

Keynote Address
David Rock

Community Planning
Anne Goring

Community Urban Design
Richard Burton
Johnny Burton
Rev. Charlie Hall

Community Environmental
Improvements
Walter Menzies

Community Economy
Pauline Nichols

Community Economic
Development
Dr. Nickolas Falk

Community Architecture I
Robin Nicholson

Community Architecture II
John Thompson

COMMUNITY DESIGN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE CROYDON CONFERENCE
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TENANTS PRESS COUNCIL TO APPROVE PLANS FOR FLATS
TENANT POWER!
GO AHEAD WON FOR LEA VIEW RENEWAL

URBAN DESIGN
QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL

LAWRENCE REVILL

The continuing "International" theme of this Autumn's Lecture Programme has reinforced the notion that there are important lessons to be learnt from Urban Design practice abroad and, perhaps more importantly, that these lessons are not confined to the USA and Tuscan hill towns. Many cities in Europe have become extremely innovative in the application of Urban Design Policies and in the quality of implemented schemes.

I have just returned from an all too brief visit to Barcelona, surely one of Europe's most exciting, urbane and style conscious cities. What gives this city its edge over British counterparts?

Firstly, the Government system in Spain allows it and the Catalan Region much greater autonomy in the way that it raises and spends money. Secondly, the strong sense of regional identity and civic pride results in enormous investment of *public* money for *public* benefit. And thirdly, the fortunate coincidence of the Olympics and the Free Market in 1992 has given the city a strong sense of purpose - an apparent desire to become Europe's foremost city in four years.

British cities in contrast, hamstrung by an antipathetic Central Government, struggle even to provide basic services. Few have very much civic pride left and certainly have no real vehicle for *it*

Barcelona has a clean, cheap and efficient public transport service; it does not have streets continually under repair and patched with blacktop; it ensures quality in the public realm through a *Public Space Design Department* with a massive investment programme based on a beautifully conceived and produced Urban Design Plan; and despite constant traffic congestion and acres of tarmac, its streets offer generous space for pedestrians to make their *paseos*.

This is just one city. Others are just as exciting and have as much to offer - Rotterdam, Milan, Berlin, Lyon, not just Europe's capital cities.

Obviously there are language and cultural barriers which hinder our understanding of why and how things are done around Europe. But these lessons are on our doorstep. Without the will to learn, Britain stands a good chance of becoming Europe's Urban Design poor neighbour. On the other hand, with effort, it could come to the forefront of urban environmental quality.

Perhaps among the many opportunities offered by 1992 could be **European Urban Design Year?**

NEWS

INTERNATIONAL URBAN DESIGN CONTINUES

The International theme for the Lecture Programme continues into the Autumn series with an all too rare look at the state of Urban Design in Eastern Europe.

19th October **100 Years of the City Skyline**
Dr. Bruno Flierl

Dr. Flierl lives and works in East Berlin. His lecture will look at the problem of verticality and composition in the skyline with special reference to Berlin.

16th November **Urban Design in the USSR**
Andrei Chelstov

Andrei Chelstov lived in Moscow until this year where he worked at the Chief Architectural Planning Department Design Bureau No. 1. His lecture will examine Urban Design in the USSR and Moscow in particular.

14th December **Past and Present: A Multitude of Ideas**
Dejan Ecimovic

Dejan Ecimovic works for the "Komgrap Project" Design Department in Beograd. He will compare the urbanistic principles under which Dalmatian towns were designed contextually.

All lectures will be at the **Building Centre, Store Street, London WC2** and will begin at **6.00 pm**. Further details from Philip Cave on 01 240 2430.

OTHER EVENTS

26th October **New Housing: Town, Village or Just Housing Estates?**

A joint meeting with the Royal Town Planning Institute Eastern Region at the **Shire Hall, Chelmsford**.

Further details from **Alan Stones** on 0245 352232.

9th November **Urban Regeneration: Who is Planning it?**

Joint meeting with the Royal Town Planning Institute London Region at the **Royal Town Planning Institute 26, Portland Place, London W1**.

Further details from Drummond Robson on 01 258 3433.

Foreword

Lawrence Revill
Conference Chairman

It was back in 1984 that the Secretary of State for the Environment invited six local authorities across Britain to examine ways in which the quality of environmental design could be improved through the planning process. Croydon is joined by, among others, Winchester, Nottingham, Knowsley on Merseyside, Lancaster and Coventry in this particular experiment. Croydon set up the Croydon Design Initiative as a body separate from the council but supported by it and representatives of the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, the Landscape Institute and local community groups to engage in a wide range of activities from arranging conferences to photographic competitions, environmental education in schools, local history studies, urban trails etc.

