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TO THE CITIZENS OF BIRMINGHAM.

*This Edition is limited to
Two Hundred & Fifty Copies*

No. 413

The
DEVELOPMENT
of BIRMINGHAM

An Essay.

With Designs & Drawings by
WILLIAM HAYWOOD, F.R.I.B.A.

&

An introduction by
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, J.P.

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I N D E X .

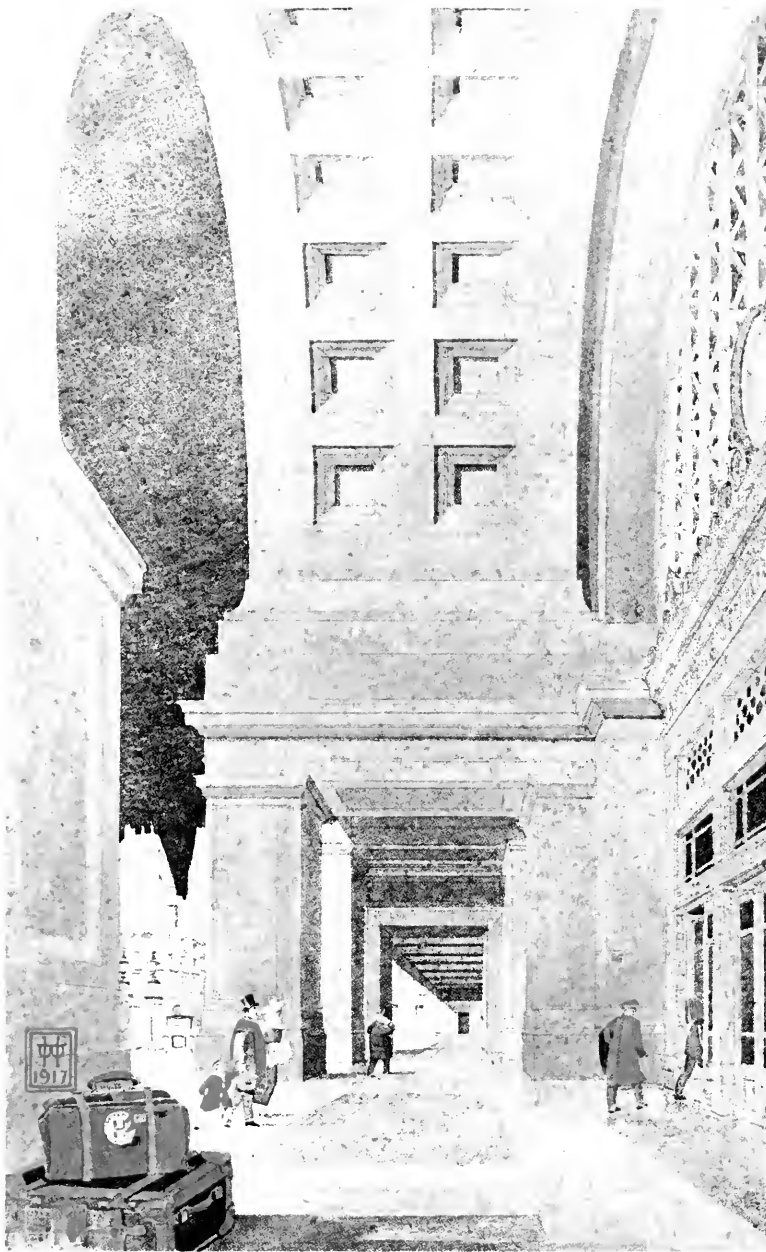
	Page
List of Subscribers - - - - -	7
List of Illustrations - - - - -	10
The Introduction - - - - -	13
Preamble - - - - -	17
A People's Hall - - - - -	27
Scheme for a Pleasure Grounds & Zoological Gardens	41
Improvements to New Street Station - - - - -	47
A Development of the Station area - - - - -	61
Preamble to the Road Plan - - - - -	64
Development of the M.R. Sidings area - - - - -	69
The Extension of Bath Row & Sheepcote Street - - -	71
Development of the L.N.W.R. Sidings area & Wharfage	73
Improvements to the Parade - - - - -	75
Improvements around St. Martin's Church, The Bull Ring, High Street & Bull Street - - - - -	77
The approach from the Station to the Town Hall -	79
The Central Place or Town Centre - - - - -	84
The future Municipal Buildings - - - - -	89
A Plan for the Central area of Birmingham - - -	92
The Rate & Method of Development - - - - -	100

The ILLUSTRATIONS.

	Page
A People's Hall : The Rotunda - - - -	25
„ Elevation - - - -	26
„ Section - - - -	28
„ Lower Ground Floor - -	30
„ Ground Floor - - - -	32
„ First Floor - - - -	34
„ First Floor Mezzanine - -	36
„ Second Floor - - - -	37
„ Second Floor Mezzanine - -	38
„ Roof Plan - - - -	39
„ Site Plan - - - -	40
Scheme for a Pleasure Grounds & Zoological Gardens	43
<i>A design for improvements to New Street Station.</i>	
New Street Station : The Entrance - -	<i>Frontispiece</i>
„ Booking Hall - - - -	48
„ Elevation & Sections - -	50
„ Plan at Street level - -	52
„ Plan at Bridge level - -	54
„ Plan at Track level - -	56
„ Birdseye view of model - -	59

List of Illustrations continued.

	Page
A New Road across the Station - - - - -	60
The Present Plan of the Central area of Birmingham	67
Plan of the M.R. Sidings area - - - - -	68
„ „ Extension of Sheepcote Street & Bath Row -	70
„ „ The L.N.W.R. Sidings area & new road to Ladywood - - - - -	72
„ „ Improvements to the Parade - - - - -	74
„ „ Improvements around St. Martin's Church, the Bull Ring, High Street & Bull Street -	76
„ „ A Station Place & approach to the Town Hall	80
Elevation of an approach to the Town Hall from Navi- gation Street - - - - -	82
A Future Town Centre - - - - -	87
A Future Municipal Building - - - - -	90
A Plan for the Central area of Birmingham - -	95



Proposed Entrance to New Street Station (See page 47).

The INTRODUCTION.

It was natural that for some little time after the passing of the Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909, the attention of Town Planners in Birmingham should be directed exclusively to the undeveloped areas of the City. The Act applies only to such areas, and moreover it was rightly felt that the preservation of the suburbs from the effects of house-building uncontrolled as to either numbers or arrangement was even more urgent than the need for replanning the central area. But with the experience gained in planning the outlying districts it gradually became clear that much might be done to improve the City as we know it to-day, even without any further extension of statutory powers.

The Report of the Housing Enquiry Committee, published in October, 1914, definitely recommended that a new plan of the old city should be put in hand at once, and the Town Planning Committee has been steadily working at such a plan ever since. More recently the proposals of the Public Works Committee have directed public attention to the possibilities of wider arterial roads, and for the first time in the history of the Corporation a definite policy has been adopted which, as the years go by, will gradually give us such transit facilities to and from the City as are enjoyed by no other town in the Kingdom.

It is then at an opportune moment that this book, full of new and even startling suggestions for City development, makes its appearance. The author, who is well known as an architect, speaks with authority on his own subject, but the bold and original

ideas here put forward go far beyond the ordinary scope of his profession. That they will find universal acceptance is not probable, but to those gifted with vision and confidence in the future of our City they will appeal as pointing the way to a higher conception of Civic dignity and Civic responsibility, and whatever may be the fate of the plans worked out with so much ingenuity and imagination they cannot fail to exercise a profound influence upon the minds of those who control our Civic destinies.

It has long been evident that the extension of the City and the growth of all municipal enterprises will require more accommodation than can now be found in the Council House or on any adjoining site. Birmingham wants a "Whitehall" and in selecting the lower end of Broad Street, Mr. Haywood has chosen a site sufficiently near the centre of the City and yet offering all the space required for the series of splendid buildings he has planned. Clearly such a site could not become a working "Town Centre" without a considerable rearrangement of the existing traffic routes but the suggestions here described show how this might be done with important additions to the rateable value of the city. No doubt many modifications might have to be made in working out the details, but the ideas now presented will at any rate serve as a foundation, and will, I hope, stimulate the demand for a definite plan of some sort to work to. The suggestion for a new set of Municipal offices is novel and perhaps will not please all tastes. It must be admitted however that from the business point of view the "skyscraper" gives the maximum of accommodation with the minimum of ground space, whilst it offers special facilities for good lighting, heating and ventilation.

The suggested improvement for New Street station could only be carried out by the Railways concerned. It does not require an expert however to see how great would be the gain to the convenience of

the public as well as to the aspect of the City were Mr. Haywood's plan carried out, and I am not sure that this suggestion which would not appear to involve any very excessive cost will not be the first of the author's ideas to materialise.

The proposals for the building of a Civic Recreation Hall and for the development of Rotton Park Reservoir as a place of amusement are both expressions of an idea that has been gaining ground rather rapidly of late years in Birmingham, the idea, that is, that in a well-organised community the amusements of the people should be just as carefully attended to as its health or its education.

In the new England to which we look forward when the present period of pain and stress has passed away there will be great changes in social and industrial conditions. The gentler and more human aspects of life will be developed ; and shorter hours together with increased earnings should give the worker an opportunity of forming fresh tastes and finding a wider circle of interests than has heretofore been possible to him. We most earnestly desire that he should be given this opportunity, to which indeed we feel that he has a right, but it is incumbent upon us to see that it is made easy for him to use it rightly. Amid all these changes men and women must not be driven to coarse or degrading forms of pleasure for lack of something more wholesome. It is important for the individual, but it is not less important for the community, that the standard of its moral should be maintained at a high level, and that is the justification for the plea that the recreation of the people should be the business of the community.

This is not a new principle to us. Already it is agreed that the City is to provide our youth with playing fields for their outdoor sports. Already the Civic Recreation League is making a carefully planned effort to bring the advantages of club life, with its games and dancing, its rest rooms and gymnasia within easy reach of every

worker in the town. But it is the general opinion of those who have studied the subject that some sort of central Recreation Hall is undoubtedly needed, and the building here proposed shows a remarkable ingenuity in combining under one roof a number of different and attractive forms of amusement. Personally, I am of opinion that while the development of the Reservoir, attractive as it is, can wait for some years, the provision of a Central Recreation Hall is urgent, and although the capital cost would be too large to allow of its being carried out on the lines here suggested except as a municipal enterprise I do not think that the sum required should be beyond the resources of a great city, whilst undoubtedly a considerable income might be raised from charges within the building.

The greatest misfortune which could happen to this book would be that it should be ignored. I do not fear that fate for it ; on the contrary I believe that it will greatly stimulate public interest in the possibilities of future development in Birmingham. I trust that it may provoke some healthy criticism, but in any case I am sure that future generations will have cause to be grateful to Mr. Haywood for the lofty and inspiring conceptions he has set before us.

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

February, 1918.

The DEVELOPMENT of BIRMINGHAM.

Preamble.

Among the new movements with which the country is now occupied, none is of more importance than that which deals with the need for communal order and convenience in our cities, the influence of which upon the social welfare of their inhabitants cannot well be overestimated. As we reflect upon the mean appearance and singular inefficiency of our towns, we realize with some resentment the price we pay for the limited vision of our predecessors, and the many advantages of which we have been deprived, by their neglect of a reasonable consideration for the needs of those who were to follow them.

In no city of its size is there more need for civic improvement than in Birmingham, which in its present condition is little more than a huge collection of people and buildings, with no evidence of proper control, and little of the convenience which so large a community should possess.

That a remedy for this state of things must be found is now generally agreed, and also that the form it shall take should be worthy of the opportunity with which we are confronted, for any decision we now make is not only of the greatest importance to ourselves, but will be felt for centuries to come by our successors. The scope of the work to be done is of course considerable, but it is curious to find that our task is made easier, by the very defects of which we have such good cause to complain; the areas of derelict property which now occupy a portion of the very heart of the city being comparatively easy to develop, because unobstructed to any great extent by costly errors in building.

For the purpose of these notes it will be assumed that the reader is familiar with the general principles of town planning, as it is not intended to say more upon that subject than may be necessary to frame the proposals put forward. These proposals are of local interest only, and may be considered to originate in the work already done by Municipal departments towards the proper development of our suburban areas, which has naturally led to the recent proposals for the development of arterial roads, and these, in turn, will necessitate the gathering of the inner extremities of those roads into a comprehensive city plan.

Now if the problem before us were the lay-out of comparatively open areas, there would be little occasion for special comment; as in that direction many precedents have been established, and copiously written upon; but it is different when the built up portions of a city are to be brought into coherence. The exact problem in this case is so hard to define, that a trial essay cannot fail to serve a useful purpose, something of the sort being even *necessary*, if only to give a background for a discussion of preliminaries.

In the suggestions now advanced my aim has been high, and would remain so, even if I thought that Birmingham could worthily do with less, for it is desirable that every possibility the town presents should be thoroughly ransacked before a final decision is made. In this matter there is room for many opinions, and these will no doubt be obtained from those who have a special knowledge of the subject.

No attempt has been made to deal with engineering details, or the respective merits of different widths of road, or tram versus tube. These are subjects already laid before the public, concerning which there is little new to be said. My purpose is principally social and architectural, with a consideration of road improvements and the proper arrangement of our administrative

and other public buildings, around which a decent roominess is much needed.

In considering roads, it must be remembered that their character varies greatly with their position and surroundings. In rural districts, roads may be said to dominate buildings; in suburban areas there is something approaching equality of value, while in the central areas of most big cities the buildings take first place. City roads have special functions: public ceremonies, processions, reviews, proclamations and musical performances, are quite common occurrences, which frequently monopolise the roads of the administrative area in Birmingham, as they all take place in the irregular patch of road widening which we call Victoria Square.

The development of the centre of a town therefore is not merely a question of roads, as generally understood: it is largely one of buildings; moreover, just as a plan is necessary for the perfect arrangement of each part of a building, so there is a larger plan of which the parts are complete buildings,—that is to say, there is a natural relation between public buildings, which should not only be satisfied for the sake of expression, but also for actual utility.

The architectural character of city roads being therefore apparent, it is also clear that, for the purpose of any central plan, we must determine what are the buildings that we either do not possess at all, or that will become necessary to replace those we shall outgrow. Consider the Council House: the population of Birmingham has increased from 440,000 to 900,000 since the Municipal Offices were built in 1878, and the late extension is not only an example of a wrong method of development, but it still leaves many offices scattered about the town in other buildings. The original building is not only insufficient for present purposes, but hopelessly out of date, and it appears certain that it must be replaced within the next 50 years, when a better site will be very desirable. Then the Post

Office has always been inefficient, and, notwithstanding the last extension, is poor accommodation for a large city. The great crowds which now attend for various government purposes, create a most unpleasant congestion, relief from which can only be obtained by a large and well ventilated hall, at least six times the size of the present one; indeed it is scarcely possible that the present buildings will be tolerated for another generation. A new Central Library will be required in course of time, to meet growing needs and provide an up-to-date storage of books, with an efficient system of delivery, and among other buildings which may reasonably be anticipated are a Natural History Museum, a Hall for Machinery and the Metal trades, an Opera House or Hall of Music, and Halls for Exhibitions, (Exhibitions are so numerous and so successful in Birmingham, that they deserve to be housed in less filthy buildings). There is also a Cathedral to be considered, and finally the need for a Central Heating Station, a War Museum, and a Memorial. For all of these there should be sites in view, and, properly grouped, these sites will be found to give Birmingham just what it needs as a town centre.

Beyond the buildings enumerated above, there are others of great importance which need immediate consideration. Among the problems of the future, social questions occupy a prominent place, and no scheme of development can be considered complete which does not provide for the greater leisure and relaxation of the people. Much good work has already been done by the Civic Recreation League, and the necessity for a really comprehensive central provision was advocated by Mr. Neville Chamberlain during his Mayoralty; but the need increases, and it is proper to make room for an extension of social facilities, when considering the experimental allotment of sites for future requirements.

The importance of the recreative intervals of our lives cannot well

be overestimated, they are really periods of unconscious schooling in which more is done, to form habits and character, than any college can hope to accomplish ; in these periods the strongest bent of the individual is given an opportunity for which it is wise to give scope in directions which will be open to the salutary effect of public opinion. Our neglect of this factor in character formation is responsible for an immense amount of evil, which it is necessary and quite possible to rectify. For a variety of reasons we are driven into quite cramped quarters for our recreation, we have not the elbow room and spaciousness of continental out-door life, and there is a general impression that the climate is chiefly to blame for this condition of things—but this is not really the case, we shut ourselves in, because our streets are narrow and incommodious, and nothing is more certain, than that when we get wide and handsome boulevards, we shall use them in much the same way that we do our parks. This is well illustrated by the present musical performances before the Council House, and the crowds that attend at some risk of their lives to hear them—a striking instance of the need for a provision of better accommodation, and also of our present inability to give it reasonable scope. In this respect our spas and pleasure resorts teach us a lesson. These things are not thought extravagant or benevolent at the sea-side, they are provided as a matter of business, and there is no reason why, from the same point of view, they should not be considered equally necessary here.

To meet these social needs to some extent, I propose that a People's Hall should be provided ; and, as the moment is opportune, and the particular object in view can be so much better shewn by drawings than by words, this project has been worked out in some detail in the first section of the book ; while for outdoor sports, with those forms of entertainment which cannot be housed in a central building, a re-arrangement of the Rotton Park Reservoir is shewn

which could scarcely fail to be extremely popular. These pleasure grounds and the People's Hall, are both convenient to densely populated areas and at the same time readily approached from the centre of the city.

Turning now to our railway services, many serious defects in these are apparent which are probably beyond repair, and the hideous viaducts with which the city is so liberally burdened, will probably be regarded as immovable for many years to come. Their appearance may perhaps be improved, for there is nothing objectionable in a viaduct per se, many in fact being triumphs of engineering beauty; we are merely unfortunate in having the wrong sort in the wrong place.

The Gt. Western Railway Co., have recently spent a great deal of money upon their line and stations, so that there is not likely to be any further development at Snow Hill, and we naturally turn to New Street Station for what is required. The situation of this great station, immediately below the principal central area, is very conspicuous; and it is here that one may reasonably expect something worthy of the two great Companies represented, and of the city.

It happens that there are problems of pedestrian traffic in the case which are really urgent, and for the solution of which plans have been in existence for some years, together with a mutual agreement with the Corporation for the provision of funds. These needs, and certain others which are sufficiently obvious, serve as the basis of a scheme more in scale with present and future circumstances. Incidentally the plan—which is described in detail on pages 47-59—covers over, and makes excellent use of, two of those foul pits from which the locomotives of arriving and departing trains belch smoke and steam into one of the busiest and most interesting parts of the city. I mean, of course, interesting in its possibilities.

When the local traffic and switch work is electrified, as no doubt it will be, we shall get rid of all nuisance at this point and deal with such smoke as may be necessary by special extraction. We shall also be able to see a natural architectural effect given to the spectacular approach to the central plateau from Navigation Street, an idea of which is given on page 82.

After the war we are to have a Museum of War Objects and a Memorial of the great sacrifices made by our people. These may reasonably be combined in one group, but, as the Memorial idea develops, it will be remarkable if we escape from the confusion of thought which has brought so many of our attempts in this direction to nothing.

It has become a habit with us to combine utility with memorial devotion, instances of which will readily occur to everyone. It is enough to mention the many hospitals and homes of rest which are supposed to commemorate the late King Edward. But of those who visit, or lie in, these buildings, who gives a thought to the man on whose name the money for the building was raised? A great work of benevolence, or of building, or any outstanding evidence of merit, can be, and usually is, a kind of Memorial, but only in the sense that all great works are permanent records of their *producers*, to whom consciously or otherwise, we pay tribute. For this reason Shakespeare has a unique memorial in his works, and needs no monument of stone to celebrate his achievements, although this may be due from us to show our gratitude.

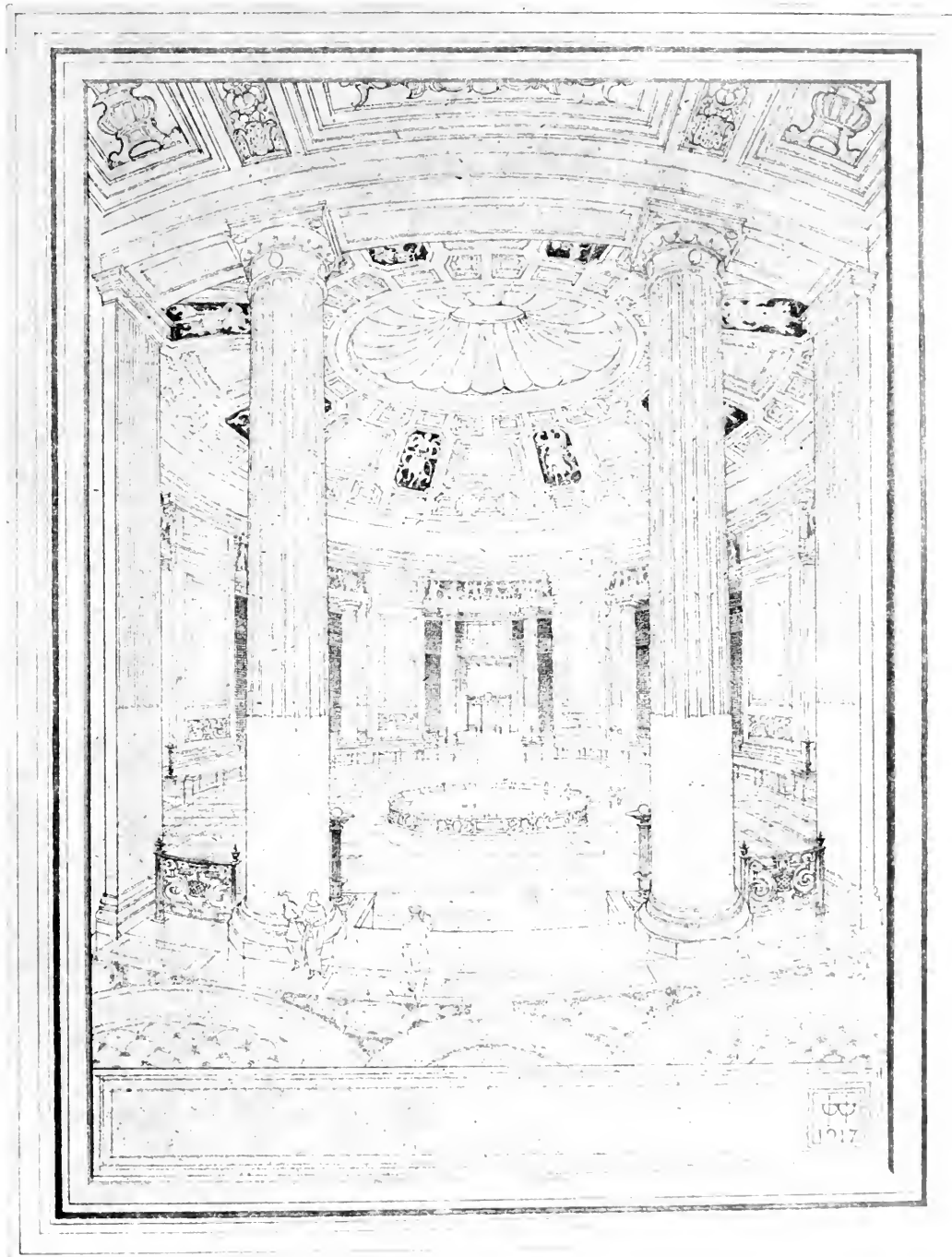
Therefore it is better that our memorial of war sacrifice should live in the history of our time and in the hearts of the people, than that we should either increase our convenience or perform our duty at the expense of a noble idea.

