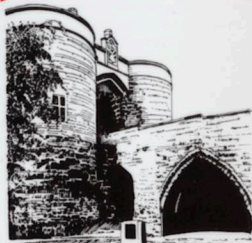


Built by command of Henry III between  
1252-55, Nottingham's Oldest Shop:

**NOTTINGHAM CIVIC SOCIETY**



**CASTLE GATEHOUSE SHOP**

OPENS DAILY 10.30am - 5.00pm

**Nottingham  
Civic  
Society**

President: Rita Cooper

Chair: Hilary Silvester

Secretary: Ruth Hardiman

☎ (0115) 910 7798

Editor of Newsletter: Ken Brand

☎ (0115) 845 0153

E-mail: [kdbrand@hotmail.com](mailto:kdbrand@hotmail.com)

Society Web Site: [www.nottinghamcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamcivicsociety.org.uk)

This Society exists to develop a worthwhile environment in Nottingham. To achieve this it encourages good architecture in all its forms, planning, and the preservation of the desirable aspects of the heritage of the city. The Society likewise will discourage, criticise and even fight bad planning, destruction of amenities and vulgarity in design.

**We need your support. We invite you to join.**

Annual Subscription: Individual £10 Family £15.50

Corporate £30 Life £200

Further details: Lynn Irvine, Membership Secretary

57 Woodhedge Drive, Nottingham NG3 6LW ☎ (0115) 958 8247

Registered Charity No. 504768

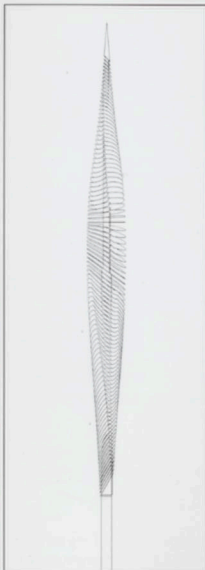
Printed by Regeena Printing, Nottingham Telephone 0115 978 9919

April 2004

**Nottingham  
Civic Society**

**124**

**NEWSLETTER**



**Axel Sculpture, Bolero Square, Ice Arena, Nottingham.**  
Artists: *Wolfgang and Heron*. Client: *Nottingham City Council*  
Mark of the Month April 2004

**£1.25**

**INDEX**

1. News of Nottingham
  4. Mark of the Month January-April 2004
  5. Trent River Park
  8. Ray Banks' Bequest (Hull)
  9. Twenty Years After
  10. Stan Saunders
  12. Architectural Vandalism
  15. Mark of the Month
    - (i) New Sustainable Research Building  
University of Nottingham
    - (ii) 'Axel' The Bolero Square Sculpture
  19. T.C. Hine and the Town Hall Question
  22. Victoria Park and Victorian Nottingham (ii)
  27. Town Planning 1927
  32. Lectures 2004/5 (Provisional)
- Inside back cover: Summer Visits 2004

**WOLLATON VILLAGE DOVECOTE MUSEUM**

After record attendances in 2003, the Museum will reopen on Sunday May 9th 2004. Thereafter it will be open on Sundays June 13th; July 11th; and August 8th as well as the Heritage Open Days week-end on Saturday and Sunday September 11th and 12th.

Open 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

For the first time there will be a charge of 50p for adults.

There will be a massive collection of school photographs on show, some of them not yet seen. The highlight of the season will be an exhibition in June to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings.

For offers of help with the D-Day display contact  
the curator Maureen Jones on (0115) 928 2567

**NEWS OF NOTTINGHAM**

The face of Nottingham is changing at a rapid pace as streets and spaces acquire new features, new buildings and new uses for existing structures.

Two important launches took place early last month, when the six final designs for the Old Market Square remodelling competition were revealed, and when Nottingham Express Transit at long last commenced public running of Tram Line One, which NET are planning to follow up with lines going out to the West and South of Nottingham.

Public consultation has been a feature both of the Old Market Square and the Tram projects, and we would certainly urge members to make their feelings clearly known about these issues; it is no use us complaining about the outcomes if we do not exercise our citizens' and users' rights to contribute to the planning stage when invited to do so.

The new tram routes are perhaps issues of particular interest to more local residents and businesses, although they do have city-wide implications especially as in the case of the Chilwell bound line and its possible effects on the facilities and environment in the Highfields area: this is a concern which is being raised regularly by the Civic Society and representatives of other organisations (local residents' association, Nottingham University, the Tennis Centre, Highfields Sports Centre, and so on) at the meetings of the Highfields Users' Group, and we will continue to press for the most sensitive, least intrusive route and treatment for the tram in this very important cultural, historic and leisure area.

As for the first new line, I enjoyed an introductory ride from the Old Market Square to Station Street, up to Bulwell and back-into the city; it was a smooth ride and the speed it achieved on the dedicated section of track was impressive. One comment, which I have heard is that the seats are rather small, and there also seems to be a feeling that the bell is noisy and less than tuneful (rather like a length of scaffolding being dropped on the pavement was one comment). It will be interesting to see how-the system beds down in a few months' time when the novelty has worn off. Let us know what you think.

Our other significant launch was, as already noted, the proposed designs for the Market Square. The green Questionnaire/voting forms seemed to be everywhere during the days following the unveiling of the competing designs. It was revealing to eavesdrop on debates and to ask face-to-face questions of

people involved in looking at the drawings or filling in their forms. Several opinions and comments surfaced time after time: people wanted to see water and greenery in the Square: they did not like gimmickry: they wanted good lighting both for aesthetic effect and for safety reasons; the lions must be retained in their current positions with the Square respecting the Council House building; good seats and much-improved, accessible, attended toilets are essential: and the management of the Square must be effective and permanent. Hopefully, our members will have made their own opinions known, as our Square is at the heart of our city and what ever is decided will affect the life and appearance of the city for many years to come.

Changes are also occurring in another historic area of the city, leading south from High Pavement and down London Road. As you may know, a new Arts Centre is proposed for the Garners' Hill Park site: a new Arts Centre in the Lace Market does seem like an excellent idea, but we do feel very strongly that the loss of the green space generally within the Lace Market, and in particular its impact at that position on the escarpment is to be regretted and resisted. It has been suggested by one of our Committee members that the site at the top of Bottle Lane (currently used for car parking) would be a much more appropriate site and would not involve the loss of the, in our opinion, much-needed green space of Garners' Hill Park.

Travellers into and out of the city along the London Road corridor will have noticed a number of dramatic changes taking place in the townscape. The Hicking Pentecost building on Queen's Road has now lost its mid-twentieth century excrecence and its original proportions have been revealed, prior to its conversion to residential use - although currently the exposed brickwork is painted white.

As you come up London Road towards the city, you will notice that after much discussion and negotiation the Boots H-Block (as it has always been known) is finally being demolished, prior to redevelopment as part of a residential/hotel complex. The view towards St Mary's is worth making the trip for, before they start on the new building.

And the view further along London Road, as you go over the railway bridge towards the traffic island is now worth travelling many miles to see (in my opinion). The demolition of the mid-twentieth century almshouses has revealed a stunning view of the sandstone cliff with St Mary's revealed sitting proudly atop it, surrounded by a cluster of buildings reflecting the historical and architectural development of the city. The planning application requested

demolition of the almshouses and for the site to be used as a temporary car park. It would be wonderful if this site could become a permanent open space at this most important - and now even more dramatic - gateway to the city. We shall continue to have concerns about this most important area (there are proposals for the higher levels of the escarpment which would block part of this gateway view, in particular the prominent Victorian warehouse), and we shall continue to campaign for this view, which vividly reflects the historical development of the city.

We continue to have concerns about the 'grain' of the city, in particular the, until recently, rather under-valued and disregarded areas just out of the city centre. We were delighted that the city has created Conservation Area status for the Sherwood Rise area, which has its own character: and we hope that this will give a measure of protection to the distinctive villas and streets which compose this neighbourhood.

The Meadows is another area which we feel needs the protection of Conservation Area status and we are currently involved in a study which we hope will lead to this status in an area which is becoming increasingly under threat.

