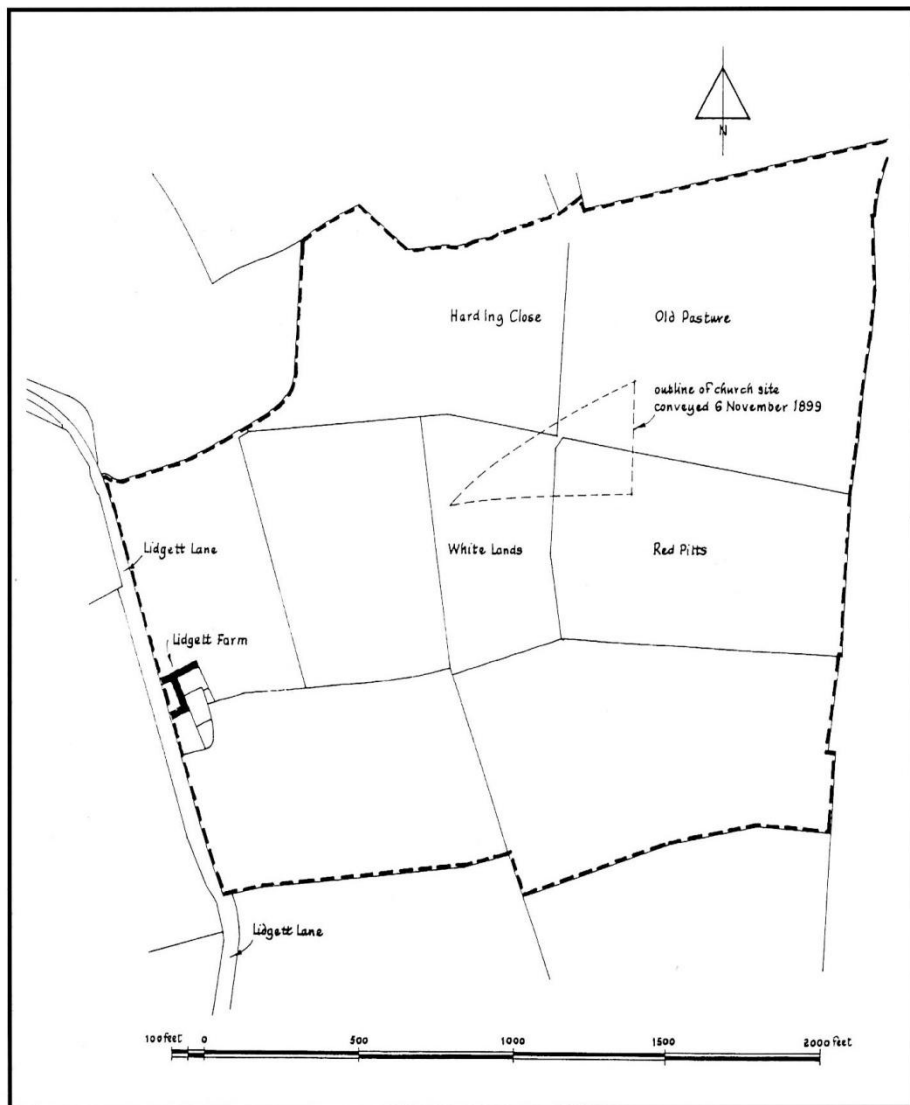


THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. EDMUND, ROUNDHAY.