A suitable position for a Memorial is shewn on page 95, and it is one which has the advantage of being immediately

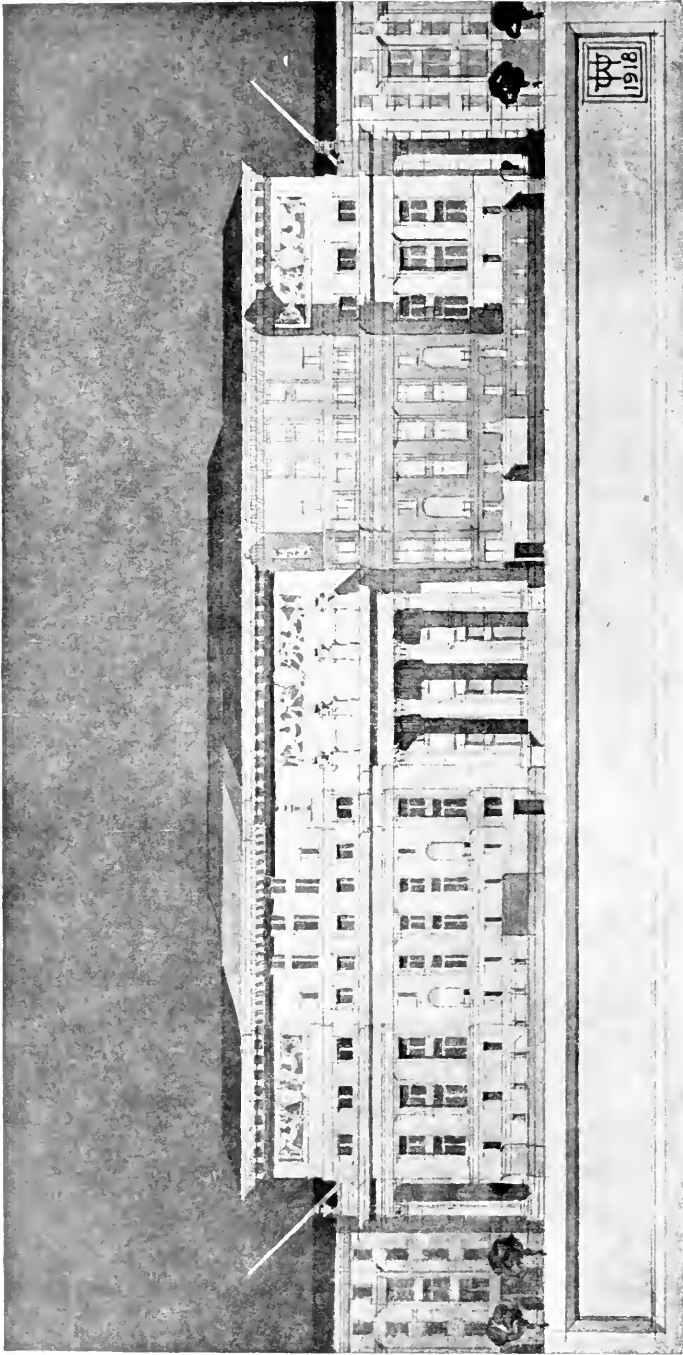
available, sites for other purposes are also indicated, including one for a central Heating station, at a low level, with convenient access to canal and rail—also for other buildings which the city is sure to need in the future; and as to the means for holding such sites available over indefinite periods, I suggest that they could be let on short building leases until required. But this is a matter which need not be enlarged upon here, and may be left to the City Authorities.

Some of the many aspects which this subject offers for consideration, have now been briefly indicated; much of the work to be done falls naturally to existing departments, and much obviously calls for quite other treatment. This has been represented in the proper quarter, with the result that a commission is now being formed upon the lines of those bodies which exist for the same purpose abroad, but the details being still under consideration, it is impossible to do more than indicate here, that the machinery for the work to be done is being considered in time.

The Rotunda of "A People's Hall."



Elevation of "A People's Hall."



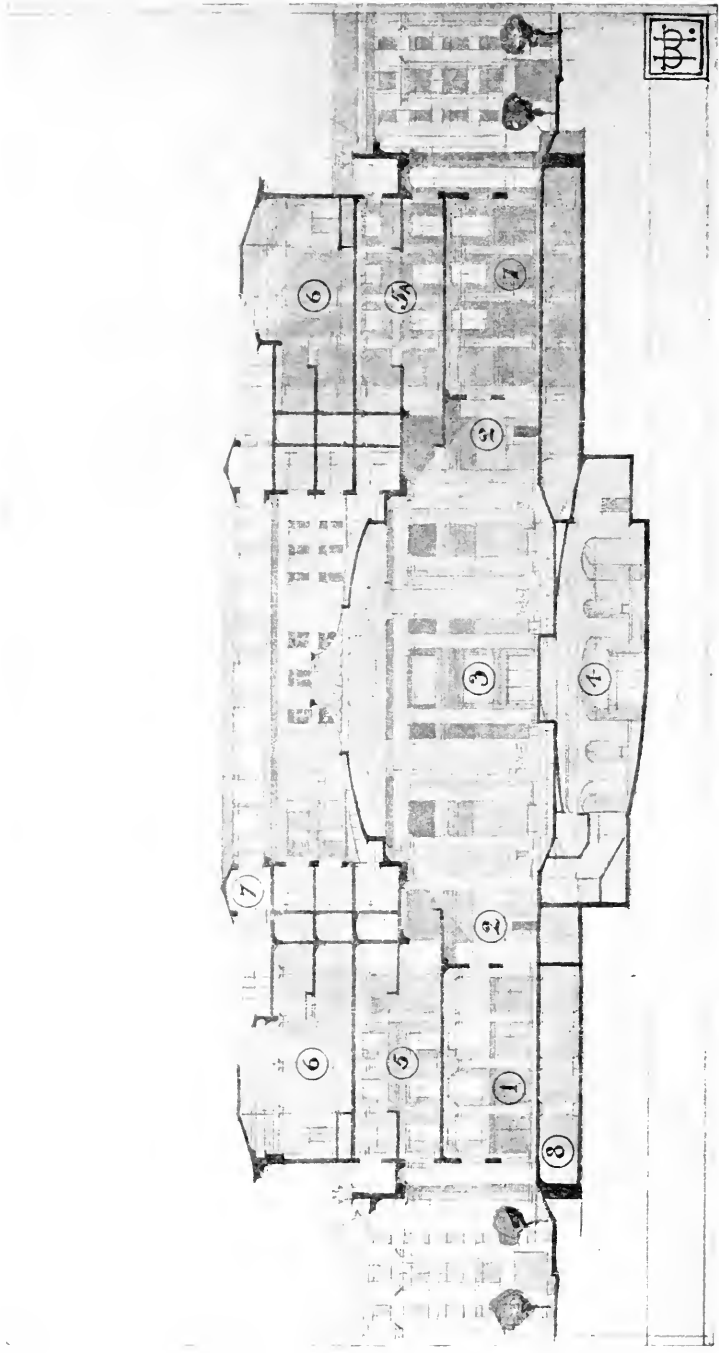
A PEOPLE'S HALL.

To give a tangible ground for the consideration of this idea, the need for which has already been referred to, plans have been prepared which shew more clearly what is intended. The accommodation indicated may be taken as suggestive only, and subject to further consideration ; but underlying any selection for this purpose there should be an endeavour to produce a repercussion of interest, the building being made to serve as many attractive purposes as possible, so that at all times it would have an air of activity.

An important place in the scheme is given to bathing facilities, which we will consider an agreeable necessity, although in this we make a great descent from the opinion of the Romans, for whom bathing was a luxury worthy of colossal magnificence. From this conception of things we have fallen away until there is nothing left of the attendant comforts of the bath, but a mere provision of water, which for the most part, is situated in the slum areas of the town. This is not intended as an adverse criticism of our present accommodation, which is excellent so far as it goes, but it is helpful in emphasizing the need for something not easy to provide apart from a combination building of the kind proposed, and this the Baths Committee will probably be the first to recognise.

A complete bathing establishment is placed on the Lower Ground floor (with heating and pumping in the basement). There are two full size swimming ponds, with galleries at ground floor level ; two Turkish baths, fifty-six ordinary baths, twenty-six cubicles for Electrical massage, Sulphur, and other Medical treatments, and a hairdressing saloon ; the whole being approached either by stairs

Section of "A People's Hall."



1, The Arcades; 2, The Promenade; 3, The Rotunda; 4, The Cinema Theatre; 5, The Restaurant; 5A, The Reading Room; 6, Halls for Lectures & Variety Entertainments; 7, The Running Track & Roof Promenade.

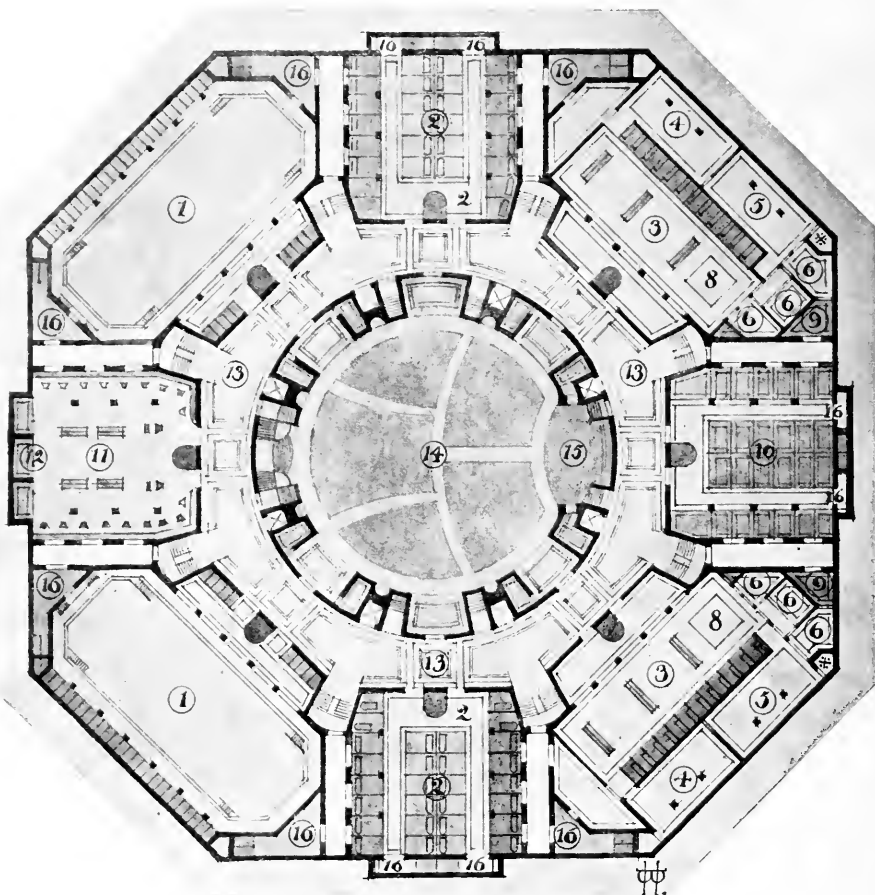
or lifts from the Promenade on ground floor, or by a short flight of steps from the Rotunda, which in this connection serves as an attractive lounge. In the centre of this floor is a Cinema Theatre, with a seating capacity of nine hundred, which is also intended for Sunday Lectures and Concerts.

On the Ground floor is The Rotunda, a large Hall for general assembly, a sort of Winter Gardens where orchestral music would be given every day, and in which light refreshments would be served. This Hall measures 100 feet in diameter under the dome, or including the Promenade, which is at a rather higher level, an average of 155 feet. It is approached through four arcades of shops or booths, and is the rendezvous of the whole building. It is intended that a small charge should be made for admission to this central area which would merge in, or be adapted to, any larger payments for Baths, Cinema, etc., [tenants' of club rooms (see later), and also club members, being provided with season tickets]. All parts of the building are reached from the Promenade by means of convenient stairs and lifts, and public cloak rooms and lavatories are placed on a mezzanine, ten feet above the ground floor.

The First floor has four small Halls, 57 ft. by 55 ft., each of which has a gallery in addition, 10 ft. wide, and approached from the room itself or from the mezzanine floor above. One Hall is proposed for a restaurant and another for reading. The remaining two for lectures, whist drives, private parties and celebrations, bazaars, etc. The four large rooms on the diagonals, each 50 ft. by 17 ft., are suitable for writing or games.

The Mezzanine above the first floor, in addition to four rooms for Billiards, has eight suites of three rooms each, on the periphery of a central area; each room is 12 ft. by 12 ft. and each suite can be thrown into one large room. Together with similar rooms on the two floors above, there are twenty-two groups, or sixty-six rooms,

Plan of Lower Ground Floor.



- 1, Swimming Baths; 2, Ordinary Baths; 3, Cooling room of the Turkish Baths; 4, First Hot room; 5, Second Hot room; * The Oven; 6, Shampoos; 8, The Plunge; 9, Attendants' Retiring room; 10, Medical and Special Baths; 11, Hair-dressing Saloon; 12, Manicure and Chiropody; 13, Corridor; 14, Cinema Theatre; 15, Stage; 16, Lavatories.

and they are suggested as the headquarters of the numerous sporting clubs, associations, leagues and other coteries in the town, for which purpose they are admirably suited. They have all the convenience of lavish social accommodation, with the opportunity of hiring small Halls for special occasions, while for general routine, their rentals would be limited to one or more small rooms for administrative purposes and private affairs.

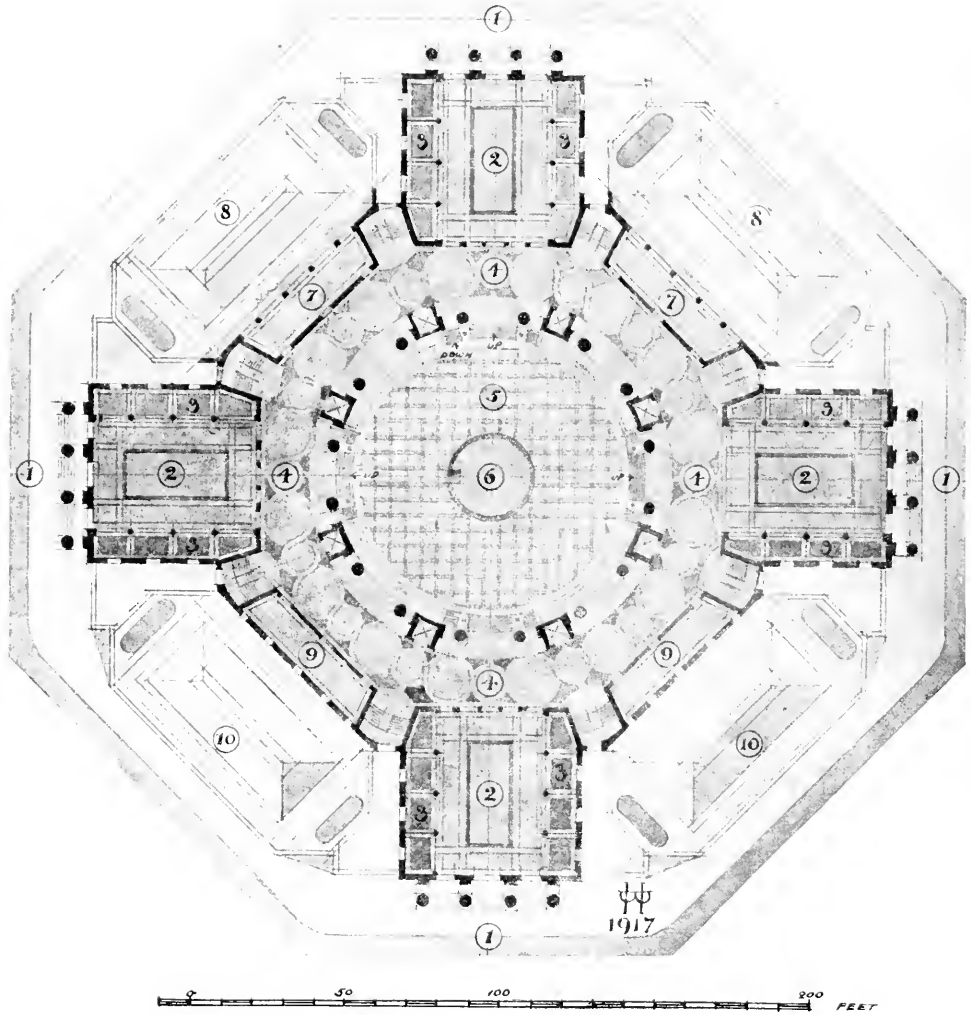
On the Second floor are three Halls for concerts, lectures, variety entertainments and public meetings. Each has a stage, and including the gallery will seat 600. In connection with these there are suitable cloakrooms and lavatories, and in the remaining arm of the building there is a gymnasium, 66 ft. by 55 ft.—which could, if necessary, be increased to 75 ft. by 55 ft. This section has additional accommodation on the floor above, where two of the rooms on the diagonal are for special training, and also on the roof, where there is a covered running track on a diameter of 110 ft., the outer areas being available for drilling; or as an alternative proposal, the running track, which is also available as a Promenade, could be combined with a roof garden.

It is not necessary to say anything of the elevations except that they should be well done, the advertising quality of the building, by which I mean its power of attraction, is of great importance and should be attended to as a matter of business.

The site is also important. The position selected is shewn on the general map, page 95, also to a larger scale on page 40, where it will be seen that the proposal is to work the site out of a road improvement, by which means it can be obtained at a cheap rate.

Apart from any question of Town Planning, the eight roads intersection at the end of Steelhouse Lane needs attention, and there will be no better time for this than immediately after the war, before new leases are taken up and new difficulties created; moreover

Plan of Ground Floor.



- 1, Entrances; 2, The Arcades; 3, Shops; 4, Promenade; 5, The Rotunda; 6, Band Stand; 7, Galleries to the Swimming Baths; 8, Roofs over Baths; 9, Service rooms for light refreshments; 10, Roofs over the Turkish Baths.

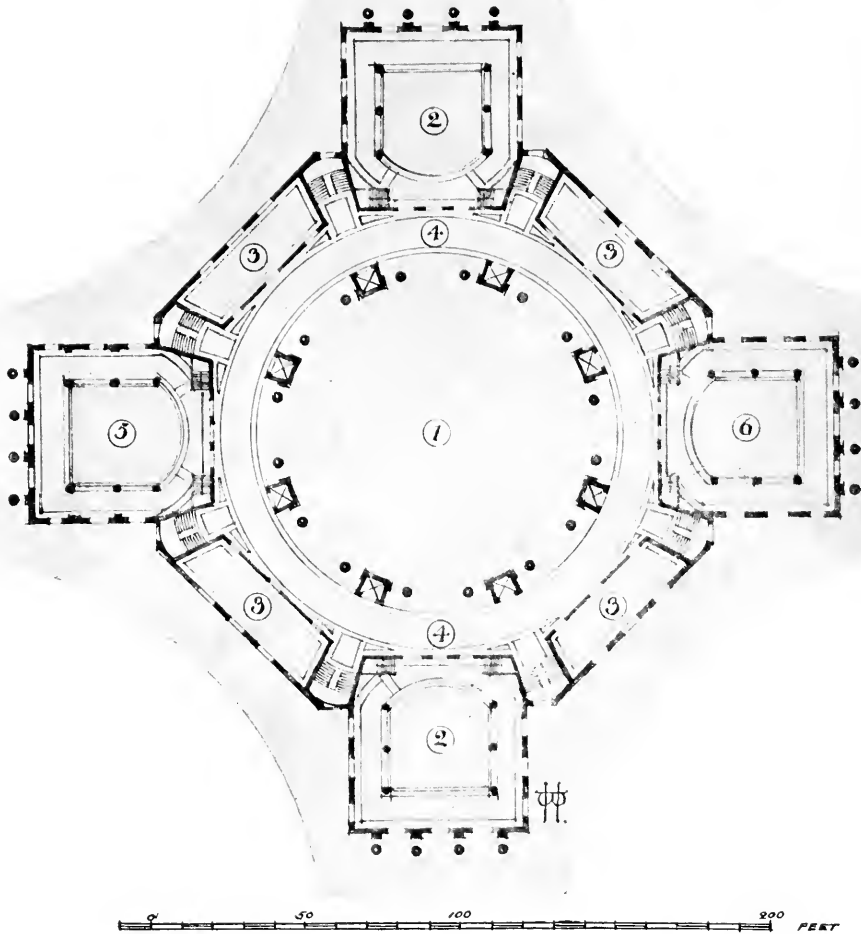
in any general scheme of improvements, intersections of this sort will probably be taken first, because these are the points of danger, which should be made safe and commodious before facilitating traffic towards them.

It will be seen that a circus of 445 ft. diameter is proposed—measured on the street plan as left by the widening of the arterial roads—cutting away certain portions of adjoining sites; the building area suppressed being about 5,754 square yards, against which a new site is created in the centre area of 8,711 square yards, so that after allowing a width of 85 ft. for the circular road, there is a gain of 2,957 square yards in building area, in addition to a great improvement in the road plan at this point. With this interesting result I must leave the allocation of values to the experts, who will say what should be charged to road improvement and what to the new site respectively.

Something must be said as to the cost of the building. At pre-war rates (post-war costs are impossible to estimate) this would be about £225,000, and towards this cost I venture to suggest that £90,000 (also pre-war value), which has already been allotted to the enlargement of the Kent Street and Woodcock Street baths, might be diverted. The accommodation provided in the new building would certainly relieve the pressure on Woodcock Street, and be a greater convenience to the public than an extension of the existing establishment at Kent Street.

Without attempting an imaginary balance sheet, the sources of income may be indicated as follows :—Admission to the Promenade and Rotunda, admission to Cinema Theatre, profits on catering, the rents of thirty-two Booths or Shops, receipts from Swimming, Ordinary, Turkish and Medical baths, the rent or profits of Hairdressing saloon, the letting of five small Halls, the rents of sixty-six Club rooms, two large ditto, and the Gymnasium.

Plan of First Floor.