We are pleased that work is already under way to create a Conservation Area in the Victoria Park/Sneinton Market area. Not only are there some fine Victorian buildings and groups of buildings in this neighbourhood (for instance, Victoria Baths, the Promenade, Bancroft's Factory and so on), but again the 'grain' of the city has been generally preserved and is being increasingly appreciated. It is also very important that protection is in place when proposals for a number of tall and massive buildings are being considered. The regeneration of the East side of the city is to be welcomed, but not at the expense of its existing character, its residents and its role as an exciting visual corridor into the city centre from the north-eastern heights and valley.

It is very pleasing to hear that two of Nottingham's new buildings have won awards in the Civic Trust's national competition. As a result of last year's entries and judging, awards have been given to the 'National College for School Leadership' (Hopkins Architects), and 'Harts Hotel' (local architect Julian Marsh of Marsh Grochowski). Our congratulations go to the architects and their clients.

We have heard from the Twentieth Century Society that the owner of a listed building in Surrey was supported by local councillors in the demolition of his listed building on the grounds that to refuse permission would be to infringe his Human Rights. This decision is now, thank goodness, to be the subject of a public inquiry. The implications could be horrendous for all our listed buildings and historic environments. Please continue to be vigilant, and let us know if you have cause for concern regarding your own neighbourhood or the city generally. And also, of course, let us know of any causes for praise and celebration.

Hilary Silvester Chairman

#### MARK OF THE MONTH January – April 2004

Recent recipients of the Society's Mark of the Month commendation have been:

JANUARY	Sustainable Research Building, School of the Built Environment
Client:	University of Nottingham
Architect:	David Short
FEBRUARY	Park Rock, Castle Boulevard
Client:	Braemore Properties Ltd
Architects:	Letts Wheeler Architecture and Design
MARCH	Portland Building Extensions and Creation of the Atrium
Client:	University of Nottingham
Architects:	Hopkins Architects
APRIL	The 'Axel' Sculpture, Bolero Square, Ice Arena
Client:	Nottingham City Council
Artists:	Wolfgang and Heron

#### "Trent River Park"

One of my personal hobbyhorses is I believe that in Nottingham we have failed to realise the potential of the River Trent, as it flows through the conurbation. In my view Nottingham can learn much from other Cities in relation to how they have harnessed the potential of their rivers. Look at Newcastle with the stunning Millennium Bridge, Baltic Mill Gallery and leisure developments transforming the previously run down banks of the Tyne. Cities like Newcastle and Birmingham have shown how rivers and canals can become vehicles for civic pride, urban renewal, job creation, high quality environments.

Although in many parts of the Greater Nottingham conurbation the Trent is very attractive, in other areas there is restricted access to, along and across the river, a poor quality public realm and some rundown semi-derelict areas. There is an enormous opportunity to create a high quality urban river "park" at the heart of Nottingham, which can become a vehicle for physical regeneration, leisure, tourism, sport, recreation and environmental improvements. I would quickly point out however that I'm not suggesting that we should build on green open spaces on the river banks; there are in fact many brownfield sites bordering the Trent within Greater Nottingham which have significant scope for new leisure, employment, commercial and residential developments.

Key features of the Trent River Park concept could include: -

- The redevelopment of the Waterside, being pioneered by Nottingham Waterside Ltd, is potentially one of the largest and most significant regeneration projects in the region with potentially up to 4,000 new homes and £1.4 billion of Public and Private sector investment. This will be a major focal point of the Trent River Park bringing significant people to live and work in the area. A recent report has suggested that as the largest scale regeneration project in the region, Waterside could become an exemplar environmentally sustainable residential and employment quarter. The report authors argue that Waterside could be an iconic development and a national showcase for new forms of sustainable city living.

Other ideas which have been suggested for the Trent River Park area includes:-

- a proposed new interpretative "Sustainability centre" providing a showcase for the expertise of University of Nottingham
- Waterside public realm improvement
- An events piazza and high quality events programme

- High quality public art along the river banks
- Riverside footpath and cycle way improvements
- A pedestrian and cycle bridge link between Colwick Park and Holme Pierrepont
- Environmental Improvements to the Embankment
- Improved mooring facilities for leisure boats.

I would be the first to admit that there is nothing particularly new about the idea of making more of the River Trent as an amenity. However as a City we seem to have turned our backs on the river. The Embankment currently presents a fairly underwhelming experience in comparison to the days of Jesse Boot when the banks of the Trent were a primary leisure and recreational destination for the City's inhabitants. However if people are increasingly returning to live in our city they will expect access to good quality recreational and leisure amenities. Nottingham has the opportunity to create a major urban linear river "park" at the very heart of the City.

It is interesting to note that in major US Cities such as Chicago, investment in public parks is now a key policy priority. Having succeeded in bringing people back to live in downtown neighbourhoods US City Mayors are finding themselves being lobbied to provide high quality well maintained parks and public open spaces in close proximity to down town residential developments.

So why have we not made the most of the Trent in the city?

The City Council some years ago produced a series of proposals focused around the river entitled the "Emerald Necklace" but unfortunately their bid for lottery funding was unsuccessful and the project lost momentum.

More recently attempts have been made to secure public funding. However Government funding, channelled through vehicles such as the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA), is directed towards stimulating economic development resulting in measurable job creation and business growth. Consequently improvements to the public realm are currently fairly low down the priority list when it comes to public investment targeted at economic development. I would argue however that the two go hand in hand; if we are trying to attract people to live, work and invest in the City then quality of life issues such as the environment are key determining factors.

I feel however that this is an idea whose time will eventually come.

Nottingham Development Enterprise (NDE), the business led regeneration agency, has spent a considerable amount of time developing the concept of a Trent River Park in conjunction with the various Local Authorities. NDE was formed back in 1987. Although NDE tend to be associated with the trams – an idea that came from and was originally pioneered by NDE, the organisation has in fact been involved in developing a wide range of regeneration, transport and environmental projects. More recently NDE has over a number of years lobbied the City Council regarding an international design competition for the Old Market Square. NDE has been instrumental in helping to raise the funding to cover the Design competition while also assisting in the Project management of the competition process.

NDE's aim is to make Nottingham a better place to live and work by acting as a catalyst, promoting new approaches to transport and regeneration and influencing the local agenda via demonstration "seeing is believing" projects. NDE is a unique "home grown" not for profit making organisation on whose board are represented the major Companies in the City, the local authorities, University and Voluntary Sector.

A substantial amount of work has already been undertaken by NDE to develop the Trent River Park concept and to get it on the local agenda. However for the project to move forward it needs the backing of a wide range of public and private sector organisations and the people of Nottingham. Without such vision and support we will not realise the enormous potential offered by the River Trent corridor as an area that is attractive to investors and visitors, as well as an amenity for the local community.

Neil Horsley  
Nottingham Development Enterprise

#### PARKING FOR SOCIETY MEETINGS

A suggestion has come from Society member Peter Fillingham about parking for our evening meetings at the Friends' Meeting House. There is parking available at the Talbot Street car park for £2.

## HYMERS COLLEGE JUNIOR SCHOOL SCIENCE LABORATORY

### THE BEQUEST OF MR RAYMOND BANKS

A new Junior School for Hymers College in Hull was officially opened by Sir Peter Williams CBE, F.R.Eng, F.R.S. on 30 September 2003. Sir Peter attended Hymers College before going up to Cambridge University and Imperial College to train as a physicist. He went on to work in science-based industries. Sir Peter has been Chairman of the Trustees of the Science Museum, and is currently Chairman of the United Kingdom's Engineering and Technology Board and President of the British Association.

Sir Peter's attendance was entirely appropriate in view of the opening at the same time of a new Science Laboratory in the Junior School. This was funded by the most generous bequest of Raymond Banks, who attended Hymers College from 1927-1934. His legacy has enabled the school's architects to design a science laboratory specifically for the primary school age range. The room has proved to be a tremendous success with teachers and pupils alike. It is a spacious area with ample storage facilities, and is equipped with the very latest technology of an interactive whiteboard. The new laboratory has put pupils at the forefront of what can be offered to their age group in the teaching of science.

