

V: New Bridge, New Road, New Church

The Building of Grosvenor Street in Chester

by G K Barnes MA

The construction of Grosvenor Bridge and Grosvenor Street was the first major disruption to Chester's street plan since the Middle Ages. The story of Thomas Harrison's bridge has been examined in a previous volume of this *Journal*. However, had he not been pre-occupied with the difficulties of the Rotherhithe tunnel under the Thames, it is possible that a different design might have been successfully put forward by Marc Isambard Brunel. The paper also examines the process of land acquisition for the construction of Grosvenor Street and the relocation of St Bridget's church.

Introduction

On 10 June 1825 Royal Assent was given to the Act providing for:

... the erection of an additional bridge over the River Dee in the City of Chester; for the making convenient Roads and Approaches thereto and for taking down and rebuilding the parish church of St Bridget and for repairing the present bridge.¹

This marked the successful culmination of a campaign launched some seven years earlier, following a public meeting in Chester Town Hall on 28 September 1818. This had passed a resolution to the effect that:

... the existing mediaeval bridge [at Handbridge] and the avenues thereto, which are the principal communication between the great manufacturing counties of Lancaster and York and the whole of the North of England, with the West of England, and with Wales and Ireland, are not only highly inconvenient but absolutely dangerous to passengers in carriages, on horseback and on foot.

It further resolved that it was expedient to apply to Parliament for leave to bring in a bill for the erection of another bridge, and a committee — the Dee Bridge Committee — was appointed: 'to receive and consider plans, surveys and estimates, and the most expedient mode of providing funds for carrying out these resolutions into effect'.

In reaching such a decision it is likely that its proponents would have taken into account not only the problems and delays to traffic endeavouring to use the existing bridge but would

also have been aware that Telford's current surveys of the proposed London–Holyhead road were favouring a route through Betws y Coed to the detriment of Chester. They could have been influenced, too, in the timing of the move by the knowledge that finance for such public works was available from the Exchequer Bill Loans Commission.

However, there was also opposition to having a new bridge rather than improving the existing one at Handbridge, and this centred largely on the expected cost to the city. Letters were published in the *Chronicle* and the *Courant*. William Harrison, brother of Alderman George Harrison (of whom more below), was one to have serious doubts and reservations. Writing to George on 23 December, he congratulated him on attempting:

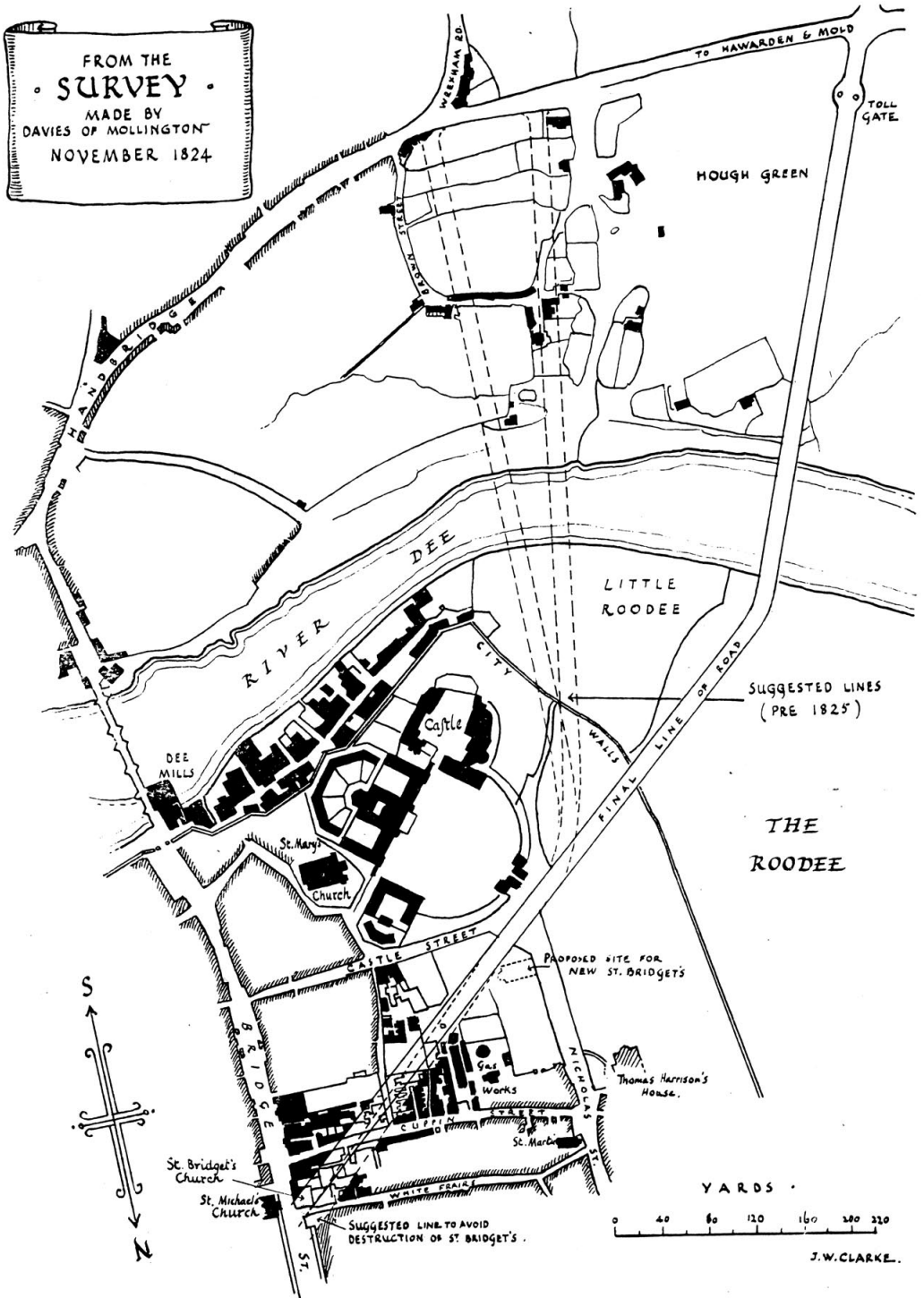
to lessen what always appeared to me the enormous and prodigal estimate of your intended bridge. The absolute utility of the bridge is to me problematical ... and such as Lord Grosvenor who would be more accommodated ought to come down with a very handsome subscription. Forgetting you have not Roman means and resources, you are ambitious to vie with Roman magnificence. [Thomas] Harrison ought to know that he has not that bottomless purse of the country to draw upon from which he has pulled so hard for so many years, ... I am glad you have had some misgivings and are endeavouring to economise. This is really patriotic. (CCALSS Z G/HS 199)

Grosvenor Bridge

A full and detailed account of the subsequent discussions, decisions and the progress of the work which led to the eventual construction of the Grosvenor Bridge in the form and place in which it now stands is given in the article by J W Clarke in this *Journal* (1958), 43–55.

However, at one time there was a real possibility that the bridge could have been built to a different design and in a different material. This came about following a meeting between George Harrison and Marc Isambard Brunel (1769–1849; father of Isambard Kingdom Brunel). With the passing of the act the Dee Bridge Commissioners had come into existence and, taking over from the Dee Bridge Committee elected at the meeting in 1818, were charged with the responsibility for getting the new bridge built. At their first meeting on 27 June 1825 the Commissioners appointed a sub-committee to consider the various schemes which Thomas Harrison had put forward over the intervening years. These had included designs for iron, single-arch and triple-arch stone constructions with estimated costs in the region of £30,000 (CCALSS Z TRB 57 fo 7v). Subsequently, on 8 November the Commissioners agreed that he should make working drawings and provide detailed specifications for a stone bridge of one arch (CCALSS Z TRB 57 fo 12v). This would cross the river on a line from the Castle portico to what is now known as Old Wrexham Road in Handbridge, being the middle of the three routes shown in Ill V.1.