1, The upper part of The Rotunda; 2, Halls for Whist Drives, Bazaars, etc.; 3, Rooms for writing and games; 4, Gallery open to The Rotunda; 5, The Restaurant; 6, The Reading room.

If it is assumed that the cost of the Band, which would include performances by the Police, could be met by special concerts and an extra charge for certain seats, and if post war advances in the cost of building and working, are met by the same adjustment that will be necessary for similar provisions everywhere, then a fair estimate of income from the above should justify the proposal financially; while there is still a margin of allowance in the fact that we have at present an annual loss upon our Baths of one-third the expenditure, which could not reasonably be objected to in this case also, on the section allotted to bathing.

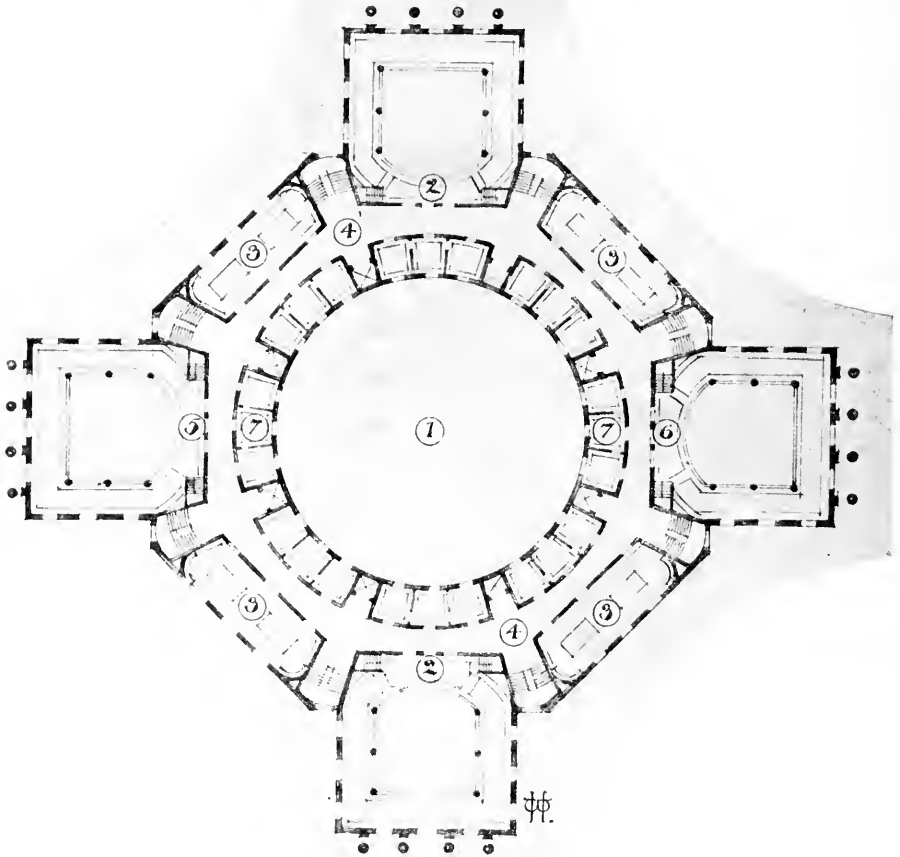
It is also fair to mention the probability of indirect gains, arising from an improvement in site values in the locality, notwithstanding miscalculations in the past, such as the failure of the last extension of Corporation Street to bring about a similar result, the cause of which will probably be found in the absence of any linking up of shopping and pleasure seeking crowds.

Corporation Street, from New Street to Bull Street, is a link of this sort, and there is an induced circulation as far as the Old Square and Grand Theatre; but beyond this point everything stagnates. The Assize Courts are even an obstacle to the continuity of circulation, and they are unfortunately placed on a crowded site which does not display their beauty to advantage.

Now this may be remedied to a large extent by the scheme before us. The position and dignity of the new building, together with the improved road lay-out, and the inducement which the nature of the building offers to the movement of crowds, justify an assumption that in the circus itself, and from the Old Square to Stafford Street, there would be an improvement in site values.

Enough has now been said to obtain a preliminary consideration of the proposal, details of secondary importance being purposely omitted, as unnecessary for the time being.

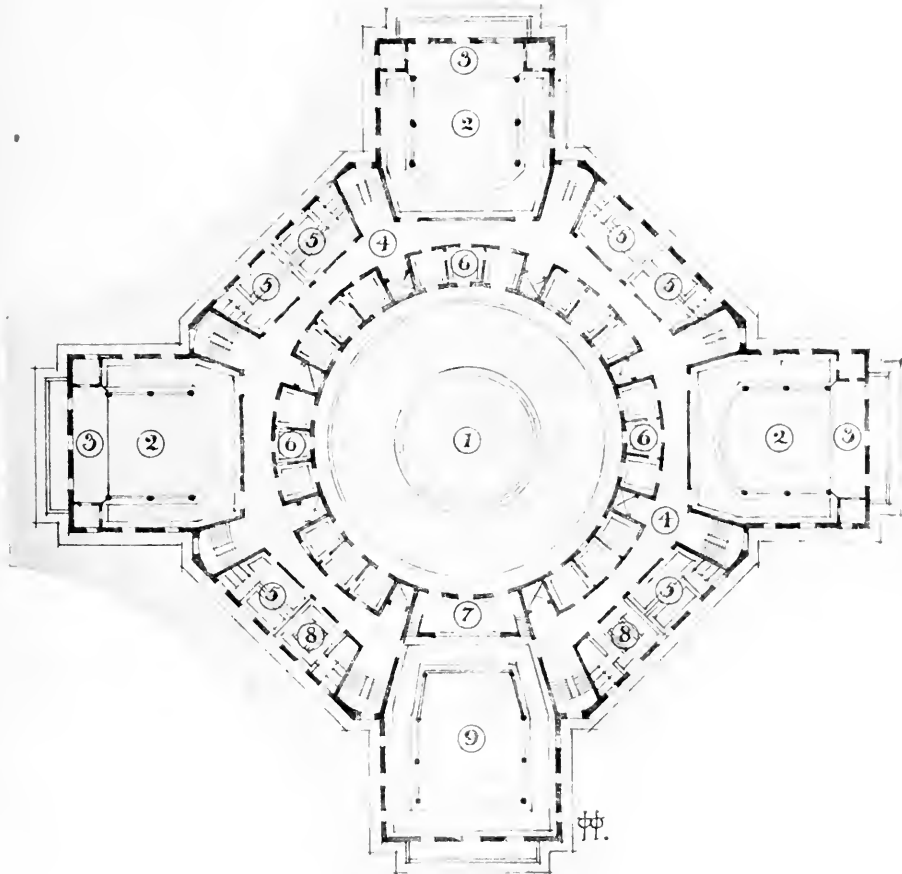
Plan of First Floor Mezzanine.



0 50 100 200 FEET

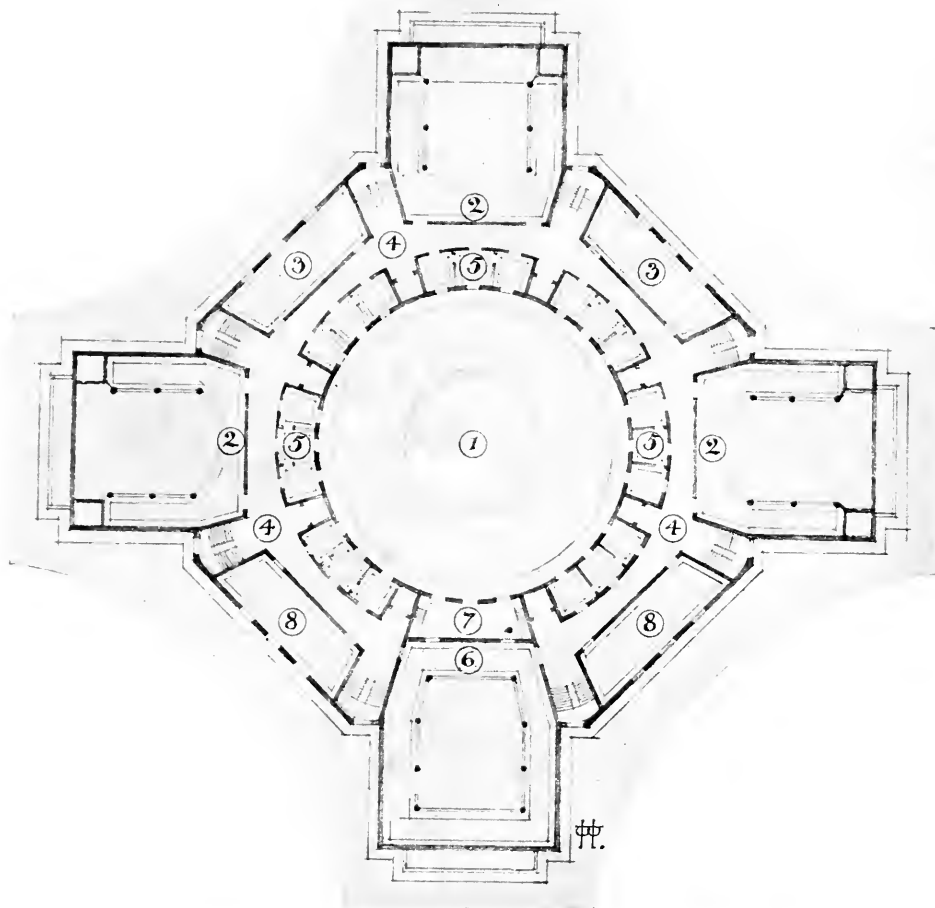
1, Open area; 2, Galleries of small Halls; 3, Billiard rooms;
4, Corridor; 5, Gallery of Restaurant; 6, Gallery of Reading
room; 7, Club rooms.

Plan of Second Floor.



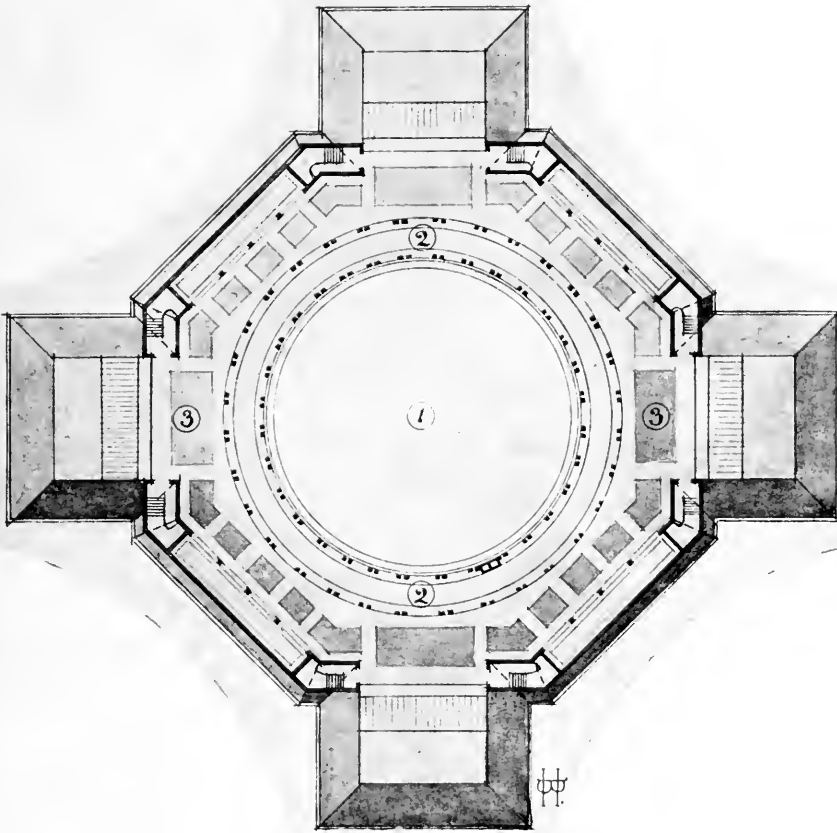
- 1, Open area; 2, Halls for lectures and variety entertainment;
 3, The Stage; 4, Corridor; 5, Cloak rooms and Lavatories;
 6, Club rooms; 7, Gymnastic apparatus; 8, Changing rooms;
 9, Gymnasium.

Plan of Second Floor Mezzanine.



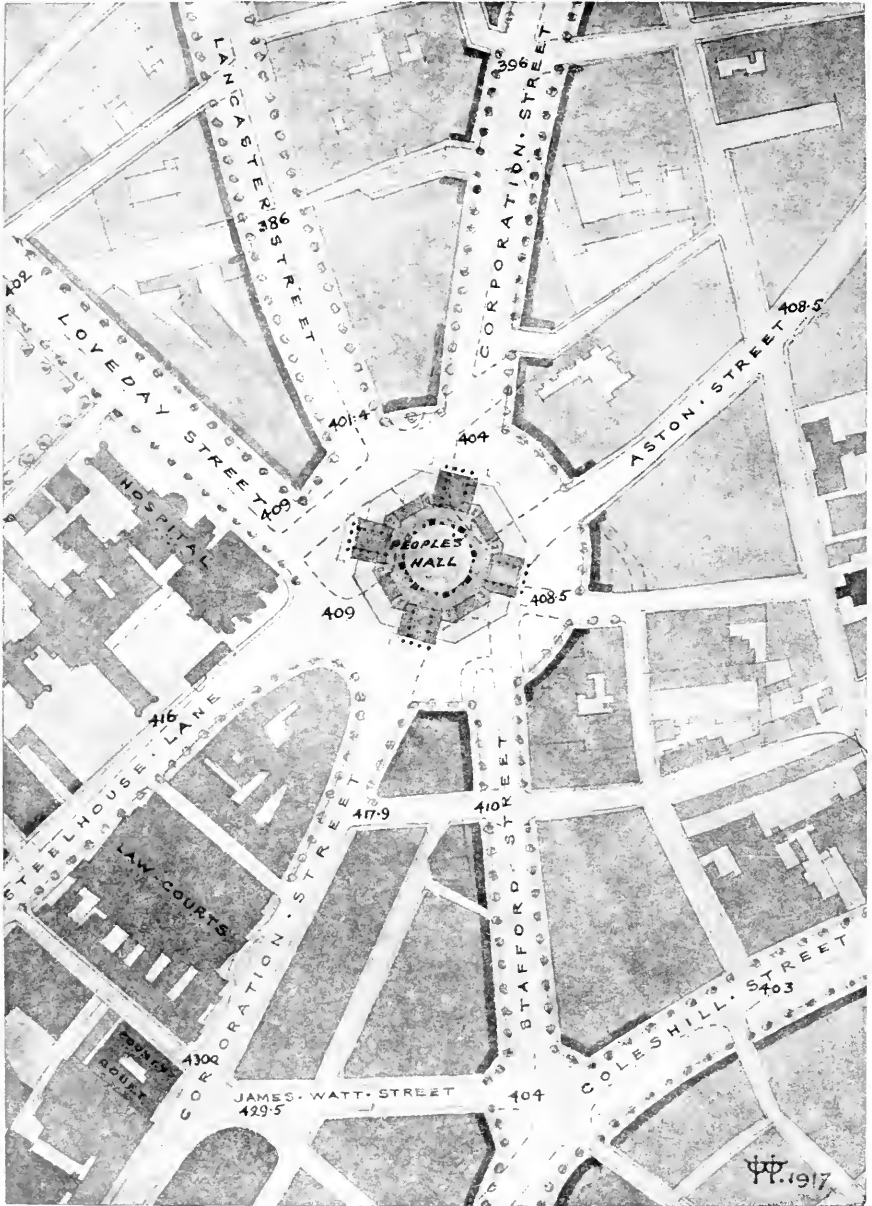
- 1, Open area; 2, Galleries of the small Halls; 3, Spare rooms;
4, Corridor; 5, Club rooms; 6, Gallery of the Gymnasium;
7, Instructor's room; 8, Special training rooms.

Plan of Roof.



- 1, Open area; 2, Roof Promenade and Running track;
3, Space for Drilling or Roof Gardens.

Plan for road improvement and site for "People's Hall."



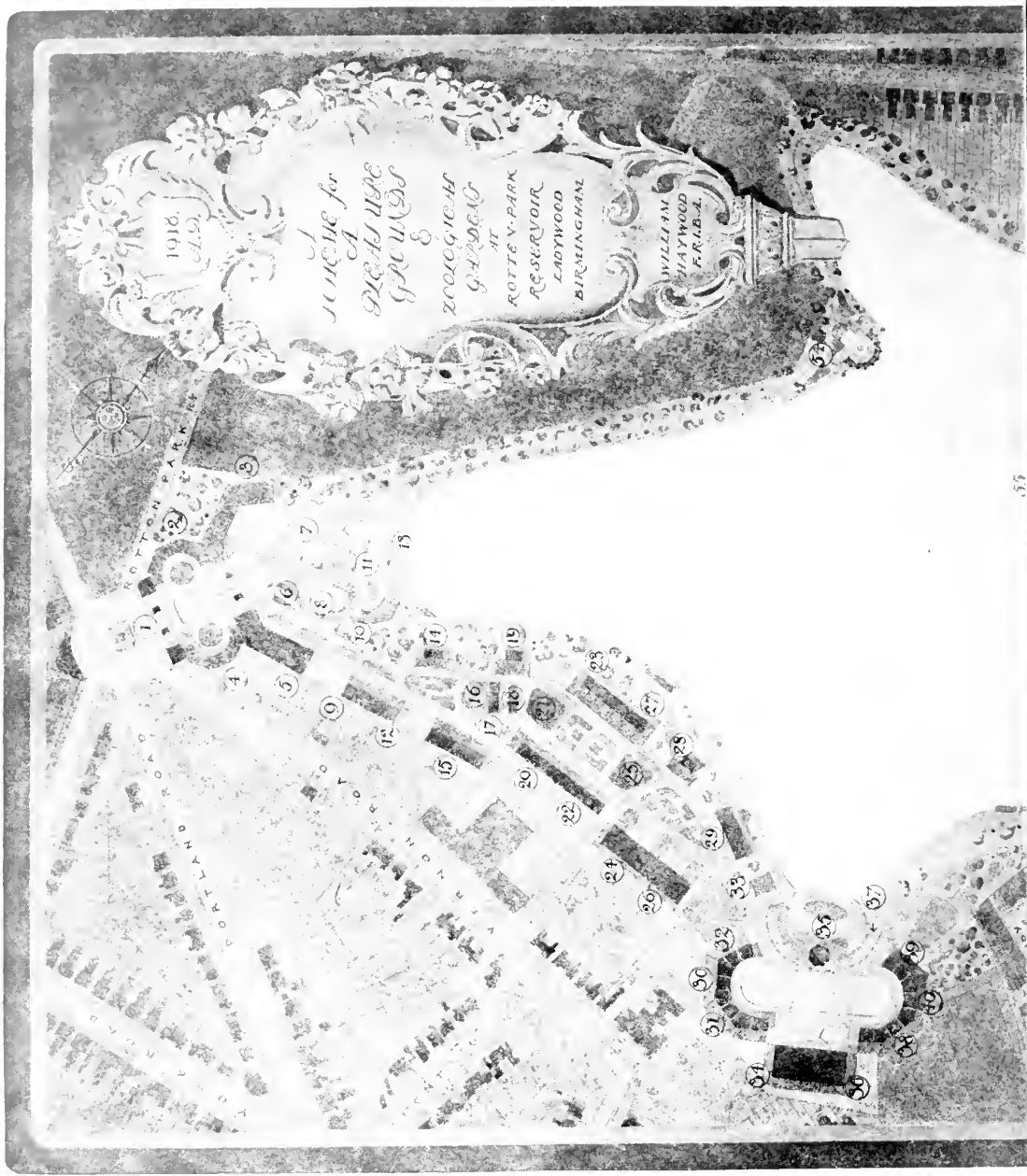
A PLEASURE GROUNDS
and
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

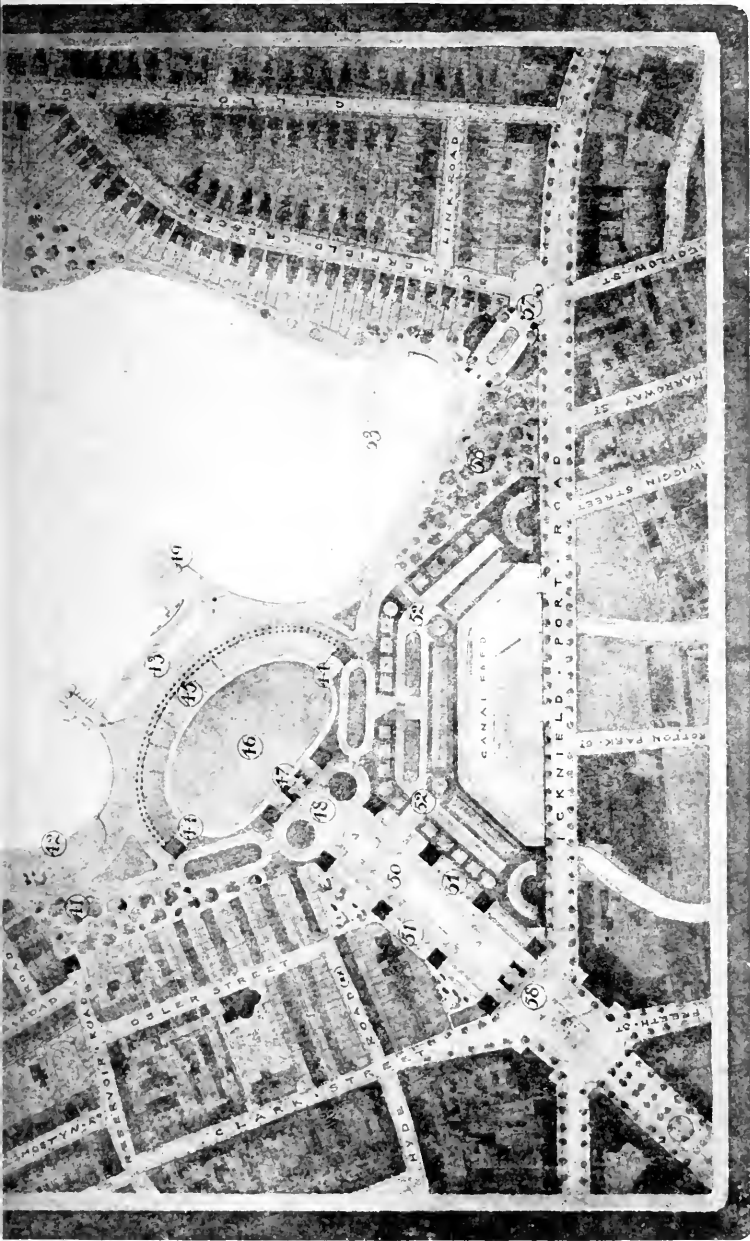
The proposed site for these Grounds is within what may be considered the central area, being about one mile from the Town Hall as the crow flies. The difficulty with the Ladywood district however, is that the approach from town is by no means direct, and there is a great need for better access.