There is a plaque commemorating Raymond Banks's bequest to the school, but his greatest satisfaction would surely have been to see for himself the faces of the happy, bright young children whose understanding and enjoyment of his own subject will also be his legacy.

Geoffrey Noble  
Bursar, Hymers College



Ray Banks' Bequest  
Hymers College Hull

## TWENTY YEARS AFTER

(On Monday July 2 1984 the Nottingham architect Allan Mulcahy was invited by the *Evening Post* to give his personal view on local architecture. The banner headline to his revelations was 'The good, the bad and the ugly.' The reason for Allan's invitation was the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Royal Institute of British Architects by an exhibition *ACTS OF ARCHITECTURE* at Nottingham Playhouse. I came across my yellowing copy of the article and realising the convenience of the date asked Allan for his current thoughts on Nottingham's architecture.)

Is twenty years a long time? Although it is quite a chunk out of a human lifespan it covers a very small period in the evolution of this city. My feature article in the *Evening Post* in July 1984 tried to draw attention to some built aspects of the city, which, in my view, either contributed to its character or adversely affected it. Reviewing the content of the article after twenty years it is interesting to look at the extent of change and try and understand the process of change.

I presented a light-hearted pop review of the good and bad buildings and spaces of Nottingham, the majority of which still exist. However, in the bad category, the former General Hospital has now been partly replaced or partly converted for predominately residential use and the Broadmarsh Centre looks as if it is to be replaced with shopping and amenity facilities that will relate to city rather than rebuff it. It is interesting to reflect that the expansion of the General Hospital and the Broadmarsh and Victoria Centre megaliths were considered by many to be appropriate and beneficial to the city at the time of their inception. Their procurement was prompted by the perceived needs at the time with little concern, recognition or understanding of the impact that such large scale developments would have on the grain of a city, consisting of predominately small buildings on small plots, which had evolved with comparatively little disruption over the previous 500 years,

It is also interesting to consider that the replacement of the Old Exchange building with the present Council House in the 1920s was undertaken and acclaimed with civic pride and a sense of progress. Do you think the future replacement of the existing Council House will be deemed to be acceptable as a positive and necessary change in a developing world or are we becoming entrenched in our own time and in the past?

The current move to remodel the Old Market Square is a frustrated reaction to the limitations imposed on the use of this most vital city centre public space by

the formal and inflexible planning of the area in association with the design of the Council House. This is a further example of the need to continually replace or renew previously popular or fashionable interventions with buildings and spaces that reflect and serve current needs. Nottingham will be continually subjected to change and the future success of this will be affected by the way we respond. That is why the Old Market Square project is so important and encouraging. It represents a city adapting to new times and needs. In my view, one of the six short listed design teams, Hopkins Architects, has come closest to identifying and addressing the real issues.

This is the heart of the city, a pulsating core of life and diverse activities. The setting should be simple, open and free of any permanent features that may reduce the flexible use of the space or conflict with the character or potential of a wide range of events. The surrounding buildings form the space and the people and activities within the space will create the timeless vitality.

Twenty years ago I identified a number of buildings and spaces, both old and new, which I felt were of particular importance architecturally to the city. All of these are still prominent; some are well used and some less so. Since then I have admired the imaginative way in which the large scale development for the Inland Revenue has been sensitively located on its city centre site; have appreciated the enhanced access to canal sides and Highfield Park and lake; lamented the lack of adventure in the bland, pastiche design of many recent city centre buildings; sighed at the lost opportunity on the ice stadium site, apart from the alien beauty of the recent 'Axel' public art installation; applauded the creative reuse of many redundant city centre buildings including the Adams Building and many for residential use; welcomed both Universities' patronage in procuring better buildings including the Jubilee Campus, D.H. Lawrence Pavilion etc; despair at the ever growing mediocrity and visual blight of new build housing schemes; impatient at the delay in treating Wollaton Hall and Park with the respect it deserves; excited by the boldness of Capital One, looking forward to the regeneration opportunities in the Waterside and Eastside initiatives but concerned at the lack of effective control over harmful changes in conservation areas. Although conservation areas were established to protect areas of particular architectural or historic interest in the city many are now losing their distinctiveness because of development pressures and innumerable alterations. This situation seems to be aggravated by insufficient management and control due to limited resources in the City Development Department. The future of the city's conservation areas is now an issue that needs to be confronted. Do we want to keep them, is it an outdated concept or do they contribute as distinctive parts of the city's vernacular? It seemed

that creating a conservation area would ring fence and protect its values. In my view, this is just not the case and a rapid review of the current situation is urgently needed.

Our city centre is bridging the humanity 'gap'. For years the first daily urban experience of many commuters was the inside of a concrete multi-storey car park. Now pedestrians are retaking many parts of the centre that had been dominated by vehicles. Transit systems are being reviewed, the spaces between buildings are cleaner, healthier and more distinct allowing greater opportunities to display, graze, window shop or just sit and watch the world go by. The city centre is, once again, becoming the communal facility it used to be. Before too long will we have to consider the effects of climate change, should we be looking for self-cleaning buildings, will building security create further barriers? Will the city grow? Is the centre big enough, will building density need to increase and if so how do we deal with this? Are taller buildings inevitable and should we be considering accessible and inviting underground urban spaces? Technological advances are breathtaking in contrast with the way the physical fabric of the city has been, and continues to be, assembled. This is going to change and making buildings will become more like making motor cars with similar regular model updates. Sophisticated urban infrastructures will provide arterial links and support to prefabricated city zones that are continually reforming and renewing. Will there be room for sentiment or will this process be gradual enough to allow current generations to assimilate change comfortably? If this is the future conservation issues will become irrelevant. Is this a concept we might be prepared to recognise and understand or is it so abstract, alien or distant to have little influence on the way we might consider these matters?

Allan Mulcahy (March 2004)

## STAN SAUNDERS

It is with deep sadness we announce the passing away of Stan Saunders on December 19<sup>th</sup> 2003 aged 80 years, Stan was a Civic Society Guide for over a quarter of a century, leading the Society's tours of the Shire Hall, the Council House and the Heritage Walks around the different parts of historic Nottingham until a couple of years ago. He was also one of the guides for Mortimer's Hole and David's Dungeon. He was a mine of information and a most interesting person to talk to. He taught me a great deal about the Caves of Nottingham and he will be sadly missed by one and all.

Our thoughts are with Joan and his family at this moment in time.

Ken Roberts

## ARCHITECTURAL VANDALISM

There may not appear to be initially an obvious connection between Joseph Losey's 1979 film of *Don Giovanni* and the most wanton example in the Nottingham area of architectural vandalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However let us examine a little further. In the film the location of Don Giovanni's house is the Villa Rotonda (1566-70) just outside Vicenza and that of Donna Anna's is the Villa Caldogno (1548-9) about 3 miles from Vicenza. Both villas were designed by the maestro Andrea Palladio. The architectural vandalism was the destruction of Nuthall Temple at the end of July and into August 1929.

Nuthall Temple was in a league of its own. It was one of just four English villas modelled on Palladio's Villa Rotonda in Vicenza and was considered to be the most liveable of the four. Thus a viewing of Losey's film - for its architecture rather than for its music and spectacle - will give an idea of this lost gem of a house.

Nuthall Temple was built for Sir Charles Sedley between 1754-7 by Thomas Wright, astronomer, architect and landscape gardener. Sedley was a great horse racing enthusiast and it was said that the house was built on the proceeds of his betting. He was M.P. for Nottingham in 1747, 1748 and after a period of retirement again in 1774. He died, aged 58, in 1778.

The most distinguished external feature of the house was the centrally placed flattened cupola without any finial. In the front, a balustraded double flight of steps led up to a recessed entrance beneath a lofty portico with six Corinthian capped pillars. A decorated triangular pediment surmounted the portico. The windows at the front were rusticated and pedimented. The feature of the rear elevation was a central apse with a small Venetian window above. A large Venetian window was on each side of the apse.

