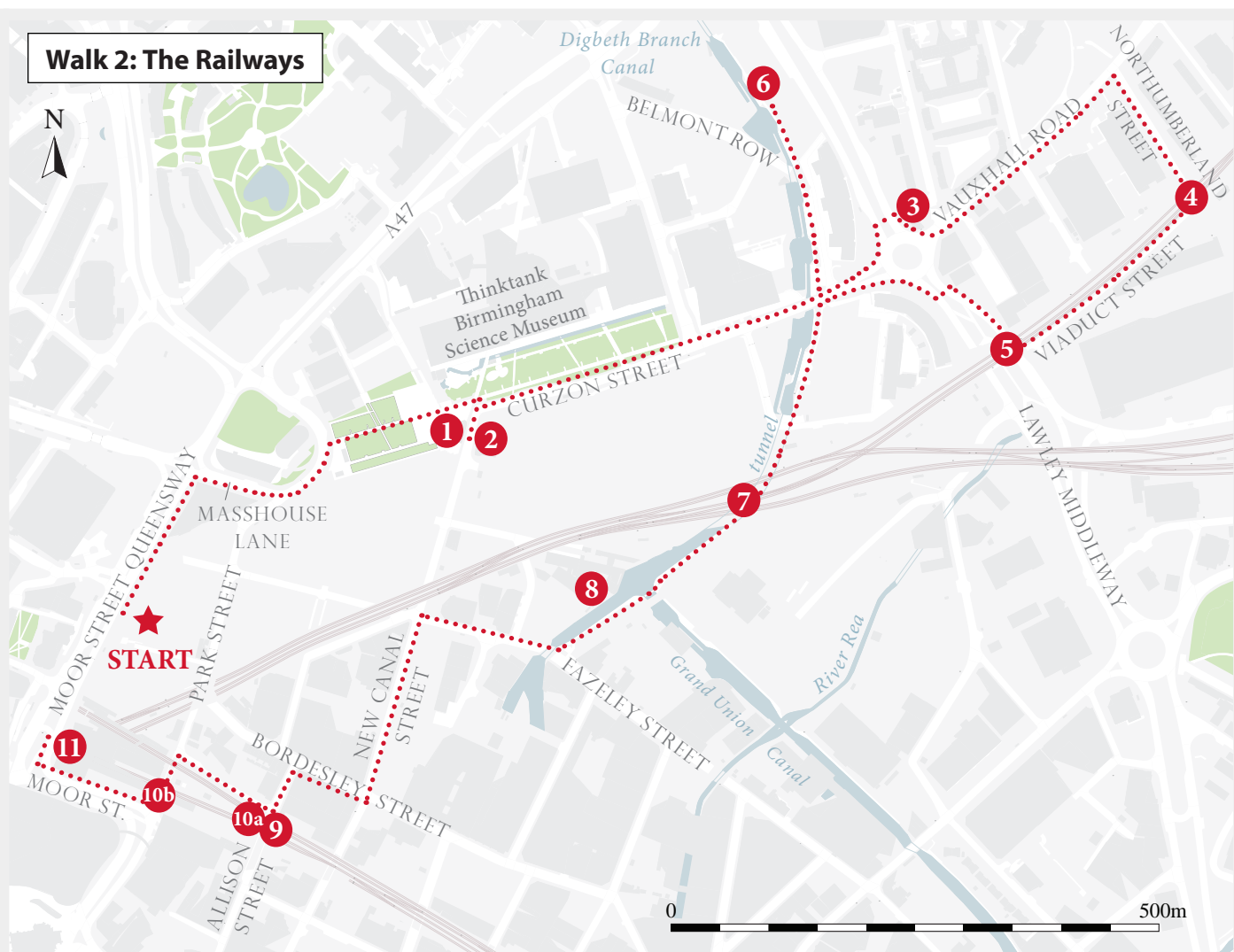


Walk 2: The Railways



1 The Woodman Public House



The Woodman Public House was once a lowly drinking establishment, not listed in trade directories: an early reference to the pub was in the census of 1861. The Woodman stood at 31 Duddeston Row (present day Curzon Street), opposite the Old Curzon Street Station. The new Woodman Public House (Grade II listed) was built between 1896–7 by James & Lister Lea and Sons. At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century this company specialised in public houses in a style known as ‘tile and terracotta’ pubs.

Originally the Woodman was incorporated into the existing early 19th-century residential block of back-to-back housing arranged around courts. Customers of the pub were likely to have included the residents of the local housing and the Curzon Street Station Goods Yard, post-dating the heyday of the station’s use as a railway terminal.