It will be seen later that a remedy for this is proposed by an extension of Gt. Tindal Street, and this is mentioned now, because the merit of the development of the Reservoir site, lies not only in its own attractions, but in the additional value that it would give to such a road, when (probably at a later date) it came to be built.

It will be remembered that before the war a company was formed to build a "White City" at Aston, which for various reasons had to be abandoned; the fact, however, serves as an indication that business men consider there is a sufficient demand in Birmingham for this sort of entertainment, to produce a profit.

I know nothing of what the Company intended to provide, but it is not likely that their scheme was so large as the one given here, and it is also probable that the buildings to be erected were of the showy and frail type which it is natural for Companies to erect, in order to keep down first cost and obtain big profits over a short period. Such ventures have a bad tradition of temporary efficiency behind them, and, as they usually fail to meet the heavy maintenance





1, Entrance to Zoological Gardens; 2, Parrots & Owls; 3, Monkey House; 4, Eagles & Vultures; 5, Reptiles & Insects; 6, Polar Bears; 7, Penguins; 8, Sea Lions; 9, Small Mammals; 10, Bear Pit; 11, Beaver & Water Fowl; 12, Civets, Ant-eater & Sloth; 13, Bridge for Toy Railway; 14, Kangaroos; 15, Wolves & Foxes; 16, Antelopes; 17, Tortoise; 18, Camels; 19, Giraffes; 20, Hyenas; 21, Pheasantry; 22, Bears; 23, Storks; 24, Lions; 25, The Great Aviary; 26, Tigers; 27, Ostriches; 28, Hippopotamus House; 29, Refreshments; 30, Llamas; 31, Moose; 32, Swine; 33, Squirrels; 34, Elephants; 35, Band Stand; 36, Rhinoceros; 37, Entrance to Aquarium, situated under the Terrace of Band Stand and occupying one-half of the oval; 38, Deer; 39, Zebra; 40, Cattle; 41 Captive Balloon; 42, Children's beach; 43, Pond for swimming events; 44, Pavilions for opposing teams; 45, The seats of Stadium; 46, The arena or sports field; 47, Grand stand; 48, Station for Toy Railway; 49, Lighthouse at end of piers and landing stage; 50, Ornamental lake; 51, Terraces & Tea Gardens; 52, The White City & Buildings for indoor recreation; 53, Water Chute; 54, Temple and Band Stand; 55, The Lake; 56, Gardens; 57, Entrance from Icknield Port Road; 58, The Principal Entrance,

charges which subsequently develop, there is a rapid deterioration until the whole is abandoned. In other words, Companies concentrate on a maximum profit with a minimum investment.

But with a Corporation the matter is different. With them it is still desirable that a profit should be made, although it is usually sufficient if there is no loss, but the municipal end in view is mainly public benefit, and this not for a short, but for a long period. Therefore such buildings as are erected, must be substantial, which in the end is an economy, because maintenance charges are by this means kept low.

The area of ground around the reservoir is not great, but with a little easement upon adjoining property, and the purchase of a sufficient area for the formation of the Main Entrance, an attractive lay-out is not difficult. The principal necessity is a large sheet of water, and here we have it to our hand at such a level that cascades and fountains on the lower levels can be worked by gravitation, the water being intercepted on its way to the canal feed below.

A ferro-concrete Stadium to seat 10,000 people and with standing room for 6,000 more is placed with its curve to the water, and the arena or athletic field, the dimensions of which are 500 ft. by 275 ft., is thus adapted to the site, which falls rapidly towards the main entrance. Here there is room for great crowds, to watch Football, Polo, Aviation, Racing, Drilling, Shooting, Reviews, outdoor theatricals, or general sporting events; and from both the floor and roof of the Colonnade could be seen Water Polo, Boat racing, Regattas, Yachting, Swimming, Water pageants and Fireworks.

It might not suit the general purpose of the grounds to rent the stadium to one of our local football clubs, nor the club to leave its present quarters, although this is principally a matter of terms, but

cup ties and special matches would find excellent accommodation here and add to the attractions of the place. The accommodation provided will probably be thought sufficient, but there would be no difficulty in increasing the provision to twenty or even thirty thousand if necessary.

Elsewhere in the grounds there is every kind of side show: Roller Skating-rinks, Cinema Theatres, Variety Halls, Shooting galleries, Pierrots, Bands, Captive balloon, Switchback railway, Water Chute, Submarines, Ocean Wave, etc., and on the lake, Motor Launches, Steam boats and Gondolas.

A toy railway runs completely around the margin of the lake, linking up the three entrances and facilitating movement about the grounds, by which means those who enter by the main approach, can quickly reach the Rotton Park area, if their objective is the Zoological gardens, which have been placed at that end of the site.

I assume that it is not necessary to justify the provision of a "Zoo" in Birmingham, as it would not only be a great source of interest and instruction, but would also give an opportunity for a certain amount of local research work.

It might be desirable to reserve this section of the grounds during certain hours of the day, or days of the week, but such details need not be discussed here. Nor is it necessary to give further particulars of the animals accommodated and other provisions, all of which are clearly shewn on page 43.

This completes the section dealing with facilities for recreation, on a scale, and in a position, suitable for future needs. To attempt less than this would probably defeat the object in view, for small measures would not give the dominant character which civic enterprises should possess; nor would they have—to anything like the same extent—that power of attraction which is necessary to establish such resorts as an essential part of life spent in a City.

When reviewing a kindred subject, Matthew Arnold once gave great emphasis to the educational value of the *Theatre*, but his words are so apt to the wider subject under consideration, that they may be appropriately quoted at the conclusion of this chapter. In a vigorous passage he says:—"The State, the nation in its collective and corporate character, does well to concern itself about an influence so important to national life and manners as the theatre; . . . The people *will* have the theatre; then make it good. . . . The theatre is irresistible; organise the theatre."

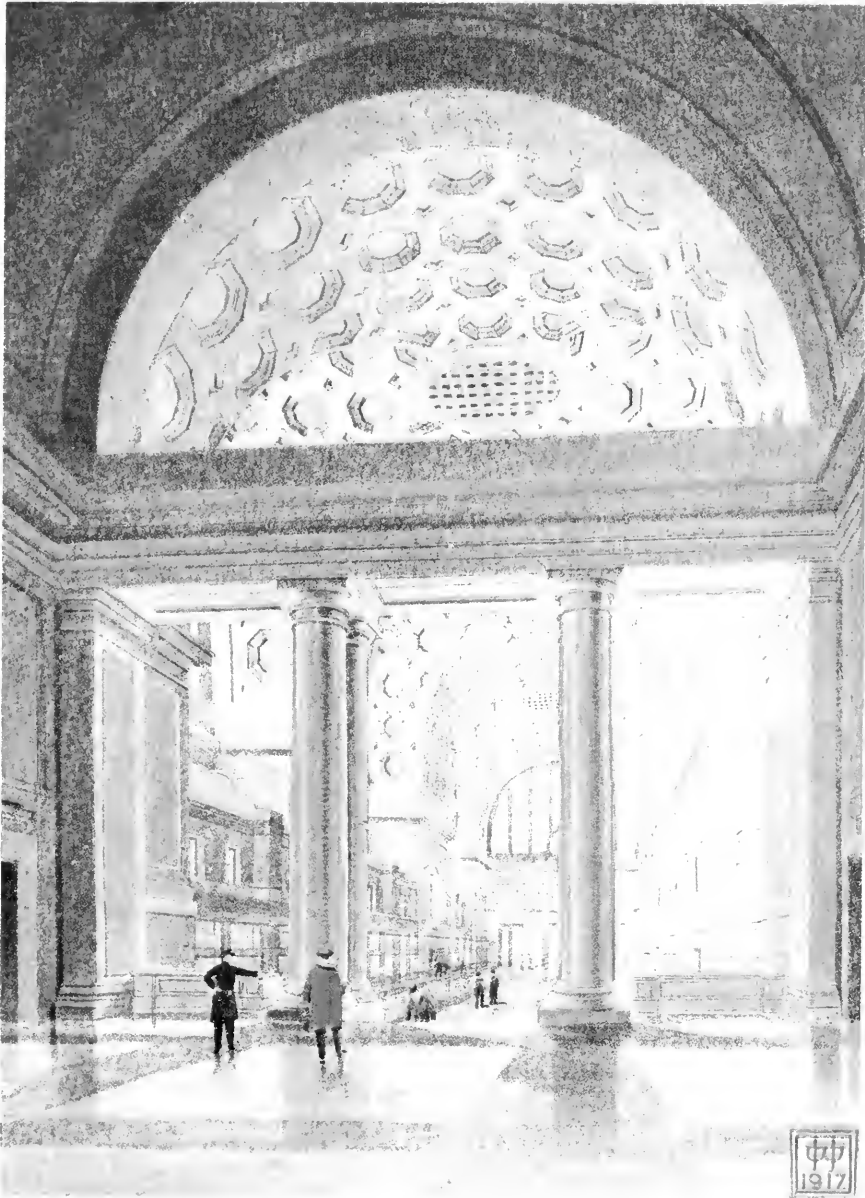
It will, I think, be generally conceded, that these words are even more appropriate when applied to recreation in general, than to theatres in particular; and that what was true of the latter 60 years ago, is even more true of the former at the present time.

A SCHEME for
IMPROVEMENTS to NEW ST. STATION.

In no class of building should there be greater orderliness than in Railway Stations, and in most English Stations one could scarcely have less. Hugh crowds of people, many of them strangers, are received and cleared daily under conditions which belong to an earlier, more leisurely, and less numerous generation.

A modern station should be so arranged that every operation incidental to travel, is provided for just in the one spot it ought to occupy, there should be no doubt possible as to the whereabouts of such things as trains, ticket booths, post and telegraph offices, waiting and refreshment rooms, luggage or cloak storage, enquiry office, railway company offices, entrances, exits, agencies, touring and shipping offices, exchange, matron, stalls for papers, etc., lavatories, barber's shop, and so on. There is often but little time to hunt for these things, and as they are usually scattered in the most unlikely places, much time is lost, and an unnecessary strain placed upon both passengers and officials.

The accompanying drawings show how these up-to-date needs may be met at New Street Station without going to any great expense,—such for instance as would be entailed by rebuilding, or by applying the drastic treatment adopted for the New Central Station, New York, U.S.A., where practically the whole station with the exception of the main hall is buried under roads and building sites.—A glance at the model on page 59 will show the



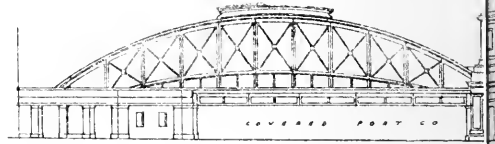
Proposed Booking Hall to New Street Station.

simplicity of the present proposal, which is to plan a large hall for general purposes on a portion of the road which now cuts the station in two. In this position it is equally available for either section of the station, the L. N. W. R. or M. R., and by flooring over the two areas on each side of this road, it is possible to obtain a large forecourt 3,900 sq. yds. in area, with entrances at three points, giving a maximum convenience to traffic movement. Along this forecourt—a view of which will be found on page 12—stretches a passenger loggia for arrival and departure, from the centre of which the booking hall is entered, luggage being taken direct from the loggia to the train or to the cloak room by means of lifts and the existing subways. A reference to the plan on page 57 will show that it is also possible to arrive or depart direct from platforms 3 and 4 by means of the portion of central road not built upon and left for this purpose.

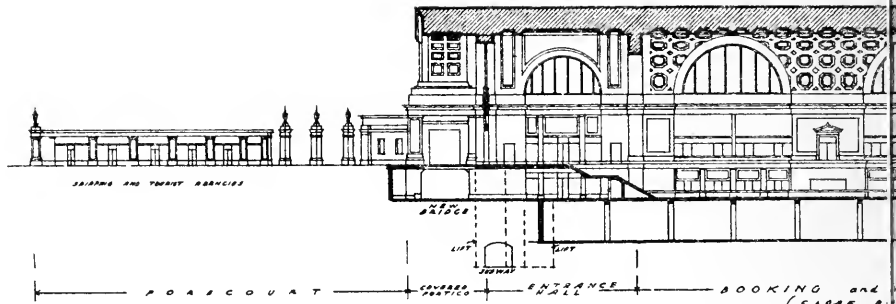
The Main Booking hall is 220 ft. by 45 ft. at floor level, which is 14 ft. below the entrance court, and therefore at practically the same level as the existing bridge; it gives immediate access to all the offices already mentioned, and to others shown on the drawings, while at the street level, and approached from the entrance hall, are the offices of the companies, the London and North Western offices on one side, and the Midland on the other.

It will be seen that both these offices and the ticket offices below, are fitted in between the columns and trusses of the great roof over the tracks, the structure of which is by this means left intact, while a great deal of necessary accommodation is obtained without encroaching upon the floor area of the booking hall. Each of the piers carrying the vault of the hall contains one bay of the station roof and the extremities of two of its trusses, and each of the lateral bays of the hall spans two bays of the roof, thus leaving a truss partially exposed in the centre, where it is incorporated in the general design and suitably masked.

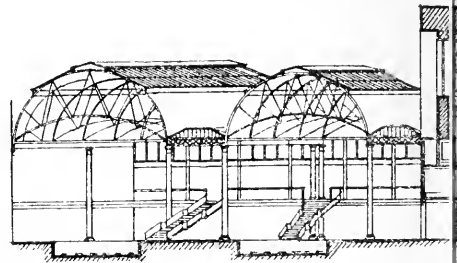
Improvements to New Street Station.



ELEVATION

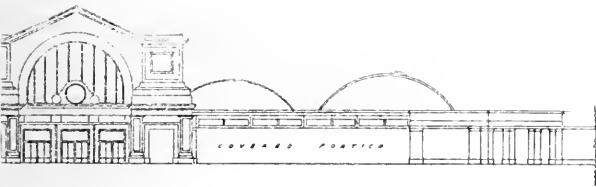


LONGITUDIN

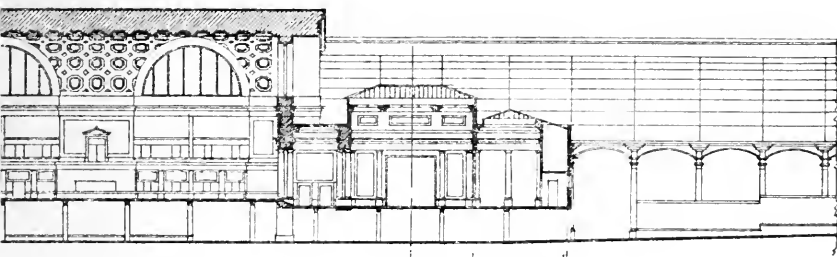


TRANSVERSE
(Looking South)

Elevations and Sections.

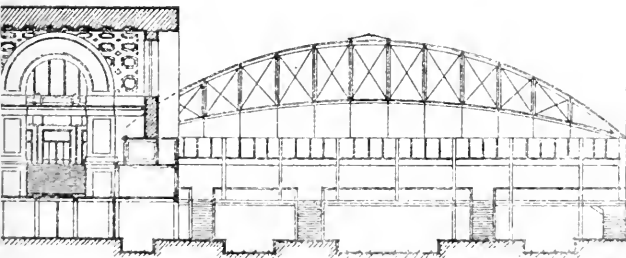


20 FORECOURT



WAITING HALL (UNBUILT)
 CENTER LINE OF EXISTING BRIDGE
 RESTAURANT ETC.

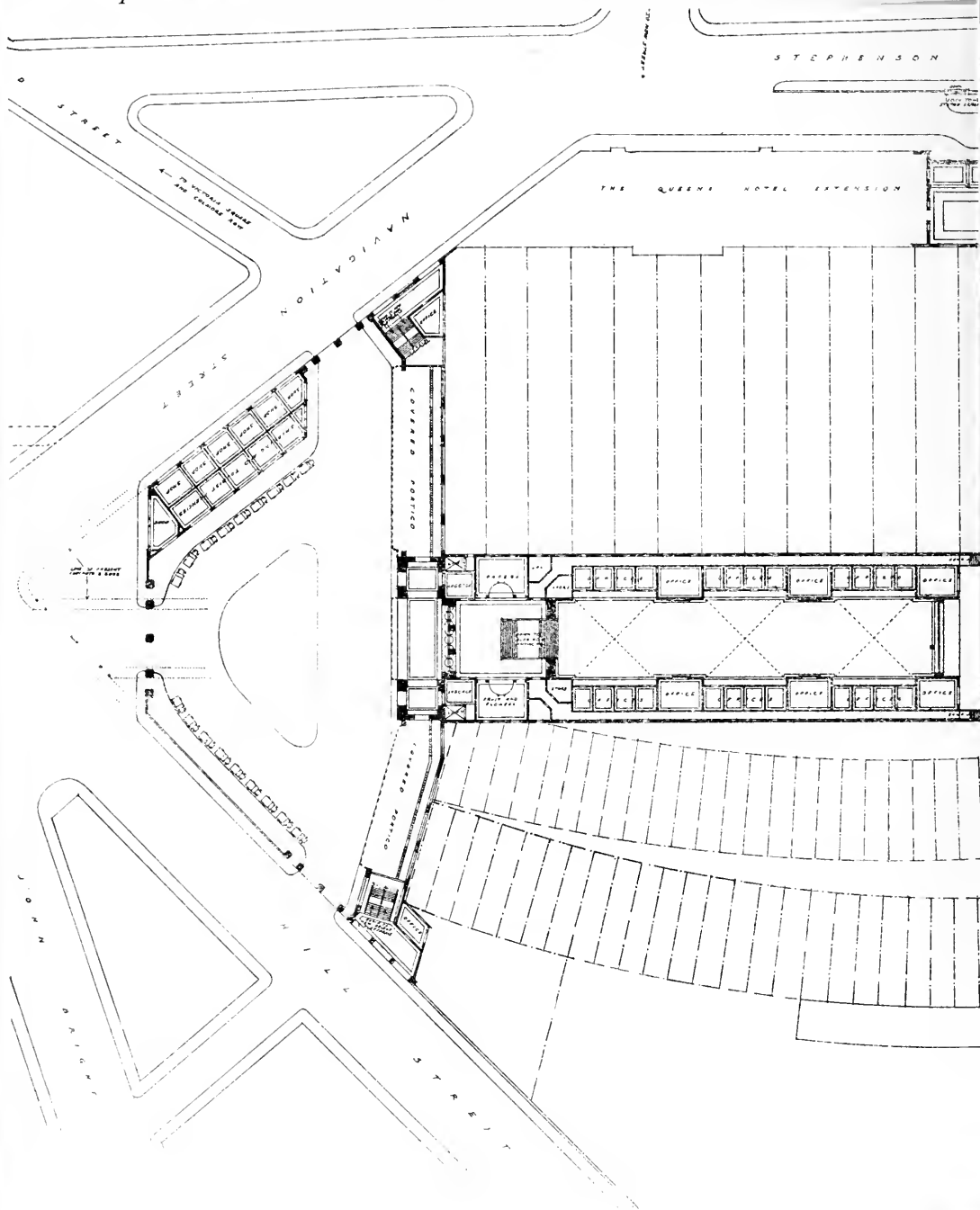
SECTION



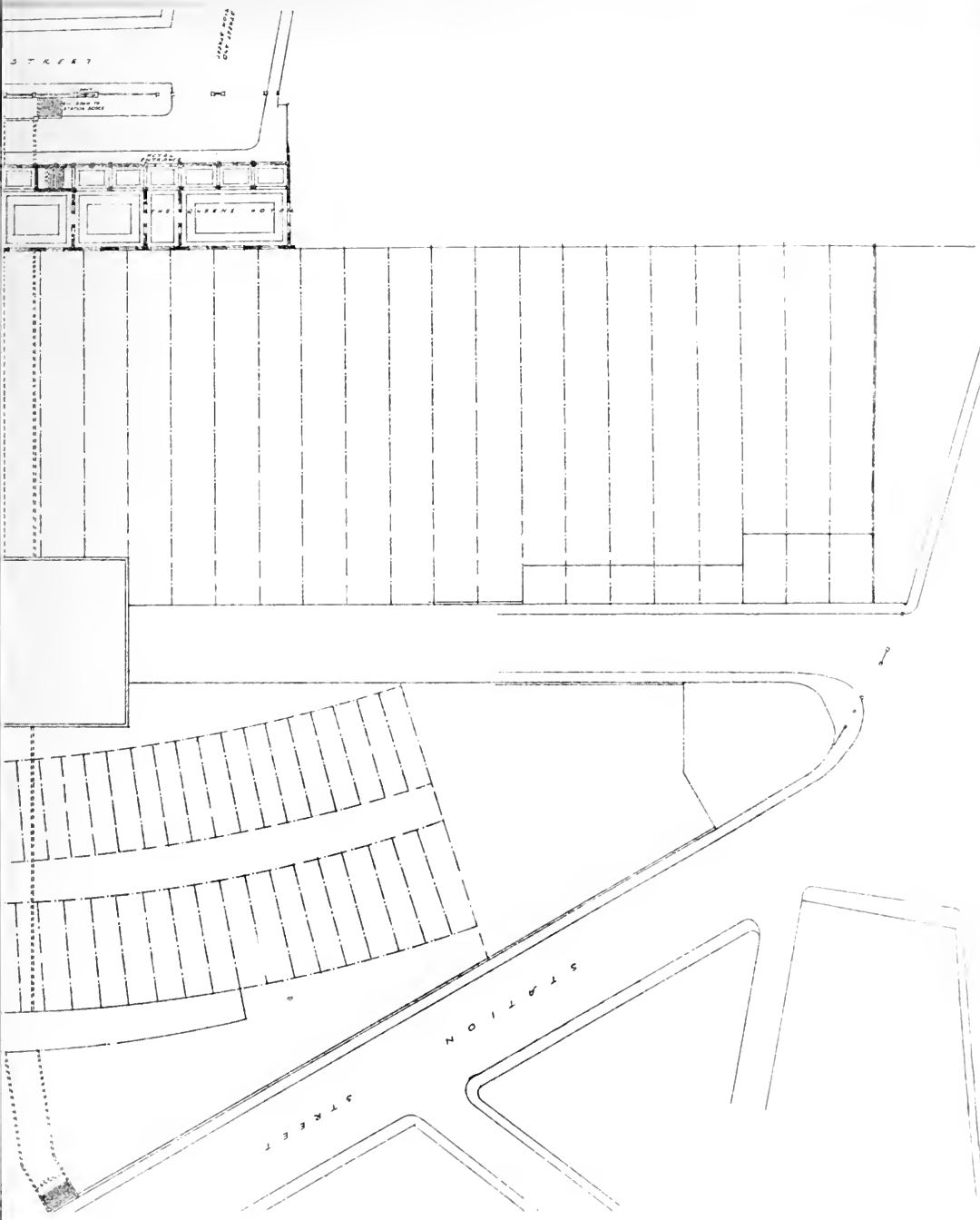
SECTION
 OF NEW BRIDGE



Improvements to New Street Station.