The stunning interior Rococo style stuccowork was by Thomas Roberts of Oxford, which was assessed by Joseph Else, Principal of the Nottingham School of Art, early in July 1929 as "certainly one of the finest examples of plaster ornamentation in the country." Much of this stuccowork was in the building's chief architectural feature, the great octagonal hall with its coffered dome. Here there was a gallery with very beautiful ironwork. In the centre of each of the eight walls, between the gallery and the dome, there was a medallion of one of Aesop's Fables.

Among the features of the garden there was a Gothic summerhouse, a yew walk, and a sizeable lake fed by a brook whose steep banks provided small water gardens.

After Sedley's death the house passed through marriage to the Vernon family. They sold the house in 1819 to the Holden family. It was a descendant of the Holden family who put "the mansion nobody wants" on the market with its 300 acres of beautifully timbered grounds and parklands in 1927. No potential purchasers came forward.

Several well-known people made some effort, mainly verbal or written, to save the building. Morley Horder, the architect of the recently opened University College buildings at Highfields, in a letter to Joseph Else, Principal of the Nottingham School of Art, begged him to use any influence he had to "save from destruction the unique example of architecture known as Nuthall Temple." Horder "hoped that the people who had just beautified their great city by the erection of magnificent civic hall in its midst would do their best to save from demolition the gem on its outskirts." In a letter of 4 July to a local newspaper, Else conceded defeat, he conclude "The Temple alas! is no more. We have allowed an unique opportunity to slip past..."

The parkland and gardens were sold in lots at auction in mid April 1929 and then the sale of the fabric of the house followed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May. Over the two days 528 lots were sold, including old oak floors, one 26ft 6in x 19ft for £15, a "Herald" double oven cooking range £1.25, a handsome massive stone staircase in situ £50, and two pairs of carved stone female sphinxes, £260 and £300. The valuable Rococo work in the hall was in the end reserved from the sale. The demolition contractors J.H. Brough and Co. of Beeston purchased the main shell of the Temple for £800, and were committed to clear the site within nine months.

Even the demolition contractors appeared to be aware of the special nature of the building. Interviewed by the Nottingham Journal, a member of the firm was quoted: "The valuable section of Nuthall Temple should be retained for the public without doubt. The place can be saved if some public-spirited gentleman will come forward. The exquisite interior work is well worth it."

At 2.30pm on 31 July 1929 the "destruction of a local landmark" began when Mr. Brough and a Nottingham Evening News reporter set fire to the building by throwing burning brands into the petrol and paraffin soaked wooden



which had been erected, as under pinning, in the foundations of the west wing. Before long some 400 tons of masonry came crashing down. "Impressive Scene" said the newspaper's headline, adding in the text "It was a wonderful sight." This "novel demolition plan" achieved in minutes what would have taken the pick and shovel method a month or two! Much of the rest of the structure, an estimated further 500 tons, was demolished in the same way in the following month.

The octagonal tower, with its rococo work, was then still standing. At some unrecorded occasion this plasterwork was carefully removed, expert advice having previously been sought, and put into store. In reappeared in 1938 in *Templewood*, a villa in a Palladian style, at Northrepps, Norfolk designed for Lord Templewood by the architects Seely and Paget.

What was left of Nuthall Temple, whether it was a residual stump of the house or the remains of the summerhouse is not clear, was finally demolished in 1966, prior to the construction of the M1 motorway. However there is talk that a gate pillar survives close to the Three Ponds public house. The location of the house by comparing O.S. maps would seem to be just a little north of the area where the A 610 crosses the motorway.

Ken Brand

So the 31<sup>st</sup> July this year will mark the 75th anniversary of the destruction of Nuthall Temple.

A shorter, different, version of this article appeared in the *Evening Post*  
16 November 2003



Nuthall Temple (1754-7) Architect: Thomas Wright

## MARK OF THE MONTH JANUARY 2004

### The New Sustainable Research Building The School of the Built Environment, The University of Nottingham

The brief was for a 3-storey 1300m<sup>2</sup> building, which provided the following accommodation:

- studio space on the first and second floor levels
- ground floor research and laboratory space
- a working flat roof research area
- offices for the Institute of Sustainable Energy Technology
- a new 150 seat lecture room
- ancillary toilet and storage space

A building budget, (excluding VAT, loose furniture and fees), of £1.6 million was jointly funded by a SRIF bid and the University of Nottingham.

#### Design:

A demanding budget for a building with a high provision of laboratory space, meant that from the outset the building form had to be both efficient and disciplined. Simple interlocking rectangular volumes were therefore established early on, with the dimensions of the body of the building being derived from a single studio working space. These were then translated into exact brick dimensions.

Placed within a mature landscape setting, the building encloses the third side of a 'lawned' court. An existing brick Victorian garden wall is 'continued' and used to wrap and set out the building at ground level before marking the entrance(s) with full height flourishes. Deliberately kept light and open in nature, the building allows the mature landscape not only to be seen through but also to pass by the building. The main body is predominantly glazed at first and second floor levels offering a real sense of contact with the landscape both near and far. The building also constantly and subtly changes in appearance as the glass continuously plays with reflections and the changing light cast by the sky and filtered by the trees. At night the building really comes alive. The main entrance is approached from under the canopy of trees passing by the 'headless statue' and then from under the canopy of the building. The first flight of stairs is deliberately kept heavy and set between concrete walls. A corner window on the second quarter landing allows a glance back to the statue. The access

between floors then moves to the glazed façade of the building and a 'light' steel and timber stair that flies within the triple height entrance hall towards to the light and views.

Made with glass, brick, steel and concrete the building's finishes internally are predominantly fairfaced. Large timber framed windows have been detailed so that they seem to float or hang within the glass wall.

#### Sustainability:

The selection of materials for the building was driven by a desire to resource these within 35 miles of the site wherever possible. The following list shows what was achieved:

MATERIALS	NOTES	DISTANCE (MILES)
Excavated material	Reused on site or relocated on the University Campus	Nil
Hardcore fill	Reused from demolished buildings on the University Campus	Nil
Insitu concrete	Batched and mixed Dunkirk, Nottingham	1
Brick	Ibstock, Leicester	26
Pre-cast concrete planks	Sutton-in-Ashfield	19
Terracotta tiles	Swadlincote, Derbyshire	26
Panablok panels	Mansfield	15
Lift installation	90% of lift British made and brought together in Loughborough	15
Glass	Supplier Leicester	26

In addition Larch was the main wood selected for use in the building. The Larch was sourced from a small estate on the Borders of Scotland.

The narrow plan allows for cross-ventilation and daylight. However due to the proximity of the building to the tree line, this has been supplemented by 8 light and ventilation wells finishing above roof level as glass lanterns.

The use of massive construction allows the diurnal internal temperatures to be controlled and combined with an under floor heating system which serves the main spaces.

The rainwater from the roof is recycled back into the building and used for flushing the toilets.

Solar thermal and photovoltaic panels are to be fixed to the roof structure shortly and will be used to supplement the building's thermal and electrical requirements. This strategy is assisted by the use of two gas fired combined heat and power units.

The building has an indicative BREEAM rating of excellent and the thermal performance of the envelope exceeds the requirements of the current building regulations.

The building is designed to act as a test bed for new and renewable technologies. The flat roof serves as a test platform for solar systems and sections of the façade can be removed and replaced with innovative envelope systems. The building and its occupants serve as a means of operating new technologies under realistic operating conditions and obtaining user feedback on their performance.

#### Credits:

Architects: David Short Associates

with Richard Havenhand and Gregg Wilson

Client: Estates Office, The University of Nottingham

Structural Engineer: Price & Myers (Nottingham)

Quantity Surveyor & Planning Supervisor: WT Partnership (Nottingham)

Mechanical & Electrical Consultants: DH Squire Consulting Engineers

Sustainability: The School of the Built Environment,

The University of Nottingham

Main Contractor: Loach Construction

David Short, David Short Associates

#### MARK OF THE MONTH APRIL 2004

#### AXEL - THE BOLERO SQUARE SCULPTURE, ICE ARENA, NOTTINGHAM

The Sculpture responds to the multi - functional concept of the arena, the building design, the square and its surroundings. Bolero Square has a strongly horizontal emphasis. The sculpture is a tall counterbalance to this and has adequate space around it to stand out against existing vertical structures. Freestanding, it has a scale comparable with the Arena's central structure.