Three areas of concern in the Croydon Design Initiative were continuing professional development, inter-professional liaison and the involvement of the community in the planning process. These were the main reasons behind the theme of the conference: "**Community Design, Community Development and Community Enterprise**". The day was organised by the Urban Design Group in association with the Croydon Design Initiative and this was the group's major London event for 1987.

So why *community design, community development, community enterprise* ? It would be easy to see this conference as merely jumping on a band wagon, and to some extent I suppose that was true, but there was more to it than that.

Firstly, as I have already said, the Croydon Design Initiative has set out to examine the extent to which environmental design can be improved by community involvement. Secondly, as the complexity of urban problems and development solutions gets greater, it is becoming more obvious that these sorts of issues require proper community input to be successful, but the scale and complexity is daunting and professional help is really necessary for local communities to actually get involved in the way they should; and thirdly, communities are themselves realising that waiting for big business or public bodies to solve urban problems will make a very long wait indeed. Local initiatives are essential #

COMMUNITY DESIGN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

*Proceedings of the Urban Design Group
London Conference
Fairfield Halls, Croydon
24th November, 1987*

Keynote Address David Rock

*Partner, Rock Townsend
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Community Planning Anne Goring

*Principal Officer, Cleveland Economic Development
Office
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Community Urban Design Richard Burton

*Partner, Ahrends Burton and Koralek
Johnny Burton
Researcher, Urbed Ltd
Rev. Charlie Hall
Vicar of St Mary's, Southampton
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Community Environmental Improvements Walter Menzies

*Director, Macclesfield Groundwork Trust
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*Director, Community Economy Ltd.
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*Director, URBED Ltd
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*Partner, Edward Cullinan Architects
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Community Architecture II John Thompson

*Partner, Hunt Thompson Associates
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The Speakers

David Rock is a partner in the architectural practice of Rock Townsend and was until recently Vice President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. As such, he was elected on the "Community Architecture" ticket as Rod Hackney's running mate in the presidential elections and his credentials in the field on community involvement are fine and long-established.

Anne Goring is Principal officer in the Economic Development Unit at Cleveland County Council where she has responsibility for the promotion of community employment initiatives. Prior to this she was a planning officer at the LB Lewisham where she pioneered a programme of Community Action Plans. Her work with Gail Revill won the Town and Country Planning Summer School Prize Paper in 1986.

Richard Burton is a Partner in the Architectural practice Ahrends Burton and Koralekand has considerable experience of Community led projects. In 1985 he led the first, and so far only, Community Urban Design Assistance Team (CUDAT) in Southampton.

Walter Menzies is Director of Macclesfield Groundwork Trust. He trained as an architect and urban designer and worked for several years for Merseyside Improved Houses (MIH), Britain's largest Housing Association, where he became Director of Special Projects.

Pauline Nichols is founding director of Community Economy Ltd, a non-profit making company which specialises in organising and securing funding for community businesses on Britain's unemployment stricken Housing Estates. She has been closely involved with several projects on the Downham Estate in Lewisham.

Dr. Nickolas Falk is the founder of URBED (Urban and Economic Development) Ltd, a non-profit making company which fosters local economic development. He is the Ideas Man behind a wide range of community initiatives across Britain and he is a premier exponent of "environmental public relations" which is using words and images to change peoples' perceptions of the places in which they live.

Robin Nicholson is a partner in Edward Cullinan Architects and he has been involved in a number of community-led developments which have been very widely publicised in the press, including the re-building of St Marys Church in Barnes and a community hospital in Lambeth.

John Thompson is a partner in Hunt Thompson Associates and among his many community-led schemes is the refurbishment of Lee View House, an inter-war housing estate in Hackney. This is now widely acclaimed, not only for the quality of the design work which has gone into it, but also for the way in which the project was organised to involve the tenants who actually lived there #

Keynote Address

David Rock

Partner, Rock Townsend Architects
Ex Vice President, Royal Institute of British Architects

I would really like to emphasise the fact that this Third Force can be harnessed. If groups of people can work together with a common purpose to do something that they all want, and especially if that common purpose involves making money, you can get a lot done. The ideal situation is one where everybody thinks they are winning, no-one's losing. It is hard work, very hard work, it is often thankless, in fact it is usually thankless. It needs resilience and yet firmness and flexibility.

I don't know where my white hair comes from, it is either in community planning or it is working with spec builders for ten years in the '50s and '60s or it might even have been because I took on a developer role in the '70s. Perhaps all those three things, but for the purposes of this conference I can say it's the community part that made the biggest impact.

I have been involved since the '60s in combinations of community working, mainly starting with urban design in towns long before it was given the title "community planning".

