TRAFFIC PLANS FOR LEICESTER

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IN preparing the Development Plan for the City of Leicester, one of the main aspects to be considered is the solution of the traffic difficulties. A study of *diagram* 1 will give some indication of the scale of the

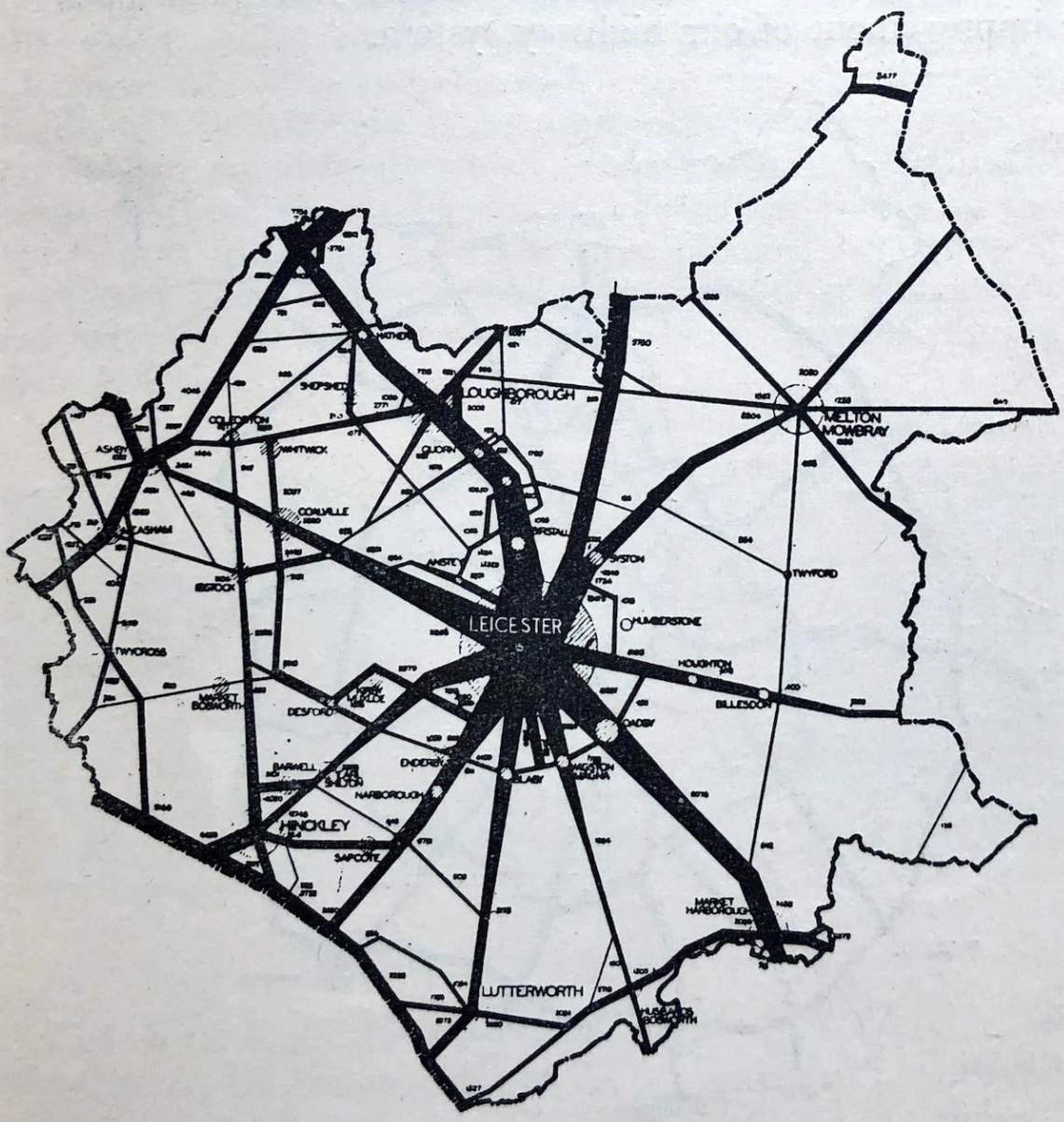

Diagram 1. *Radial Roads showing volume of traffic converging on Leicester.*

problem and shows how all the roads in the County converge on the City with an increasing volume of traffic, and even in the restricted conditions of present motoring, cause severe traffic congestion in and around the central shopping and business area of the City during peak times.