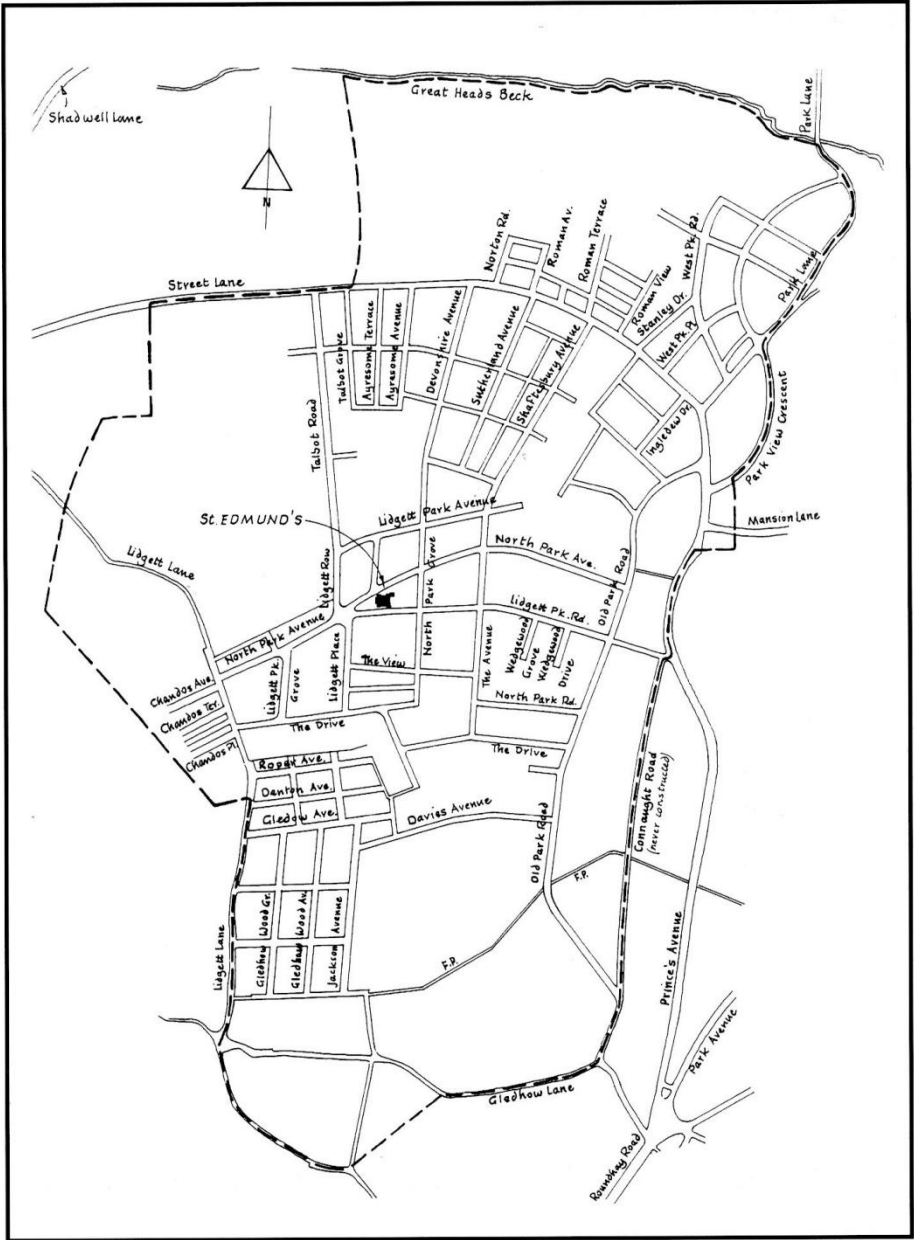
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LIDGETT FARM AS CONVEYED TO J.W. ARCHER

Based on the plan in deeds dated 11th August 1887 held in West Yorkshire Archives Volume 22 page 591 number 324.

Area conveyed : 89 acres or thereabouts.



THE PARISH BOUNDARY 1910

Based on a map published in the church magazine February 1916

"Roundhay New Church" was dedicated on 20th July 1901 and the first Sunday services were held the following day. The centenary of that auspicious weekend was celebrated one week early on the 14th and 15th July 2001. However, the Parish Church of St. Edmund in which the service of celebration was held was not the building dedicated one hundred years before. That was built in about eleven months from August 1900 to July 1901 as the parochial hall to a future parish church which function it has filled since 1909.

In the later years of the 19th century the area west of Roundhay Park from Oakwood to Street Lane was being developed residentially. In earlier decades quasi-country houses had been built; later development constituted infilling between them and as time went by the plots being sold became smaller, overall returns being related to the number of plots per acre. There was no "master plan" so the area has an eclectic mix of the old "country houses" and smaller properties. Of direct concern to the future Roundhay church was the area of land known as Lidgett Farm (illustrated). This had been owned since 1887 by John William Archer, a woollen manufacturer resident in Chapel Allerton. However, sales to builders did not start until 1898.

As the turn of the century approached the growing population of the area was serviced by an electric tramway to the Park Gates and an increasing range of shops at Oakwood; but there were no places of worship and for members of the Church of England their parish church was St. John the Evangelist at Moor Allerton 2 miles away. At Chapel Allerton also about 2 miles away was the newly built parish church of St. Matthew, but the nearest one was St. John's on Wetherby Road on the edge of the park, still 1.25 miles distant and within the parish of Barwick-in-Elmet. None of these were easily reached, walks over open fields being involved on the shortest routes. Rather more distant (2.25 miles) though more convenient being on the tram route from the Park gates into Leeds, was St. Aidan's Church in Roundhay Road. In these circumstances a small group of residents got together with the aim of building a place of worship and ultimately a parish church. The prime mover in this endeavour was James Hare of "Brooklands" (now No3), North Park Avenue who engaged the support and interest of near neighbours Messrs. J.B. Mays of "Hollybank" (now No7), and G.W. Brown of "Wedgewood" (the land is now Wedgewood Court). The first objective was to acquire a site and, probably early in 1899 an approach

was made to the landowner and developer, the previously mentioned J.W. Archer, through his architect Mr. Carby Hall with a view to a plot being allocated within the envisaged development of Lidgett Farm. As a result, the triangular site bounded by Lidgett Park Road, North Park Avenue and North Park Grove was agreed upon. It was purchased for the erection of "a church, vicarage and schools" by the Leeds Church Extension Society in November 1899. However, it seems the cheque was never presented so that for all intents and purposes Mr. Archer was the first major benefactor. It seems there was a gentlemen's agreement between Mr. Hare and his friends and Mr. Carby Hall the architect that his practice would be retained to provide architectural services in the development of the site, perhaps as a quid pro quo for his good offices in the acquisition of the land.