When I left the London office of BDP I set up another group of 65 small firms in two buildings in Covent Garden called 5 Dryden Street that had shared support services. The important thing about 5 Dryden Street was that everybody was both a landlord and a tenant.

I think a lot of planners will say that they have been doing community planning for many many years. But there's lots of people in the field, all amateurs; I have been very conscious over the years that we are amateurs. There are no professional entrepreneurs, there are only people who have picked it up.

The keynote of my speech was meant to be about attitudes of today, but especially turning attitudes into practical results. In the end what happens on the ground is what matters; there are many skills needed, a whole mixture of skills. I think it all boils down to the word **awareness** in the sense of context, of finance and funding and costs and value. There are too many people around who can cost everything except what it is worth. There is also awareness of the client problems.

There is also humility; realising that one can't do it alone and that the renaissance man doesn't exist, it is now ten people.

I would like to emphasise some clear messages. There is **identifying contemporary needs** which is the whole marketing thing, getting down to what people want. There is the **entrepreneur developer attitude**, getting it done somehow.

Mondragon in the Basque area started with church money only some 25 years ago. This is now a vast organisation that runs its own university, schools, has its own bank, a bank that is a helping bank which will put people into a business to see that it is managed. Then there are the Amsterdam foundations, a very good partnership between local authority, government and owners, local people. House or shop or building owners can get a lot more grants if they put their building on a long-lease into a certain sort of trust and which is empowered to do the job properly and it is a profit-sharing sort of organisation.

One of the advantages of working in this field, the community field, is that it has a spin-off effect on the rest of our work; it makes us all more aware. I keep telling our architects to stand in other peoples' shoes - imagine what people are thinking and wanting. It doesn't matter how a building turns out in the end as long as we are actually solving a problem.

There are broadly speaking two sorts of profession. There is what I call the me sort of professional; a me-professional is only concerned with his or her professional attitudes and roles and design skills with inward-looking attitudes. Strangely enough they are the ones who often produce very good architecture, simply because they are so intense about it. On the other hand, there can be a your-professional which is a person who is interested, a heads-up person who will be drawing while he is actually looking to see what is happening in the world and be much more aware of society and context in the full sense. I think that those are the people that I hope communities will be working for.

Community Planning

An we Goring

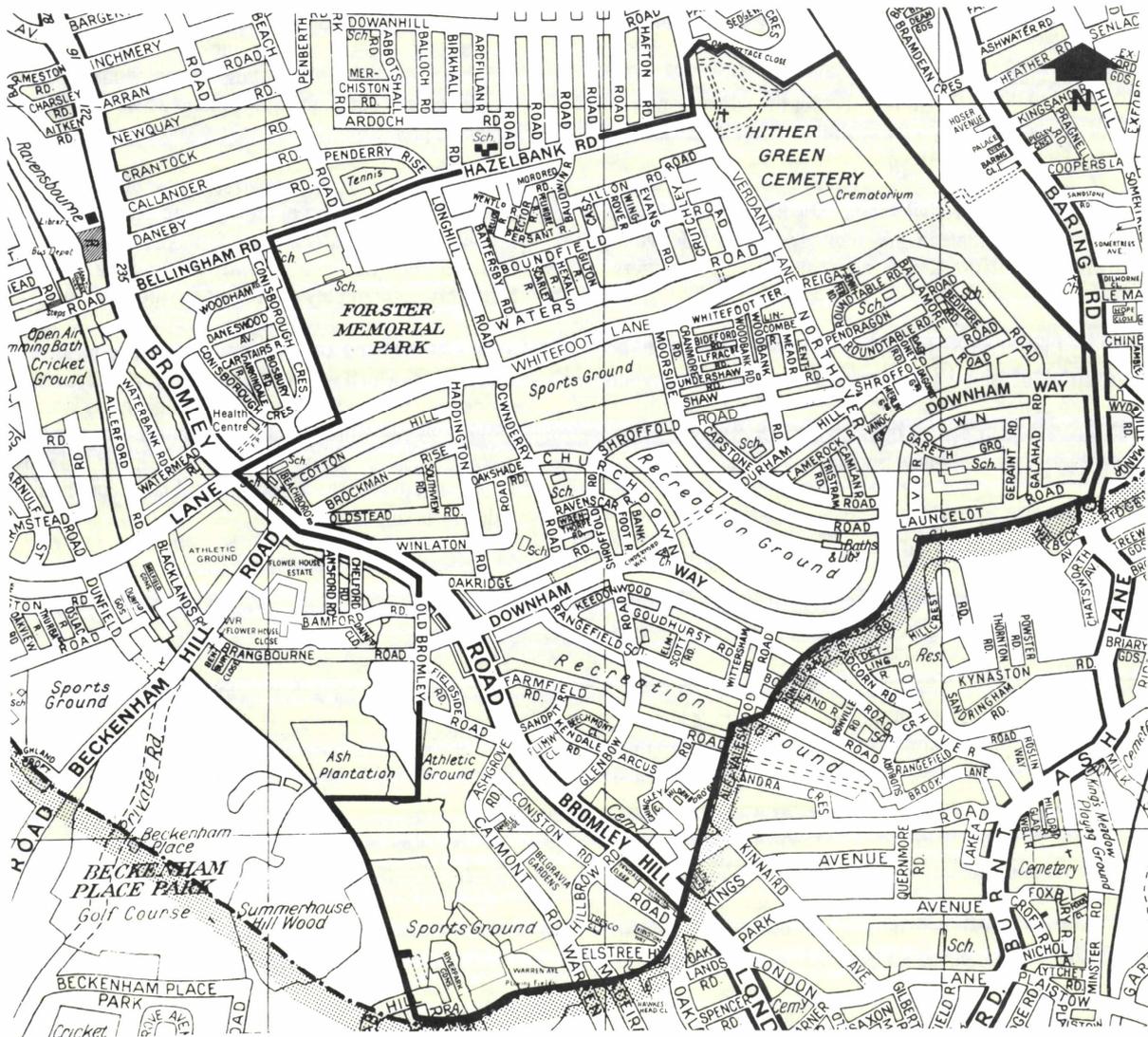
Principal Officer, Cleveland Economic Development Office