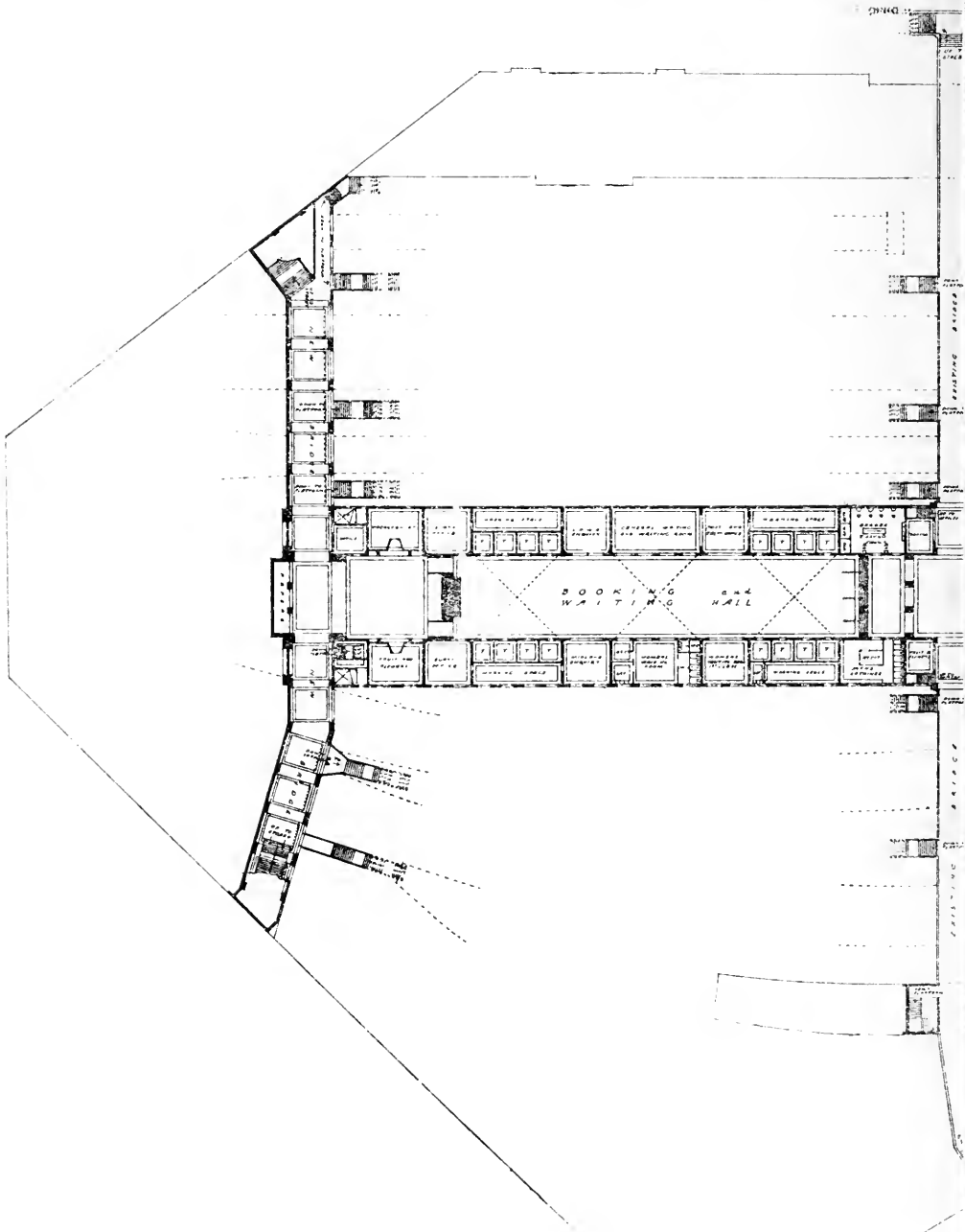


Plan at Street Level.



0 50 100 200 300 SCALE FEET.

Improvements to New Street Station.



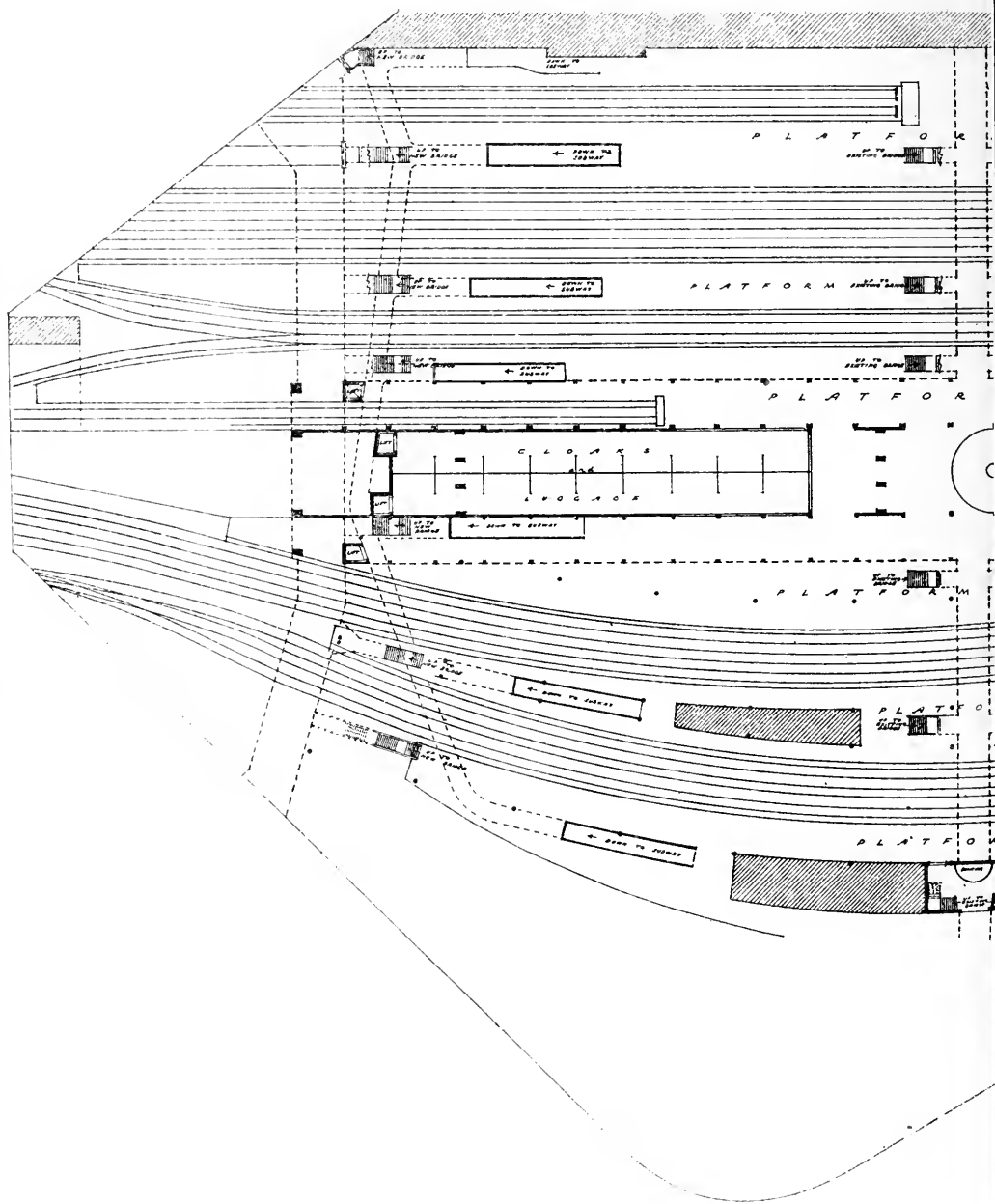
Plan at Bridge Level.



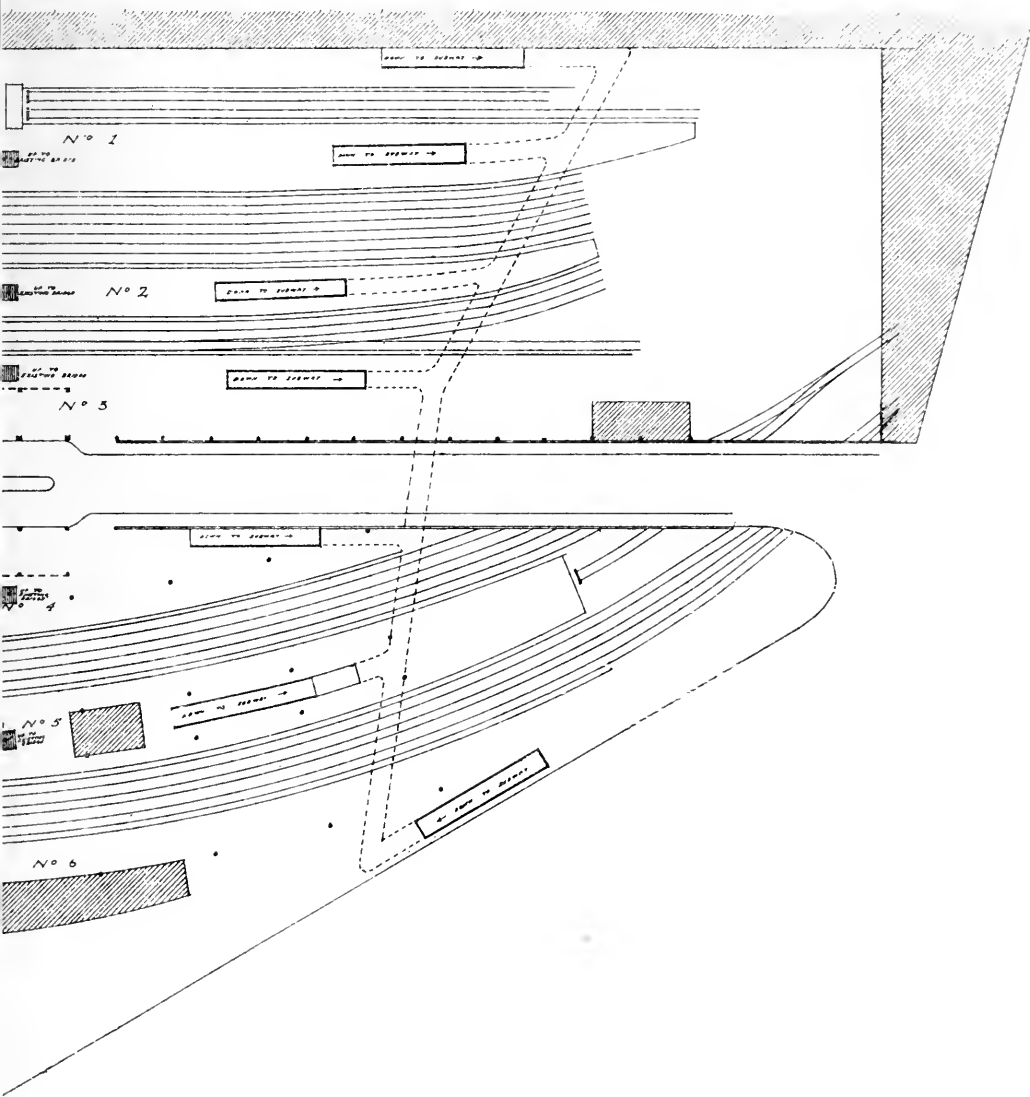
I



Improvements to New Street Station.



Plan at Platform Level.



The length of the hall is partly determined by its function of joining up the existing bridge with a new bridge under the front loggia which will be described later. The present bridge is made more commodious at the point of junction with the main hall, and is altered at the Stephenson Place entrance where it is continued at the same level under the Queen's Hotel, to emerge by stairs in the present hotel forecourt. This enables the two sections of the hotel at present divided on the ground floor level, to be combined, while direct access from the hotel to the bridge is retained by means of a separate flight of stairs.

It would be for the authorities to determine whether this bridge should be given entirely to the general public with access to the main booking hall only,—and not to platforms,—or whether it should continue to serve its present purpose, for which it would be vastly improved by the transfer of the principal station facilities to the new entrance and bridge elsewhere. If the latter, then an office would probably be required at bridge level under the hotel forecourt, for certain details of administration.

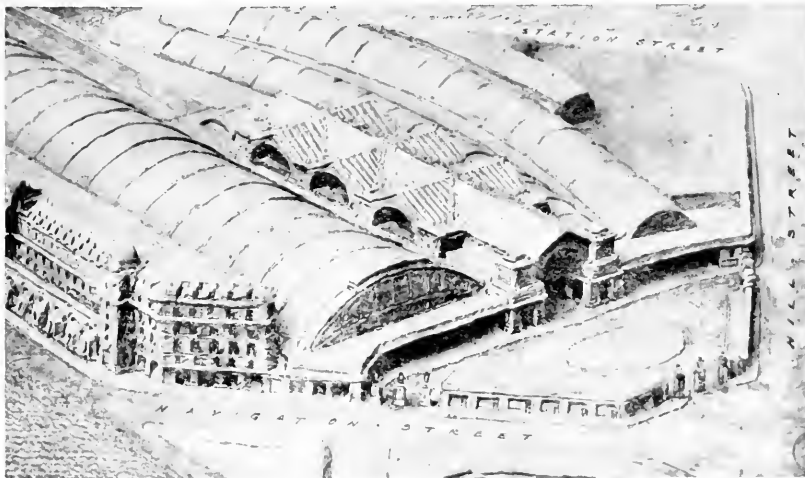
As a relief to the present traffic congestion, a second bridge is designed to pass from Navigation Street to Hill Street, approached by stairs at each end, and passing the main booking hall at a common level; it is situated immediately beneath the loggia to forecourt, and communicates with each of the platforms in the same way that the present bridge does. If used in conjunction with the latter it would by its position effectively split up and relieve the present overcrowding, while an equivalent result would be obtained if it should be decided to keep each bridge for the exclusive purpose of station and public traffic respectively.

Immediately below the main hall and at platform level, luggage and cloaking facilities for both companies have been arranged; this position being readily accessible from all directions, either by lifts to

the booking hall and main entrance, by sub-way to all platforms, or direct to taxi service by the road leading to Worcester Street.

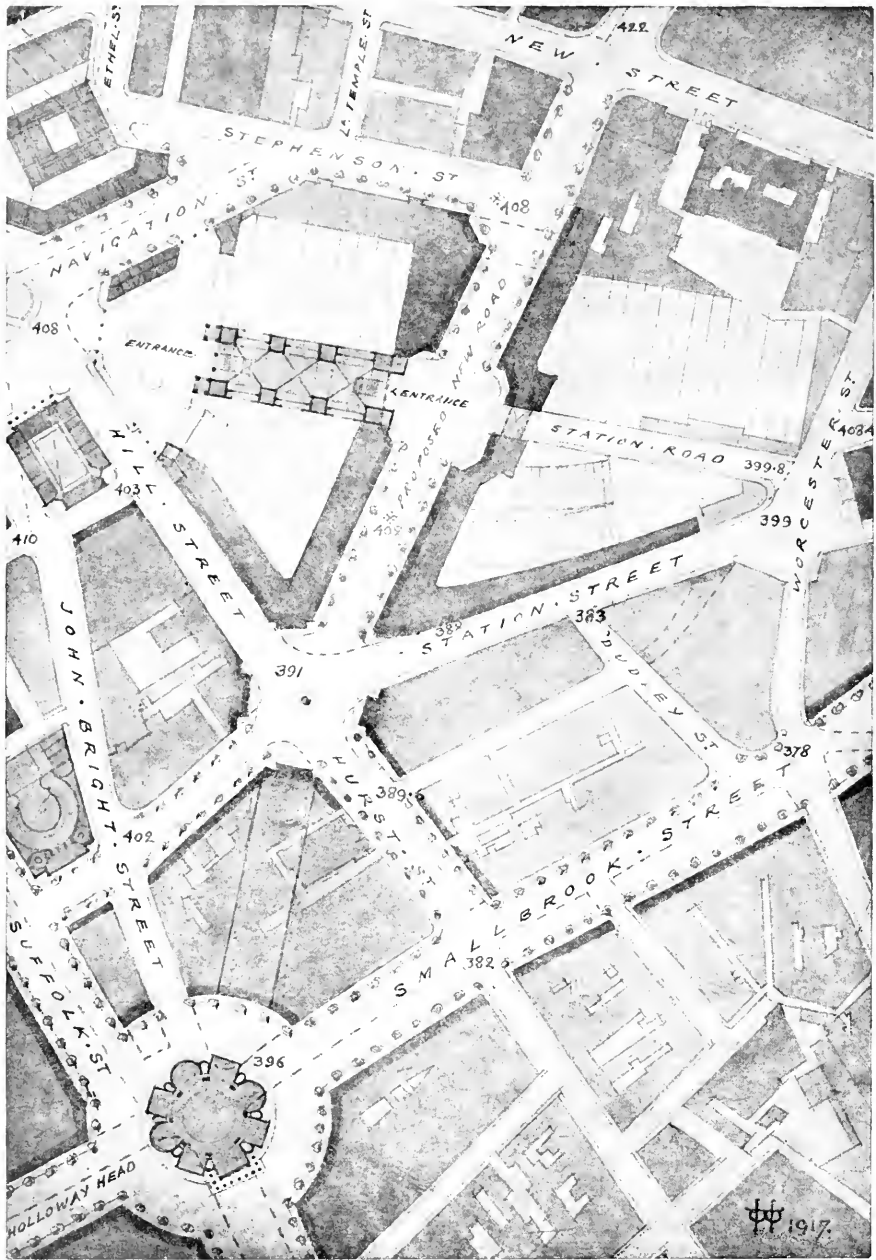
The general plan is now apparent, and reference to the drawings will supply all details of minor importance. The elevations, perspectives, and view of model will give the general appearance of the structure, which is suitable for its purpose, and when seen from above—as this station is—simple and effective. It is obviously a station and will scarcely be mistaken for an hotel, which is the appearance so many of our stations entrances really have.

The present tram service to the station will be revised when the circulating route is completed, and all the present termini in Navigation Street will be removed. It will then be necessary to give direct access from the booking hall, to the Suffolk Street tram route. This will be best accomplished by a tube under the station forecourt,—in direct communication with the booking hall—in which a moving platform would pass to and from an exit in the centre of Navigation St. where it adjoins the tramway on the ring road. This tube could also quite easily be continued to Snow Hill, and so satisfy a very great need for inter-communication between the two stations.



A birds-eye view of the scheme.

Plan of a new road & improvements around New Street Station.



100 200 300 1000 FEET

Levels marked * are assumed.

DEVELOPMENT of the STATION AREA.

At this point we may consider a proposal which is intimately connected with the scheme already discussed, although in some respects it belongs to a later section dealing with the general subject of road improvements.

The proposal is illustrated on page 60, and consists of a new road from Stephenson's Place to Hurst Street, which is obviously a perfect solution for the existing congestion on the station footbridge, and, at the same time, a much needed extension of the Corporation Street route beyond the present cul-de-sac.

Commencing at New Street, where a slight easement to one corner of Corporation Street is made to give better alignment with the new thoroughfare, Stephenson Place is left untouched, except that an obstructive statue and convenience are removed. Then from the Queen's Hotel, the new road is cut direct for the intersection of Station Street and Hurst Street, at a gradient of 1 in 80 until within 70 yards of the station boundary, when it changes to about 1 in 20, in order to clear the last of the Midland Co.'s tracks.

The construction of the road, so that it would not interfere with the present station accommodation, does not apparently present any great difficulty, and points of support, and girder depths, may be left to the skill of the engineers, who would probably avoid the difficulties created by the huge girders designed for a similar purpose in Navigation Street and Hill Street—if that difficulty presented

itself—by designing the whole ground storey of the flanking buildings as a girder, in which the necessary openings for windows, etc., could be allowed for.

The new road is practically confined to the station area, and offers the railway authorities the advantage of relief from the present bridge congestion, another excellent approach to the station, and a general improvement of the locality, which would at once add to the value of the Hill Street and Station Street frontages as building sites. If adopted in conjunction with, or as likely to follow, the station scheme discussed in the previous chapter, it would be necessary to omit the Entrance Hall of that design, and enter the Main Booking Hall direct from the Loggia as shewn on plan, page 60, an alteration which would appreciably reduce the cost of that section of the scheme and be equally satisfactory.

This is the road at its simplest ; but there is an alternative continuation which may be mentioned. It would be possible, for instance, to maintain the 408 level, and to pass the road intersection by means of a bridge continued through the block opposite and so falling by 1 in 36 to the circus at Bristol Street ; this would give a still better gradient, and also bye-pass a great deal of traffic—sometimes thought to be desirable—there would also be the creation of considerably more street frontage. But, on the other hand, this extension would be more expensive, and Station Street, Hill Street, and Hurst Street, would be cut off from direct access to the new road ; from which it would appear that the smaller scheme is preferable.

The remaining improvements shewn on this plan may be briefly indicated. A circus is shewn at the junction of Smallbrook Street and Bristol Street, leaving an island site suitable for a public building ; another island site, facing Hill Street and the proposed station place, is suggested for an Exchange, or a Chamber of

Commerce ; and between John Bright Street and Suffolk Street is another detached area, which is suggested for the new Prince of Wales Theatre displaced from Broad Street. Wherever possible, fully detached sites, such as these, should be given to buildings in which fire risks are most to be feared, and especially to theatres, which also need many entrances and plenty of space for queues to wait without nuisance to adjoining property owners.

It is proposed to close Old Meeting Street, as it apparently serves no useful purpose, and interferes with the erection of buildings of a decent character, and the widening of Holloway Head, the closing of Pinfold Street, and the use of the present railway areas at the bottom of Hill Street as building sites, are all dealt with on the sectional plans which follow.

PREAMBLE to the ROAD PLAN.

In the preceding pages three schemes of a special character are given in detail, and they have been treated in this manner because, although intimately connected with the general development of the City, they have important features not necessarily dependant upon Town Planning proposals, in relation to which they may be considered either in combination, or as quite separate desiderata.

In the following pages, the possibilities for road development in the central area of Birmingham are considered both as a whole and in detail. Certain important sections being drawn to a larger scale, and described separately, in order to show more clearly the modification of building areas and street frontages.

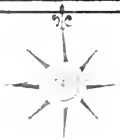
These details together with those illustrated earlier on pages 40 and 60 are gathered together and shown in combination on the complete plan on page 95, should be considered in conjunction with the road plan as it now exists, which is illustrated on page 67, although, as a road plan, the latter does more than justice to present conditions, which would be more accurately indicated, if the large areas of Railway Siding and canal wharfage were blacked over, to represent the impasse they really produce. As shown, they give a deceptive appearance of openness which is very misleading.