This arrangement was queried later because Mr. Carby Hall was not known as a "church architect" in the way for example that G. F. Bodley the architect of St. Matthew's Chapel Allerton was known, but the arrangement held and the Carby Hall practice worked on all phases of development from 1900 to 1936.

Under the strong leadership of a building committee elected at a public meeting held at the Mansion Hotel in October 1899 including the initiators of the whole enterprise, fund raising proceeded so well that building started in the summer of 1900. The circumstances were unusual. As a general rule Anglican churches are "planted" where ecclesiastical authority sees a requirement but in the case of Roundhay it was local people who felt the need and took the initiative. While they had the support of the Diocese and the tacit agreement of the incumbent of St. John's Moor Allerton (in whose parish the church was to be built) as well as some financial help from the Leeds Church Extension Society, it was local residents who led the way.

The building dedicated in July 1901 and known as Roundhay New Church still exists as part of the parochial building still in use to day being the larger of the two halls. The present form of the parish rooms is the result of successive extensions in 1901, 1913 and 1923.

The first incumbent Rev. C.E.Coade, and the building committee, did not lose sight of the original intention to build a Parish Church but just when fund raising efforts were again to be concentrated he left for pastures new in Lincolnshire. Fortunately his successor, Rev. C.E.O'Connor-Fenton, was even more enthusiastic about building a parish church and as if to encourage him, in 1905 two years after he arrived, the church council decided unanimously to adopt the name of St. Edmund as had been envisaged in the Leeds Churches Act of 1901 to follow the redundancy of an inner city church of the same name within the purview of Leeds Parish Church. Thus Roundhay New Church became St. Edmund's Church. It did not yet possess a parish but at least now it had a proper name.

In 1907, two years after the naming of the church, a start was made on Phase 1 of the permanent structure. This consisted of the nave and transepts (the southern one being the tower base), the north and south porches and a vestry with the heating chamber below. It was consecrated in May 1909. It then took more than twelve months for necessary legal processes to be completed but at last, "by order of the King in Council on 13th October 1910" a parochial District was assigned: (Illustrated). The new parish was carved out of adjoining older ones i.e. Moor Allerton, Chapel Allerton, Shadwell and Barwick-in-Elmet.

The First World War saw the parochial hall used as a military convalescent hospital from December 1916 until February 1919. After the Armistice thoughts turned to the provision of a memorial and following much discussion it was decided to build the chapel as included in the original scheme as a memorial chapel to house a memorial tablet. The tablet was quite readily obtained but design problems related to cost delayed the chapel works so that the bronze tablet was put in the south transept where it is still to be found. The memorial chapel was ultimately dedicated in October 1925 but was only two thirds the size originally intended. It constituted Phase 2 of the building programme.

Phase 3 (the last) was the chancel including the crypt below and the clergy vestry and organ chamber on the north side. Construction started in July 1934 and it was dedicated on 1st June 1935. The building contractors for the works from inception in August 1900 (the first part of the hall) to Phase 3 of the parish church had been J.T. Wright. The proprietor was a resident in the parish and a member of the congregation but all his contracts had been won in competitive tender.

During the second world war the parochial hall was requisitioned by the Medical Officer of Health for Leeds as a decontamination centre (the use of poison gas was considered a real danger). Arising out of post-war legislation in the planning field, the church was listed in a schedule of buildings of architectural interest at Grade 2 as compared with for example St. Matthew's Chapel Allerton which is Grade 2* reflecting their respective architectural merits. The latter was by G.F.Bodley a nationally known and respected architect of the Gothic Revivalist style while St. Edmund's was by a local man of lesser skills. It is also of course incomplete: the bell chamber and lantern stage of the tower on the south side were never built.

The rather spare, unembellished interior lent itself readily to internal alterations made necessary by changes in the liturgy of worship since the time the church was designed and re-ordering was carried out, save only for new sanctuary furniture, in time for the Centenary.

Note.

For a full account of the history of Roundhay New Church, see "Roundhay St. Edmund: The First Hundred Years," by Geoffrey Bass obtainable from the church, Oakwood Clock Bookshop and Philip Howard Ltd, Street Lane, Price £10.00.