There are a lot of terms for community planning; popular planning, planning from the bottom up, planning for real. They are all names for the same approach, planning with people. And I am here today to talk about the experience of the London Borough of Lewisham over the past four years. Four years ago the council took the decision to stop promoting statutory local plans and to switch to community plans which have more relevance to people's lives. I will stick to two main themes: What Can be Achieved in Planning with the Community and How Can It Be Done?

An Alternative to the Statutory Process?

I would like to explain why it was done in Lewisham. Why were the Council and local people disillusioned by the statutory planning process? A statutory local plan can be a very long and cumbersome process and for those of you who haven't been involved with them I can assure you that people can get rather fed up in the process and the Plans often don't have much relevance to the lives of local people. I thought I would give a couple of examples from Lewisham to show you why people felt this way about it. The Catford local plan was really centred on Catford Town Centre which is on the South Circular, which most of you will know. In 1976 when the plan was started one of the proposals in the plan is to change a part of the South Circular into a bus only route and there would be a pedestrianisation scheme and major environmental improvements. Ten years later, in 1986, not much has

DOWANHILL

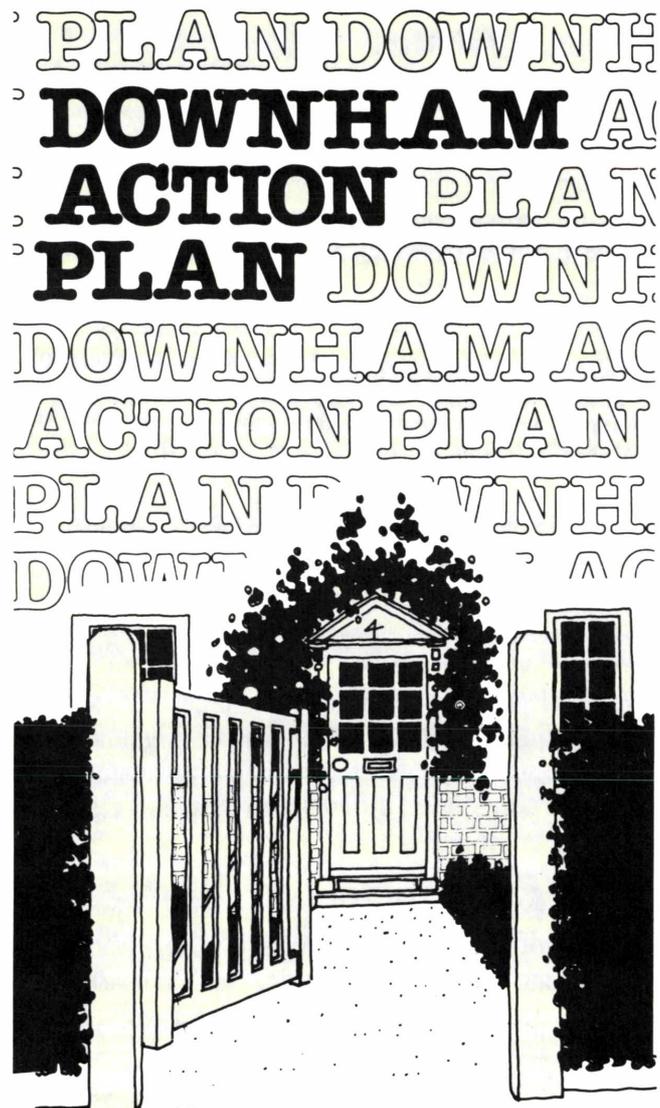


The Downham Action Plan Study Area

changed. The only thing that has changed actually is that a giant cat appeared, a bit of pop art, ready to pounce on any unsuspecting pedestrians brave enough to cross the South Circular.