It must be generally appreciated that the need for improving and planning a future system of existing communications arises from the fact that the present system of roads was not designed to deal with modern traffic requirements, and during the last 30 years the development of the internal combusion engine has outstripped the improvement of our highway system.

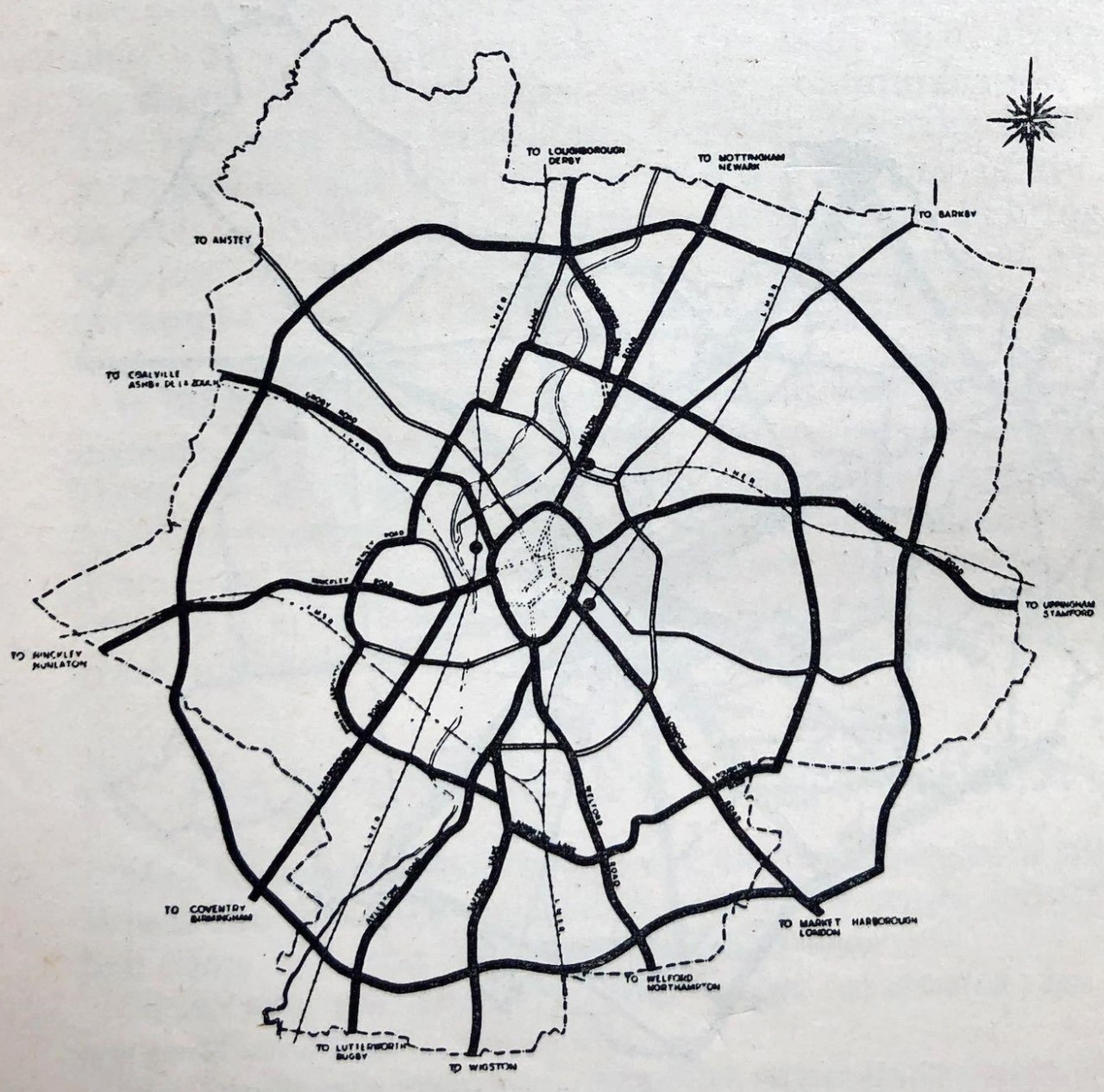

Diagram 2. *Pattern of Radial Roads and three proposed Ring Roads.*

It is perhaps not so generally appreciated that any proposals for future communications must be based on the knowledge that the number of vehicles using the roads will almost certainly double itself within the next 20 years.

This article is intended to provide only a very brief account of the planning proposals for the main features of the future system of road communications for the City, together with some mention of relevant associated matters.