Height and elegance combine to create a striking symbol for the Arena that does not over dominate its context. The sculpture's height, form and tonality contrast definitively with other materials in the square presenting a bold, dramatic and striking landmark like Eros at Piccadilly or the Sky Mirror at Nottingham Playhouse.

The materials used give distinct identity to the sculpture but combine and contrast sympathetically with those of existing structures. Materials, colour and tone are drawn from the reflective properties of ice, skate blades and patination on the ice surface. To enhance movement, artificial and natural lighting are used to capture and produce changing effects throughout the day and night.

The sculpture adds another key point City attraction for Arena users and City visitors. It is immediately experienced by Arena users inside and outside the building, by those walking or driving by and may also be viewed at different levels and from perspectives from Lace Market properties. Glimpses are caught from the Bellar Gate and Stoney Street approaches and the approach perspectives of London Road Island and Hockley.

#### CONCEPT, MEANING AND PUBLIC RECOGNITION

The sculpture evolved from a definitive aspect of skating: the turn on the ice. This can be in the spin of the ice dancer; the curving shifts of the hockey player, the striding turns of the speed skater or simply the continual procession of skating around the rink.

Also reflected is the way the body enwraps itself in movement on ice. The ways limbs extend, fold, curve and elegantly interweave as internal and external shapes. In turn, the surface of the sculpture reflects the patination of the ice as a result of impact of these physical movements on its surface.

The form of the sculpture evolves from this human movement on ice to the abstract symbol of the blade itself on ice. Materials consolidate the way in which light and movement join to fully extend the sculpture's symbolism.

The public can relate to the sculpture through form, movement and mood created through lighting; these link with visual memories of ice sport participants and audiences.

WOLFGANG AND HERON

#### T.C. HINE and the TOWN HALL QUESTION

Few people in Nottingham in the mid nineteenth century were more convinced of the need for the town to commission a new town hall, if only as a matter of self respect, than the architect Thomas Chambers Hine (1813-99). Hine would have been well aware of the emerging northern towns that erected their prestigious town halls in the period 1850-75; these included Leeds (1853-8), Halifax (1859-62), Manchester (1867-77) and Bradford (1870-3).

Hine lived to see the building of the Guildhall (1887-8), which housed courts and headquarters for the Police and Fire Brigade. However, the Victorian town hall he so wanted was destined to be Cecil Howitt's neo-Baroque offering of the 1920s that was not completed until 1929, thirty years after Hine's death. In the piece that follows Hine starts to make known his feelings on the subject.

Tuesday 10 July 1855 was one of the great days in the life of Thomas Chambers Hine. On this day his Adams and Page lace warehouse was formally opened with great ceremony. With a frontage of 144 feet on Stoney Street and an overall depth of 100 feet towards St. Mary's Gate, this truly was a great building.

The opening was extensively covered in both the *Nottingham Review* and the *Nottingham Journal*; in the *Review* most of the speeches were printed verbatim. Hine expressed his relief at the completion of the work. "In the building of which we have this day met to celebrate the opening, and of which I have had the honour to be concerned as the architect, I have taken a very great interest, and for the last two and a half years it has occupied no inconsiderable share of my time and attention."

After referring briefly to the twelve warehouses he had erected in the town since 1851, Hine returned to his latest triumph. "The external appearance of the building has, as I fully expected it would, excited a considerable degree of criticism; but I am not willing to admit the force of those objections which are made to it on the ground of too much ornament being imparted to it. It has been said by some that it assumes too much importance for a lace warehouse, and that it might be taken more for a town hall or an exchange."

Warning to his theme Hine quickly went on the attack. "Is it not notorious that the public edifices of Nottingham are very much behind the age, and that they are inferior to those of nearly every other town of the same size in the kingdom Let us, for instance, examine our Town Hall<sup>1</sup> and Exchange as buildings of this nature are referred to, and what shall we find? Of the former perhaps we need

not say anything, as from the discussion it has given rise to, I am inclined to think it is already doomed; therefore, we will not abuse it in its old age. Let me ask of the latter, is it a building, which shows the commercial importance of a town like Nottingham? Standing as it does on perhaps the finest site, I was going to say in Europe, but certainly in England, I consider it a disgrace to us."

After dismissing in some detail the features of the façade of the Exchange, the architect reverted to his main theme. "I ask you gentlemen, if these are our public buildings may not the public, who are accustomed to regard them as such, be so habituated to inferior works, as to be unable to distinguish when a building is consistent with the purpose for which it is erected. I think you will gather from what I have said that my object has been to raise an edifice which shall be worthy of the town, of the important trade for which it is celebrated, and last, though not least, of the energetic and enterprising gentlemen of this firm."

Hine was subsequently challenged by the Town Improvement Committee to produce designs for the "Improvement of Nottingham Market Place". By 1857 he provided the Committee with a large drawing showing a new town hall somewhat in the manner of a large French chateau. In front was a market place with its central area lowered, thus allowing arcades to be set underneath the surrounding roadways. A fountain was at the centre and balustrade parapets and sweeping steps were at the edges. The original drawing survives and is stored at Brewhouse Yard.

Hine recalled later: "shortly afterwards the question of new municipal buildings began to be discussed, and in the same friendly spirit as before I was requested by the then Improvement Committee to furnish plans for these buildings, in other words, to give them a design for a back to the Exchange front as exhibited in the design which I had the honour of submitting to the Corporation in the first instance, and I believe that the plans for these buildings will be found somewhere in the Public Offices." Nevertheless there was no action on the part of the Council then and for some time ahead.

Writing later in his eclectic compendium of Nottingham history *Nottingham Its Castle, A Military Fortress, A Royal Palace, A Ducal Mansion, A Blackened Ruin, a Museum and Gallery of Art*, published in 1876, Hine was more specific about the Exchange.

"In 1724, the Exchange, in the Market Place, was erected from the designs of Mr Marmaduke Pennel, the Mayor. This edifice, though of modest red brick exterior, had the merit of being real and good of its kind, and with its colonnaded piazza, its statue niches<sup>2</sup>, and other stone accessories, would at

any rate bear the impress of a public building. Simple as was its design, it was however found to be too much in advance of the age when "George the Third was King" to be appreciated; for towards the middle of that monarch's reign [1815] it had to give way to the bald stuccoed shop windowed façade, which it now presents.<sup>3</sup>

"One conspicuous feature in the old Exchange was the wide piazza before named, and it is this colonnaded ambulatory noticed so frequently by old writers which distinguished our Market Place from all others."

The lack of a "modern" Town Hall in Nottingham and the reluctance of the Council to even contemplate doing something to rectify the situation was a constant source of irritation for Hine. Not until 7 April 1873 was a committee was appointed "to enquire into the propriety of the Council taking steps for the erection of suitable buildings for the public requirements of the Borough." Then early in 1875 Hine's friend the Borough Engineer, Marriott Ogle Tarbotton, who had been exploring possible sites for a new town hall, presented the results of his work in a report to the Public Buildings Committee of the Corporation of Nottingham.

Ken Brand

(Tarbotton's suggestions and the sequence of events leading to the erection of the Guildhall in Burton Street will be recounted in a future Newsletter)

Notes:

1. No doubt Hine was aware that on 18 November 1850 the Council appointed a committee to consider "the Cost of providing another place for public business in case the Council should deem it expedient to sell the Town Hall." Then on 2 May 1853 a committee was appointed "consider the Eligibility of and the best plan for enlarging the Council Chamber." An amendment to consider a new Guildhall was not carried. The Town Hall and the Guildhall mentioned refer to the same building at Weekday Cross. The Council Chamber was there and continued in use there until, through the Borough Extension Act of 1877, the number of councillors was increased (from 56 to 64) and an enlarged chamber was needed.
2. The niches were intended for the statues of George I and the Prince and Princess of Wales but were left "untenanted."
3. Of this alteration Hine noted pointedly: "AD 1815 The Exchange front in the Market Place remodelled – the combined effort of two Archt<sup>ts</sup>., Adams and Whyatt!" (sic).

