

21st Century

Planning and development in Leeds has matured. The current framework can be seen in The Adopted Local Plan, which forms part of the statutory development plan for the Leeds district. It sets out the vision and strategy for the area until 2033, and provides the basis for decisions on planning applications.

Some Key dates

1837. Municipal Corporations Act.

1842. Leeds Improvement Act.

1890. Housing of the Working Classes Act. This was updated in 1894 and 1900.

1909. Town and Country Planning Act. This has been updated many times with the current 2008 Planning Act and the 2011 Localism Act being the most recent.

Opening times

Monday – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Tuesday – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Weds – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Thursday 9.00am – 8.00pm

Friday – 9.00 – 5.00pm

Saturday – 10.00am – 4.00pm

Sunday - Closed

For more information

Local and Family History

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E: localandfamilyhistory@leeds.gov.uk

W: www.leeds.gov.uk/libraries

Blog: secretlibraryleeds.net

Tickets:

ticketsource.co.uk/Leedslibraryevents



Town Planning Institute Meeting in the Civic Hall 1939. The model was of a proposed new Library/Art Gallery, to be built on the current site on the Headrow

Leeds City Council Papers: Planning & Development

Our Research Guides list some of the most useful, interesting and unique items in at Leeds Central Library. Many others are listed in our online and card catalogues. Items marked * may require 24-hours notice to view.

Contact us for more information:

Visit: www.leeds.gov.uk/localandfamilyhistory

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Background

Leeds Corporation (now Leeds City Council) has been deeply involved in the development of the fast-growing city in the 19th century and onwards. Over 200 years of Council papers are lodged in the Central Library, and these give details of how it has contributed to making the city what it is today. Many of these papers are annual publications, while others are for specific activities.

19th Century

Following the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, Leeds Corporation was established as a town council, governed by Ratepayers (modern day Council Taxpayers).

Initially with little money and few powers, the Corporation was unable to shape the development of Leeds, but as the century progressed, things started to change. For example, cholera outbreaks in the 1830s led to an urgent need for a better fresh water supply. A private company was set up to do this, but in 1852, it was purchased by the Corporation. The Corporation pushed through the Leeds Improvement Act of 1842 to allow them to build sewers. So early on, it realised that a more strategic type of development was needed, and that the Corporation was best placed to oversee it.

At the end of the century, the Corporation had also taken control of Trams and the supply of Electricity and Gas, which cemented its role in ensuring access to services for all.

By the 1870s, development was controlled via the Building Clauses Committee which gave approval for both commercial and residential developments. But this didn't resolve the issues around existing sub-standard developments. The Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 finally gave the Corporation the power to acquire, demolish and rebuild the slum dwellings to the new and better standards in place.

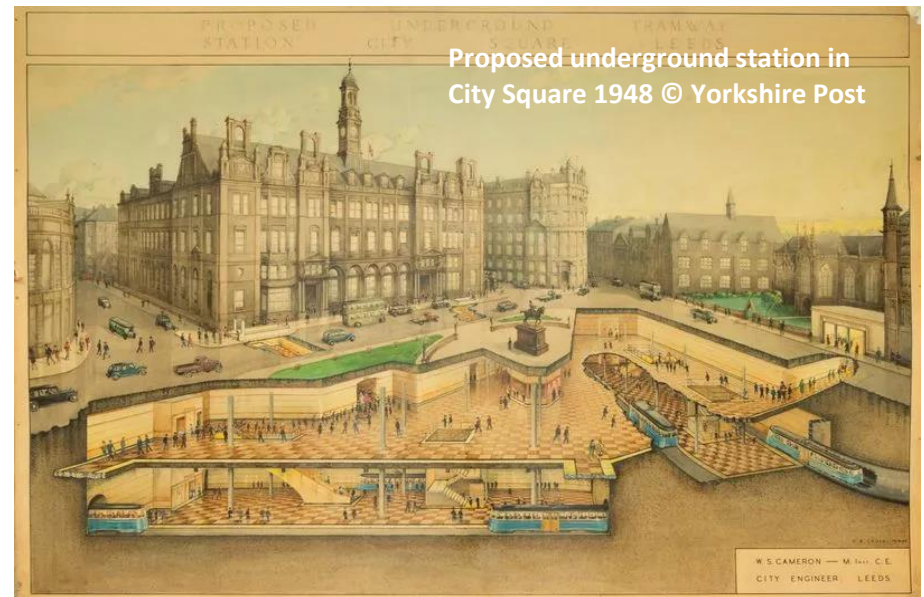
Quarry Hill and York Street areas were designated as Unhealthy Areas and the properties demolished over a number of years. This eventually led to the Quarry Hill flat development in the 1930s, which were, in turn, demolished in the 1970s as it had fallen into disrepair.

20th Century

It wasn't until the Town Planning Act of 1909, that planning took on its modern form. This meant that development, particularly housing, had to meet legal standards. It included the banning of new back-to-back housing, although Leeds Corporation continued to build them for another 30 years!

Health and other issues were taken into account so that, for example, factory development was to be concentrated in areas away from residential areas where possible.

Soon, each part of Leeds was covered by its own Town Planning Scheme, which identified the land use and any areas that could be considered for development



It's also interesting to see what might have been – including the proposed Kearney Tube system above, which would have put the tramways in central Leeds underground to reduce congestion. Needless to say, the plans were cancelled due to costs.