The plan for road communications for the City of Leicester is based on the spider's web pattern, formed by the main radial roads and three proposed ring roads (*diagram* 2). The radials, which are the existing main roads, will be widened as circumstances permit, and where possible to an ultimate width of 100-120 feet. The alignment of these widenings, together with the routes of the Outer and Inner Ring Roads, were planned a quarter of a century ago and have been reserved, and in some parts carried out, as new developments have occurred during that period.

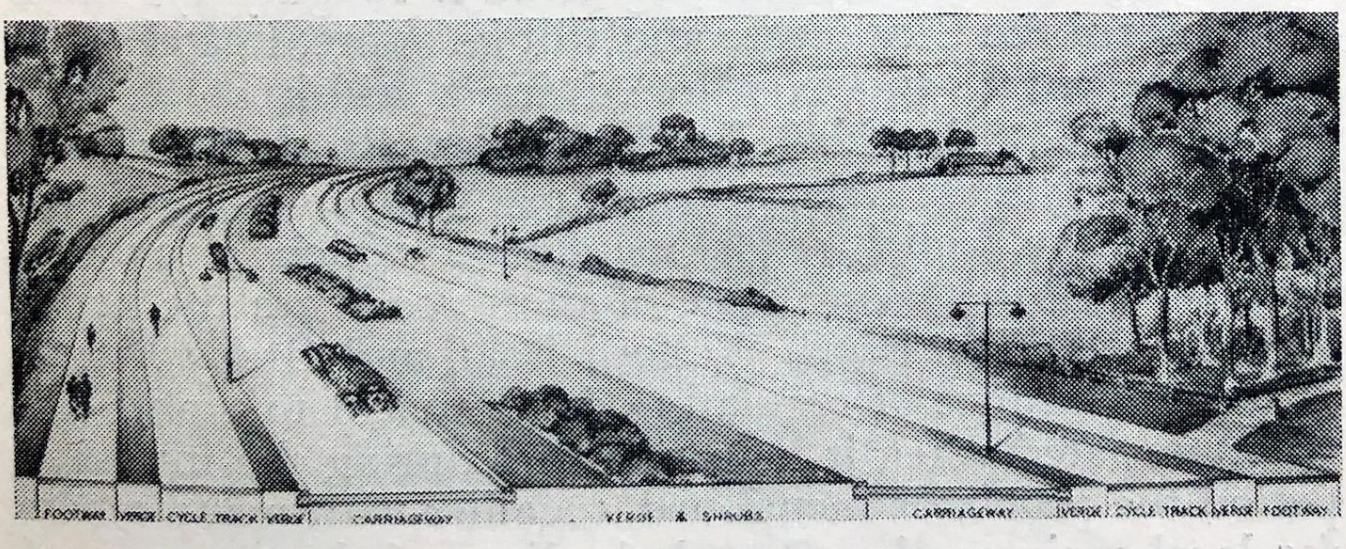

Diagram 3. *Outer Ring Road.*

The Outer Ring Road is roughly three miles radius from the City centre, about 17 miles in length and its width will vary from 120-150 feet. It will be designed for fast through traffic, with dual carriageways, cycle tracks, pedestrian subways, and in some cases two-level treatment at junctions.

