Leicester City Locations

There are many locations in Leicester and Leicestershire which have been very significant in the history of Leicester Fosse and Leicester City.

Some of the buildings have long gone, some have changed and some are still with us.

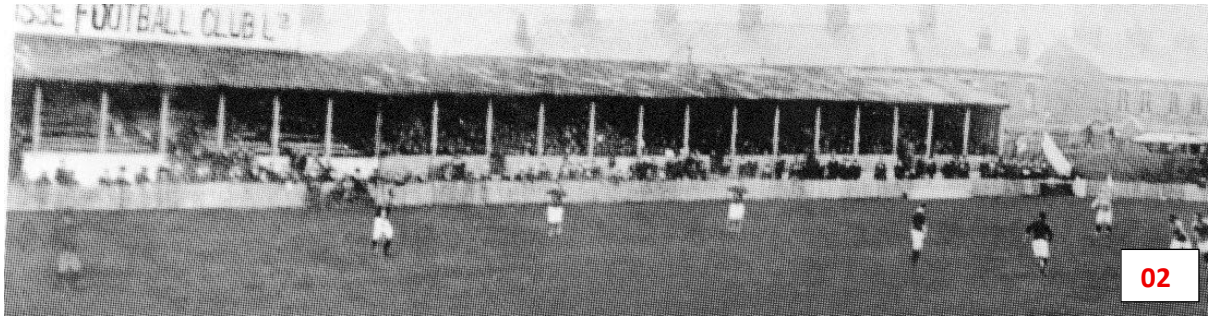
Club Historian John Hutchinson's new series revisits each of these sites and tells the story behind them.

The old Main Stand at Filbert Street 1921-1993

In 1891, local boot manufacturer Joseph Johnson, four of whose sons had played for Leicester Fosse, secured a permanent home for the Club by guaranteeing the rent for the use of land owned by the Corporation at the end of the newly built terraced streets of Walnut Street, Filbert Street and Brazil Street.

Two years later the original Main Stand was built on the west side of the ground. This is depicted in a plan in the 189/95 Fosse season ticket booklet. It also appears in the background of a Fosse team photograph from 1892 **(Picture 01).**

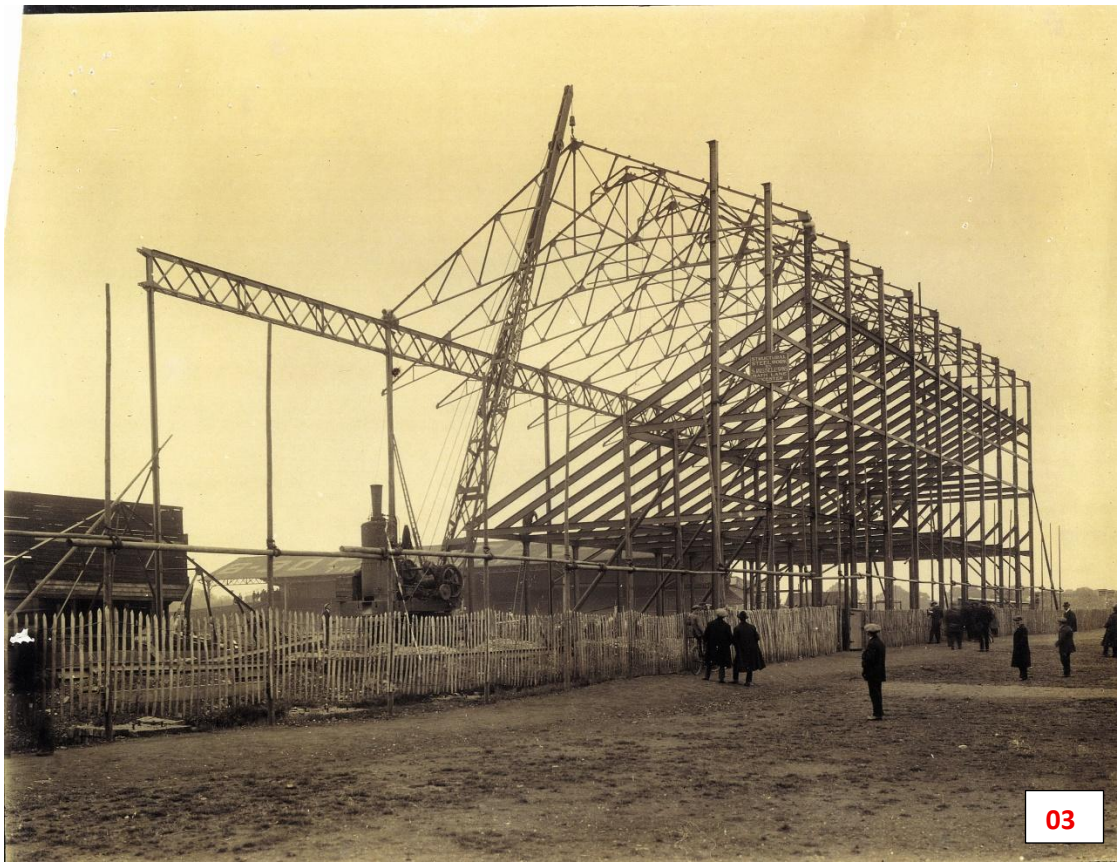
Prompted by Leicester Fosse's promotion to the old First Division in 1908, the Main Stand was extended **(Picture 02).** A new cash office was added, a bath and a shower were provided in the visitors' changing room and six extra gas jets were installed.



