

# Victorian & Edwardian Stoneygate



The original architect's line drawing of 10 St. Mary's Road, Stoneygate

## Tour 1



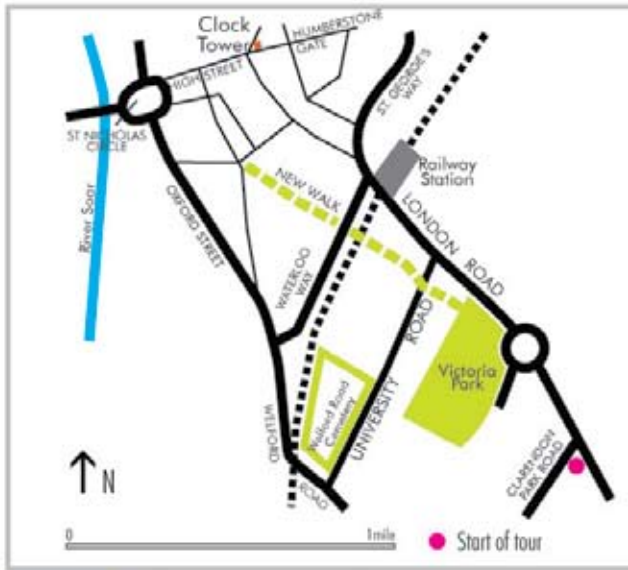
## Introduction

Welcome to Stoneygate, Leicester's premier residential suburb. This walk will take you past some of the area's very best buildings designed by some of Leicester's very best Victorian and Edwardian architects - such as Joseph Goddard, Isaac Barradale, Edward Burgess, James Tait, Arthur Wakerley, Stockdale Harrison and, the most well-known nationally and internationally, Ernest Gimson. You will pass grand houses, big semi-detached villas and large terraced homes, mainly in the 'English' or 'Domestic Revival' style, all of which were built in the best material with lots of decorative touches in timber, tiles and glass. From its start as an exclusive enclave on the edge of the city to a desirable middle class suburb, Stoneygate reflects the social changes that occurred during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Leicester became an important industrial town.

The whole walk should take you about 1-1½ hours. If you want to break for refreshments the city centre is only 5 minutes away by bus or you could visit Queens Road nearby where there is a selection of bars and restaurants. *The houses you will be passing are people's homes, so please remember to respect their privacy.*



The White House, North Avenue



**1** Our tour starts at the [Congregational Church](#), a very dramatic building in local Mountsorrel granite by James Tait and dating from 1885-6. This Grade II listed building has a striking tower and is an important local landmark. Tait, a Congregationalist himself, produced a building that closely resembles a Gothic Anglican church but is appropriately subdued. The big tower pretends to be a West tower but is actually on the east side and the 'belfry' has no bells!



Clarendon Park Congregational Church, Springfield Road/London Road

**2** Go left then turn right into [Springfield Road](#) which was laid out in 1884 under the supervision of Isaac Barradale. Here there are buildings by several of the best local architects of the time as well as one of the earliest houses remaining in Stoneygate at [number 2](#) – a stuccoed mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed house in the Classical style, Stoneygate House (virtually invisible behind trees and fencing and a curving drive).



2 Springfield Road.

**3** Opposite is [3 Springfield](#) by Arthur Wakerley (1891) with a Stockdale Harrison scheme next door at [number 5](#).

**4** [4-6 Springfield](#) is a pair of Grade II listed 1900 Goddard semi-detached villas in the Norman Shaw manner. Based on the Queen Anne style these have roughcast walls and Ipswich windows at first floor level. The pierced balustrade at first floor level and the long horizontal projecting second floor windows (known as a 'jetty') are a delight.



Numbers 4-6 Springfield Road in the Arts and Crafts style

**5** Beyond the impressive [Bishop's Lodging](#) at [number 10](#) is a systematic linked development of 6 houses by Redfern &



Sawday – [number 14](#) being the home of Alfred Sawday, one of the partners. Note the unusual decoration, enhanced even more by the present owners, at [number 27 opposite](#) (by Draper & Walters in 1893).

**6** At the end is a very pretty terrace by Joseph Goddard (1897) – [43-55 Springfield Road](#). The stepped windows on the side of the end terrace house ([number 3 Cross Road](#)) cleverly define the stairwell.