Examples of the route, though not of the final treatment, are already to be seen in Ring Road, Stoneygate, Colchester Road and Palmerston Boulevard. Where important roads cross the Outer Ring Road and there is adequate undeveloped land available, it is proposed to provide fly-over junctions and roundabouts, an illustration of which is shown in *diagram* 4.

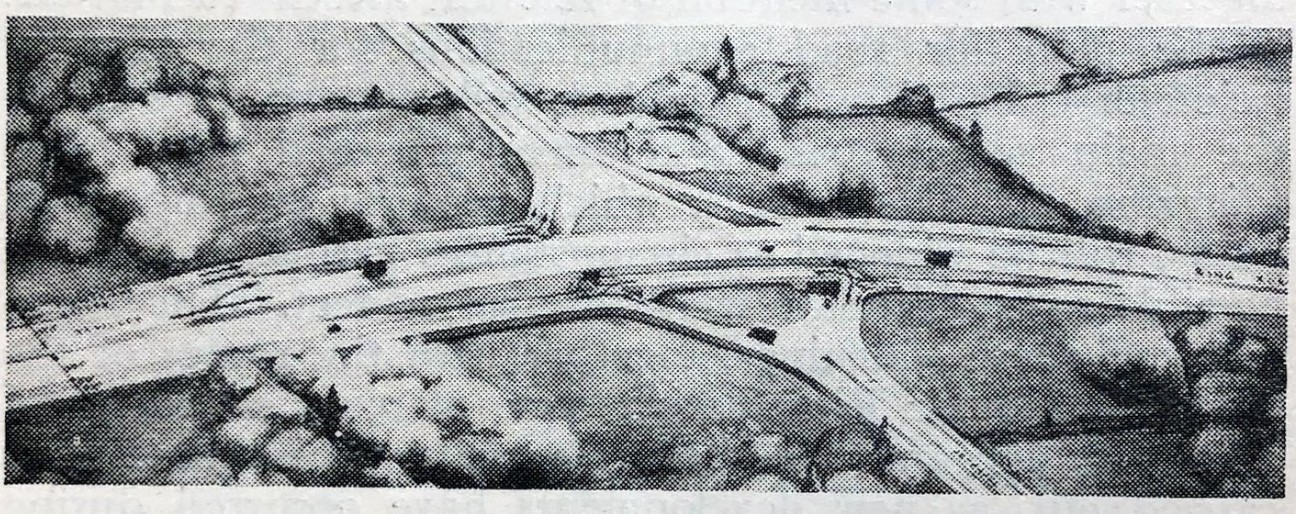

Diagram 4. *Fly-over Junction and Roundabout*

The route of the Inner Ring Road is roughly 1½ miles radius from the City centre and will be approximately 10½ miles in length and is planned for a width of 85 feet. Abbey Lane, Blackbird Road, Henley Road, Woodville Road and Wyngate Drive are existing examples of this route. Types of the radial roads mentioned which give some indication of the future scale of these roads are the newer portion of Melton Road, Welford Road and Groby Road.

The importance of regulating development to a plan will be appreciated when it is known that during the inter-war period the proposals mentioned, together with many others for local main roads, affected the lines of development of some 26,000 houses and a large number of industrial premises within the City boundary. A large number outside the City were affected by the proposed Outer Ring Road.

The route of the Central Ring Road was laid down in 1930, with a further section added more recently. This was planned to prevent cross-central through traffic and will be 100 feet in width. Its route is from Belgrave Gate

(near George Street), via Archdeacon Lane to St. Nicholas Street—St. Nicholas Street to the Newarke—the Newarke to Infirmary Square (via Oxford Street)—Infirmary Square to London Road (via East Street)—London Road to Humberstone Gate (via St. George Street)—Humberstone Gate to Belgrave Gate. A part of this new thoroughfare between Church Gate and Abbey Street was constructed before the outbreak of war, which stopped further progress.