Another example from the Catford local plan, a site where there was employment development. There was going to be a big commercial, development in the centre next to the Town Hall and in 1986 it's still a car park, and what is even worse, they have resurfaced the car park! These may be extreme examples, but they are part of the reason that Lewisham looked at community action plans which would relate to peoples' lives. As you can imagine, not many people in Catford feel that the local plan has much to do with them and so Downham was chosen for the first of the new start *Community Action Plans* which were not to be restricted to land-use issues and as officers we were given the brief that the Community Action Plan should relate to the needs of the local community. They would be a corporate plan and at the first meeting of local councillors involved in the plan the overall aim was set to improve the quality of life for all people living and working in the area.

A Background to CAP's



Now, before I go into the details of how it was done, a little background on the area of Downham. Most of the plan area, which has a population of 22,000, is covered by the Downham Estate, which is one of the estates built in the 1920s on the then edge of the urban area by the old London County Council. The estate was built on Garden City principles with wide streets, corner greens, cottage style houses, the veritable homes-fit-for-heroes, which may look attractive from the outside, but inside hide a multitude of sins. The LCC and the GLC had a very haphazard programme of rehabilitation of the houses and so there are some very basic facilities still lacking in many of the houses and there are a lot of structural problems. The houses are 60 years old and need new roofs and there are parts of this estate, which have severe environmental problems outside also.

There is a very small pre-fab estate are not very pleasant houses to live in, but people are very fond of them. I remember one particularly lively public meeting where the council was proposing to knock them down and a resident stood up and said, "You will do that over my dead body"; and so the council decided that they would take a couple of the pre-fabs and see whether it would be possible to do some rehabilitation work on them. Unfortunately they discovered that they were built mainly of asbestos, so I am afraid this prophecy may well come true!

One of the features of the estate is that London buses don't go into the estate, they only touch the edge, and apart from the fact that it has been there since the '20s and '30, London Transport still hasn't got round to putting buses in - they're a bit slow on these sorts of things. There are a lot of old people living a long way from shopping facilities, social and civic facilities. Co-incidentally with the Action Plan the council also had a programme of de-centralisation; they built a neighbourhood office which will house housing, social work, environmental health and direct labour staff there, so local people don't have so far to walk.

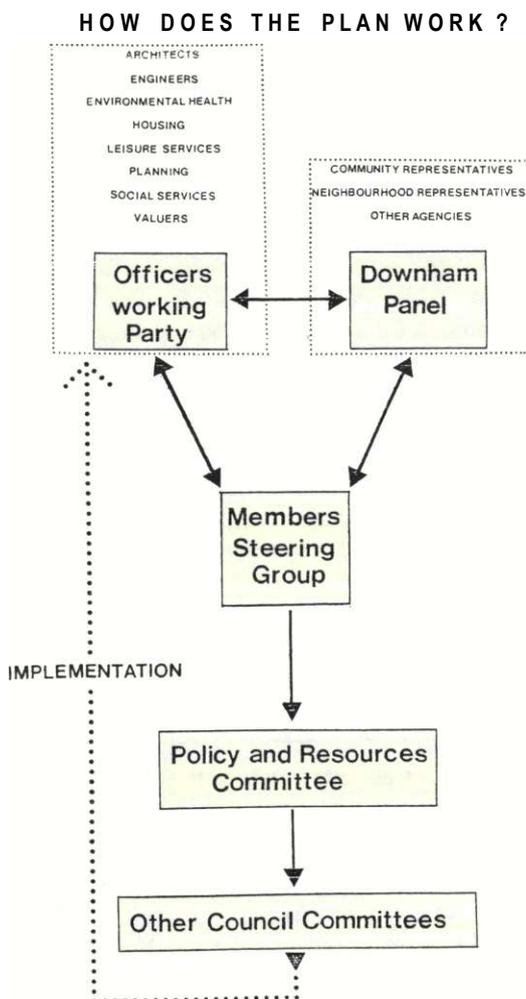
The Process

Returning to my theme, how can it be done? There are three main bodies involved in the Community Action Plan. The *Officers Working Party*, which has representatives from all departments - it is a corporate plan - the *Members Steering Group*, consisting of the councillors of the three wards that cover Downham and also the *Downham Panel* which consisted of representatives from various community groups, agencies that work in the area such as British Telecom, the Fire Brigade, the Police, the local Adult Education Institute, etc. Also on the panel were two representatives from eight neighbourhood areas. Because it was felt it was such a big area that local neighbourhood issues could get missed out, eight neighbourhoods were defined. We held public meetings there at the beginning and the end of the planning process and two representatives from each local area were asked to sit on the Panel and represent the local issues.