George Harrison (no relation of Thomas), who was owner of the Roodee Foundry and Paper Mills and had been mayor of the city in 1824/5, was the chairman of this sub-committee. He was in London from 14 to 26 November 1825 and visited Rotherhithe, where Brunel was completing the shaft from which the tunnel under the Thames to Wapping



III V.1 Proposed lines for a new Dee Bridge: survey by Davies of Mollington 1824. (After Clarke 1958. Reproduced by permission of Chester Archaeological Society)

would be driven.² Whether Harrison went with the intention of getting advice from him on the bridge or simply out of curiosity to view this ambitious new project is not clear, but in the event the bridge was discussed.

Brunel's idea was to construct it of rubble — by which he meant brick or stone set in mortar and reinforced with iron — with a facing of solid masonry. Since he said that he could make it in this way with a single arch span of 200 feet at a cost of £10,000, Harrison got very excited and wrote to him the day after their meeting, whilst still in London at the King's Arms Tavern in Kensington. In his letter he asked Brunel to provide more information, for: 'if we can appear with £10,000 work thought to cost £30,000, there is little doubt that it will carry great weight with those who have the disposal of public money'.³

Brunel responded to Harrison's letter with a request for information on the height of the arch, an indication perhaps that his estimate of £10,000 was made without knowing fully the dimensions and specifications of the bridge. However, even when given these details, his reply of 23 November was devoted mainly to general comments on the use of rubble stone for the arch instead of granite, the method of construction which he proposed to adopt. Pointing out that the pyramids were not constructed of granite and that the Romans had made extensive use of bricks, he pronounced that employing granite was paying too dear simply to make a monument that might last for ever (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 16r, 17v and 17r).

It is not really surprising that he did not focus his thoughts too rigorously on Harrison's request. On 21 November the shaft for the Rotherhithe tunnel had been finished, and Brunel, who had been working seven days a week under extreme pressure, not unnaturally suffered a reaction. As his journal for 22 November records: 'on getting out of bed, I was taken with giddiness and sickness ... Dr. Morris was sent for. He ordered ten leeches'. The following day, the date of his letter to Harrison, he wrote: 'Very ill, though much relieved by the leeches. I could not attend the meeting of the South London Docks' (Clements 1970).

During the next few weeks letters were exchanged at frequent intervals, as Harrison, who had been given authority by the sub-committee to proceed on an official basis (CCALSS Z TRB 1, fo 50), tried to get Brunel to commit himself to a definite figure for the cost and satisfy the concerns which had been raised about the practicability, appearance and durability of what was a new and 'problematical' method of building. He was also trying to persuade him to visit Chester and view the site (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 18v).

Brunel, although continuing to prevaricate concerning the probable cost, did address himself to these concerns. Thus in a letter of 14 December he said he had shown the proposition to be a practical one:

... having just prepared a plan for a bridge using Rubble stone across a river 210 feet in breadth, where no more than £10,000 or £12,000 could be obtained in one of our most admired spots in West England. The plan gives satisfaction, but the [money was] not raised.

As for appearance:

... the most striking feature of the [Thomas] Harrison bridge is the magnitude of its proportions. A structure of this character must be to the eye what the Parthenon is to the Spectator, an insulated mass set off to the most advantage by a background that tends to magnify the object. When we see an arch of cast iron of 210 feet span we are struck with admiration but if it was of stone or of that imposing character we should view it with something more than admiration, it is the sublime and beyond the powers of description!

The question of costs, however, he dismissed in a sentence as: ‘depending on the nature of the ground for the abutments’. He made no commitment about coming to Chester but said that if he were to make the journey, his charges would be 10 guineas per day, plus travelling expenses by public conveyance and 2 guineas daily expenses (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 19v).

Harrison, not surprisingly, was somewhat exasperated, complaining in his letter of 17 December that Brunel had not dealt with the important points. The whole affair hinged on whether he would undertake to carry out the work for a given sum and guarantee it. He must answer these questions to the satisfaction of the sub-committee (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 20r).

At last, in a letter dated 20 December 1825, Brunel did give some at least of the required information, but even then he was unable to provide a full, comprehensive costing. Having said that for a bridge of 200 feet span, 36 feet in width and a rise of 40 feet with abutments, ‘if done with rubble stone or Stucco [he] would have no objection to undertaking it for £15,000’ and comparing this to his estimate of £36,900 for one in solid stone with its ornamental parts, roadworks and centreing, he refrained from giving an estimate for the foundations and work below the line ‘not being acquainted with the ground’. He did say, however, that the cost of pilings for the foundations of a rubble bridge would be considerably less than that for a stone bridge and he undertook to ‘insure the durability of the foundations for a certain number of years’. (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 21v)

This letter was placed before the sub-committee on 22 December but, as Harrison told him on 29 December, ‘the information did not come up to expectations’. Brunel had, of course, not helped his case by specifically excluding the cost of the foundations from his estimate, so that the sub-committee were not given the full picture. However, the overriding factor which must have influenced their judgement arose from a stupid misunderstanding on their part. Brunel had illustrated his proposal for the arch with a sketch which only showed one half of the bridge. Inexplicably the sub-committee linked his estimate to this sketch and assumed that the figure of £15,000 was for the construction of half a bridge! Consequently they were led to believe that a complete rubble bridge would cost £30,000, plus an unknown sum for the foundations, which would be little less than the estimates for a stone bridge (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 22r).

Brunel replied to Harrison on 3 January 1826, correcting the misconception and producing a figure of £9,000 for the foundations and abutments of a rubble bridge, a saving of £3,000

over the £12,000 which he estimated would be required for a stone bridge. For the superstructure his estimate of £15,000 for a rubble bridge would mean a saving of £17,000 over a stone bridge, since he now considered the lowest possible figure for a bridge of that material to be £32,000. He acknowledged, however, that if someone was prepared to build a stone bridge together with its foundations etc for £35,000 — an eventuality which he himself could not conceive as possible — then he accepted that with his rubble bridge costing in total £24,000, a saving of £11,000 would be unlikely to be sufficient to persuade the sub-committee to agree to his scheme (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 23r).

So it turned out. The Dee Bridge Commissioners met on 5 January and decided that the saving in expense from the rubble bridge ‘was not commensurate with the risks run in applying [this] new mode of construction’. It was therefore resolved that ‘consideration of Mr Brunel’s plan be abandoned’ and that he be informed accordingly (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 15r).

On 7 January Harrison wrote to Brunel, relaying the Commissioners’ resolution. However, in the light of the friendly relationship which seems to have grown up between the two, the burden of his letter was written on a personal, unofficial basis. Thus, he said that their estimates for a stone bridge had been revised upwards, approaching the figure that Brunel had envisaged and therefore might prove to be more than they could afford. Accordingly he felt that the committee would now be thinking of an iron or chain bridge and suggested that Brunel should come to Chester on his own account. ‘By mail up and down it would not cost [him] £10’ and Harrison would put him up in his own house. Brunel could then speak to the Commissioners in person at their next meeting, which was set for 26 January 1826. ‘He almost owed it to [his] great reputation ... to combat the objections which were raised against his mode of constructing bridges’. (CCALSS Z CR 810/1)

In his reply Brunel took the abandonment of his plans philosophically, since ‘all my work having been original, I have had naturally to overcome prejudices and struggle with difficulties ... and I should not risk the loss of the reputation I have acquired by proposing a plan uncertain in its execution’. He admitted, however, that he had changed the form of the arch from that designed by Harrison and approved by the Commissioners, and that if no deviation from that was to be allowed, ‘I would give up at once the idea of convincing others of the practicability of executing the same in rubble stone, since although it might be done, it would be too bold for a first step on so large a scale’. As to visiting Chester, the only justification for this would be to offer his services for an iron or suspension bridge. Nevertheless, he was prepared to consider making the journey, but work on the tunnel was at a crucial stage and he did not feel able to leave it for the next few weeks, especially as there was the risk of being detained in Chester by bad weather (CCALSS Z CR 810/2).

There is no record of Brunel having actually attended this meeting. However, as it is known that he did visit Chester and stay with Harrison sometime in January, this would seem to have been the most likely occasion. At all events, following the meeting the Commissioners wrote requesting him ‘to furnish an Estimate with the proper specification of the expense of a bridge cased in white stone to be constructed substantially upon Mr Thomas Harrison’s plans together with full observations and explanations’. (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 24)

Brunel responded by requesting the driving of piles in order to ascertain the nature of the ground on the north side of the river and offering the loan of a pile engine, which could be sent by coastal vessel. The sub-committee, however, considered that this would cause unnecessary delay and advised him to prepare his estimates on the assumption that 25 feet of piling would be required (CCALSS Z TRB 1, fo 52v).