**7** More English Vernacular by Redfern & Sawday can be seen in the paired semis at [40-46](#) (1894).

**8** Walk down Cross Road, turn right, cross over Clarendon Park Road to arrive at Central Avenue. This is a very attractive street mainly dating from the 1890s with an example of an early attempt by Barradale to design large terraced villas on its south-west corner at numbers [2 & 4 Central Ave](#) and [75-77 Clarendon Park Road](#). Not entirely successful, Barradale’s eventual solution to his design problem will be seen at later [6-12 Clarendon Park Road](#). Opposite is Ambleside – a house of 1893 by Frank Seale – the half-timbered back extension was once the billiard room!

**9** At the end of [Central Avenue](#) you will see [The White House, North Avenue](#), behind its attractive scalloped boundary wall. A nationally important listed building, it was designed and built by Ernest Gimson in 1897 for his brother, and represents the Domestic Revival movement of the William Morris school – part of the Arts and Crafts movement. It takes a traditional approach to building – using the



*The Bishop's Lodge 10 Springfield Road*



*31 Springfield Road: moulded brick decoration*



*Above left: porch detail to 33/35 Springfield Road and right: decorative plasterwork to turreted bay at number 27*

best materials, sourced locally (such as the Swithland slates on the roof and whitewashed bricks), and is built to express the simple honest tradition of English vernacular architecture. Note particularly how its simple design contrasts with the more ornate and somewhat self-important houses we’ve seen elsewhere. Interesting features include the windowless splayed end wall and the moulded plasterwork on the bay windows with the date and initials of the original owner – ‘A.J.G’. If you are interested in seeing another Gimson house you can follow [Tour No. 2](#) to Ratcliffe Road and see ‘[Inglewood](#)’ (point K on the map).

**10** Turn right now then first left into [The Avenue](#) and walk up to Knighton Park Road. Here the buildings at [12 and 14](#) are interesting – no. 12 because it was built by Barradale (1882) for Wilmott Pilsbury the first principal of the Leicester School of Art (now de Montfort University) and no. [14 \(Woodville 1883\)](#) by J B Everard for himself.

**11** Further into Knighton Park Road and there is a super turret at [number 15](#), while [number 11](#) is a Goddard partnership building of 1910. One of the nicest houses, with lots of decorative touches such as ceramic tiles, barley sugar twists on the window pilasters, can be found at [number 3-5](#) and might be worth a look if you have time.

**12** Return to the beginning of [Knighton Park Road](#) and turn right onto [St Mary's Road](#). The first house is [number 10](#) by Barradale (1879) which has recently undergone a major refurbishment by the owners to restore it back from use as a school to a private home. They



*Part of the terrace at 43-55 Springfield Road*



*The spire of Christchurch near the corner of Clarendon Park Road/Central Avenue*



*22-24 Central Avenue*

still need to tackle the school hall in their back garden though! Next door at 6-8 is a pair of semis by Goddard (1879). **Number 4** (the original vicarage to St John the Baptist Church in Clarendon Park Road, (point 24 on this walk) is by Goddard (1870) in the Jacobean style.

**13** The little park on the left of **St Mary's Road** is the only public open space in the conservation area and was established when Stoneygate was being laid out. There would have been little need for public recreation space then as most houses had their own big gardens and Victoria Park was just across the road. It was laid out by the Leicester Corporation but later bought by local residents, perhaps to ensure its exclusivity.

**14** At the end of **St Mary's Road** turn right into **Victoria Park Road**. The first house is **number 34** – a comparatively small building but with some interesting detailing and pleasing proportions. It is, like the White House, in the Arts and Crafts style but is entirely different in concept and design. It was probably built some time after 1919 and has some attractive features such as the boldly outlined and widely splayed bay windows and the decorative panel with a zig-zag pattern picked out in gold above the central doorway. .

**15** At **24-28** is a terrace of 3 houses by the Goddard Partnership, an almost symmetrical design with a large horizontal window tying the whole together at second floor level. Then there is **number 20**, possibly the best of the row, by Samuel Perkins Pick, with a big jettied and gabled top floor and tall chimney stacks.



*The White House, Central Avenue.*



*12 Knighton Park Road.*



*11 Knighton Park Road - a design by the Goddard partnership from 1910*

**16** Finally there is **12-14** – a big brick semi-detached villa probably designed by Stockdale Harrison. The painted stonework at **number 12** is unfortunate but the big bold full height bays topped with conical roofs and decorative finials are great fun.