And the Panel's role was to monitor the work of the plan and how it progressed.

To involve local people with officers to work on the plan, there were lots of public meetings, discussions with community groups and every household in the area was leafleted and people were asked to give their views by writing, by dropping in, by telephoning. There was also a vigorous poster campaign and articles in the local press about what was going on, so we tried to make it high profile, to get people involved and someone soon coined the slogan "Doing It For Downham".

As well as asking people to come and join us we felt that we should avoid the problems of bias and we commissioned a household survey from NOP. Eight hundred houses were surveyed and they were asked questions about council services and what they would like to see on the estate. We didn't just rely on people coming to us, we went out to them in their homes as well.



The Organisation

As a result of all this the Community Action Plan became needs based. Recreation issues had to be co-ordinated between Leisure Services, Social Services and the

Engineers Department. I am sure some of you working with local authorities will realise some of the problems that this raises. However, the officers soon got the hang of it and did start working together as a team; and since I don't work for Lewisham any more I can say that the Chief Officers took a lot longer to get the hang of it, but once they realised just how popular the plan was, and what a lot of publicity it was getting, they soon became reconciled to the idea as well.

So, how was the plan drawn up? We tried to find out the existing situation on the estate. We identified the needs; these needs came from local people. Then we set aims for the future and proposals to achieve these aims. And these proposals were short, medium and long-term, because we tried to be realistic about funding and implementation. It was soon evident that it was going to take two years to draw the plan up so we decided that to show the local people we meant business we would have immediate action. We asked people what they would like to see done on the estate immediately. And we tried not to get into the trap of raising peoples' expectations and then being unable to come up with the goods. So a programme of immediate action was drawn up to be carried out while the plan was being prepared.

Corporate Involvement

It wasn't just a pencil plan, it involved other agencies; one of the issues that came out at public meetings and talking to people was the state of the telephone boxes on the estate which were frequently vandalised and there were a lot of old people living there who didn't have telephones: it was a big problem for them. So we got on to British Telecom and got them to come along to the public meetings. I think it was the first time British Telecom had ever done anything like that and they got a bit of a shock. However, we were very lucky because the officers from British Telecom were sympathetic and just by chance British Telecom were looking for an area to pilot their so-called vandal-resistant, telephone boxes, and so they piloted it on Downham. It was called the Downham Phone Project and so throughout the estate new vandal-resistant phone boxes were put up. There were additional boxes and also boxes with disabled access. From an average of six out of twelve telephone boxes being out of order there are now only one in twelve out of order, people might not think that is particularly relevant to community planning, but it has made a significant difference to people's lives just to have that service available.

A further example of immediate action was the increasing numbers of council house sales and people wanting to make their own individual alterations to their houses. The whole character of the estate was being changed and so the Planning Department produced a design guide which was circulated throughout die estate to people telling them how they could make sympathetic additions to their homes.

Another immediate action was that a swimming pool would have special classes for parents, and toddlers and also for the elderly, a special class for over 50's and they were very successful. So then they thought, "Right we will have classes for disabled people", and so they organised a hoist, which was put in the shallow end of the pool to let disabled people into the pool and they advertised them well and they sat back and no-one turned up to these classes! So another item of immediate action was a ramp to the swimming pool entrance. A ramp was put in at the library, and inside the library two store cupboards have been converted into toilets, one for the disabled and also one with baby-changing facilities.

A final example of immediate action. An old tram shed was set up by Downham Community Workshop to help young people set up in business and, with money from the Council and other agencies, it has been transformed. One of the first businesses to come out of the scheme was two lads here who wanted to set up a landscape gardening business. The Council stopped doing the gardens of disabled and elderly people on the estate which worried a lot of elderly people, who couldn't do anything about it. So the action plan was able to give these two young men a contract to clean up and maintain one hundred gardens, which made a significant difference to the environment of the estate and as well as that made a very valuable social link between elderly and young people.