The Commissioners met again on 9 February, when they considered Brunel's submission. He estimated a cost of £30,520 for a bridge substantially built in brick but cased in white stone and constructed according to Thomas Harrison's plans. In arriving at this figure he had assumed 35 feet of piling from the present site surface but had not included the cost of the columns with their entablature and pediments. He explained that the casing would be of Manley stone from 12 to 24 inches thick. The arch would be of the hardest and best bricks, and the filling of the abutments would be of rubble stonework with substantial bands of wrought iron. He quoted examples of brick structures sufficiently strong to resist the greatest pressure to which they would be subjected, citing St Paul's, the dome of the Pantheon in Rome and the tower of Strasbourg. He himself could not be present at the meeting but, as he advised in his letter, his son, Isambard, 'would be found competent to represent me on this business ... Young as he is, [he was 20 at the time] his powers are those of a maturer age'. (CCALSS Z TRB 72)^d

Writing at the same time to Harrison, however, he conceded that, if funds would have allowed, a bridge of stone or granite would be best. In the circumstances brick offered the cheapest alternative, dismissing iron as a poor substitute (CCALSS Z CR810/6).

Following the meeting the Commissioners ordered that this estimate and one for a stone bridge from James Trubshaw, a Staffordshire contractor, should be adopted as the basis for an application to the Exchequer Loan Commission for 'a loan of such money as may be wanting' (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 25r). However, when Brunel learnt that Trubshaw's estimate was for £31,000, he wrote to Harrison on 3 March, resignedly pointing out that his brick bridge at £30,520 stood no chance of being approved. Harrison replied, suggesting that he should prepare an estimate for a stone bridge (CCALSS Z CR 810/7).

Whilst the Loan Commissioners were considering the application — a procedure which involved a visit to Chester by their engineer Thomas Telford — Harrison and Brunel kept in touch. Harrison, looking to the possibility of Trubshaw's plan being thrown out, on 30 March again encouraged Brunel to produce an estimate for a stone bridge (CCALSS Z CR 810/7). Brunel, however, said that he did not want to appear over-anxious and preferred to wait until he was asked. For Harrison's own private information he told him that he would not undertake a stone bridge for less than £45,000 (CCALSS Z CR 810/8).

On 1 July 1826 the Loan Commissioners announced their refusal to advance any money for the bridge. This decision was based on Telford's report, a copy of which the Bridge Commissioners were able to secure and consider at their meeting on 27 July. The report rejected the site which Thomas Harrison had proposed for the bridge and which had been adopted by both Brunel and Trubshaw as the basis for their estimates, on the grounds that it had no rock for the foundations nearer than 50 feet below the waterline. Telford

suggested an alternative position 110 yards downstream (Ill V.1), where the rock was 2–3 feet below the surface and where, since the breadth of the river was only 160 feet, a span of only 175 feet would be required. He estimated the cost of a stone bridge at £31,080 and of an iron one at £25,662. The total cost of the project with a stone bridge would be £50,698. This sum was made up of, in addition to the bridge itself, the embankments, roadway and fencing at £9,388, the purchase of property for the new avenue at £2,480, toll house at £250, new church at £4,000, repairs to the old bridge at £1,500 and other costs £2,000 (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 28r).

The Bridge Commissioners decided to advertise for an engineer for the bridge and Alderman Harrison, still seeking to involve Brunel in its construction, suggested that he apply (CCALSS Z CR 810/9). The latter, however, in a letter of 5 July declined, pleading the absolute necessity of his continual presence at the tunnel, ‘where every inch of this subterranean labour requires a vigilant eye’. He could not refrain from pointing out that the pressure to which the tunnel was subjected considerably exceeded the greatest that a bridge with a brick arch of 200 feet span would have to bear (CCALSS Z CR 810/10).

On 22 August Brunel wrote to Harrison asking his opinion on charging the Commissioners for his professional services, ‘since the business of the bridge [was] now quite at an end’. He wondered whether to put forward a specific fee or ‘leave it to the liberality of the Committee’. Harrison replied on 9 September, advising the former course and at the same time telling him that the construction of the bridge had been awarded to Trubshaw. It was to be built in accordance with Thomas Harrison’s plans with a 200 feet span, but at the site recommended by Telford (CCALSS Z CR 810/11).

Brunel followed Harrison’s advice and on 22 September sent off his account:

... for statements and estimates relating to the mode of constructing a bridge over the Dee and for professional communications with the Commissioners between 9 December 1825 and the middle of February 1826; also for subsequent communications at the end of February with Mr Finchett Maddock [Town Clerk of Chester] for the purpose of laying plans and other papers before the Loan Commissioners in London — £63. (CCALSS Z CR 810/12)

The articles of agreement between Trubshaw and the Commissioners for building the bridge were signed on 1 February 1827. Although still incomplete, the opening ceremony was performed by Princess Victoria on 15 October 1832, when it was named Grosvenor Bridge. The certificate of completion was delivered to the Commissioners on 20 November 1833 and a balance sheet presented two weeks later. This put the cost at £49,824 12s 9d but did not include the cost of the toll houses, the new church of St Bridget, making Grosvenor Street and other ancillary works.

The time when the Bridge Commissioners and their sub-committee were deciding about the bridge crucially coincided with Brunel’s pioneering work on the Thames tunnel. This undoubtedly in his eyes was pre-eminent, demanding and dominating his attention first and foremost. Although Alderman Harrison tried very hard to have his plan for a rubble

bridge accepted, the impression left in the letters is that Brunel was not especially enthused about getting involved and in consequence not overly disappointed when he was turned down.

Grosvenor Street and St Bridget's Church

The Dee Bridge Committee appointed at the public meeting in 1818 was alive from the outset to the necessity of ensuring that there would be adequate access to the new bridge, and at its meeting of 9 October 1818 ordered that the notice of the intended application to Parliament for the Bill: 'should embrace avenues to the Bridge from the two Churches (*sc* St Michael's and St Bridget's) to its Wrexham Lane end in Handbridge'. As noted in the minute book of its sub-committee, there was a meeting on 30 May 1821, for example, between the Magistrates of the County and City of Chester and a deputation from the Commissioners of Police to consider 'making a new street to the castle starting from Lamb Row'. At this meeting it was decided that the proprietors of the premises between Lamb Row and Bunce Lane, namely Earl Grosvenor, Sir John Williams, Mr Seller and Mrs Blower, should be asked for their concurrence and assistance in this scheme.

Lamb Row itself had recently collapsed⁵ and the site had been bought by a Mr Roberts. He had begun to build there and an earlier meeting of the Commissioners of Police on 15 May had been told that 'he was disposed to give to the Public that portion of the frontage of these premises to Bridge Street and Cuppin Street and to make these linable with Mr Brown's shop in Cuppin Street, receiving for the same £200'. The meeting of 30 May therefore agreed that Mr Roberts should be asked to suspend building and to have a further meeting with the Commissioners. This took place on the following day. Then in reply to the question of what he would want for the ground which fell within the area required for the plans prepared by Harrison, he said he would make up his mind by 19 June, 'provided he had completed the purchase and felt disposed to accommodate the County'. There is no record as to whether he did come to such a decision and, if so, what price he placed on the piece of land. Since he appears amongst the owners and was involved in the valuations which were negotiated when work on the new street finally got under way in 1827, it seems clear that no deal was struck at this time.

The old church of St Bridget or St Bride stood on the west side of Bridge Street at the angle formed by its junction with Whitefriars and, as indicated by the Dee Bridge Committee in October 1818, was the favoured starting point for the new road. According to Ormerod (1882, 1, 341), the church, an etching of which was made by G Batenham in 1816 (Ill V.2), had a neat body with side aisles and a tower holding four bells. It had been repaired in 1785, when it was cased externally with stone. However on 12 May 1823 the vestry had noted that the steeple was in a very dangerous condition and agreed that the tower should be immediately taken down level with the roof.⁶ On 24 July, therefore, having considered various options such as repairing the church, rebuilding the steeple or tower, and uniting with another parish and in that case demolishing the church and erecting a new one conjointly with the parishioners of such other parish, it had resolved that removal to a new site would be the most expedient course 'provided the removal could be effected with the consent and co-operation of the city so as to entail upon the parish only the same proportion to expenses, which shall attach to every other parish'.



