

= North Road (Manchester) =

North Road was a football stadium and cricket field in Newton Heath , Manchester , England . It was the first home of Manchester United Football Club ? then known as Newton Heath Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Football Club ? from its foundation in 1878 until 1893 , when the club moved to a new ground at Bank Street , Clayton .

Initially the ground consisted only of the pitch , around which an estimated 12 @, @ 000 spectators could congregate . The addition of stands in 1891 increased the capacity to about 15 @, @ 000 . The football club signed its first professional players in 1886 and began to break from its sponsoring railway company , but without the company 's financial support it was unable to afford the rent on the ground and was evicted .

= = History = =

= = = Early years = = =

Following the foundation of Newton Heath LYR F.C. , at the request of the employees of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway (LYR) company 's Carriage and Wagon Works , the club needed a pitch to play on . The chosen site was owned by the Manchester Cathedral authorities , but although conveniently sited next to the wagon works it was a " bumpy , stony patch in summer , [and] a muddy , heavy swamp in the rainy months " . The railway company agreed to pay a nominal rent to the authorities and to lease the ground to the football club . As it was next to the railway line operated by the LYR , the ground was often clouded in a thick mist of steam from passing trains . Players had to get changed in The Three Crowns public house , a few hundred yards away on Oldham Road , as there were no facilities nearby . There may have been some kind of refreshment offered to supporters at the eastern end of the site .

The first recorded matches at the ground took place in 1880 , two years after the club 's formation , most of them friendlies . The first competitive match held at North Road was a Lancashire Cup first round match against Blackburn Olympic 's reserve team , played on 27 October 1883 , which Newton Heath lost 7 ? 2 . Details of the attendance have been lost , but it is assumed that the ground must have been enclosed by then , as an entry fee of 3d (about £ 1 as of 2016) was charged for the match . Football became a professional sport in England in 1885 , and Newton Heath signed their first professional players in the summer of 1886 . The club 's income was insufficient to cover its wage bill , and so the 3d admission charge was extended to all matches played at North Road , later rising to 6d .

= = = Expansion and eviction = = =

The ground originally had a capacity of about 12 @, @ 000 , but club officials decided that was not enough to give them any hope of joining the Football League . Some expansion took place in 1887 , but in 1891 Newton Heath used what little financial reserves they had to purchase two grandstands , each able to hold 1 @, @ 000 spectators . However , this transaction put the club at odds with the railway company , who refused to contribute any finance to the deal . The two organisations began to drift apart from then onwards , and in 1892 the club attempted to raise £ 2 @, @ 000 in share capital to pay off the debts incurred by the expansion of the ground . The split also led the railway company to stop paying the rent due on the ground to the cathedral , who at about the same time decided to increase the rent . Under increasing financial pressure , especially as the cathedral authorities felt it inappropriate for the club to charge admission to the ground , an eviction notice was served on the club in June 1893 . The club 's management had been searching for a new stadium since the first eviction attempt in May the previous year , and they were able to move to a new ground on Bank Street , three miles away in Clayton . It proved impossible though to take the two grandstands to the new ground , and they were sold for £ 100 .

== Present ==

The stadium no longer exists , and North Road has been renamed Northampton Road . After a spell serving as playing fields for locals , Moston Brook High School was opened on the site . A red plaque was attached to one of the school 's walls , marking the location of the old stadium , but it was stolen and not replaced . Following the school 's closure in August 2000 , the site was chosen by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) as the location of the North Manchester Business Park in 2002 .

== Other uses ==

Newton Heath LYR Football Club was also founded as a cricket club , and the North Road ground was used by both branches of the club . However , the cricket and football seasons often overlapped , causing conflicts between the two sports . The ground was barely adequate for football , despite the best efforts of groundsmen Charlie and Ned Massey , but its use in the winter made it even less suitable for cricket in the summer .

== Records ==

Although attendance figures were not recorded for many of the earliest matches at North Road , the highest recorded attendance at the ground was approximately 15 @, @ 000 for a First Division match against Sunderland on 4 March 1893 . A similar attendance was also recorded for a friendly match against Gorton Villa on 5 September 1889 . A record @-@ low league attendance of approximately 1 @, @ 000 was recorded for Football Alliance matches against Walsall Town Swifts and Birmingham City on 21 April 1890 and 13 December 1890 respectively . However , an attendance of 400 was recorded for a Manchester Cup match against Eccles on 31 January 1885 .

The earliest recorded four @-@ figure attendance at the ground was 3 @, @ 000 for a friendly with West Gorton (St. Mark 's) on 12 November 1881 . This was the first recorded meeting of the two sides that eventually became Manchester United and Manchester City .