The final example I have is the Downham Festival. We got local community groups to get together and have a week's long series of events for old and young and this has now become a yearly event with various activities going on

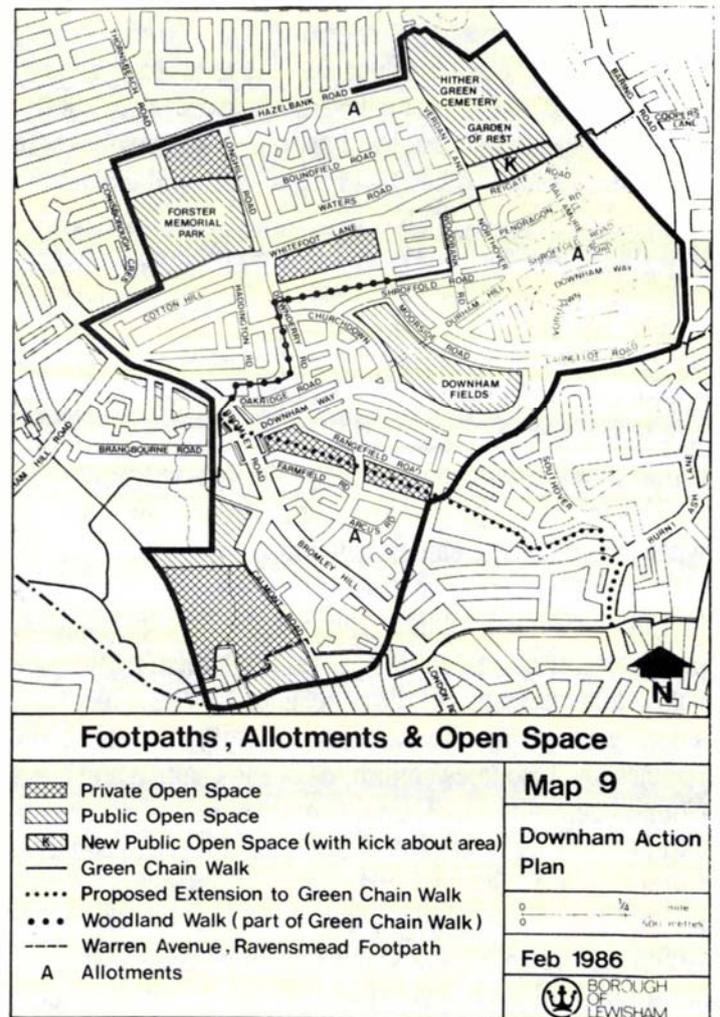
What Can Be Achieved Through A Community Action Plan?

The longer term I said that there was a set of proposals drawn up and put into the plan. There are 150 proposals in the short, medium and long-term which were nought to two years, two to five years and five to ten years for implementation.

What is in the plan for the longer term? Downham fields, an area of park land at the centre of the estate is rather bleak and windswept. The officers are working on an environmental development plan to incorporate what local people would like to see in that park, which includes sports pitches, including tennis, a bandstand, a trim trail and an amphitheatre. One of the things that came out of the public meetings on the north of the estate was that people were really annoyed about the state of some garages, which nobody wanted to use. Another set of issues were the needs of the unemployed in that particular area. There was a high level of unemployment, so the local Tenants Association and the Downham Community Workshop got together with the officers and put forward a proposal to set up an enterprise centre in the garages which would provide garage size workshops while some of the garages have been knocked together and made into

training shops and a reception area. The training side of it was put through the main committee budgets and was accepted because the Community Action Plan is a priority. Because there were a lot of single parents in that part of the estate a creche was also included as part of this development, the enterprise centre is now open, and it has really made a significant difference to the environment there.

In the original plan of the estate there were large tracts of open space which look really nice on the plan, the Garden City principle, but in reality all these open spaces are playing fields owned by the Inner London Education Authority and locked after school hours. There is a proposal in the plan to liaise with ILEA to open them so that people can use them and so that people didn't have to walk for miles to get round them. I have to say that there has been no success on this to date and perhaps it is one of the lessons we have learnt, that liaising with ILEA is not what a Community Action Plan can achieve.



Outside agencies were involved, including the Police. The initial household survey carried out in 800 households showed high dissatisfaction with Police services, so we got the local Chief Superintendent to come along to public meetings. Local people weren't backwards in coming forward about what they felt about Police services and as a result of this there has been an increase in the number of homebeat officers. There has been a number of surgeries set up at community centres and also a drugs helpline has been set up with the health service.

Last but not least, a subterranean public convenience. It is one of the long term proposals of the plan to replace it with one of those swish automatic public loos. Because of the immediate action the engineers volunteered to put in some landscaping to make it look a bit better in the meantime until the money for the automatic loo came along.