Other improvements included a nine-foot high brick wall at the Filbert Street end of the ground and a nine-foot high corrugated iron fence at the Kop end of the ground. The Kop's earth bank was enlarged, terraced and covered by a roof.

The consultant for the Filbert Street improvements was the world famous stadium architect Archibald Leitch.

The next major development of the ground came in 1921 when the old Fosse Main Stand was replaced by a new Main Stand which was 240 feet long.



In this photograph showing the construction of the new Main Stand **(Picture 03),** the remains of the old Fosse stand can still be seen in front of it. The old Kop (replaced by the Double Decker in 1927) can be seen in the background.

The lower half of the new Main Stand was a terraced paddock. Above this were 22 rows of seats. In the space under the Stand there was a gymnasium and concert room, home and away changing rooms, (each containing two showers, a communal bath and a smaller bath), the Board Room, the Ladies' Room, the Referee's Room, the General Office, a kitchen and a garage for directors' motor cars.

The new Main Stand can be seen in this rare picture, which was taken on 17 October 1921, a month before it opened. It was taken from the site of the present day King Power Stadium. **(Picture 04)**

In 1925, the Main Stand was extended a further 80 feet towards the Kop and 40 feet towards Filbert Street. This extension added a boiler house, a drying room and a space for storing carts, rollers and tools.

In this aerial photograph, taken in the summer of 1927 when the new Double Decker Stand was being constructed, the lighter coloured roof sections of the Stand indicate the 1925 extension. **(Picture 05).**

This remarkable photograph **(Picture 06)** shows the Main Stand on 18 February 1928, when a record crowd of 47,298 turned up for an FA Cup game against Tottenham Hotspur.

The Main Stand was badly damaged by the Luftwaffe in 1940 and by a fire in 1942, but it was repaired after the Second World War.

Until the 1950s, the players' tunnel in the new Main Stand had a mock classical surround. The courtyard in front of the tunnel was often used for team photos **(Picture 07).**

Floodlights were added to the Main Stand in 1957 and a gantry for TV cameras was built into the roof in the 1960s.

The Stand was demolished in 1993, to be replaced by the new Carling Stand **(Picture 08)** which was itself demolished along with the rest of the old Filbert Street ground nine years later.

Student flats and waste ground now occupy the Main Stand site **(Picture 09)**

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