III V.2 St Bride's church: etching by G Batenham, 1816.
(Reproduced by permission of the Chester Archaeological Society)

The vestry appointed a committee to confer with the bishop, the magistrates and the commissioners of police regarding the expenses both of removal and repairs to the church, and it was resolved that the church should be temporarily protected from the weather in a way suitable for divine worship and that no part of it should be taken down until a new one had been built.

At the public meeting held on 17 August 1824, which endorsed the Dee Bridge Committee's plans for the proposed Parliamentary Bill, a resolution was passed that 'the present dilapidated state of St Bridget's and the consent of the parishioners to its removal, as expressed on 24 July 1823, afforded an opportunity of opening the best possible avenue from the heart of the City to a new bridge'.

The meeting had appointed a committee to take matters forward, and this in its turn had appointed a sub-committee to obtain plans etc. On 31 August 1824 it commissioned Mr Davies of Mollington 'to survey and draw a plan, of not less than two inches to a chain, of the land and property affected by the proposed works' and on 12 October ordered him to prepare estimates 'for a new road between Castle Gates and St Bridget's church'. Davies in his estimates valued the premises that would have to be demolished at £3,020, and the expense in taking down St Bridget's, removing the materials and building a new church on county land near the Castle at £4,500. If, however, the road were to be routed on the west side of St Bridget's, the valuation of the premises to be demolished

would be £6,200. III V.1 shows these alternative routes and the proposed site for the new church.

On 22 November it was decided to ask Thomas Harrison to provide estimates for removing St Bridget's and rebuilding in stone on the site which the county were offering. It was to be capable of accommodating 600 persons, for although the population of the parish numbered 900, the present church held only 350 and the parish clerk, who had been there for thirty-four years, said that he had never known there to be a shortage of room.

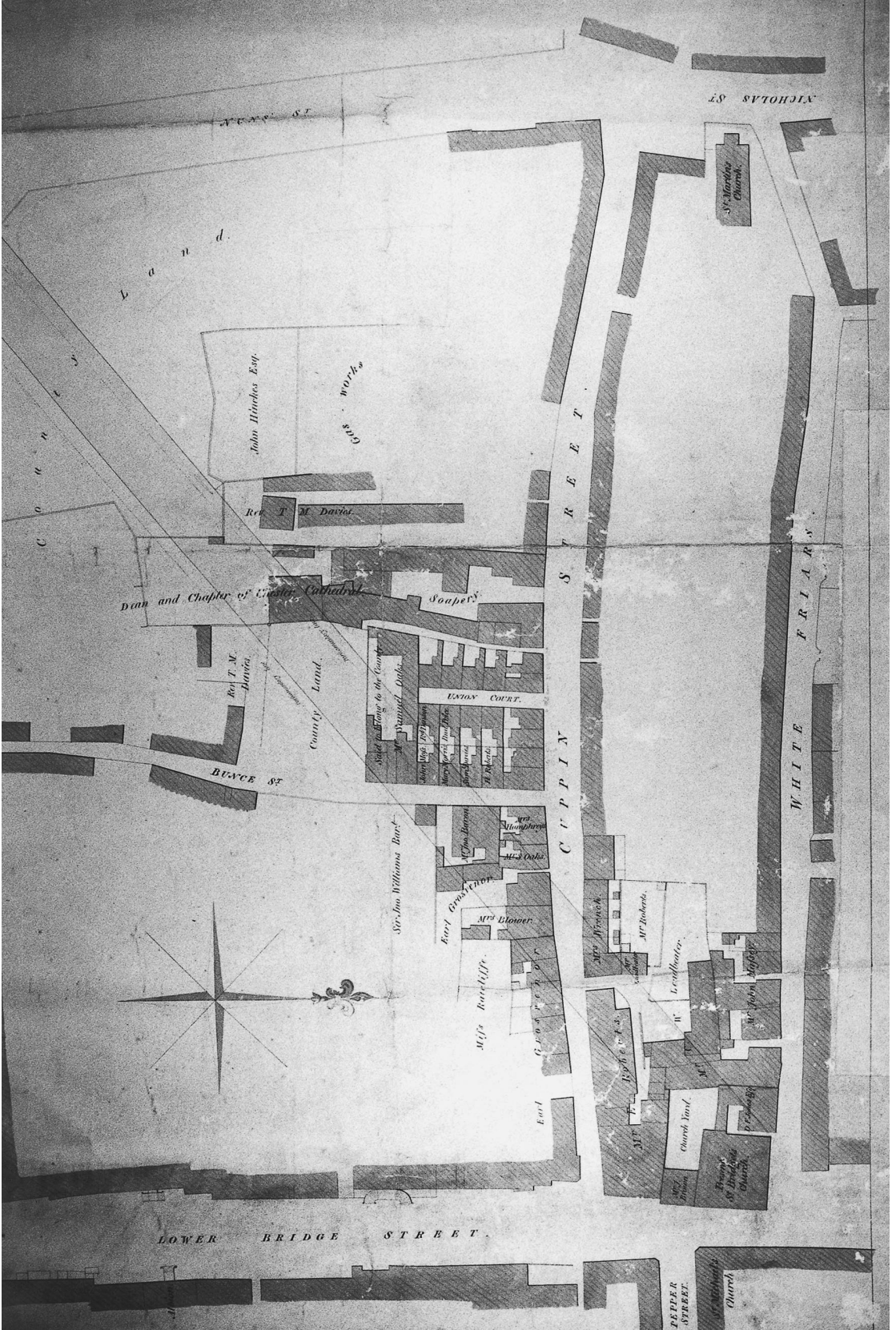
Harrison presented his estimates to the sub-committee on 4 December. The church was to be 55' x 45', with the 600 persons accommodated by a gallery around three sides. Cased in red stone, the cost would be £4,100; if white stone was used the cost would rise by £300. Against these sums there could be offset £400 for materials reused from the old church and stone given by the Corporation, but the inclusion of 15% 'poundage' would bring the respective totals to £4,155 and £4,600.

The sub-committee in a meeting with the bishop on 21 December 1824 'minutely examined' Harrison's plans and estimates. It was agreed that the costs should be revised so as not to exceed £4,000 and that 'the Bridge Trustees, being empowered to take down the church and lay the site together with the burial ground to a public street, would pay to the Commissioners of the Church Building Accounts that sum of money to be applied to erecting a new church on a site to be granted by the County Magistrates to the Church Building Commissioners'.

On 22 November the sub-committee had raised the question as to whether it was necessary to obtain the consent of the parishioners, the owners and the occupiers of property on the line of the new avenue, as was the case with turnpike roads. The town clerk was instructed to consult the parliamentary agents; he returned with the answer that as regards the property owners and occupiers, the agents' opinion was that their consent was not required and a notice to the effect that the houses and premises would be wanted would suffice. 'The improvement would be a public benefit and private interests must always give way to the public convenience'. As far as the parishioners were concerned, the resolution of St Bridget's vestry of 24 July 1823 was sufficient. However, in view of the fact that there had been changes in the intended place and mode of building the new church, the sub-committee thought it would be best to convene another meeting of the vestry to ascertain their feelings.

The bishop was consulted and he also recommended the convening of the vestry. He was of the opinion that the rebuilding should be under the direction of the Dee Bridge Committee and that the parish should contribute to the rebuilding a sum to be agreed between it and the sub-committee. If agreement could not be reached, then the parish would be called upon to repair the existing church and rebuild the steeple.