The order in which the various sections of the road plan are taken will perhaps need some explanation. The most natural

course would have been to give the complete plan first, and to proceed from the general discussion, to a subsequent analysis of details. But because some of those who may consider these proposals will not be familiar with plans, it is hoped that by proceeding in the reverse order, they will more readily grasp the whole scheme when it is finally built up out of the sections which have already been examined separately.

If the reader will also keep in mind that the general consideration of traffic circulation is reserved for discussion at a later stage, it will be possible, for the time being, to leave on one side the principle justification for such new roads as that from the Bull Ring to Livery Street, and the extensions of Smallbrook and Shepcote Streets, and concentrate upon what may be considered secondary values, by which means it is hoped that the necessary explanations will be much simplified.

The Present Road Plan of the Central Area.

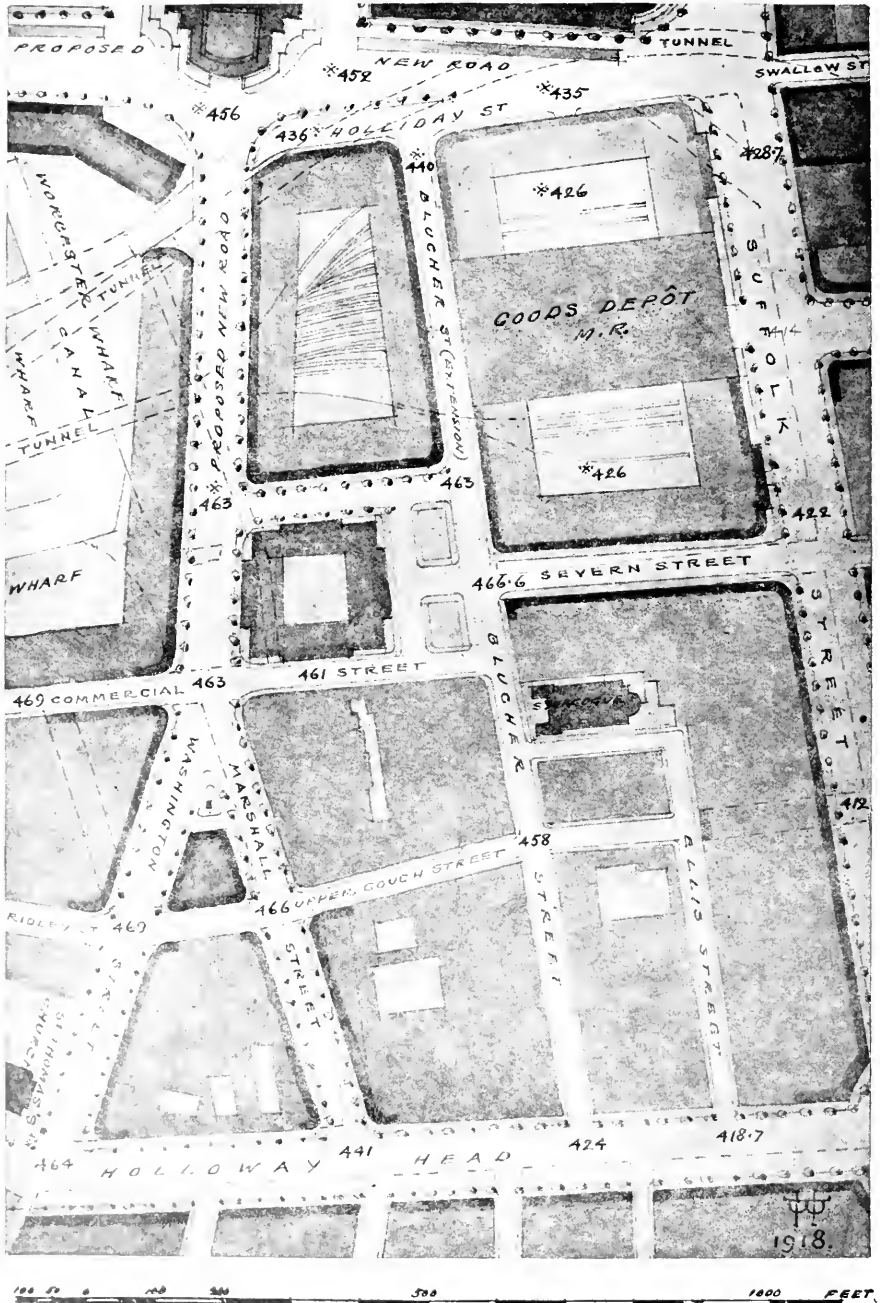


PLAN of the CENTRAL AREA



AREA of BIRMINGHAM: 1912. C.D.

The M.R. Sidings area from Holliday Street to Holloway Head.



Level marked * are assumed.

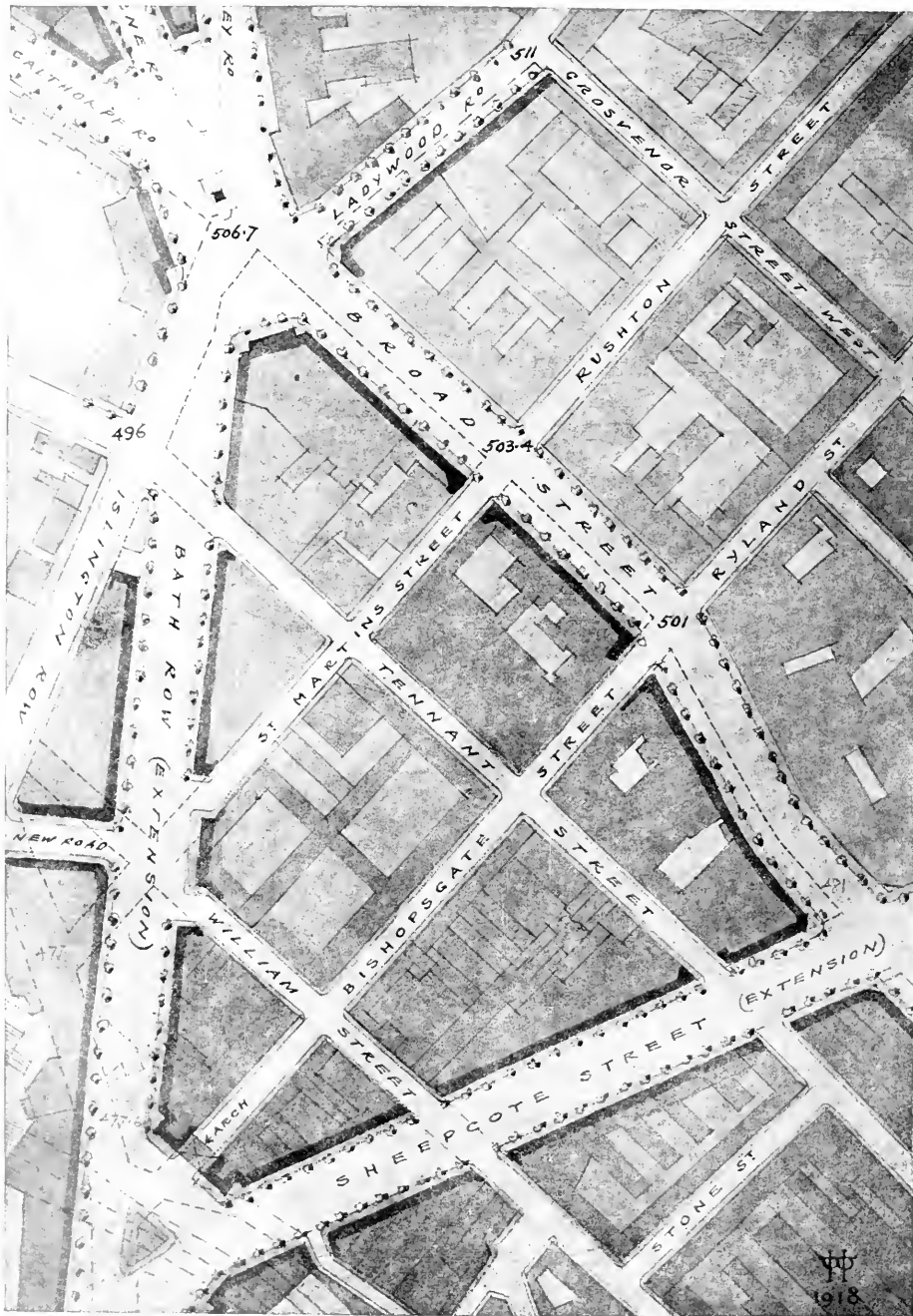
*The DEVELOPMENT of
the M.R. SIDINGS AREA & WHARFAGE.*

From Suffolk Street to Bath Row and from Broad Street to Holloway Head is a desolate area, across which the only communication is the tortuous Granville Street, and a dreary footbridge between Commercial Street and Holliday Street.

The plan on page 68 deals with the worst portion of this area, and it is not difficult to see that what is required is a tie between what is at present the bottom of Bridge Street (raised by the new lay-out to a level of 456 ordnance) and the higher part of Holloway Head, at St. Thomas' Church. This road is shewn 85 ft. wide and divides when it reaches Commercial Street, to pick up Washington and Marshall Streets, both of which are widened, and modified in direction for the purpose. The levels are easy and the bridging over Holliday Street and the M.R. sidings, extends for not more than 150 yds., after which the natural level is again available.

The covering over of the Railway Goods yard, etc., at a level which would leave the efficiency of the latter unimpaired, and by this means forming building sites fronting on the new road, is very desirable, and should prove mutually advantageous, to both the Company and the City. One expects also, that when the conditions about their depot are so much improved, the Railway Company would be prepared to give a simple and dignified appearance to the facade fronting Navigation Street, to which it would bear an important relation.

The extension of Blucher Street to Holliday Street has some advantages, but is not essential. Gough Street has been closed, and Severn Street widened to 75 ft. The site at the top of this street is an excellent one for a public hall, the position is commanding, and the approach quite satisfactory.



Plan of improvements to Fire Ways & extensions to Bath Row & Sheepcote Street. (Scale as before).

*The EXTENSION of
BATH ROW & SHEEPCOTE STREET, etc.*

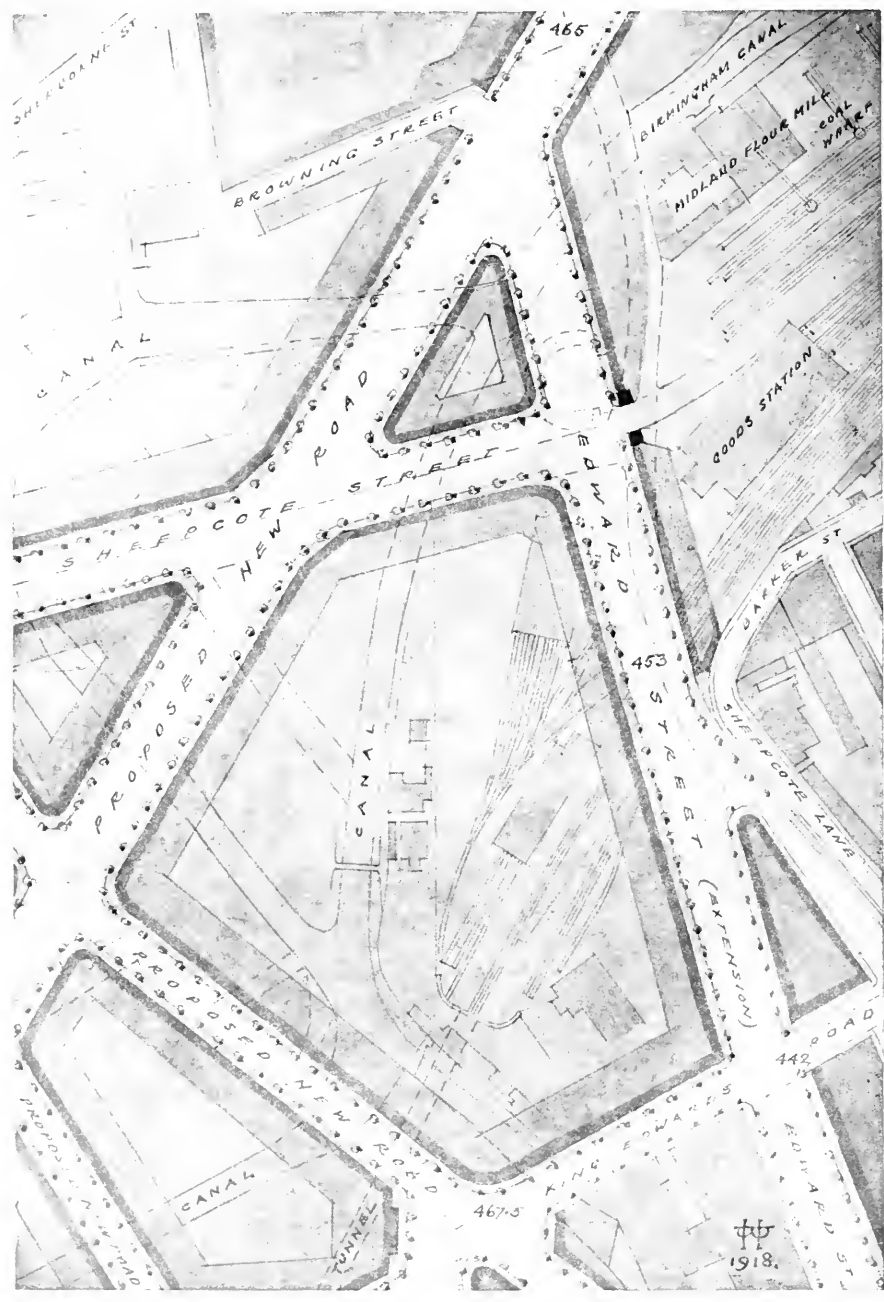
It is proposed to extend Bath Row to the Five Ways as a new road, rather than as a widening of Islington Row, in order to give a better line of connection between the Five Ways and the ring road, and also because this arrangement improves certain awkward building sites adjoining the railway, making them available for a better class of building. The property displaced by this re-arrangement is quite small and unimportant, while the improvement is considerable.

Two variations are made from the building line as proposed in the Corporation Scheme for the widening of arterial roads. The first is that the line of the Broad Street widening is kept to the same side of the road throughout its length—instead of passing from one side to the other—the intention being to preserve the bank at the corner of Sheepcote Street, which does not deserve to be pulled down unnecessarily, and the second is to negotiate a suitable arrangement at Five Ways, on lines which would cost less to adjust.

The continuation of Sheepcote Street to Bath Row does not call for special comment, this extension passes through an area of back streets and cheap property, and is essential to the ring road which will be described later.

Small refinements, such as the arch across Bishopgate Street, the treatment of St. Martin's Street and William Street to correct their awkward alignment with the new road, and the improved arrangement of the entrance to the Hagley, Harborne and Calthorpe Roads, are sufficiently explained by the plan.

Plan of the L.N.W.R. Sidings area & new road to Ladywood, etc.



*The DEVELOPMENT of
the L.N.W.R. SIDINGS AREA & WHARFAGE.*

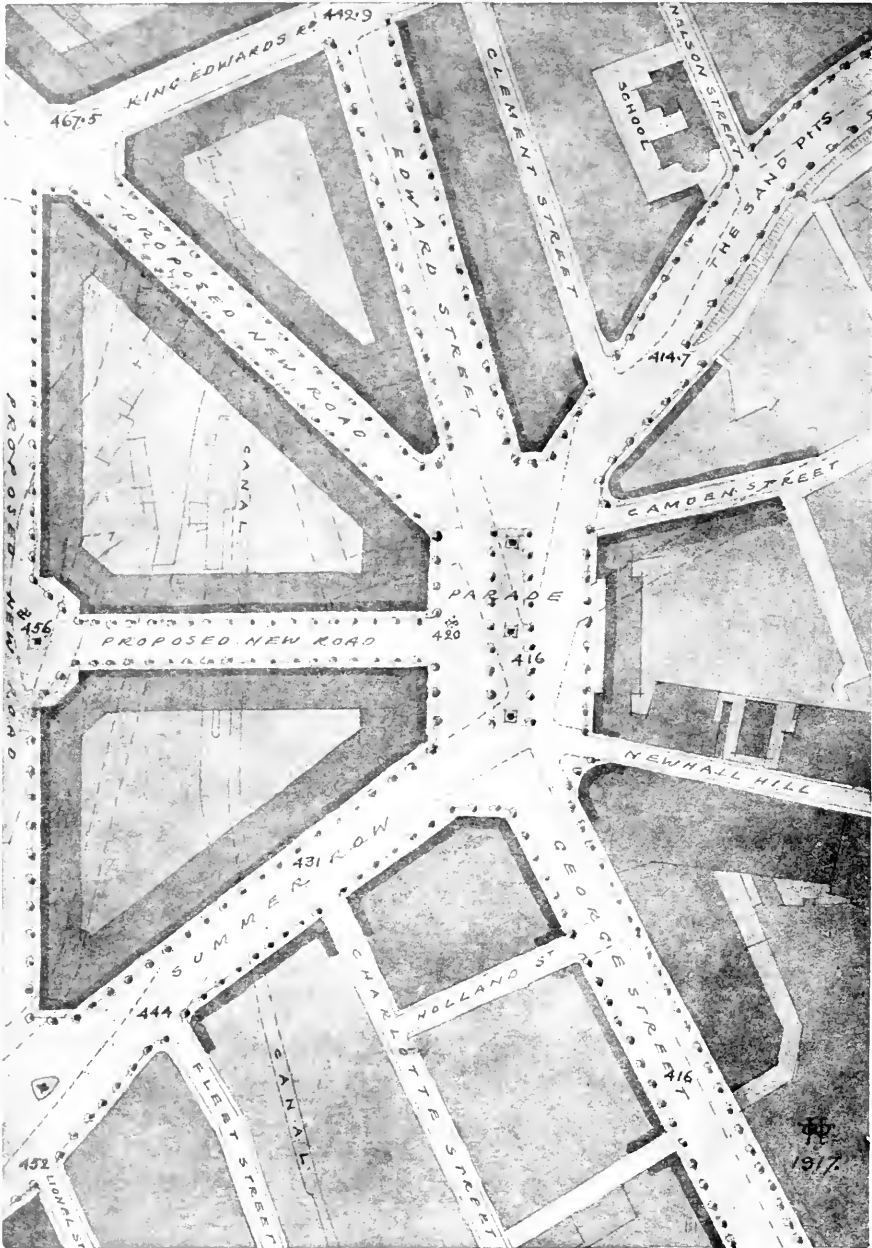
This plan needs but little comment, the area dealt with is one of those obstructions to a proper growth of the city, which must be cut into by any efficient scheme of development. Fortunately, owing to suitable levels, it is possible to leave practically all the present wharfage and railway sidings intact, while building new roads and buildings over them.

It will be seen by reference to the general plan on page 95 that the continuation of Edward Street beyond Sheepcote Street is there shown to follow the line of St. Vincent Street, a direction which makes use of the existing road, and gives a greater area to the island site left by the three main roads. On the other hand the continuation of the straight line has the merit of giving a better building frontage across the front of the Midland Flour Mill, and scope for greater harmony in the character of the buildings which the improved conditions are expected to encourage.

This plan also shows an important section of the new road to Ladywood from Broad Street, referred to in connection with the proposed Pleasure Grounds at Rotton Park Reservoir, and shown complete on the general plan. For a distance of 665 yds, this road is cut through a congested and obstructive area ; 470 yds. represent a widening of Gt. Tindal Street ; and 270 yds. pass through small house property as far as Ickniel Port Road. The levels from Broad Street to St. Vincent Street vary only 4 ft. Gt. Tindal Street rises 1 in. 54 to Monument Road, and from that point to Ickniel Port Road there is a fall of 1 in. 47.

By means of this road the whole of the Ladywood area would be effectively opened up, and pleasure seekers would be given a suitable and direct approach to the proposed recreation grounds.

Improvements to The Parade & new roads across canal wharfs.



Levels marked * are assumed.

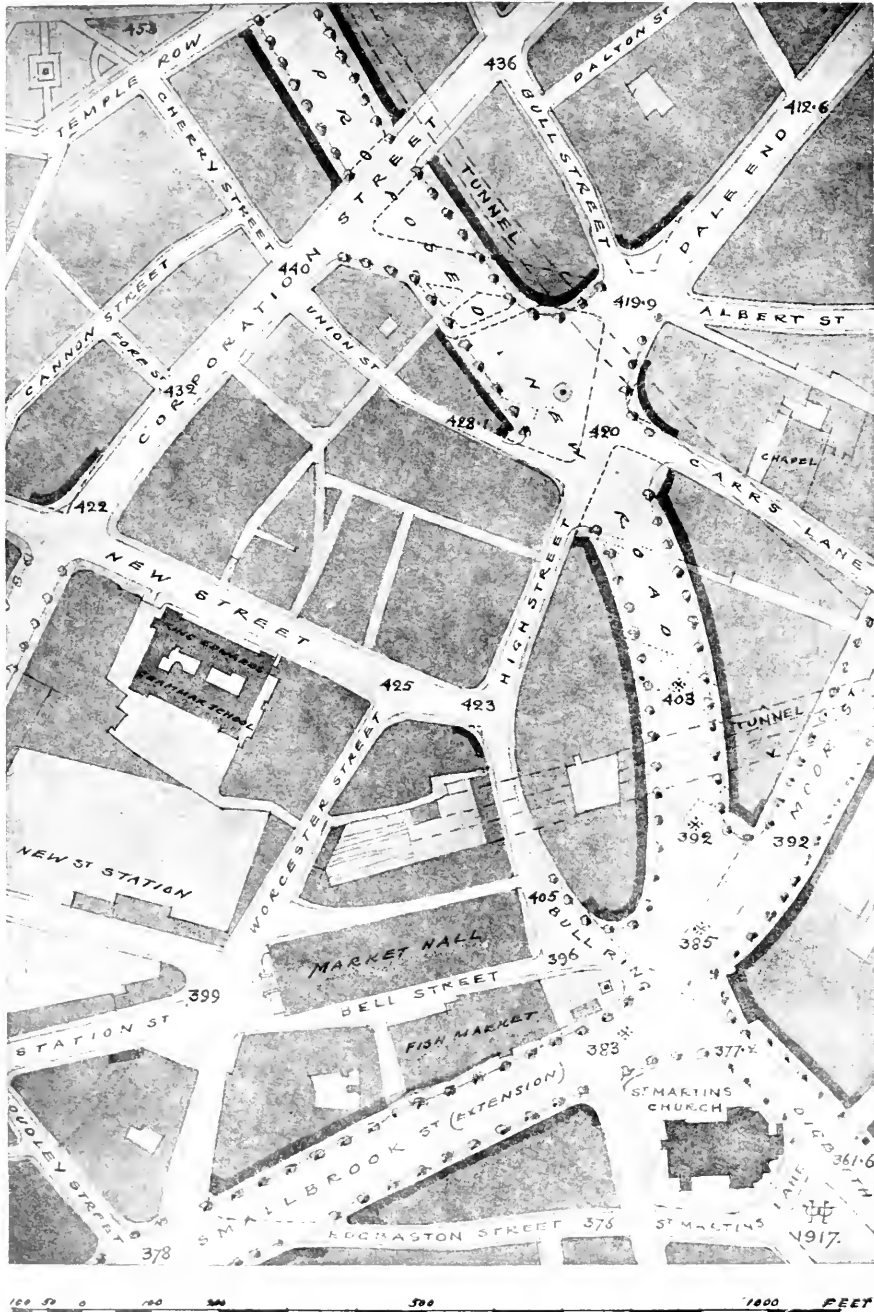
IMPROVEMENTS to the PARADE.