Cecil Howitt's Council House celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday this year – 2004.

## **VICTORIA PARK and VICTORIAN NOTTINGHAM (ii)** **From Eysore to Grass Lawns and Shrubberies**

In 1887 a new landscape gardener became responsible for the maintenance of Bath Street Cricket Ground. (An official title for it seems never to have been fixed upon, and I have repeated the variations of name as they occur in each report or minute.) Hitherto Frettingham & Son, of Bromley House, Angel Row, had looked after all public walks and recreation grounds in the Borough. The number of these ever increasing, however, it was decided to split the job into three contracts. The one, which included Bath Street, went to W. Bardill of Stapleford for an annual fee of £369. Frettingsams retained responsibility for what must have been the most prestigious and challenging job of all, the Arboretum, and were paid £750 for it.

The state of the Bath Street ground continued to cause concern, and in April 1888 the Borough Engineer was again requested to report on its condition, and recommend what should be done. Early in the following year he was instructed to go ahead with improvements to the drainage, for which £120 had been earmarked. In March 1889, though, when he laid his plan before the Public Parks Committee, it was decided that consideration of it should be held over. A further postponement was agreed upon in July, and the decade ended with the feeling that all was far from satisfactory at Bath Street, and that something quite radical was needed to rectify matters.

The 1890s found the same old troubles besetting the recreation ground. In February 1890 the Watch Committee were asked to ensure that the police gave special attention to the way games were played there, in view of complaints 'from inhabitants of neighbouring houses'. Bardill, meanwhile, was ordered to clean out the gullies adjoining the police lodge after every heavy fall of rain. Surface drainage was clearly still a serious problem, and in 1891 the Public Parks Committee once more addressed the question of major improvements. Interested local people were invited to submit suggestions about what was needed, and in June Councillors Sharkey (who led the campaign for a modernized park) and Gregory presented to the Committee a memorial signed by 557 residents, begging that consideration be given to improving the site.

After an official inspection, the Public Parks Committee yet again threw the problem at the Borough Engineer, who was directed to prepare a plan and estimate for levelling and draining. This was quickly made ready, and laid before the Committee in July; they, however, noting that the cost would amount to £2,300, immediately stated that such expenditure was out of the question. At a full meeting of the Borough Council on October 5 1891,

Councillor Sharkey, seconded by Councillor Gregory, moved a resolution that: 'It is desirable that a scheme should be devised for rendering the Bath Street Recreation Ground better available for the purposes of recreation, and that a Committee be appointed to devise such scheme, and to report to the Council'. After more official passing of this hot potato, the hapless Engineer was once more bidden to prepare a report on the levelling and draining of the ground, asphaltting it after levelling, and planting trees and shrubs along the north and west boundaries. At long last Arthur Brown's labours were not to be in vain, and over the following year a redesigned park began to take shape.

In February 1892 the Public Parks Committee were shown four schemes for an improved ground. One of these, submitted by local ward representatives, suggested that the ground be lowered at one end by 7 or 8 feet, to reduce the fall in the surface level. A Bulwell stonewall would be built along the north and west boundaries, and an efficient system of drains put in to prevent water washing sand into adjacent streets during heavy rainfall. The cost of such improvements was estimated at about £2,500. Two other schemes were less expensive; one was for the whole ground to be roughly levelled and then asphalted, at a cost of some £2,100, while another suggested that a plantation be formed at the north and west sides of the ground, after the sandstone rock had been hacked up: this was expected to involve an outlay of around £1,000. All three of these schemes were, however, rejected in favour of the Borough Engineer's plan. Brown proposed a wide shrubbery along the north and west sides, ornamental beds and walks in the turfed interior of the ground, and a large asphalted children's play space, furnished with swings, near the Bath Street entrance. It was calculated that these works would cost £3,000. The Committee resolved to recommend Brown's scheme to the full Town Council, believing that this was the only effectual way forward if the Council was 'desirous of making any permanent improvement in this ground'.

The Council agreed with this view, and its Finance Committee sought the consent of the Local Government Board for a loan to pay for the works. The Borough Engineer again discussed his plans with the Public Parks Committee, who found that some last minute alterations were needed. They decided to enclose the whole ground by an iron palisade fence, with entrance gates, which would be closed at night. In the light of this decision, a footway was ordered to be made across the ground, next to the burial ground wall; this was to be kept open at night for the convenience 'of persons desirous of crossing the ground' to get home by the shortest route. Just as the Engineer was instructed to obtain tenders from likely contractors, the pressing need for new works was emphasised by a letter from the solicitors Wells and Hind, on behalf of

owners of adjacent properties, complaining yet again about the condition of Bath Street Recreation Ground.

The tenders came in, with three separate contracts to be awarded. The lowest estimate for the stonework was £203.7.0d by James Thomas of Park Wharf, Lenton Boulevard (now Castle Boulevard). Raybould & Co. of Workington submitted the lowest bid for the ironwork contract; their figure of £360 undercut several well-known local firms, including Walter Danks, Thomas Danks, and G.R.Cowen & Co. of the nearby Beck Works. The Public Parks Committee seem, however, to have smelt a rat, offering the job to Rayboulds subject to satisfactory evidence of their ability to carry out the work in 'a good and workmanlike manner'. If this were not forthcoming, W.H.Raynor of London Road, Nottingham, who had sent in a tender of £458.18.8d, would be given the contract. As for the third contract, for gardeners' work, William Bardill, the man in possession, submitted a tender of £1,361.2.4d. This was substantially less than that of Thomas Toop of Hucknall Road, Carrington, who priced the job at £1,608. The following month, December 1892, saw a letter from Rayboulds, declining to carry out the work 'as per tender', and asking if they might submit a revised one. The Committee would have none of this, and resolved to accept Raynor's tender instead. Mr J.H.Bardill meanwhile informed the Committee that his father had died, requesting that, as executor, he be allowed to carry out the gardening contract.

Inevitably, it now seems, there was further delay in starting the ground improvements. This was caused by the Local Government Board withholding consent to the necessary loan. The Town Clerk wrote to the Board, urging the speedy granting of this consent, in order that work might be begun during the winter, and so help to find employment for a number of the men currently out of work in Nottingham. Indeed, a deputation from Nottingham United Trades Council attended the Committee meeting on February 20 1893, urging that the town's unemployment plight demanded a prompt start to the project. The Town Clerk had by now received a telegram from the Board, indicating that consent for the loan would be given in due course, and it was resolved that, under these circumstances, the job was to proceed at once.

Work went ahead throughout the year, Arthur Brown making necessary amendments as it progressed; a shrubbery alongside the Bath Street boundary: the swings resited in a more convenient position; and strong wire netting fixed to the iron boundary fences. It is not easy to imagine, at this remove in time, just how much levelling of the ground was needed to turn it into what we know as Victoria Park. Even now, when one instinctively thinks of the park as a level

expanse of ground, it comes as a surprise to look at the site, and realise how much of a slope still exists. What conditions were like before levelling and draining can only be conjectured. In spite of everything, however, they must have been good enough for the playing of cricket matches for half a century.

Early in 1894, it was decided that the remodelled Bath Street Recreation Ground was to be opened during the first week in May, and Thursday the 3rd was later fixed upon. What subsequently caused the event to be moved to Monday the 7th, we do not know, but the local press of May 8 1894 was at last able to report the opening of the new park.