On 11 January 1825 the sub-committee submitted a memorial to the city magistrates on the subject of the new bridge. Referring to the road, which would be the first significant change to the Chester's street layout within the City Walls, certainly since that depicted in



St Andrew's Church

White Friars

Crippin Street

Kenilworth St

John Blincoe Esq

Rev. T. M. Davies

Dean and Chapter of Chester Cathedral

Rev. T. M. Davies

Buice St

County Land

Warrant Deeds

Sir Isaac Williams Bart

Every Court

Ms. Latham

Ms. Tolke

Ms. Flower

Ms. Russell

Earl

Mrs. Stowch

Mrs. Roberts

Leather

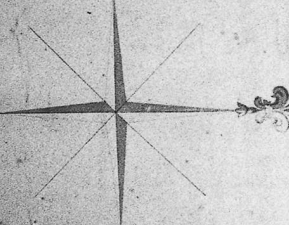
Mr. John Rogers

Church Yard

Trinity Church

Deffer Street

St. Andrew's Church



John Speed's map of the early seventeenth century and probably even earlier, the hope was expressed that:

... nothing will impede an improvement so long and so anxiously anticipated as combining utility and ornament in the most eminent degree, opening a handsome street from the center (*sic*) of the City to the Castle, giving additional and well merited display to that most magnificent specimen of modern architecture, and placing in its neighbourhood a church of simple and beautiful construction with a Bridge that will do honor (*sic*) to its venerable architect, forming an assemblage of fine buildings alike interesting to the man of taste and honorable (*sic*) to the district.

The sub-committee, holding that the removal of the church from its present site would be less expensive than re-routing the line of the new road also:

... presumed to hope that the Magistrates will assist by empowering [them] to complete the proposed grant of a site for the new church on unoccupied ground to the north east of the Castle Gates (*see* III V.1) and £1,200 out of the County rate with such part of the south end of the Nuns Gardens as may be necessary for forming the road'.

The Dee Bridge General Committee met on 17 January 1825 to receive the sub-committee's report on the revised estimated costs for the undertaking. These included £2,760 'for the formation of a new street from the two churches [St Michael's and St Bridget's] to the Castle Gates'. This sum was exclusive of the property given freely by Earl Grosvenor, but took into account the expenses of the work of making the actual roadway, estimated at £400. The report was accepted and it was agreed that a bill should be drawn up for presentation before Parliament.

This then became the act quoted above, and in it there was included a schedule listing in detail the houses and other premises, which it was proposed to purchase in order to make the new road (Appendix 1). Under the act the Dee Bridge Committee was replaced by the Dee Bridge Commissioners and it was the sub-committee of the latter that on 26 November recommended that the approach to the bridge should be as delineated in Mr Davies's plan. As shown on the attached plan (III V.3), this (the continuous line) differed slightly from the Parliamentary one (the broken line).

Subsequently, further adjustments were made in consequence of an order made by the Commissioners on 3 May 1827, extending the width of the road by 12' and authorising the purchase of the additional land required. A considerable part of the extension lay within the boundaries of the county and was granted by the magistrates gratuitously. Of the remainder, which was in private ownership, Earl Grosvenor also gave his land without charge, whilst the others agreed to their property's inclusion at a price of 2s per yard. The total cost of the extension was estimated at £588 (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 37).

left: III V.3 Plan of properties to be cut through by the new street in Chester. 6 December 1826. (CCALSS Z TRB 192. Reproduced by permission of Chester City Council)

As detailed in Appendix 1, the premises affected in addition to St Bridget's church and churchyard included businesses, such as a counting house, coachmaker's shop, public house, kelp mill and currier's workshop. There were also two shops, fifty-four dwelling houses and a garden house, plus several pieces of unoccupied land and gardens together with portions of the City Walls and the River Dee. These last were for the most part owned by public bodies such as the Chester Corporation, the Crown, the Custos Rotulorum for the county and the Dean and Chapter of the Diocese of Chester. Private owners numbered twenty-eight. These were mostly multiple owners, such as Earl Grosvenor, Joseph Jones and John Edwards, with the properties occupied by tenants. Most of the owners of a single property also had let them to tenants and there were only a handful of houses actually owner-occupied.

Payments of compensation to the owners of the premises were the responsibility of the sub-committee, but the minutes of their meetings contain no systematic or comprehensive account of their management of this task. Details of the negotiations which took place with some of the individuals are recorded and give some indication of the way the process was conducted. Thus, in the case of Mr C W Leadbeater, whose property consisted of parts of a dwelling house, outbuildings and yard, it was agreed that this should be assessed by two competent persons. One of these would be nominated by Leadbeater, the other by the sub-committee and if they could not agree the matter was to be referred to an umpire. In the event an award of £410 was made and accepted. Mr John Brown accepted £575 for his shop and counting house next door to St Bridget's in Bridge Street. The kelp mill owned by the Dean and Chapter and occupied by Messrs Hodson & Winter was to be taken down and rebuilt on a new site under the direction of Messrs Cole & Royle, who seemed to have acted as the sub-committee's assessors in many of the cases. For the land the Dean and Chapter received £170 8s 0d. Mr Edward Roberts, who owned the currier's workshop and two houses, agreed to accept £1,210, plus £32 for loss of rent. It was also agreed that any of his land which was taken but not used should be sold to him for an equitable sum within a reasonable time after the formation of the street.

Agreement was reached with Sir John Williams Bart, whose garden and garden house were to be taken, on the purchase of the land at 5s per sq yard and the rebuilding of the garden house and restoration of the surrounding wall at the expense of the Commissioners. Sir John had expressed a preference to have a piece of land given him in exchange for what he would lose, and the Commissioners also agreed to try to obtain part of Earl Grosvenor's land for him. If they were successful, the payment to Sir John would be reduced in proportion by 5s per sq yard. However, although this agreement is recorded in the sub-committee minutes for 25 April 1827, it is reported in the same minutes nearly twelve months later that Sir John was complaining that he could not enter into negotiations about the land without giving notice to his tenant, which he had not done because of the uncertainty over when the work would be carried out (CCALSS Z TRB 83-5).

Calculations for the valuation of some of the properties between Bridge Street and Bunce Street are to be found on a separate loose sheet (see Appendix 2). Undated and unsigned, it has the appearance of a preliminary draft, prepared in advance of the negotiations, since in those instances where the agreed figures are known through the sub-committee minutes there are significant differences. Mr Leadbeater, whose property was valued at £200 gross,

received £410 and Mr Brown accepted £575 as against the valuation of £430 gross. The valuation of £270 gross for Mr Roberts was in respect of ‘part of a house, poor shippon and very small cottage’ with no provision for the currier’s workshop and his other property which went towards his receiving £1,210.

As well as specifically excluding St Bridget’s, there are other omissions from the list and properties west of Bunce Street are also ignored. Inevitably the total of £1440 for the property falls short of the original estimates and must be discounted as a pointer to the actual cost. What this eventually proved to be is not known, since although a balance sheet for the cost of the bridge itself was in due course presented to the Commissioners, no comparable accounts exist for making Grosvenor Street.

From June 1827 onwards the sub-committee minutes from time to time recorded the demolition of houses and the sale of materials from them for sums of £50 or so. However, little or no information is given about the progress of the work on the new road, the first reference in the minutes occurring on 25 September 1828, by which it would appear that the footpaths were about to be constructed. The sub-committee ordered that these were to be of the width of 9’ 6” inches on each side; the water table was to be paved to a width of one yard; and the centre of the channel to be 1’ from the curb stone. Twelve months then elapsed before the sub-committee became involved again, when it ordered that three gas lamps should be placed between Bunce Street and the Castle.