2 Old Curzon Street Railway Station

The Old Curzon Street Railway Station (Grade I listed), first called Birmingham Station, was one of the earliest railway stations to be built. Phillip Hardwick, designed both the railway terminals of Old Curzon Street Station, with its Neo-Classical façade (featuring four Ionic columns) and the now demolished Euston Station, London (with its Doric columns), for the London and Birmingham Railway Co. (L&BR) line. Old Curzon Street Station opened on the 9th April 1838 while the London terminal of Euston opened earlier on the 20th July 1837. The railway line, 112 miles in length, was engineered by Robert Stephenson from 1834 and the first uninterrupted journey between the two stations was on the 17th September 1838 and took 4hrs and 48 minutes. The cheapest fare was £1. The now demolished Grand Junction Railway Station terminal (opened on the 19th November 1838) was built on a northern area of the site, fronting Curzon Street, and connected Birmingham to Liverpool. The three-storey Old Curzon Station main building, built in ashlar sandstone, housed the L&BR railway companies offices and board rooms, while the ground floor and a new northern extension incorporated the Queen’s Hotel. A subsequent southern wing became The Euston Hotel.

The decline of Old Curzon Street Station was a result of its distant location away from the centre of Birmingham. The station lost all of its passenger services to New Street (Grand Central) Station when that opened in 1854, but for the occasional excursion trip, and then became the city’s main goods depot, which closed in 1966. Much of the station’s structure was subsequently demolished.



3 The White Tower Public House



Also known as Moriarty's, the public house is interesting for being designed in the 1930s Art Deco style and is built of white ashlar blocks and red brick in stretcher bond and tile that includes herringbone patterns. An earlier public house with the same name was here from at least 1835.

4 Lawley Street Viaduct



The viaduct (Grade II listed) connected the Grand Junction Railway to its terminus at Curzon Street Station. Designed by Joseph Locke, it is one of the earliest English railway structures. It has 28 numbered arches built in red brick with sandstone dressings. The viaduct was raised in 1893 and the later structure complements the earlier construction with the spacing of the arches.

5 Lawley Street Viaduct/Lawley Middleway Railway Bridge



The Lawley Street Viaduct and bridge on Lawley Middleway best shows the original construction of the viaduct with its sandstone dressings and arch with numbered plaque and the brick surfaces of the archway. The later 1893 viaduct can be distinguished by its facing of blue engineering bricks.

6 Ashted Locks



The Digbeth Branch Canal, operational in 1790, linked the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal at Aston Junction and the Grand Union Canal at Warwick Bar in 1799. There are six locks on the Digbeth Branch Canal.

7 The 1838 section of railway bridge Branch Canal



The single span bridge (Grade II listed) over the Digbeth Branch Canal into Curzon Street Station was built between 1837–38. It is an excellent early example of English

railway engineering and also Neo-Classical architecture. The bridge was built to carry over the canal the Grand Junction Railway line from Liverpool into the nearby terminus of Curzon Street Station.

8 Birmingham Gun Barrel Proof House



The building was used to test gun barrels for safety. The guns and barrels were stamped if they passed the tests. The buildings date from 1813–14 and were set up in response to an 1813 Act of Parliament requiring firearms to be assessed. The Gun Barrel Proof House is still operational and signifies the importance of the Birmingham gun manufacturing industry in the city.

9 Gentlemen's Urinal Allison Street



This cast iron structure (Grade II listed) dates to between 1880–90. Each panel is made of two sections. The top panel has a floral motif in an urn, while the lower panel has Neo-Classical oval medallions in the Adams style. The urinal, no longer in use and internally not accessible,

was entered from each end through small decorative arches, of which the northern example survives. The convenience would have been used by the workers in the many small industrial premises in the Digbeth area.

10a&b Moor Street Railway Goods Station Shed B



The ground floor of Moor Street Car Park is all that remains of Moor Street Goods Station, which opened in 1909. The Goods Station was built on steep terrain on two levels, with metal goods sheds overlying two masonry sheds, partially built in an early example of reinforced concrete. Fish, fruit and vegetables were the main produce handled at the Goods Station for distribution to local markets, such as the Bullring.

11 Old Moor Street Railway Station



At the turn of the 20th century Birmingham was facing a problem with growing local commuter traffic and the eventual solution was to build Moor Street Station, which was first opened using temporary buildings in 1909, which were replaced by the current Old Moor Street Station (Grade II listed) which opened on the 7th July 1914. The station is built of brick, partially faced with terracotta tiles and stone dressings with steel and glazed platform roofs and was designed by W. Y. Armstrong. By the 1960s Moor Street Station had become rundown and railway services from here reduced. In the 1980s, however, a new plan for improved local railway services resulted in a new Moor Street Station being built and the old station closed in 1987 and was mothballed, but fortuitously saved from demolition. Local commuter services were again strained in the 2000s, resulting in The Old station being opened and renovated to a cost of £11 million. An important route from Moor Street Station was established to London Marylebone in 1993 and today the station provides links to Worcester and Kidderminster.