The *Nottingham Daily Guardian* was fulsome in its praise: 'The transformation of the old Bath Street playground, which had for years been an eyesore to that particular portion of the Sneinton district, into tastefully laid out walks, grass lawns, and shrubberies, provision also being made for the children in the matter of swings and other means of recreation, and which is henceforth to be known by the title of 'The Victoria Park', is one that cannot fail to meet with the fullest appreciation, not only of the residents in the immediate neighbourhood, but of the town generally'. The *Guardian* went on to describe how the landscaping work, carried out by Bardills to Arthur Brown's designs, would be a most acceptable improvement to the town's amenities. As usual on such occasions, there was a numerous attendance of Borough notables. Not only was the Mayor present, but others on hand included Alderman Lambert, chairman of the Public Parks Committee, and a dozen members of the Town Council. John Sharkey, who had both done much to press for the improvements to the recreation ground, was also among those invited.

Mr Lambert recalled that the land had been allotted to the Corporation as a playground in the 1845 Enclosure Act, but pointed out that so much use had been made of it that it soon became totally bare, not a single blade of grass surviving. He paid tribute to Mr Sharkey, who, he said, deserved the credit for promoting the improvement scheme while a member of the Town Council. Sharkey, a wine merchant, might well have reflected that his diligence on behalf of the community had done him precious little good, he having been defeated by a Conservative opponent in the 1893 election for Byron Ward. Sharkey's fellow Liberal, F. W. Gregory, had, by contrast, been returned unopposed in 1892; Gregory was a pawnbroker and clothier of St Ann's Well Road and Long Row.

The Mayor, greeted with applause, spoke next; saying how pleased he was that this occasion should fall within his year of office. Alderman Pullman observed that he had known the area intimately for many years, and had always felt

that improvements were required at the recreation ground. He congratulated all concerned in the remodelling, and declared the ground open, naming it Victoria Park.

The *Evening News* added a few extra details. The ceremony had begun with members of the Corporation assembling outside the main entrance at half past three, and in his speech Alderman Lambert had expressed the opinion that the £3,000 expended on the improvements was money well spent. 'He hoped the people in the neighbourhood would value the new ground and prevent damage being done, and that order would be maintained... The inhabitants of the neighbourhood ought to be thankful to Mr Sharkey for the persistence with which he had advocated the laying out of the ground'. The Mayor added his own appreciation of John Sharkey, 'for the interest he had taken in the welfare of that part of the town', and hoped that people 'would derive considerable benefit from the improvement'.

The *Evening News* report imparted an air of excitement to the proceedings; 'A very large crowd, numbering several thousand persons, awaited the opening of the gates with evident interest, and as soon as the gates had been thrown open the grounds were thronged, the younger people making immediately for the swings which were kept going all night.' It is likely that the authorities had been concerned about possible unruliness at the opening, but the occasion passed without mishap, the *Evening Post* recording that the police arrangements were 'admirably carried out by Chief Superintendent Lamb'.

Stephen Best

(To be concluded in the next Newsletter)



Victoria Park  
(O.S. Map 1901)

## TOWN PLANNING 1927

On 5 January 1925 the Nottingham City Council, through their Estates Committee, after a second reading belatedly decided to replace its old shabby Exchange building with a new civic hall designed by its Housing Architect, T. Cecil Howitt. Howitt's original design was for a rather splendid shopping arcade; fully open east west as well as the familiar north south. Subsequently, after some severe reservations, his proposal was altered to include extensive council accommodation at the western end facing onto the Market Place, thus closing that opening. The plan of the shopping arcade changed from a cross to a T shape. In due course, after the demolition of the old Exchange, which mainly dated from 1724, the foundation stone of the new building was laid on 17 March 1927.

It was soon obvious that the existing Market Place with its 'conglomeration of unsightly' heavy wooden canvas covered stalls and attendant litter would not provide a suitable approach to the new building. On the 4 July 1927, the Council adopted a recommendation from the General Purposes Committee to move the Market to a site, owned by the Council, on King Edward Street.

Various proposals were suggested for the use of the Market Place. There was some vague consultation with local interest groups and societies. From stallholders and market traders there was considerable hostility at the loss of a Nottingham institution stretching back over 800 years. In the end, perhaps inevitably and without competition, the task of redesigning the Market Place was given to Howitt who duly produced his Market Square - before long it became the people's popular 'Slab Square' and officially 'Old Market Square'.

Before the fate of the Market Place was finally entrusted to Howitt, the changes in the centre of Nottingham began to attract the nation's architectural press. Their feature writers started to evaluate these changes. One commentator was Charles Thornton.

Thornton writing for *Garden Cities and Town Planning* the journal of the Association of the same name produced an article 'Nottingham and its Market Place. A Plea for Town Planning Powers for Built-up Areas.' This appeared in the issue for October 1927. Correctly anticipating that the Council's future plans for the Market Place would largely ignore traffic flow he put forward the rather bold proposal to create a triangle of main roads close to the centre of the city, at the heart of which would be the new Market Place.

In order to achieve this Thornton wanted primarily a wide slightly curving road from the junction of Chapel Bar and Park Row down to the area where Carrington Street met Greyfriar Gate. One might observe he was anticipating Maid Marian Way by some 25 years! His second move was from the end of a widened Clumber Street and High Street take a new road in a curve across St Peter's Gate, behind St. Peter's Church to the bottom end of Low Pavement and so into Lister Gate. The third side of the triangle was Upper Parliament Street, which of course extended from Chapel bar to Clumber Street. The most controversial section of this network was widening High Street to the west, taking off part of the Exchange site! This had already been widened through the 1923 Nottingham Corporation Act.

Thornton did not even consider that his new main road would cut off the Castle from the centre of the city. Whilst enormous changes have taken place in the city and even more are promised in the wake of the arrival of the NET and the Big Wheel initiative, some of his passages are worth another airing. He started by describing the physical setting.

'The City of Nottingham claims to be "The Queen of the Midlands" and many facts can be put forward in justification of that claim. One of them is the possession, at its very centre and pivot, of the Great Market Place, reputed to be the largest open one in England comprising a space which, with the surrounding roadways, covers an area of upwards of five acres.

Nottingham is a town of awkward contours; it is built mainly on a range of low but fairly steep hills and is crossed on its southern side by a cliff which extends with breaks from Colwick Woods on the east by High Pavement to the Castle Rock and from there by Newcastle Terrace and ends by joining up with high ground near the top of Derby Road towards the west. Between High Pavement and the Castle Rock there is a wide break in the cliff through which the main thoroughfare from Trent Bridge and the South passes to the Market Place. The other chief roads out from the Market are probably near the line of old tracks, the direction of which would be partly determined by the suitability of the contours.

Nottingham is, thus, a spider web town with the Market as the central parlour, and the tendency is for traffic crossing the city to pass through it.'

Thornton continues by assessing the failings of the movement of traffic across the city centre at the time.

'The Market Place is somewhat irregular in shape, roughly, an oblong; its greater length east and west with an angular west end where it narrows down into Chapel Bar leading to Derby Road the main western thread of the web. The general result is a roughly triangular central traffic system. Traffic down Derby Road strikes the apex and passes by Chapel Bar into the Market Place and out by Wheeler Gate to Trent Bridge and the south; it can avoid the Market only by tortuous routes with awkward gradients or by giving the centre a very wide berth. It can pass to Sherwood, Mansfield and the North by Parliament Street without entering the Market and the width of Parliament Street is adequate. Traffic from North to South must, however pass through the Market and leave it by Wheeler Gate. There is the possibility of collateral communication by Clumber Street, but this is so narrow that it is dedicated to one-way traffic. A new way is to be opened up from the North to Trent Bridge but it is somewhat roundabout and will not, for many years, attract light traffic. It would be more satisfactory if it led to a new bridge over the river to relieve Trent Bridge of traffic to the East but the cost of a bridge would be very considerable.

The North East is fed from the North-Eastern corner of the triangle but to pass due east, the traffic must, perforce, make for the river crossing. The traffic system described fits the contours fairly well.'

He then puts forward his solution for easing the current and future traffic chaos.