The more important of recent proposals for the improvement of the existing communication system in the built-up areas and, in particular, for assisting the smooth flow of traffic approaching and leaving the Central Ring are as follows:

(a) The gathering of Narborough, Hinckley and Glenfield Roads to a direct route over the West Bridge;

(b) The widening of Jarrom Street to provide a more direct route to the West as an alternative to Aylestone Road and Walnut Street;

(c) The continuation of Church Gate to Blackbird Road to relieve the Northgate approach;

(d) A connecting road from Sparkenhoe Street to Queen Street to supersede the existing Swain Street route.

In addition to these proposals, with a view to discouraging through traffic and to relieve the congestion caused very greatly by the exising public passenger transport service, a careful study has been given to the central area, and by amendment of the existing street pattern together with the proposals for the Central Ring Road it is hoped to better these conditions.

The principal streets in the central shopping, administrative, entertainment, and business area (such as High street, Granby Street, Belgrave Gate) carry a large number of passenger transport vehicles daily. The total number of vehicles and cycles utilising these three roads daily is upwards of 17,000, 13,000 and 19,000 respectively. Removal of these vehicles would considerably relieve cross-central

traffic and congestion and increase safety and convenience in the Central Area, and it is accordingly proposed to revise the existing public transport system to follow the policy of tramway abandonment. This policy will involve the establishment of omnibus stations clear of the Central Area, but within reasonable distance for public convenience. In this connection, the ideal for a single-terminus from which all omnibus services would operate was found impractical for the following reasons:

(a) The City passenger services alone would involve the operation at peak times of about 750 vehicles per hour and this figure would be about doubled if Midland Red and other services were included;

(b) The provision of a terminus capable of meeting these and increased demands to arise from new developments would be impracticable of solution in the Central Area;

(c) The object of relieving the area of cross-central traffic would be defeated;

(d) Suitable radiating roads from the central site could not be superimposed on the existing street pattern without considerable interference with the business life of the City.

Another influence which led to the proposals finally drafted was that inter-connection between road and rail termini was known to be unsatisfactory and the remedy was proposed of providing an inner circular route, based on parts of the Central Ring with the addition of Newarke Street, Welford Road and Charles Street, with the omnibus stations sited on this inner circle.

Three modern omnibus stations to provide all facilities for convenience and refreshment of passengers and employees are to be sited on this inner circle, beyond which no public transport will penetrate into the Central Area. These stations are so sited as to serve their contributory areas in City and County without involving cross-central traffic and with inter-connection by the inner circle with

the main railway stations. Referring to *diagram* 5, the sites are :—(B) Causeway Lane; (C) Newarke Street to Welford Road; and (D) Humberstone Gate by Charles Street; and they are all within convenient walking distance of the Central Area.