**17** At the roundabout turn right into **London Road** but, in passing, take note of the nice little 1930s house that stands like a 'hinge' at the junction. Another well-known local landmark, it is in the process of sensitive restoration by its new owners.

**18** Now cross **London Road** at the traffic lights, turn right and then left into Stanley Road. The two big houses on your right at **238 London Road & 3 Stanley Road** are by Isaac Barradale. They were built in 1878 for two sisters (one for each) and are most appropriately described in the Leicester Victorian Society's 1994 pamphlet 'Walks through Victorian Leicester' as "thundering English Vernacular of a distinctly suburban style. They climb the hill up **Stanley Road** with the solid and weighty swagger of the successful Victorian middle-class for whom they were built".

**19** Further down is "**Eastfield**" which was used for many years as a student hall of residence but is now being re-used as a school with plans for houses in the grounds. It was built in 1844 and remodelled several times. A large house built in expensive white bricks, it has lovely fishscale roof tiles, elaborate chimney stacks and bargeboards and big mullioned windows



*15 Knighton Park Road.*



*6 & 8 St. Mary's Road facing the delightful triangular public open space*



*7 Victoria Park Road: this fine 1930s house is currently being restored*



**20** Walk back to [London Road](#) and turn left turn until you reach the driveway into [Scholars Walk](#). This is the former Stoneygate School (hence the new name, Scholars Walk) which was purpose-built in 1859 by Henry Goddard in the Gothic style. The Gothic style is quite rare in Stoneygate. It was known locally as Rudd's School (presumably after one of the early owners/headmasters). Again, sympathetic restoration – the Council required that any new development retained the existing building – has created 4 luxury apartments, with well-planted grounds, creating a surprising haven on this busy road.



*Scholars Walk, London Road*

**21** Next door is "[Brookfield](#)", the former Charles Frears School of Nursing, now part of De Montfort University. Originally the home of the Burgess family (the architect Edward Burgess was one of them), it was bought by the Fielding Johnsons (another wealthy local family) in the 1870s and remodelled by Goddard & Paget in 1877 in the new English Vernacular style – lots of timberwork, big gables and bargeboards, balconies etc. A bit of the original house peeks out behind the original building on the right hand side. One of the best aspects of this development is the grounds fronting London Road which have a superb collection of trees carefully planted to create the feeling of grandeur, reflecting the Victorian ambience of the area. The original owners would never have seen the final results and their fore-sightedness means that we are the ones that are lucky enough to benefit from their landscaping decisions. Taken together with Scholars Walk, these two sites give us a taste of what Stoneygate might have looked like 140 years ago.



*"Brookfield", London Road*



*The Firs, London Road*

**22** Cross over [London Road](#) at the pedestrian crossing and turn left towards [The Firs at 223 London Road](#). This building is one of the two Italianate houses to have survived in Stoneygate (we saw the other in Springfield Road at the beginning of the walk). This Classical style was very popular in the first 2 decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – restrained detail, stucco etc. Its use as offices ensures its survival – lots more examples can be seen in New Walk, an easy stroll northwards across Victoria Park.



*290-292 London Road*

**23** Continuing along [London Road](#) note the houses on the corner of [St John's Road - 290-292 London Road](#). This pair of semi-detached villas (dated in the pediments 1889) is in a sort of renaissance style and are by the Goddard and Paget Partnership. They have lots of rich detailing and retain their original small paned windows. The refurbishment of the left hand end included a meticulous repair and restoration of the original windows – an essential element of the building if it is to retain its character. Imagine what the building would look like if the windows had been taken out and replaced with modern plastic ones.



*St. John the Baptist Church, Clarendon Park Road.*

**24** Finally, turn right into [Clarendon Park Road](#) and walk up to St John the Baptist Church. This was designed by Joseph Goddard and built in 1884-5. The relatively plain exterior belies the grandeur of what lies within. It is well worth a visit if it is open. Next door at [6-12](#) are two pairs of semi-detached villas - Barradale's solution to his villa problem. This design was used all over Stoneygate and can be seen at [43-53 Stoneygate Road](#) (included in the Victorian & Edwardian Stoneygate – Tour 2).



*East Avenue: St. John the Baptist C of E Primary School.*