'Though it is desirable for heavy traffic to skirt the City by ring roads, it would be a doubtful advantage to the City for traffic to do so generally and what is needed is a triangular system of roads that would permit trams and the main currents of traffic from all directions, to pass sufficiently near to the Market Place and to feed it without passing through it; and this could be achieved by widening Clumber Street which is a continuation of Mansfield Road, constructing a short new stretch to join with the Trent Bridge route (Carrington Street) and by constructing eventually a new road from the point where the Derby Road becomes Chapel Bar; also to join the Trent Bridge route. This would be a fairly large undertaking but it could be so directed that it would pass chiefly through back property, which would be improved. It could also be planned to take the gradient at a convenient angle.

'This road system would enclose a central triangular district at the heart of the City freed from main current traffic. This district could then evolve into a dignified and comparatively peaceful centre for shops. Public institutions should also be placed within or on the immediate outward verge of the charmed triangle.'



So a peaceful centre could be achieved without a mention of pedestrianisation!

'The carrying out of such a traffic system would raise the inevitable bogey of cost, but cost would also be saved as it would not then be necessary to widen any of the thoroughfares heading into the Market Place and the sense of enclosure of the Market would not be interfered with. It would be difficult to destroy this sense of enclosure in a space of such dimensions. At the same time, the widening of thoroughfares will tend to reduce that sense. At present, the vistas of roads leading up to it are suitably closed, the Northern and Western exits are uphill, and Wheeler Gate which goes slightly downhill to the South, is crescent-shaped. Friar Lane, which leads to the Castle entrance, has recently been widened and this has lessened the sense of enclosure just a little. Had it been straightened out on its left-hand side, this would not have occurred to the same extent. Moreover, the improvement would have been greater as the Castle Gateway would probably have formed a clear vista; from the Market Place.'

Eight years later the Council, through the Nottingham Corporation Act 1935, started to think in terms of street works which would allow traffic to by-pass the Old Market Square, as the new Market Place was now named. Among street improvements included in the Act and adopted by the Council in January 1936 was the widening of the narrow Granby Street, which went from Friar Lane to St. James' Street and the extension of Granby Street to Park Row.

Any further ideas on an inner ring road had to wait until after World War II to get near implementation. In October 1945 the Council resolved to promote a Bill, which would include powers to set out a new road from Castle Boulevard to the junction of Park Row, Upper Parliament Street and Chapel Bar - virtually Thornton's starting point of 1927. In November the newly elected Council confirmed the decision. However the Bill met with considerable hostility through the expected expense and unnecessary demolition involved. Although at the requisite public meeting to approve the promotion of the Bill the Lord Mayor declared a show of hands was in favour of it proceeding, the opposition disputed this. The Council accepted a petition for a referendum on the matter and in the resulting poll of ratepayers the Bill was rejected by 10,706 votes to 4,029.

The various surreptitious moves of the Council to acquire land for the eventual contentious setting out of the new road must wait to be recounted on another day. Could the loss of the Collin's Almshouses of 1709; the best almshouses

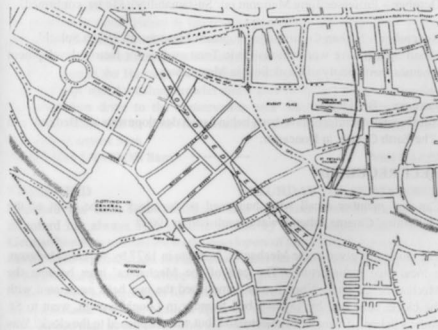
of the period in England, and Fothergill Watson's St. Peter's rectory have been avoided if more consideration been given at the planning stage? Sufficient to record here that the first stage of a narrower new road, named Maid Marian Way opened for traffic in 1958.

Ken Brand

Thirty-nine years ago, on the 26 February 1965, Professor Arthur Ling, then head of the Department of Architecture at the University of Nottingham, came out with his well-worn verdict on Maid Marian Way.

'Maid Marian Way is an insult to Maid Marian and one of the ugliest modern streets in Europe. In one section of the street where building is not yet completed, 38 different materials have so far been used.'

Towards the end of last year a planning brief was issued for the demolition of People's College, not exactly the prettiest building even on Maid Marian Way. The subsequent redevelopment of the site would be for mixed uses that included a smaller education presence for People's College.



**Proposed New Street  
Town Planning 1927**

## CIVIC SOCIETY 2004/5 LECTURE SERIES

John Archibald has kindly offered to take on the onerous task of Programme Secretary. Here is his provisional programme; more details will be available later.

**September** – Christine Wagg or Professor John Beckett

Christine Wagg – Legal Secretary to the Peabody Trust  
The talk will outline the life and work of George Peabody, an American merchant banker and philanthropist, who founded the Peabody Trust in 1862 to 'ameliorate the conditions of the poor and the needy of London'.

The talk will also touch upon the more recent work of the trust including developments such as 'BedZed'.

If Professor John Beckett is speaking the topic has yet to be confirmed.

**October** – Professor Tony Marmont on 'Sustainability'. (To be confirmed)

**November** – Nathan Cornish, Development Manager of 'Urban Splash'.  
Urban Splash have won various Civic Trust awards for their redevelopment schemes, particularly of Castlefield in Manchester.

**January** – Bill Dunster  
Bill Dunster Architects have been behind such developments as 'BedZed' and 'The Earth Centre' in Doncaster.

### HELP REQUIRED

Can any member recall what happened to the clock in the front of the Mechanics' Cinema, when it was demolished in 1964?

The clock was given to the Mechanics' Institute in 1877 by William Hodgson, a local lace manufacturer. The hall of the Mechanics' later became the Mechanics' Cinema. When it was demolished the two bells associated with the clock, bells cast by Taylor's bell foundry in Loughborough, went to St. Anne's School, Townsville, Queensland; but what happened to the clock? Was it made locally by Cope?

Any leads e-mail directly to [freda.raphael@lineone.net](mailto:freda.raphael@lineone.net) or inform the Editor.

## VISITS SUMMER 2004 KNARESBOROUGH & THE YORKSHIRE DALES SATURDAY JUNE 5th

On arrival at Knaresborough coffee (included) then a short walk of the Castle grounds and town centre, making our own arrangements for lunch. There are many eating places around the town, reassemble at 2pm for a scenic tour of Nidderdale via Ripley Village, Pateley Bridge, Burnsall, Bolton Abbey and Harrogate, tour to include photo stops and tea stop (not included in the price). Depart approx 5pm from Harrogate.

**MEET SALUTATION 8am**

**Price £12.50**

## CAMBRIDGE SATURDAY JULY 3rd

We are guests of the Preservation Society. On arrival coffee will be served at their offices where a short talk given and they will show us one of their projects. We make our own arrangements for lunch then meet again for a guided tour round the town, leaving Cambridge at 5pm.

**MEET SALUTATION 8am**

**Price £12.50**

## LOUTH & GRIMSBY SATURDAY 7th AUGUST

On a arrival at Louth Hilary & Ian will be taking us for a short stroll around one of the most important Market Towns in England, then back on the coach to Grimsby where we make our own arrangements for lunch. We are meeting our guide at 2pm at the Heritage Centre (entrance included) where we will have a guided tour round a fishing trawler and a look at the exhibition (admission included) then drive to the conservation area *Sitties* (local name for salt marches). There will be time for refreshment (not included) before we leave Grimsby at approx 5pm.

**MEET SALUTATION 8am**

**Price £ 14.50**

## STAMFORD SATURDAY 11th SEPTEMBER

Stamford has more listed buildings than any other town in the country. Stamford has always been missed, missed by the railways, missed by the German bombers and missed by the developers of the sixties & seventies so we have a town without scars. On arrival we meet our hosts for coffee (included) at Melbourne's Brewery where we will be given a talk about Stamford. We make our own arrangements for lunch; there are plenty of eating and watering houses around. We meet again at 2pm; we will then split into smaller groups for a guided tour, as the pavements are very narrow in many places. There will be time for refreshments (not included) before leaving Stamford at 5pm.

**MEET SALUTATION 8.30am PLEASE NOTE TIME PRICE £12**