The Parade is one of those road junctions which are at present badly congested, and requires special treatment. Two fairly steep inclines run into it, and the levels generally are not of the best, for which reasons additional spaciousness is desirable, and as is usual when several roads meet, it does not require much correction of the building line to obtain greatly improved conditions.

This is the more necessary as it is proposed to widen Edward Street and George Street, and also to open out two new roads, one passing diagonally through Cambridge Street, to the new road running to Ladywood, the other rising at right angles towards the proposed Central Place, and so forming an axial approach to the new Municipal Centre, giving a magnificent prospect of the War Museum and Memorial. These roads are built on piers, and pass over the canal area without interfering with the wharfs, or the navigation of the canals.

The line of Camden Street has been altered to break up its uninteresting appearance, and also to centralize the building between Camden Street and Newhall Hill on the axial line. The gardens which occupy the centre of the Parade are 290 ft. by 50 ft. and are sufficiently large for an agreeable horticultural display. They also serve to mask a difference of levels, which can thus be suitably graded.

Improvements around St. Martin's Church, The Bull Ring, etc.



Levels marked * are assumed.

*IMPROVEMENTS
AROUND ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, etc.*

The conditions within a wide radius about St. Martin's Church are most difficult to bring into order, owing to the levels imposed, and the complicated character of the traffic problem. It is proposed to improve these as follows :

On Plan No. 7 of the recent Corporation proposals for the widening of arterial roads, the width of Digbeth, opposite St. Martin's Church, is shown as 60 ft. This is probably an oversight, and in view of the additional traffic which it is intended to divert to this point from the Coventry, Stratford, Warwick and Moseley Roads, I propose to increase this width to 85 ft. I assume also that in clearing away the indifferent property between Digbeth, Moat Lane, Smithfield Street, and St. Martin's Lane, the intention, in the proposals referred to, is to improve market accommodation, either by removing the present open air marketing from the Bull Ring to a less obstructive site, or by giving more room for the great assembly of vehicles which now stretch out into the adjoining roads on market days, to effect a much needed improvement in that respect.

Referring to the map, page 95, it will be seen that the width between the Vegetable Market and the corner of Smithfield Street has also been widened to 85 ft. so that the traffic of Bradford Street and Bromsgrove Street may have access to the ring road at this point ; also that the difference in levels between Moat Lane and Digbeth is accommodated by a division, or barrier, which runs out where the levels equalise ; and further, that additional accommodation for vehicles, and the many other outdoor needs peculiar to markets,

is proposed by the clearance of the area bounded by Jamaica Row, Moat Row, and Sherlock Street, which would then be common to the meat and vegetable markets, and their probable extensions.

Returning to the plan, page 76, a new road from the Bull Ring, passing through Corporation Street, is suggested, an important feature of this proposal being that it offers a solution to the congestion difficulties in Bull Street, High Street, and the Bull Ring. These streets are at present not only dangerously over crowded, but there appears to be no possible way of dealing with the difficulty on the existing routes which would be satisfactory, or which would not be far more costly than the scheme now put forward. There would be no doubt of the successful development of this road, all vehicular traffic, except such as had business in the streets referred to, would naturally prefer the more open route, especially as it will be seen that the gradient is much superior, being in fact very little more than that of Carr's Lane. The conditions under which the new ring road will be constructed, the tram and other traffic which would immediately give a vigorous use to the new thoroughfare, and the great crowds in the vicinity, would all ensure a rapid building programme for the new frontages, and automatically lessen the pressure in the congested areas referred to.

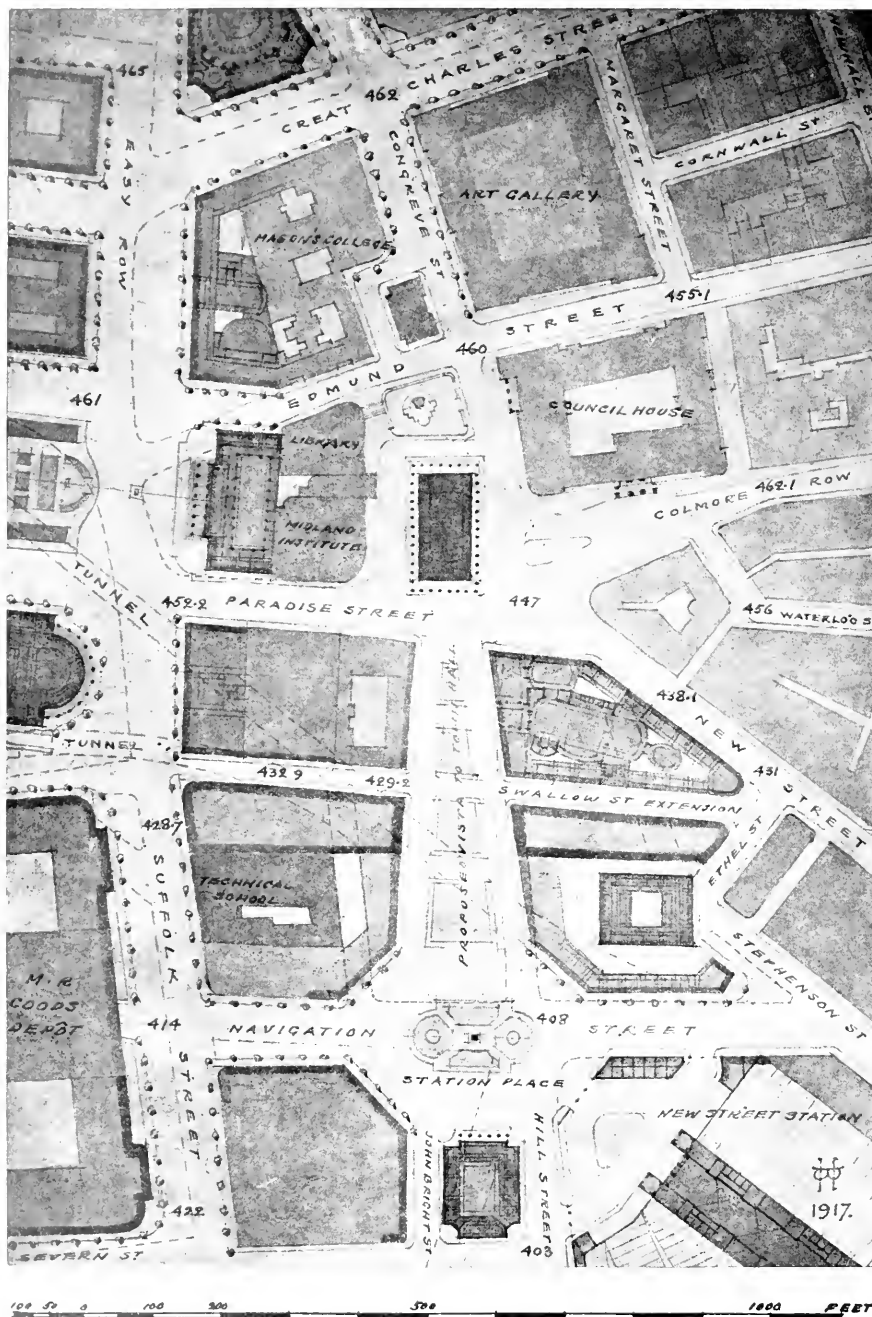
The meeting of several important roads on a considerable slope such as the Bull Ring, produces difficulties of transit which it is proposed to improve by projecting a plateau from the front of the Fish market, which would stand about 12 ft. above the Smallbrook Street extension at one end, and gradually reduce to a common level at Bell Street. By this device the Smallbrook Street extension could be carried across the end of Spiceal Street without a dangerous tilt, and the gradient of the Bull ring would be eased by the greater length of the bend, thus improving the conditions at the principal point of the descent.

*The APPROACH from
the STATION to the TOWN HALL.*

An important circumstance in this locality is the fact that on arrival by train, a first impression of the City is obtained on issuing from the station precincts, and the pride of the City is concerned that this impression should be a creditable one ; therefore the station itself having been already dealt with, it now remains to open out a prospect which shall serve as a suitable introduction to the town.

No great difficulty presents itself in forming a Station Place, with a good approach, either from Suffolk Street in the one direction, or from New Street in the other, and there is ample room for the formation of quite a fine area in which to circulate the usual traffic appertaining to the approaches of a railway station. But the remaining portion of the scheme, from the Station Place to the Town Hall, is frankly an appeal to civic pride ; for although it is true that a better accommodation for traffic is obtained, and that this is very desirable, there are not here the same practical claims that may be urged for the road adjustments which have been proposed elsewhere, and in this respect there is a departure from the conditions so far adhered to, namely, to obtain what beauty is possible from convenience, and not to seek it for its own sake. Not that beauty fails to give an ample return for money wisely expended upon it, but if, as a people, we have not yet learned to regard such expenditure as profitable, it is perhaps advisable to attempt only the more reasonable programme of getting the maximum amount of beauty out of our necessities.

Plan for a Station Place and approach to the Town Hall.



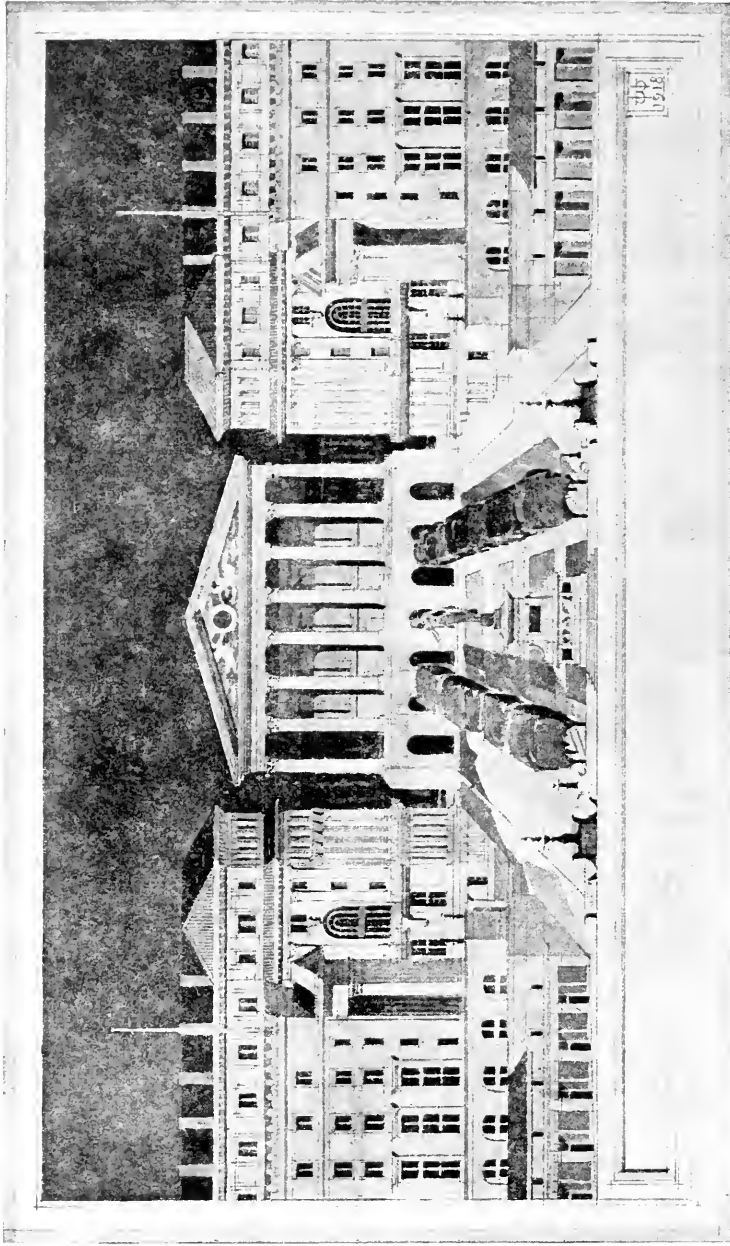
In the present case the temptation to show what could have been done by prevision, was irresistible, and perhaps, when the Post Office comes to be condemned, or the value we set upon such matters is improved, the suggestion may be justified.

There is nothing at the present moment between Navigation Street and Swallow Street to prevent this vast improvement ; but at the Post Office extension we meet with a difficulty which is likely to block the way for some time to come. This need not discourage us however, the dreadful unsightliness of the present buildings and the truly remarkable possibilities of this approach to what, in effect, is our Acropolis, should encourage us to wait for and take the opportunity, when it again offers itself, as in time it will.

The Town Hall stands 600 ft. back from Navigation Street, on a rise of 40 ft., and above this the colonnade of the Hall stands 23 ft. higher on its stylobate, offering a remarkable opportunity for architectural effect; and, in order to get the proper value from these unusual conditions, it is proposed to construct a vista comprising two roads of 50 ft., enclosing a series of gardens, tapering from 50 ft. in width at Navigation Street to 25 ft. at the top of the hill. The roads draw together to enhance the effect, and in the centre, dominating the whole, is the Hall.

On either flank, if building operations are properly controlled, there should be an important building, properly designed for effect from the Station Place, while further down the hill, on the lower side of Swallow Street, two buildings, less both in actual height and by having a lower ground level, would give variety to the composition ; Below these again, shops or other buildings of two stories, would keep the view open and assist the monumental effect, which would be closed laterally by the Technical School on the one hand and a new block of office buildings on the other. Facing in the opposite direction and approaching the station from the Town Hall, the

A suggested approach to the Town Hall from Navigation Street.



view is centralised by an Exchange, Hall of Commerce, or other Public Building, while the new station would be in view practically as far as the Town Hall. It would be difficult to find a better example than this of the need for planning in advance, and also of the necessity for a commission of control over important building areas.

The new buildings on each side of Suffolk Street, shewn on page 80, are described on other plans, and need not be spoken of here, and as to other modifications, it will be seen that, by extending Swallow Street, and closing Pinfold Street, which at present conducts traffic to New Street at an inconvenient angle, a better gradient and a far superior arrangement of building sites is obtained, especially of the site fronting Victoria Square and New Street, which is suggested as a suitable position for a first class hotel.

A TOWN CENTRE.

It is a curious fact, that many of those who talk with enthusiasm of the fine things seen in other towns, are content to live the principal part of their lives in ugly and inconvenient surroundings. It is true that nature tempers our senses to our circumstances, so that the mind of the average citizen is deadened to the unpleasant things about him, as the slum dweller is also unconcious for the most part, of what we who know better, would rescue him from. This apathy goes hand in hand with an affection for everything that is of the town, which deserves something more worthy of attachment, and among the developments which may be expected to provide this, is a suitable central "Place."

The chief point of interest in all towns is, or should be, the "Town Place" around which its principal buildings are grouped. From the administrative point of view this is the centre from which the conduct of the City is mapped out and ordered. For the traffic problem it is the centre of the web. To the Citizens it is an object of pride and affection to which they naturally gravitate, and for the stranger it is the chief measure of the condition and standing of the townspeople.

It is at once evident that in selecting a position for a suitable centre for Birmingham, it would be costly to attempt any patchwork in connection with the present public buildings. One must also consider the inconvenience of any re-adjustment of existing accommodation,

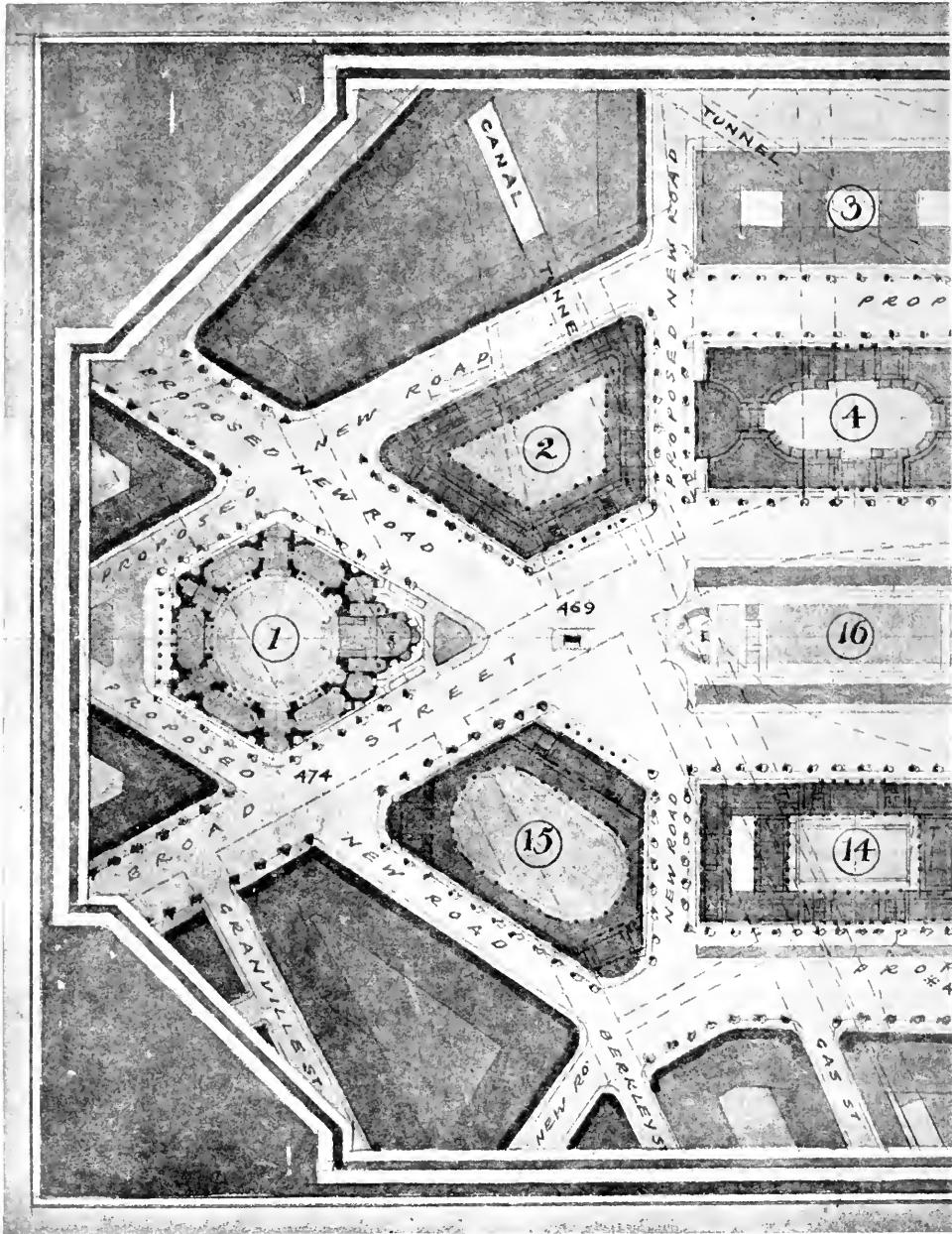
which would seriously interfere with the continuity of administration, moreover, the public buildings we now have are best left in comparative obscurity. Nevertheless any new development should be in the vicinity of the Town Hall, and we naturally turn to the area which is shewn developed on page 87.

With the exception of two new buildings which should not have been erected, and one or two manufacturing premises and offices, there is nothing here but acres of wharfage, two shockingly ugly and badly ventilated Halls, a few sundries, and much dilapidation; it is a waste land in the very shadow of the Town Hall, and unless opened up now, will become a permanent hindrance to a convenient development of the city. This is obviously the area for our purpose, being based at one end upon Suffolk Street—which is intended to be the main cross road of the city, as well as the most central section of the inner ring road—while at the other extremity of the new “Place” we have Broad Street and the new road to Ladywood, and midway on either side there are direct links with the Parade and Holloway Head (see page 95).

Around this open space, which is laid out as a formal garden between two parallel roads, are grouped the following buildings :

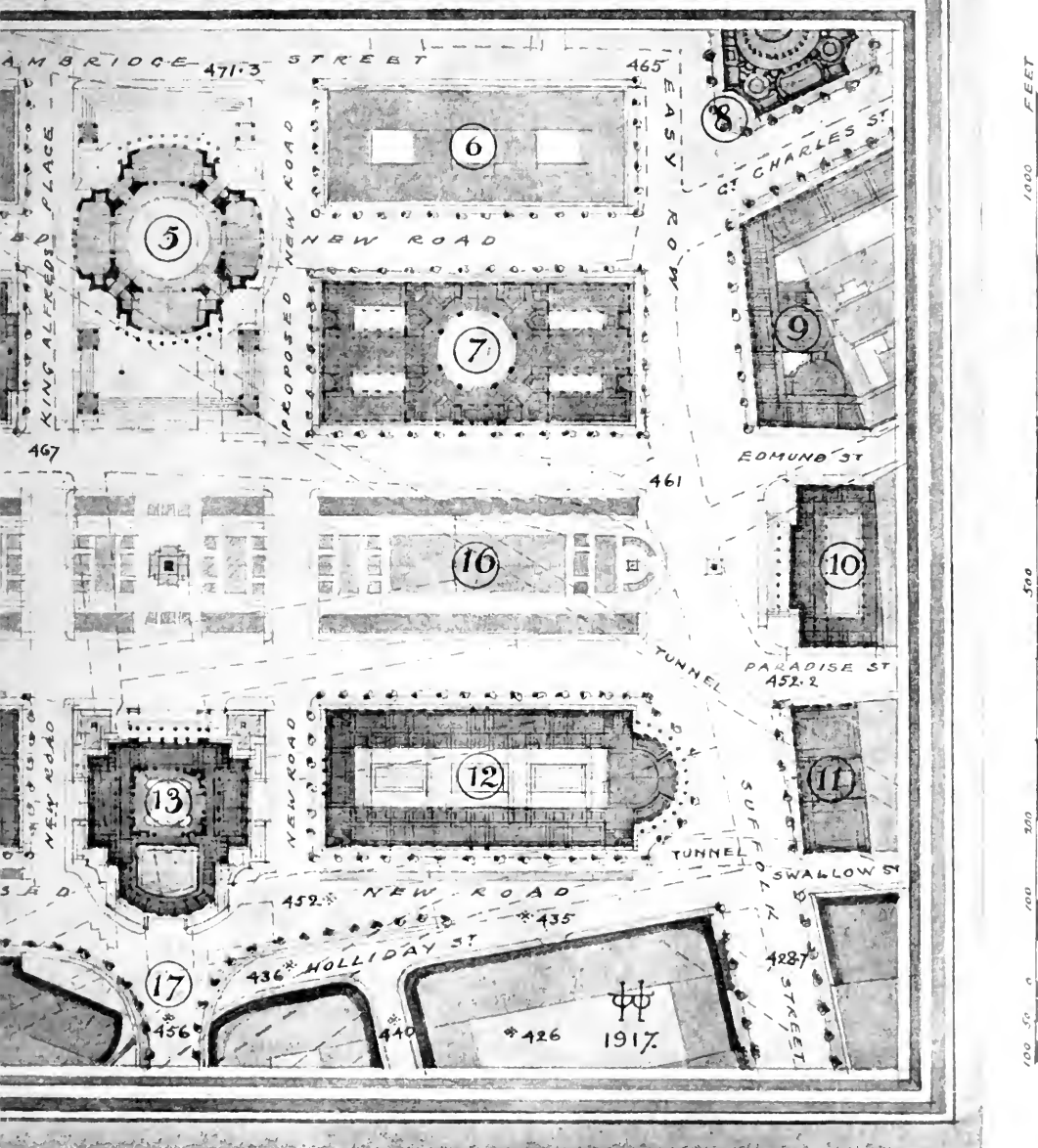
The Cathedral ; two Exhibition Halls, for the general purposes now served by the Curzon and Bingley Halls ; a Natural History Museum ; the War Museum and Memorial ; sites in reserve and suitable for Musical, Literary or Collegiate purposes ; a site in reserve for Municipal use ; an Opera House or Theatre, placed on the detached site between Easy Row and Summer Row ; additions to Mason’s College ; a Library extension, which would have the advantage of leaving the existing building in use, and permit the allocation of special sections for a Children’s Library, a Commercial Library, etc., the whole building being served by a modern system of book delivery from an efficient stack room ; a Hall of Consulates,

Plan of Future Town Centre.