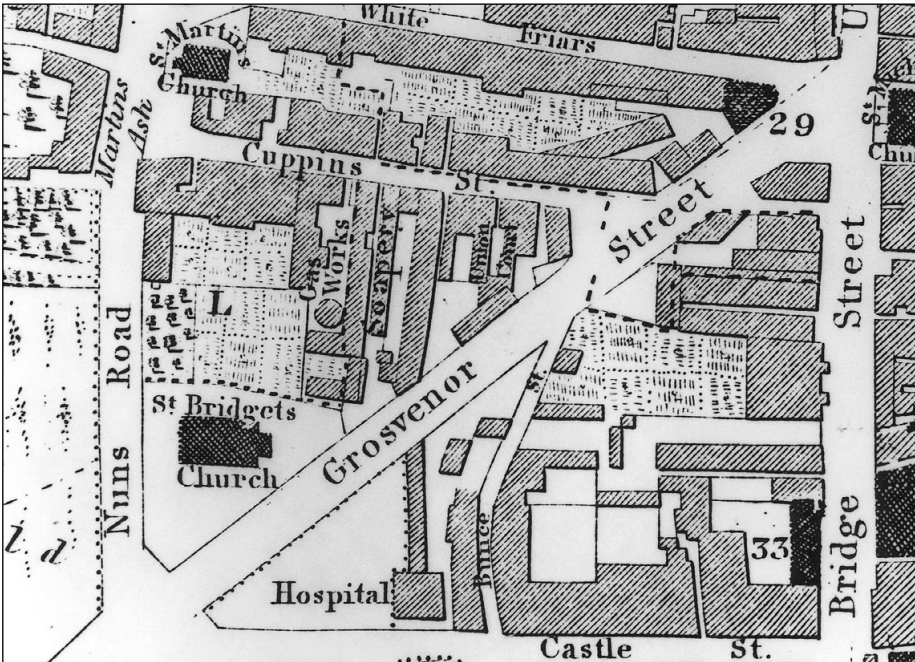
The only direct indication in the minutes that the road had been completed came on 13 January 1834, when it was ordered that the portion of Grosvenor Street — the first direct reference to it by name — between Bunce Street and Bridge Street, ‘which it was incumbent on the parishes of St Mary on the Hill and St Bridget’s to repair, should be surrendered to them with the requirement to repair it’. They also ordered the placing of gas lamps along the new road and embankment, with oil lamps from where the gas mains ceased to the bridge.

However, building along the line of the new street had clearly begun some time before. The Commissioners had sold a plot of land to Mr Leadbeater on 7 April 1828 on the east side of his existing premises and between them and the new road for £20. This, in effect, was behind the site of the demolished church, and the sale was made on condition that the building he erected there would not be used ‘as a gin and spirit shop or be attached to his present house for the purpose of selling liquor’. Despite this, the building would seem to have been what became The King’s Head (III V.4), as shown on John Wood’s 1833 map under number 29 (III V.5). It had been purchased some time before November 1831 by Thomas Onslow, who on 23 November obtained the Commissioners’ approval to purchase the adjoining plot of waste land for £1, provided he built on the plot, retired part of his front in Whitefriars and agreed not to build stables on the Grosvenor Street front.

Wood’s map does not appear to indicate that much other new development had taken place by 1833. The Commissioners’ minutes are silent in this regard, other than on 16 December 1836 allowing the City Corporation to erect a weighing machine opposite to the plot of land adjoining Mr Withers’s unoccupied soapery (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 61).



III V.4 King's Head Hotel, Grosvenor Street, c 1935. (From Goulbourne & Jackson 1987)



III V.5 John Wood's map of Chester, 1833: detail

The census of 1841 also suggests that developments along the street proceeded slowly. The only inhabitants returned for St Bridget's parish were Onslow and his family at the King's Head, and there was one uninhabited house; in St Mary's there were seven households, including Thomas Ellis, who was the Machine Keeper. By 1851, however, the situation

would seem to have improved quite significantly in that new houses had been built and these were occupied by members of the middle class. Although the census shows little change in St Bridget's, with the King's Head the only occupied premises and the number of uninhabited houses having risen to four, the households in St Mary's had increased to ten and there were nine occupied houses in St Michael's. Many of the occupants in St Mary's were master tradesmen, whilst the heads of households in St Michael's include a 'Lady', a 'Gentleman' and two army officers on half pay.

Information on the progress of the work of rebuilding St Bridget's is also scanty. Notwithstanding the grant of £4,000 the vestry must have come to an early decision that this was not going to be enough, for on 16 December 1825 it resolved to raise £500 to be used for 'casing the North and East sides of the new church in a style corresponding with the South and West sides and also for enclosing the new cemetery by a suitable iron railing or other fence'.

The Commissioners authorised payment of a first instalment of £2,000 'as soon as it might be required' on 2 November 1826 (CCALSS Z TRB 57, fo 33), suggesting that work was in progress or was about to start. On 28 June 1827 the sub-committee noted that the parishioners were dissatisfied over the delays in building and agreed that the Church Building Commissioners should be notified of their concern.

At all events the laying of the foundation stone took place three and a half months later on 12 October 1827. The ceremony was performed by the Bishop of Chester, Dr C J Blomfield, spreading mortar with a silver trowel on a plinth stone and reading a dedicatory prayer for the church. There was a brass plate fixed to the stone, recording the event and noting the names of the architect and the builder. Possibly because of age — he was 83 and would die in March 1829 and be buried in the new cemetery — Harrison was not responsible for the design, which was the work of one of his pupils, William Cole the younger. The builder was John Wright.

According to the report in the *Chronicle* of 19 October, the ceremony was preceded by a procession from the Exchange, where those present were 'regaled with negus, cake etc'. Those taking part in the procession included the boys of the Blue Coat School, Poor Gownsmen, William Cole and Joseph (*sic*) Wright 'carrying the trowel', the churchwardens, the clergy in their canonicals two by two, the mayor and Corporation in their robes and a band. The *Chronicle* also had to report with regret that during the ceremony part of the crowd 'behaved with extreme indecorum, pushing each other and shouting to the annoyance of the venerable prelate and the respectable portion of the individuals present'.

As designed by William Cole, the church measured 87' x 51'. It had doric pilasters supporting a pediment at the west end, and a cupola supported on ionic columns above (III V.6). The building, according to Ormerod (1882, 1, 341), was 'a plain oblong structure with a neat light and airy interior, but with no architectural grace to recommend it. There was a gallery at the west end, a painted roof and a coloured east window representing the Ascension'. Its classical design met with mixed opinions; to Hemingway (1831, 2, 116) it was 'executed in a superior of elegance', but in Thomas Hughes' eyes (1856, 61) it had

‘none of the characteristics of a Christian church and might easily be mistaken for some pagan temple’. Hemingway also pointed out that, ‘although the parish of St Bridget’s was wholly within the city, the church itself was neither in the parish nor the city, but altogether within the county palatine’. In fact there had been a clause in the act regarding the rebuilding specifying that after its consecration the church ‘for all purposes, and to all intents whatsoever, shall be deemed part of and situate within the parish of St Bridget’s and within the city of Chester’.

The church was consecrated on 5 August 1829 by the bishop, John B Sumner, who had succeeded Blomfield in 1828 on the latter’s translation to London. The ceremony was preceded, as with the laying of the foundation stone, by the mayor and other members of the Corporation processing from the Exchange, dressed in their official robes and accompanied with a band. The *Courant* in its report of 11 August, true to form in missing no opportunity to discredit the Corporation, said that ‘it would be difficult to imagine a more motley or grotesque group ... The inhabitants thought the occasion too opportune to pass without manifesting *their* estimation of the body corporate, which they did by the most marked contempt’.

The church was said to be two-thirds filled ‘by a very respectable congregation, who contributed silver at the doors as they entered’. This had the effect, according to the *Chronicle* in its report of 7 August, of ‘preventing an indiscriminate and inconvenient crowd and at the same time furnished the sum of upwards of £30’. In the afternoon a dinner was



