


3. Seagrave: enclosure award 1761


5. Whetstone: Parish Council minute books (5 vols.) 1895-1958; Parish Meeting minute book 1894-1942

NONCONFORMIST RECORDS

1. Baptist:
Kirby Muxloe Free Church: Church account book 1925-38
Woodgate Baptist Church, Loughborough: Church Meeting minute books (4 vols.) 1846-1918; Officers Meeting minute books (3 vols.) 1909-36; volume containing statement of doctrine and rules 1846, roll of members 1846-84, and candidates for admission 1846-77; Church account book 1846-57; Treasurers' account books (2 vols.) 1866-1918; Sunday School Teachers' Meeting minute books (4 vols.) 1882-1953; Sunday School membership rolls (2) 1846-1916; admission registers (5) 1875-1935; Sunday School Clothing Club account book 1878-83; Sunday School Library list of subscribers 1846-58
Baxter Gate Baptist Church, Loughborough: Church account book 1846-7; Sunday School rolls of members (3) 1815-46; Sunday School accounts 1833-46; attendance registers (boys) (2) 1815-28
Market Harborough Baptist Church: Deacons' Meetings minute book 1905-13; Church Meetings minute book 1830-1914

II. Congregational:
Ashby Parva Congregational Church: account book 1901-27
Frederick Street Congregational Church, Loughborough: Ashby Square Church Meeting minute books (2 vols.) 1829-1908; Frederick St. Church Meeting minute books 1908-35; Deacons' Meeting minute books (3 vols.) 1832-1941; Sunday School minute books (4 vols.) 1864-1963
Oakham Congregational Church, Rutland: volume containing "List of the members of the Church of Christ at the Old Meeting House .... Oakham with some account of God's dealings with them" 1794-1863, Church account book 1776-1904; Sunday School minute book 1854-1910 (including rules 1854); deeds 1718-1874

III. Methodist:
Primitive Methodist Chapel, Syston: Trust account book 1873-92

PUBLIC RECORDS

1. Petty Sessional Divisions:
   (a) East Norton: Court registers (2 vols.) 1887-1933
   (b) Market Harborough: Court registers (9 vols.) 1895-1957

2. Valuation surveys, Inland Revenue: working sheet maps (on Ordnance Survey 25" scale) 2nd edition for Leicestershire and Rutland

OFFICIAL RECORDS

1. Billesdon Rural District Council: Billesdon Poor Law Union minute books (2 vols.) 1836-44, letter book 1853-61, Billesdon Rural Sanitary Authority minute books (4 vols.) 1872-97 (including minutes of RDC 1895-97). Billesdon RDC minute books with reports of committees (2 vols.) 1897-1933, minute books, with reports of committees (4 vols.) 1934-45; Rating Committee minute book 1927-39; Housing and Sewerage Committee minute book 1933-39; as Highway Authority minute books (3 vols.) 1907-30; as Public Health Authority (11 vols.) 1901-39; correspondence 1920-39; correspondence, agreements, reports and specifications concerning housing 1898-1937; papers, agreements, reports etc. concerning water supplies, sewerage and highway schemes 1893-1938; papers and maps concerning Leicester County Review Order 1931-36; Second World War, Government Evacuation Scheme surveys of accommodation, correspondence etc. 1930-41; Air Raid Precautions papers etc. 1939-45

2. Leicestershire Central Registration District: notice books of marriage for Barrow upon Soar District (12 vols.) 1921-49; Billesdon District (6 vols.) 1837-1949; Blaby District 1949; Leicestershire Central District (10 vols.) 1949-60

3. Leicestershire and Rutland Fire Service: Market Harborough Fire Station occurrence books (49 vols.) 1942-65; register of members of N.F.S. brigade, Market Harborough 1942-46

FAMILY AND ESTATE

*Hazlerigg MSS. (addnl.):* deeds relating to Noseley chapel 13th-17th cent.

*Halford MSS. (addnl.):* correspondence, principally concerning the professional activities of Sir Henry Halford, the royal physician, 18th-19th cents.

MAPS AND PLANS


Ordnance Survey maps of Leicestershire and Rutland, six-inch and twenty-five inch scales, First and Second editions

EDUCATION RECORDS

1. *Blackfordby Church of England School:* managers' minute book 1945-58
4. *Foxton Board School:* plans and elevations 1874
5. *Hinckley Grammar School:* plans and elevations 1893
8. *Loughborough Technical College:* plans and elevations 1920
10. *Moira and Albert County Schools:* managers' minute book 1942-63
11. *Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe County Schools:* managers' minute book 1951-63
13. *South Wigston Girls School:* plans and elevations 1902
15. *Thornton Board School:* plans and elevations 1880
16. *Thurcaston Board School:* plans and elevations 1875
17. *Wigston Magna British School (Bell St.):* plans and elevations 1872
18. *Wigston Magna Infant School (Long St.):* plans and elevations 1880
19. *Wymondham Old Grammar School:* plans and elevations 1924
20. Register of annual returns of maintenance for Voluntary Schools 1936-49

SOCIETIES

2. *Leicestershire Federation of Women's Institutes:* Jubilee Year (1965) Scrapbooks: Anstey; Billeshon; Bitteswell; Broughton Astley; Countesthorpe; Fleckney; Foxton; Frisby-on-the-Wreak; Hoby; Kimcote and Walton; Old Evington, Shearsby and Arnesby; Stoke Golding; Swinford and Thrussington
BUSINESS RECORDS

G. E. Gamble & Sons, funeral directors, builders etc., Syston: work and job books (5 vols.) 1893-1927
Account book of John Wakerley, builder, of Sherrard Street, Melton Mowbray 1848-52

MISCELLANEA

Deeds relating to properties in many Leicestershire parishes 16th-20th cents.; minute books of the Quorn Hunt (5 vols.) 1884-1955; memoirs of Thomas Kemp of Harby c. 1850; printed papers and posters relating to local affairs in Melton Mowbray 18th-20th cents.; printed papers etc. relating to local affairs in Wigston Magna 19th-20th cents.; Air Raid Precautions wardens book of alerts Woodhouse Eaves 1940-45; miscellaneous tax papers, Rutland, 1821-26