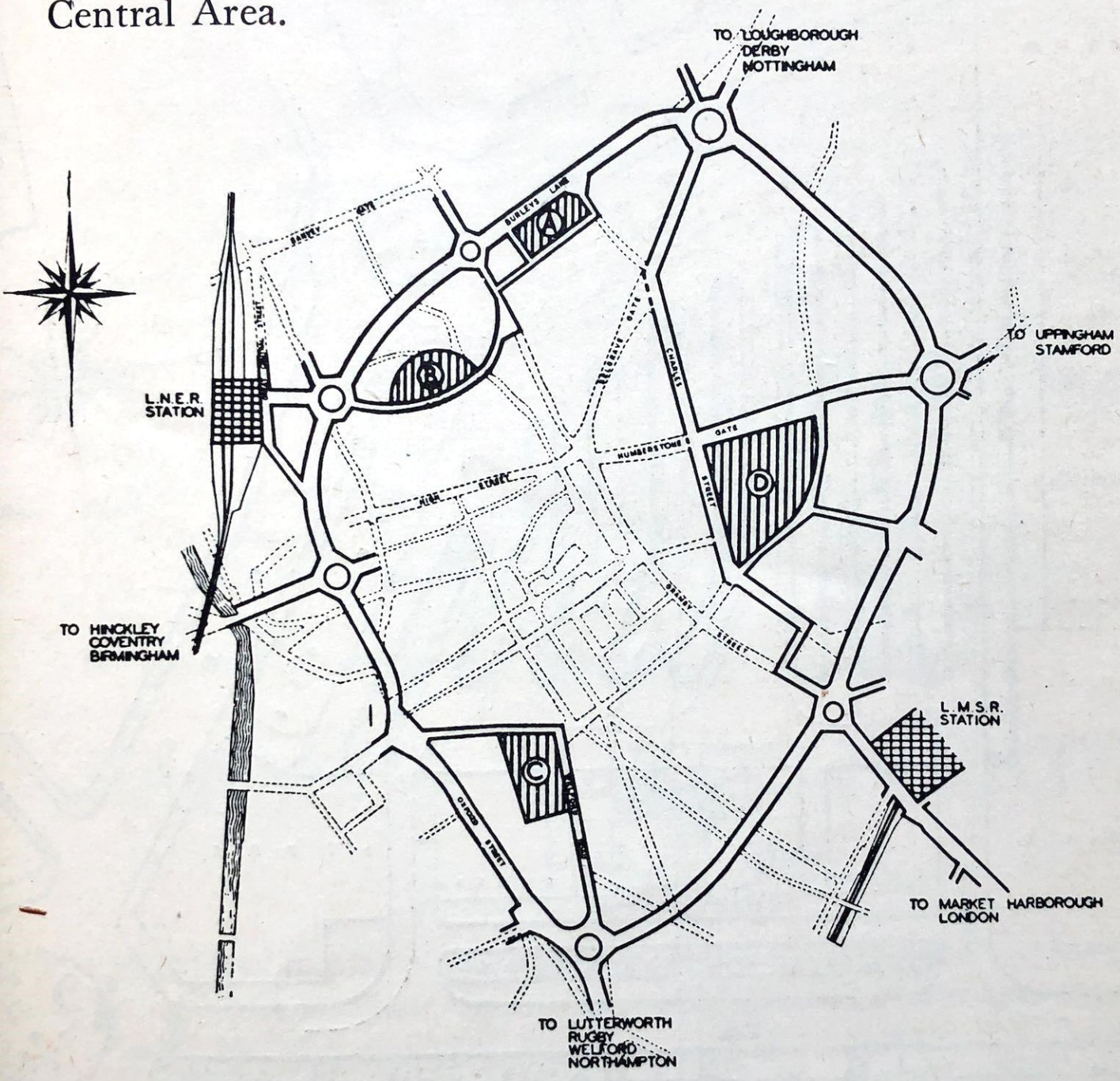

Diagram 5.

Diagram 5 shows the Central Ring Road, together with the three passenger bus stations provided within this road and all within easy walking distance of the centre of the City, together with the passenger bus station provided on the Central Ring Road for those services serving towns and villages outside the City. It will also be noted how these connect up with the main railway stations.