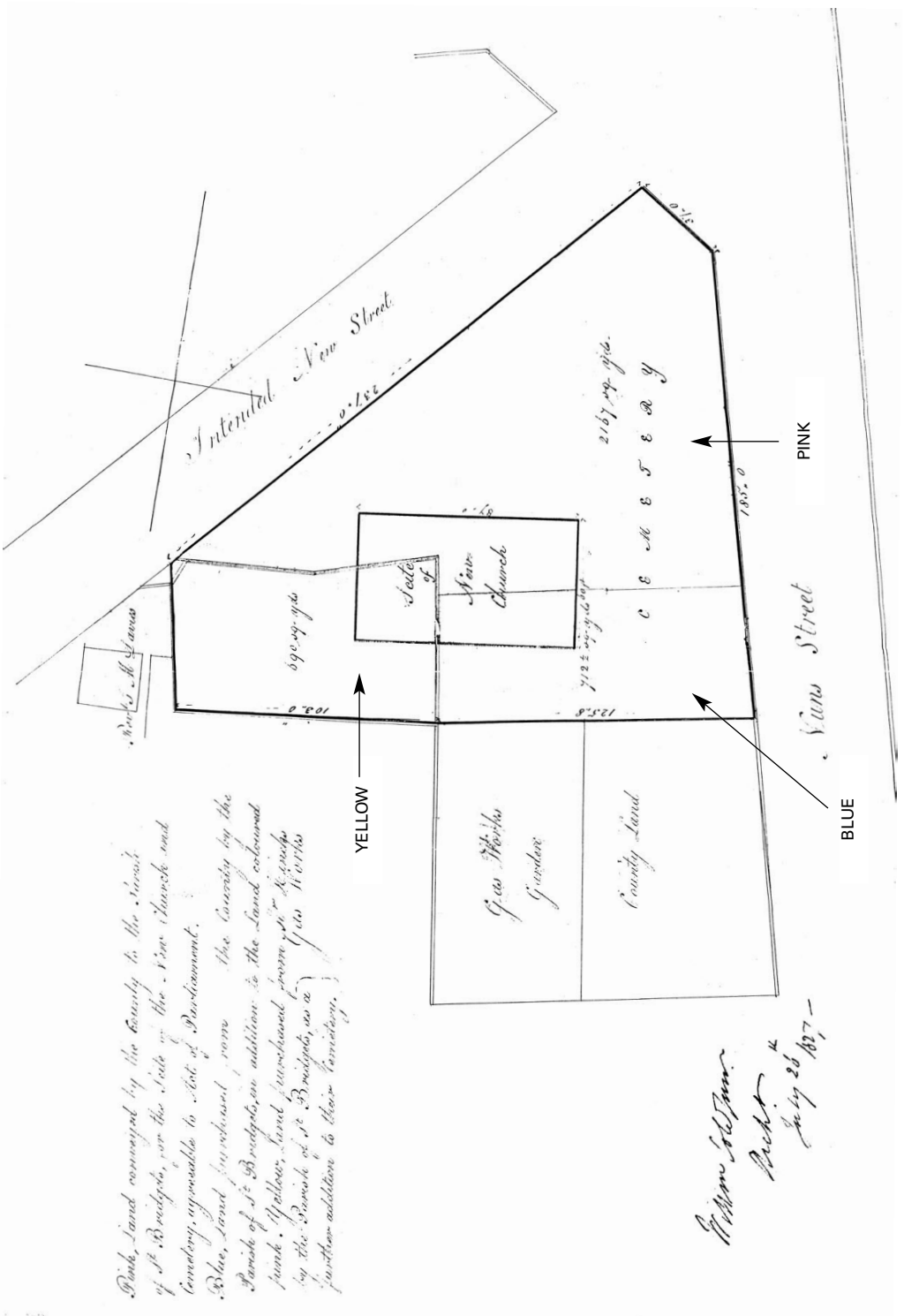
III V.6 The Castle and St Bridget’s Church. (Chester: Seacombe. *In: Views of Chester: volume of prints in Chester Archaeological Society Library. Reproduced with permission*)

provided by Mr Ebrey at the Globe Inn, attended by some twenty-five persons, parishioners and those connected with 'raising the elegant edifice'. During the evening 'the most pleasant hilarity prevailed — several good songs were sung and the usual toasts were received and celebrated with enthusiasm'.

The new burial ground had been consecrated on the same day as the laying of the foundation stone. The size of the original piece of land granted for this had been the subject of some concern to the vestry, 'considering the removals which must take place'. Accordingly on 23 November 1826 they had resolved to ask the magistrates to sell a portion of county land adjoining the north side of the piece already granted. This sale was agreed on 22 March 1827, and the parish acquired a plot of ground measuring 753 square yards, together with another of 693 square yards, the latter for the purpose of making an exchange with the gas works garden. Mr Hinckes, the owner of the garden, and the Gas Light Company, the lessees, had agreed to the exchange provided the parish met all costs. These amounted to £204 6s 0d, made up of £144 6s 0d for the ground, £20 for enclosing the new gas works garden and £40 for the necessary conveyances (CCALSS Z TRB 82). As a result of these additions the area of the new site extended to 3,569 square yards, of which 2,989 square yards were used as the cemetery (Ill V.7). In response to pressure from the bishop to complete the deal so that the cemetery could be consecrated, the vestry on 7 July 1827 agreed to accept an offer from the bank of an advance of £200 against a promissory note signed by the churchwardens. The terms of repayment were £50 pa over four years, commencing in February 1828, but the account was in fact settled in full in 1830.

Some income had been obtained from the sale of goods from the old church, the churchwardens being empowered on 25 March 1827 to sell the two bells, the shandeliers (*sic*) and any other articles there. However, on 14 March 1829 the vestry, being faced with the need to settle various tradesmen's bills, decided to raise £800 by a mortgage on the church rates. On 18 October it was agreed that a further £200 would be required, which should also be secured by the assignment of the church rates. On 4 December, therefore, in return for £400, an assignment of the rates was made to Sarah Poole, and an offer by the rector, Richard Massie, of a loan of the balance of £600 from his two spinster daughters was accepted. The Massies were to have preference in repayment, and Sarah Poole was not repaid until 2 February 1861, when the agents for her representatives received the balance owing, plus interest, of £115 16s 0d (CCALSS P 15/8/2).

The new church remained in use until 1892, when it was demolished following the establishment of St Mary-on-the-Hill as the parish church for the united parish of St Bridget and St Martin, which had itself been formed in 1842. The cemetery survived until the construction of the inner ring road in 1972, when most of the site and that of the church disappeared under the roundabout at its junction with Grosvenor Street. In the cemetery were a number of brick-lined vaults. Above one was a stone slab in which was set a marble tablet inscribed 'Thomas Harrison's vault, died 29 March 1829 age 85'. The vault contained three coffins, two of lead and one of wood, but with no indication as to which was Harrison's. These coffins, together with the other remains from the cemetery, were re-interred at Blacon, although the memorial obelisk to Matthew Henry and several flat gravestones were retained and remain within the grassed-over centre of the roundabout.



Pink Land conveyed by the County to the Vicar of St. Bridget, for the site of the New Church and territory, agreeable to Act of Parliament.

Blue Land purchased from the Vicar of St. Bridget, in addition to the Land coloured pink. Yellow Land purchased from St. Bridget by the Vicar of St. Bridget, as a further addition to their territory.

William Salt Janr.
 Rectr. &
 July 25 1827 -

Appendix 1

Schedule of Houses and other Premises proposed to be purchased and used for the purposes of the Act 6 Geo IV c 175. (Reproduced by permission of Cheshire County Council)

The SCHEDULE referred to by the foregoing ACT.
Of Houses and other Premises proposed to be purchased and used for the purposes of this Act.

Where situate.	Description of Premises.	Names of Owners or reputed Owners.	Occupiers Names.
In the parish of Saint Bridget, in the city of Chester	Saint Bridget's church	(Reverend Richard Massie John M Kinlay (Thomas Clayton) Mr. John Brown ditto	Minister. Churchwardens. Edward Hughes. Self.
Ditto	Shop and rooms over	David Francis Jones, esq.	John Ward.
Ditto	Counting-house	Mr. Charles Worral Leadbeater	Simeon Williams.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, shop and offices	Mr. Edward Roberts	Elizabeth Parry.
Ditto	Paris of dwelling-house, outbuildings and yard	ditto	Isabella Berry.
Ditto	Currier's workshop, closet and room over	ditto	William Jones.
Ditto	Two dwelling-houses, offices and yard	ditto	ditto and others.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, outbuildings, offices and yard	ditto	(Untenanted.)
Ditto	Prayers, yard, &c.	Mrs. Wrench	Daniel Roberts.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, &c.	ditto	Matthew Davies.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	ditto	Anne Barnes.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	ditto	Samuel Dod.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	Earl Grosvenor	Jane Davies.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	ditto	Robert Jones.
Ditto	Coachmaker's shop	ditto	John Davies.
Ditto	Parts of yard and shed	Miss Ratcliffe	Richard Snelson.
In the parish of Saint Mary-on-the-Hill, in the city of Chester.	Dwelling-house, yard and offices and garden	Mrs. Mary Blower	Self
In the said parish of Saint Bridget, in the city of Chester	Public-house, yard and offices	Earl Grosvenor	Edward Davies.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard, &c.	ditto	Morris Williams.
In the said parishes of Saint Bridget and Saint Mary-on-the-Hill, or one of them, in the city of Chester	Dwelling-house, yard, &c.	ditto	John Price.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard, &c.	ditto	John Williams.
In the said parish of Saint Bridget, in the city of Chester	Dwelling-house, yard, and offices	Mr. Samuel Oaks	Robert Williams.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, &c.	Mrs. Humphreys	Robert Hughes.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard, &c.	ditto	

left: III.V.7 St Bridget's church: site plan showing land granted and purchased for the new burial ground. (CCALSS EDP 72/4. Reproduced by permission of Cheshire County Council)