Levels marked * are assumed.

- 1, The Cathedral; 2 & 15, Exhibition Halls; 3 & 6, Sites in reserve; 4, A Natural History Museum; 5, The War Museum and Memorial; 7, A site in reserve for Municipal purposes; 8, The Opera House; 9, Extension of Mason's College; 10, Extension of the Library; 11, A Hall of Consulates;



12, The New Post Office; 13, The Municipal Buildings;
 14, A Hall of Machinery; 16, Formal Gardens; 17, The new
 bridge road to Holloway Head.

NOTE.—A better arrangement for the Memorial is shewn on
 the general plan, page 95.

or Bank ; a Post Office, in a convenient position for subterranean communication with the railway, and having a large central hall for the public ; a Municipal Building ; and a Hall for the exhibition of historical and modern machinery, samples of local manufactures, and loan exhibitions of the latest machinery devices ; a sort of town showroom of goods, for the information of our manufacturers, and the display of their output.

The gardens around which these buildings are grouped will be better understood from the view on page 90, which shews the central portion in front of the Municipal tower.

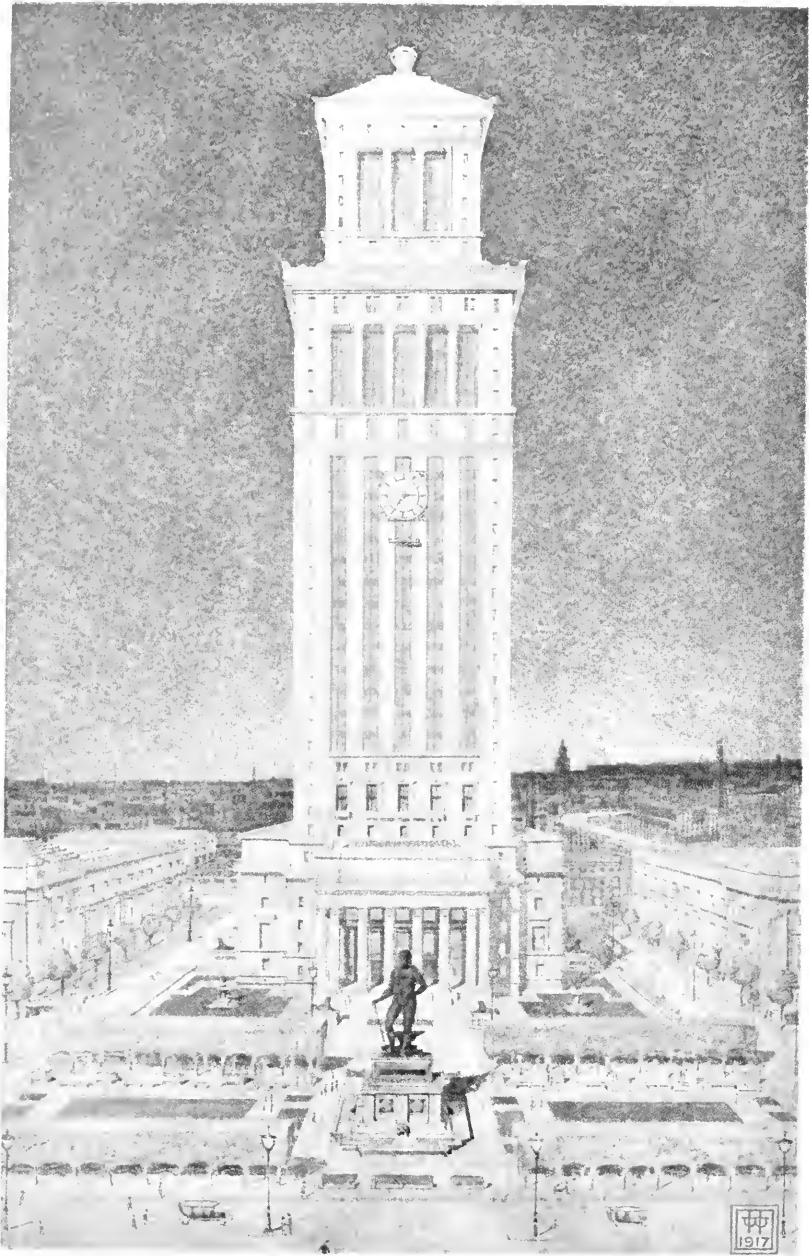
The total garden area measures 400 yds. long by a width of 57 yds. and without being unduly large, is sufficiently spacious to give a proper setting to the buildings around. Within an enclosure of formally arranged trees, there are fountains, lawns, seats, band-stands, shrubberies, and pedestals for statuary, which in their ensemble, would give character to the civic centre, and add greatly to its amenities.

The FUTURE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS.

If there is one building in an English town which justifies the use of a "Sky Scraper" it is the chief administrative offices or Council House. This naturally marks the centre of the town's affairs, and is the building which claims pre-eminence in the civic scheme. If as a "Sky Scraper" it is an isolated example, its individual importance is the greater, and the objection of over-shadowing—which would be a serious one against promiscuous tall buildings in our climate—is not created.

There are other merits in the tower form, for it is obvious that the cost of a site for a huge vertical building on a narrow base, will be less than the site value of the same accommodation in the usual horizontal type of building, and moreover, the architectural importance usually given to a Municipal building by domes and towers which are merely ornamental, is here turned to a practical use, by adopting a form which is at the same time imposing, and useful to the last inch of its capacity.

The Ground floor and First floor would be largely ceremonial, on a scale proportionate to the city, and elsewhere in the building the various corporation departments, now more or less scattered about the town in separate buildings, would be lodged where one would naturally expect to find them. A Fire Station would be placed at the back—immediately under the Council Chamber, and opposite the new bridge road to Holloway Head—the fall of the



The Future Municipal Buildings.

site giving excellent accommodation for this purpose ; and the spacious roadways, being at this point quite clear of tramways and mixed traffic, would give the proper conditions which the approaches to a Fire Station should have.

Among other accommodation to be provided in this building there should be a "Hall of Marriages," designed on a scale in reasonable proportion to the ceremony ; the present conditions of civil marriage being neither worthy, nor politic, and in need of improvement at the earliest opportunity.

In the foreground of the picture are shewn the formal gardens of "The Town Centre," with a central monument which is intended to symbolise the spirit of Birmingham, conceived as a metal worker. This figure is about 35 ft. high, upon a pedestal of the same height, and would be sufficiently large to maintain a proper scale with the Municipal Tower, and its position in relation to a large open area.

The PLAN.

Before proceeding to consider the road scheme as a whole, it is perhaps necessary to reaffirm the tentative nature of the present proposals. It is obvious, that even after an official plan has been obtained, it must still remain of so elastic a character as to allow of modification, addition, or omission, as circumstances change, or new opportunities are perceived. It is not to be supposed, therefore, that the present intention goes further than to offer a number of ideas for selection or refusal as they may be found of value or otherwise.

Bearing this in mind, attention may be first directed to the incorporation in this scheme—with but little variation—of the ring road already suggested by the Public Works Dept. Of this route, Suffolk Street and Smallbrook Street (with its extension) are inevitable; but although Gt. Charles Street, takes a useful direction, its gradient is so abrupt, that even if trams adopt the unpleasant device of tunnelling at this point, it is still difficult to see how the road itself could justify its new magnificence; moreover it has the further objection that a length of 300 ft. is permanently crippled by passing under a dismal viaduct. I am quite prepared to hear that there are questions of tram circulation involved in this line of route, which make it desirable, but unless the claims are very cogent, or the remedies applied to its deficiencies very drastic, I should prefer to suggest the abandonment of this section.

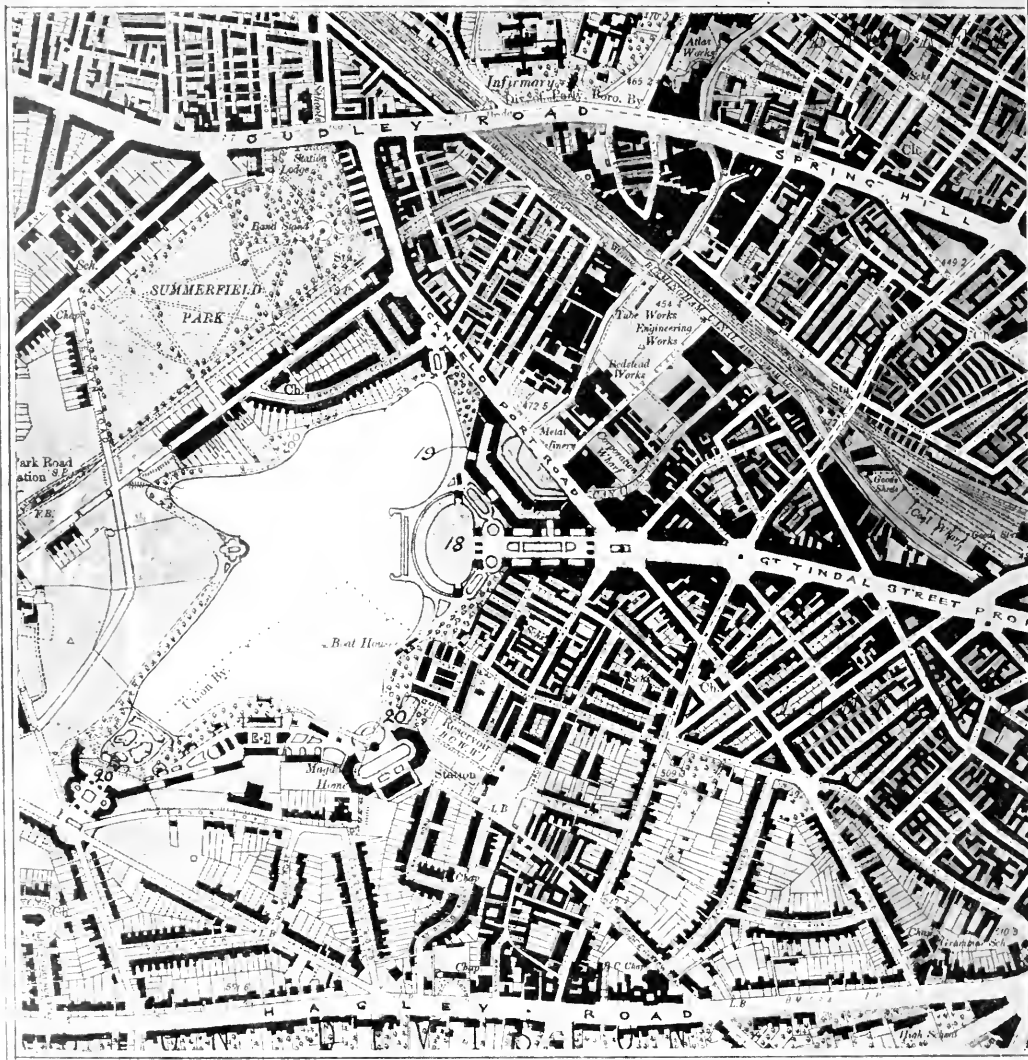
Treating it for the time being as a possibility, the route is continued along Bath Street and diverted along Loveday Street for the return to Lancaster and Corporation Streets, this being less expensive, more attractive, and a better gradient than the continuation to Corporation Street across Lancaster Street as proposed.

From Corporation Street, the ring is completed by the widening of Stafford and Moor Streets, but a possible variation arising out of the proposed new road from St. Martin's Church to Corporation Street is, that it would be better, and cost less, to widen 1,000 ft. of Dale End, than 1,700 ft. of Moor Street. The levels of the former are far superior, the Coleshill Street traffic would take a better line and reach the ring road at a better point, and a simpler loop would be found for the return of trams from Perry Barr and the eastern districts of the town.

The continuation of Easy Row into Summer Row, is an important connection which at once provides a through communication between Dudley and Rednal, without change or deviation. The levels are good, being just over 3 in 100 from Cambridge Street to Lionel Street where the junction is made, and although the alteration would probably mean that the Newhall canal branch (Birmingham Canal Navigations) would have to be cut short, this is a relatively unimportant consideration, and moreover, is understood to be already under consideration for other reasons.

Taking the Dudley Road—Bristol Road route as a base line, a complete loop is developed on either side of it, each of which has about the same circumference as the Gt. Charles Street, Suffolk Street and Moor Street route; that is to say, roughly 2 miles. Added together, the two loops form approximately a square of about $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles in circumference. They attach the open areas of no less than four important churches, and they are in close contact with both Snow Hill and New Street Stations. The complete

The Proposed Road Plan of the Central Area.



1 TOWN HALL, 2 ART GALLERY, 3 LIBRARY EXTENSION, 4 HALL OF CONSUL
 9 CATHEDRAL, 10 NAT HIST MUSEUM, 11 MEMORIAL, 12 RESERVE, 13 OPERA HOUSE

PLAN of the CENTRAL AREA of

1000 FEET 500 1000 2000 3000



5. 5 POST OFFICE, 6 MUNICIPAL B^{LDG}, 7 TRADES EXHIBITION HALL, 8 EXHIBITION BLDG
 9 UNIVERSITY, 15 EXCHANGE, 16 or 16^A HALL of MUSIC, 17 PEOPLE'S HALL, 18 STADIUM, 19 PLEASURE GROUNDS
 20 "THE 700", 21 CEN KALLOWAY'S ARCH
IRMINGHAM SHOWING POSSIBLE DEVELOPEMENTS
 5000
 1 MILE
 WILLIAM HAYWOOD. F.R.I.B.A. 1917.

figure forms the ring road which is required for linking up the arterial roads and for the improvement of tramway facilities.

The important question of tramways has not yet been referred to, and it will be noticed that no tracks have been shewn on any of the sectional plans. This does not mean that they have not been considered, but that in order to shew displaced building areas upon the new roads and widenings without confusion, it was necessary to omit the lines of tramway ; moreover, without consultation with the Tramways Dept.—the advantage of which I have not had—it appeared wiser to leave the exact selection of routes open, and aim at making the scope of that selection as wide as possible.

These possibilities may now be indicated, and for convenience of reference, the Central Place, which occupies a portion of Broad Street, will be referred to as “The Broadway,” the new road to the Pleasure Grounds, as “Parkway,” and the road from the Bull Ring to Livery Street as “St. Martin’s Avenue.”

Starting with the ring road, this may either be used as a loop common to all routes, or it may have a separate service linked up to each district service by a system of transfer. Each district may be made to circulate upon the half of the ring road which it joins ; or, it may take a short loop within the ring road, as from Dudley via Easy Row, The Broadway, Parkway, Sheepcote Street and the Parade ; or from Selly Oak via Suffolk Street, The Broadway, Broad Street, Sheepcote Street and Holloway Head ; or from Perry Barr and the eastern services via Moor Street, St. Martin’s Avenue, and Steelhouse Lane (widened for this purpose) ; or, from Handsworth via Livery Street, St. Martin’s Avenue, Moor Street (or Dale End), Stafford Street and Steelhouse Lane ; and so on for the other districts, and further, it is apparent that any district may have a direct service with any other if this should be wanted.

From the tramway point of view one other link is still desirable,

although not absolutely necessary, namely :—a direct tie between Steelhouse Lane and The Broadway. This appears to be quite impossible by any other means than a tunnel descending in Colmore Row immediately beyond Livery Street, and passing under Colmore Row and the Town Hall, to emerge with a bend into Suffolk Street. I believe that the levels of the several Railway tunnels would permit this to be done, and the necessary width could be obtained in Colmore Row by an easement upon the Churchyard. But whether the convenience gained would justify the cost, I leave an open question.

Passing to other features of the Plan. Reference has been made elsewhere to the barriers against proper development presented by our railway sidings and canal wharfs. A glance at the map on page 67 will shew, that as regards the very centre of the City we have four main areas of obstruction, namely :—the sidings of the L.N.W.R., extending from Monument Lane to Cambridge Street and St. Martin's Row, a length of over half a mile, with an average width of 150 yds., in the whole of which area there is only one cross road. Secondly, the canal area extending from Cambridge Street and the Crescent towards the Parade in one direction, and from Summer Row to King Edward's Road in the other, an area of over 500 yds. by 200 yds. Thirdly, the M.R. sidings and Corporation wharf, etc., extending for more than 500 yds. in length, by 230 yds. between Commercial Street and Severn Street, and, fourthly, the canal wharfs situated between Paradise Street and Bridge Street, for a length of 230 yds. by a width of about 150 yds.

In addition to these obstructions we have the retarded development of the area bounded by Broad Street, Easy Row, Cambridge Street, and King Alfred's Place ; and embracing all five areas are the backward influences which emanate from each intermingling, and so creating one great belt of restriction.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that any proposals for development which do not deal with the incubus of these dead areas, will leave the worst features of the City untouched, and the new roads by means of which it is proposed to open them up must be regarded largely from this point of view ; nor does it appear that the ultimate cost of constructing such roads, where they take the form of bridges across sidings etc., is to be compared with that of widening existing roads, since it is evident that there are new values created both for the City and the Companies concerned ; the one by general convenience and extra rateable value, and the other by the acquisition of important building sites and their rentals ; while as a further advantage, so far as the proposals are confined to Railway and Canal areas, there is no need to wait for the falling in of leases. Presumably the cost of construction would be shared between the parties interested, but in what ratio it is of course impossible to say here.

As the remaining details of the scheme have been already referred to in the description of the sectional plans, there is little more to say which cannot be equally well seen in the illustrations. The setting for the memorial has been varied in the General Plan from the position shown on page 87, and the former is better in several respects ; it stands better in relation to the Parade, it has gardens on all four sides which improve its relation with the adjoining buildings, and the lay-out altogether is more interesting.

The new buildings of the central group, and as many others in the vicinity as possible, would be supplied with heat from a Central Heating station situated on the Corporation Wharf, Holliday Street, where it would be convenient to both canal and rail, and, while in close relation to the centre of the City, not unduly conspicuous.

By this, and other means we should economise in the use of fuel, and at the same time purify our atmosphere ; adding the final

touch to a change which would produce healthier and happier conditions for our people, under which they would lead more interesting lives, and be elevated in character by the agreeable influence of pleasant surroundings.

The proposals which have now been made will perhaps be considered more than should fall to one generation to carry out, but it must be remembered that we have a long period of omission to make good, and that by spreading the performance over a length of time commensurate with the cost, both labour and outlay will be reduced to suitable proportions. Conceive the citizens of the year 1818 confronted with a programme of the principal Birmingham enlargements and additions of the last century, and you have an equivalent situation. Work that is done without forethought, and a little at a time, grows unconsciously under our hand to enormous proportions, but is apt to be misdirected and extremely wasteful; whereas by planning in advance it is possible to obtain far greater value for the same or less expenditure; and if in this case we propose to first count the cost, there is no need for alarm because the sum is great. Looked at from the proper angle it is really normal.

The
RATE & METHOD of DEVELOPMENT.

It will naturally be asked by what means and in what time could such proposals as these be accomplished, and to this question the most obvious reply is, that the same policy as that adopted by the Public Works Committee for the Arterial Road Scheme, would apply in this case also. That is to say, that by eliminating the present costly and aimless procedure of casual improvement, and diverting this annual outlay in the direction of an approved scheme, continual progress would be made towards the object in view.

But this is not all. It has been shewn that two large recreation schemes may reasonably be regarded as self supporting, and if this is true, there need be no delay in building them ; also the improvement to New Street Station is not at all improbable within this generation, and this, of course, does not affect the city financially to any extent. Then we shall probably not have to wait long for a Hall of Music, and there is already a strong movement towards the erection of a War Memorial and Museum, and with these, in combination with even a very modest instalment of road revision, a vigorous commencement is even now at hand.

I venture to suggest, however, that there is still another means of adding scope to an early programme. Within a comparatively few years, the series of World Exhibitions, which have been arrested by the war, will probably be resumed, and if Birmingham were sufficiently enterprising, we could obtain, in addition to the benefits

for which such exhibitions are primarily made, a unique opportunity for the rapid development we desire; that is, provided that we adopted the right method of working this sort of project. For there are two ways of conducting Exhibitions. One is to treat everything as temporary, and aloof from the City proper, the other, to build more substantially, and retain as permanent the best among the Halls, roads, and gardens to be constructed.

By adopting the latter course a really fine scheme could be developed in Birmingham, of which the Art and Industrial Section would be lodged in the heart of the City, and by ways not necessary to describe here, be intimately connected with another section at the Pleasure Grounds. There need be little or no interference with traffic, due to the enclosure of the Exhibition area, and we should in this way obtain a permanent advantage from an expenditure which is usually regarded as justified by merely temporary requirements.

It appears, therefore, that the possibilities of rapid advancement are considerable, and that if we have sufficient resolution to do the work, opportunities will not be lacking; our commercial men must be brought to see that there are great personal and public values in civic improvement, and they must learn from cities like Chicago, where commercial opinion is one of the chief factors in this class of reform, that there is an important work for them to do; we want among our men of business, and men of wealth, a keen interest in civic advancement; we need the assistance of their business and financial imagination; and such men owe it to the community, to put all their influence on the side of a policy which means so much for the future convenience and
happiness of the citizens of
Birmingham.

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