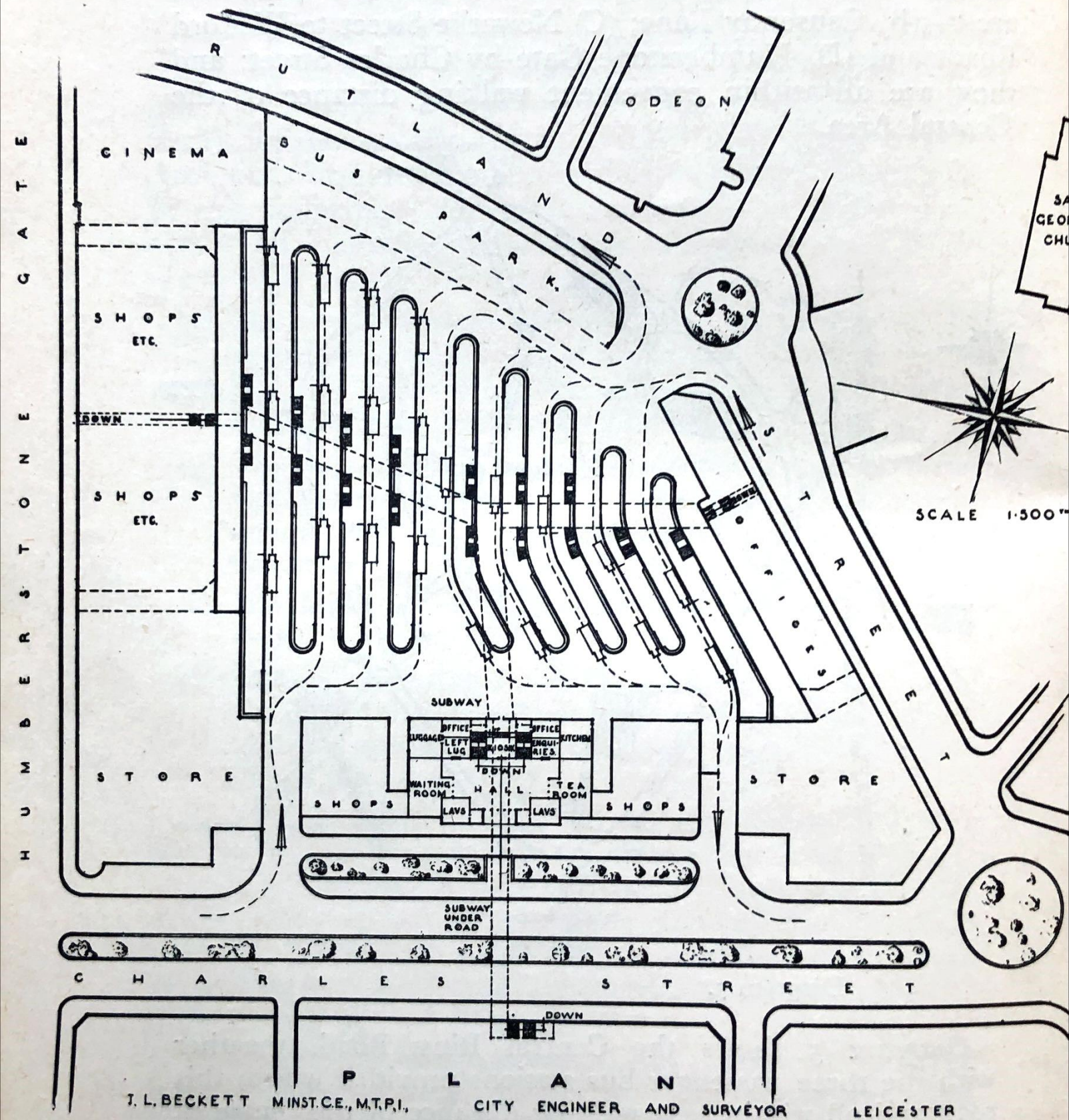

Diagram 6. *Suggested layout for bus-station, showing loading platforms, with provision of amenities for passengers. It is proposed that these stations should provide a large amount of private car parking under grant.*

The provision of public car park facilities is also receiving serious consideration, and after making reasonable allowance for the probable facilities to be provided by private garages, etc., it was estimated that the net requirements for public car parks would be in the region of some 4,000 cars.

The present parking accommodation provides probably only one quarter of this amount, but sites have already been selected to provide for a large portion of the total of 4,000, and other sites are still to be settled, to be dependent upon a more detailed layout, as it must be appreciated that any planning scheme must be sufficiently fluid to permit of slight deviations and amendments from the master plan.

The proposals outlined here are naturally taking a long-term view and much of the construction which is now urgently required must depend upon economic and other considerations, but with the anticipated rapid increase in the number of motor cars within the country, it is hoped that as many of these proposals will be completed as can be reasonably expected under present conditions.