Where situate.	Description of Premises.	Names of Owners or reputed Owners.	Occupiers Names.
In the parish of Saint Michael, in the city of Chester	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	Mr. John Baron	Self.
Ditto	Garden house and part of garden	Sir John Williams, bart.	Dr. Cummins.
In the said parish of Saint Mary-on-the-Hill, in the city of Chester	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	Hugh Roberts	Self.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	Samuel Davies	David Pugh.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	Mary Morris	Robert Leake.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	Mr. John Moss	William Parry.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	Paul Price	John Grindley.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, yard and offices	Richard Dawson	Self.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, buildings and yard	Samuel Oaks	Self.
In the said parish of Saint Mary on-the-Hill, in the County Palatine of Chester	Yard and buildings	The Custos Rotulorum of the County Palatine of Chester, in trust for the inhabitants of the said county	Samuel Oaks.
Ditto	Dwelling-house, &c.	ditto	Eleanor Salisbury.
Ditto	Land	ditto	Untenanted.
In the said parish of Saint Mary-on-the-Hill, in the city of Chester	Land	Reverend Thomas Davies	Untenanted
Ditto	Kelp mill, buildings and land	The Dean and Chapter of Chester	Messrs. Hodson & Witter.
Ditto	Land	Reverend Thomas Davies	Untenanted.
In the parish of Saint Martin, in the city of Chester	Part of garden	John Hinckes, esq.	Gas Light Company.
In the said parishes of Saint Martin and Saint Mary-on-the-Hill, in the County Palatine of Chester	Land	The Custos Rotulorum of the County Palatine of Chester, in trust for the inhabitants of the said county	Untenanted.
In the said parish of Saint Mary-on-the-Hill, in the County Palatine of Chester	Land	ditto	Mr. Dunstan.
In the said parish of Saint Mary-on-the-Hill, in the county of the city of Chester	The city wall	The Corporation of Chester	Untenanted.
Ditto	Land	The King	William Jones.
Ditto	Land	The Corporation of Chester	ditto.
Ditto	The River Dee.	-	-

In the said parish of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, in the county of the city of Chester	Land		The Corporation of Chester	Untenanted.
-	-	-	-	-
-	Part of a garden	-	James Bingley	Self.
-	Ditto	-	James Mainwaring, esq.	Thomas Weaver.
-	Dwelling-house, offices and garden	-	John Edwards, esq.	Thomas Speed.
-	Dwelling-house, offices, garden and land	-	ditto	William Davies.
-	Dwelling-house, offices, &c.	-	ditto	Edward Jones.
-	Dwelling-house, &c.	-	ditto	Late Thomas Foster, now untenanted.
-	Dwelling-house, &c.	-	ditto	Untenanted.
-	Dwelling-house, &c.	-	ditto	Thomas Price.
-	Dwelling-house, out-buildings, offices and garden ground	-	ditto	John Phillips.
-	Dwelling-house and buildings	-	Rebekah Shone	Self.
-	Dwelling-house and building	-	Edward Phillips	Joseph Wainwright.
-	Dwelling-house, offices and garden ground	-	John Edwards, esq.	Thomas Whittakers.
-	Garden ground	-	ditto	Samuel Saunders.
-	Garden ground	-	ditto	John Rogers.
-	Dwelling-house, offices and garden	-	ditto	Richard Bellis.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, offices and garden	-	ditto	Randie Bellis.
-	Land	-	The Corporation of Chester	Untenanted.
-	Dwelling-house, garden, &c.	-	John Edwards, esq.	John Bellis.
-	Garden ground	-	ditto	Thomas Davies.
-	Dwelling-house, offices, garden, &c.	-	Earl Grosvenor	Joseph Vaughan.
-	Dwelling-house, offices, garden, &c.	-	ditto	Edward Price.
-	Dwelling-house, offices, garden, &c.	-	ditto	Griffith Jones.
-	Dwelling-house, offices, garden, &c.	-	ditto	Samuel Fairbrother
-	Dwelling-house, offices, &c.	-	Mr. Joseph Jones	Anna Actor
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, &c.	-	ditto	John Cotgr eave.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, &c.	-	ditto	William Davies.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, &c.	-	ditto	Michael Gerrard.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, &c.	-	ditto	Samuel Saunders.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, &c.	-	ditto	Thomas Price.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, &c.	-	ditto	Thomas Davies.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, garden, &c.	-	ditto	Edward Thomas.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, &c.	-	ditto	Thomas Ridgway.
-	Dwelling-house, buildings, &c.	-	ditto	George Worrall.

Appendix 2

Valuation of property to be purchased for forming the new street between Bridge Street and Bunce Street in the city of Chester as per annex plan* excepting St. Bridget's Church.

David F. Jones Esq.	a House	£450	-	Materials off £90	-	£360
Messrs. Brown's	Shop	£430	-	Materials £80	-	£350
Chas. Leadbeater	Stables and Room	£200	-	Land & Improvements	£120 £80	
Edw. Roberts	Part of a house, poor shippon and very small cottage	£270	-	Improvement	£200 -	£70
Wrench Esq.	a cottage		-	Improvement considered	— £50	
Mrs. Blower	a house	£360	-	Materials	£60 -	£300
# William Cooper & others	a house	£350	-	Land & Materials	£120 —	£230
Sir J. Williams	a bit of land					£35
Earl Grosvenor	two back houses		£12 per year			
	public house		14			
	smithy		7			
	2 houses 4 (?)		<u>18</u>			
				£51 at 15 years value	760 (sic)	
				Improvements off	100 —	<u>£665 sic</u>
						2140
				Earl Grosvenor's donation	665)	
				Sir J. Williams do	35) -700	1440

Total of land purchased by the County from the Crown

	4163 yards @ 2/- —	<u>416 — 6 — 0</u>
Part of Farecloughs	1188 yards @ 7/- —	<u>415 — 16 — 0</u>
To be purchased	Gas Co. Garden —	<u>90 — 0 — 0</u>
		<u>922 — 2 — 0</u>
	Building land off	<u>400 — 0 — 0</u>
	Differance (sic) to County	<u>522 — 2 — 0</u>

* The plan is missing

Not named in the Schedule or on the plan reference ZTRB 190

Source: CCALSS ZTRB 147

Notes

- ¹ 6 Geo IV c 125 (reprinted as a foreword to the Minutes of the Dee Bridge Commissioners: Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service (hereafter CCALSS) ZTRB 57
- ² George Harrison's Account Book 1811–37: CCALSS Z D/HS 516. Brunel was engineer to the tunnel, a project without precedent. Physical problems when the Thames broke in on more than one occasion and financial difficulties led to construction being abandoned for long periods, and the work was not completed until 1843.
- ³ The correspondence between Harrison and Brunel from 18 November 1825 to 3 January 1826 was entered in the Minute Book of the Dee Bridge Commissioners, following a directive made at their meeting of 5 January 1826: CCALSS ZTRB 57 fo 15v.
- ⁴ Brunel's presence at the Rotherhithe tunnel as it slowly progressed and problems arose was crucial and clearly took first priority with him. Symptomatic perhaps of his absorption there is that he misdated his letter to the Commissioners as 7 January.
- ⁵ The collapse began when a portion of the south side fell into the street. No-one was injured but it was reported that a Sal Adams, who was reputed to be 'a practitioner in things relating to the other world — a Meg Merrilees in whose hands fate had placed the destiny of the world' was sitting in an upper room in a chair within six inches of the wall which fell down. The report concluded 'this does not augur well for her foresight'.
- ⁶ As is evident both from Ormerod's description and Batenham's etching, St Bridget's did not have a steeple in the modern sense of a spire surmounting a tower. It must be presumed the vestry were following the not uncommon practice of the day in using 'steeple' as the equivalent to 'tower'.

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