

De Beauvoir Town, South Dalston, Newington Green

An urban pavement walk with a few short stretches in parks and one along the canal. There is an option through Islington to return to the start.

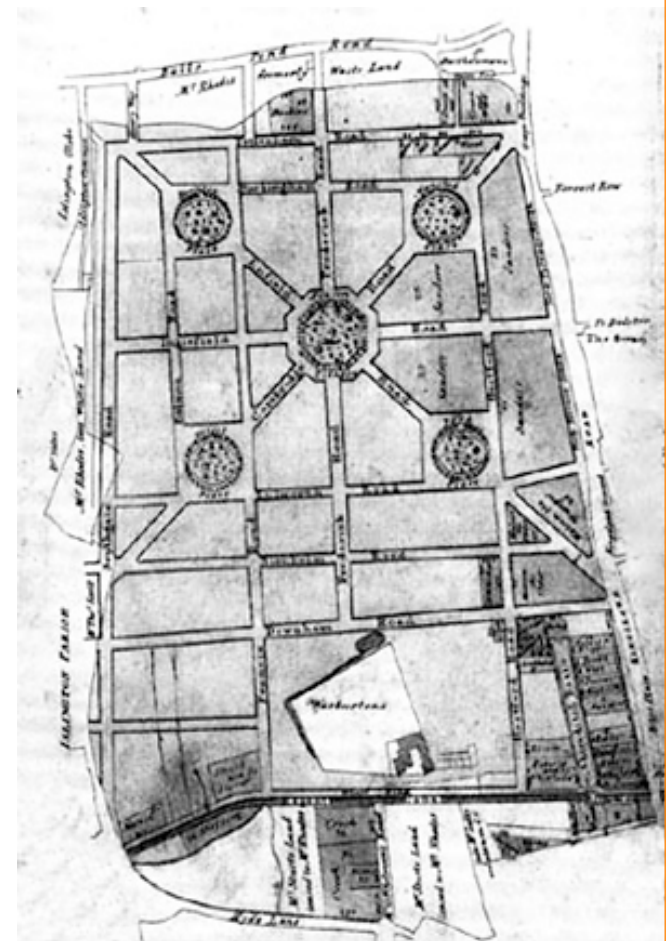
De Beauvoir Town

Until 1820 the area now covered by De Beauvoir Town was open country with a few grand houses. In 1821, stimulated by the opening of the Regent's Canal the previous year, developer and brick maker William Rhodes (1774-1843), a grandfather of Cecil Rhodes, secured a lease for 150 acres (0.61 km²) of land from Peter de Beauvoir. Rhodes planned to build residences for the upper classes in a grid pattern, with four squares on diagonal streets intersecting at an octagon (see map). However, wrangles about the lease dragged on and the original clients had drifted to the West End. When resurrected, the plan was much less ambitious for the middle classes and only one square, today's De Beauvoir Square, was built. Some parts of the road pattern were retained, including some wide streets and diagonal roads but with smaller houses. The areas to the south, east and north were subsequently rezoned for housing estates or industrial use. The area with its fine wide streets, Victorian villas and short terraces, eventually deteriorated but is

gradually regaining its former glory.

South Dalston

Rhodes was involved in the development of South Dalston too, as was the Middleton Family but the aspirations were not so high and the streets were narrower. Dalston was originally one of four small villages within the Parish of Hackney along with Newington, Shacklewell, and Kingsland grouped for assessment purposes. Middleton's development in Hackney began under an agreement of 1840 with Islip Odell, from Upper Clapton, for the land immediately east of Stonebridge common. The Middleton Arms was followed by houses in Middleton Road, leased in 1842. Odell, a brickmaker who promoted development by others, settled until 1862 at Shrubland Cottage in Queen's Road. Presumably Pownall was responsible for the layout of Albion Square, where many of the houses had been built by 1844. The Rhodes estate continued its development eastward: in St. Philip's Road, Forest Road East, Lavender Grove East, Lansdowne Road (later Drive), and Albert Road East (later part of Middleton Road) in 1861, and also in Wilton, Salisbury, and Greenwood roads in 1863. Houses linked Dalston with the south end of Hackney village, lining both sides of Richmond Road, by 1865.



Newington Green

Newington Green was once part of the Manor of Newington Barrow, earlier in the possession of Alice de Barowe. It included the two ancient settlements of Newington Green and Kingsland. Both originally had a green, but the one at Kingsland was

completely built over by the end of the nineteenth century. Newington Green, however, eventually became common land and is now preserved as a London Square. In the fifteenth century Newington Green was a forest clearing. However, by the middle of that century a number of prosperous people built houses around the Green, attracted by the rural surroundings only a short journey from London and Westminster. A large house, known as the Bishop's Palace, was built in the sixteenth century on the north-east corner of the Green. Around the 1660s the area became a haven for non-conformist preachers and teachers, outcasts under the repressive laws of James II. Several academies were set up to educate those refused entry to Oxford and Cambridge for religious reasons. Both Daniel Defoe and Samuel Wesley were educated at Charles Morton's Academy (1667-1696). Defoe married a girl from the area and lived in the area for many years. After the Toleration Act of 1689, under William III, non-conformists were able to worship openly and in 1708 a Presbyterian Chapel (later to become Unitarian) was built on the north side of the Green. It still stands, and is the oldest non-conformist church in Britain still in use for worship. In 1611 William Halliday, a wealthy Alderman of the City of London, bought a 44 acre estate to the south of

Newington Green and built a large three storey house which was later inherited by Henry Mildmay. Mildmay House, as it became called, later became nos. 9 & 10 Newington Green; it was used as a boarding school in the early nineteenth century and in 1885 it became a nurse's home. Another old house on the west side of the Green was replaced in 1658 by a terraced row of four houses, nos. 52-55 Newington Green, the oldest terraced houses still surviving in England. Mary Wollstonecraft was another famous resident of Newington Green. She ran a girl's school in the area from 1784 until 1786 despite having little formal education herself. In the 1840s to 1850s the Mildmay Estate, to the south of the Green was leased for building and Mildmay Park, Mildmay Grove and Mildmay Street were built.