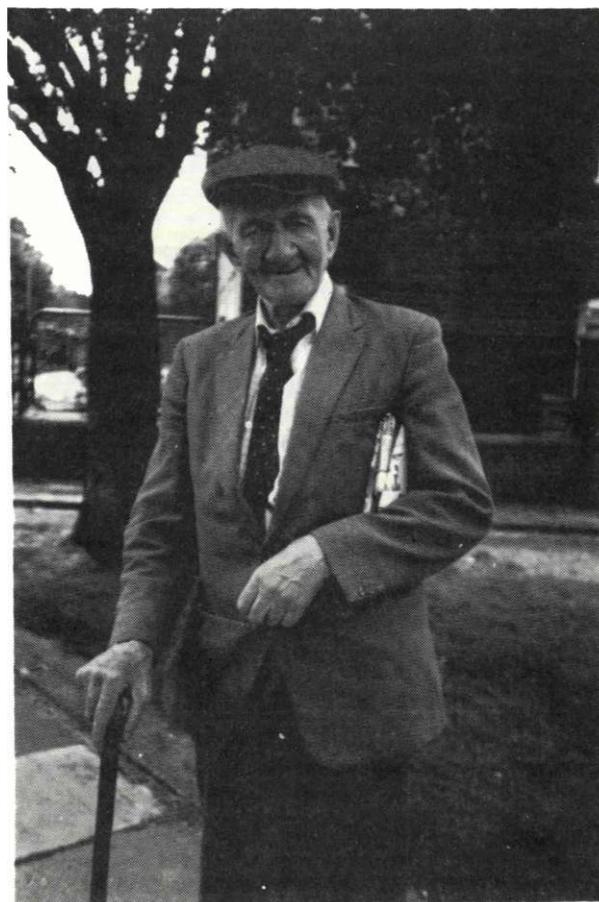
I have given you lots of examples of what a community action plan can achieve and how it was earned out. In Lewisham, statutory local plans were not always seen as relevant by local people, but in the Downham Community Action Plan and the action plans that have followed in Lewisham, the local people were the plan makers, they worked with us throughout and are still working and have made the plan relevant to their lives.

The success of the plan is not just due to all the publicity and the public meetings and the articles in the press, but it is really due to the fact that local people chose what went in the plan. But having said that I think as a word of warning to officers that if you want to get involved in something like that then you really have got to be prepared to accept anything that people say at public meetings. You have got to take anything on board, trying to take action about the services that you don't have any influence over such as the telephones and such as the drugline. People perhaps wouldn't have thought that is part of what community action should be about. It is really the Council acting as a facilitator to help people make changes in their lives and what I would like to call *making links*.

So to finish on Downham. The plan document is finished but work carries on monitoring and implementing the plan with regular meetings of the panel and also of the members steering group and regular six-monthly reports to the policies and resources committee of the Council and other Council committees. There is no point going into an area and just bowing out again and not being there to continue helping people. Something that has happened that perhaps I didn't anticipate to begin with: it is not just the panel which meets regularly now, local people themselves have set up a number of groups and working parties to deal with issues which have been raised in the plan. There is a working party on the needs of the elderly which was seen as a particular area that should be looked at in the plan. There is a working party on the regeneration of courtyard flats. This working party has been meeting almost weekly or fortnightly trying to get improvements to their homes.

I don't intend to go into the financial details of how money was allocated for the works and services needed for the plan except to say that the Council did not realise the can of worms it was opening when it started the Community Action Plans. In fact there was no budget allocated the first year and yet we were out in the area, people were expecting us to do things. After that the Council allocated us £50,000 per year for immediate action and other proposals that went through to committees from the plan were given high priority because of the fact that they came from a Community Action Plan. Since the proposals have been drawn up and the plans finished the plan makers, the officers who have to implement it, are in a good position every January or February when the cry comes out "slippage!", they are ready to take advantage of any money that the Council has and can't spend before the end of March. A number of major items have been carried out on that basis because the plan is there and the needs have been identified.

Not every community will have impetus for a community action plan coming from a local authority like this. But I hope I have shown, using the two themes, that How Can It Be Done, a partnership can work between a local authority other agencies, community groups, the voluntary sector and the ordinary resident, and What Can Be Achieved, well I think a tremendous amount has been achieved and significant improvements made to the environment of the local area *ff*



Community Urban Design

- *Richard Burton*
Partner, Ahrends Burton and Koralek
- *Johnny Burton*
Researcher, Urbed Ltd
- *Rev. Charlie Hall*
Vicar of St Mary's, Southampton

Richard Burton, CUDAT Leader

In 1985 a small group of us in the RIBA and other related Institutions were invited by the Community of St Mary's in Southampton to help them. A slogan appeared, "Put the Heart Back into St Mary's" We did about five months preparation work together with that group and we ended the period with an extremely intensive weekend in Southampton. A report was produced on the last night of that weekend by the groups, that is the St Mary Street Group on one hand and the RIBA group on the other and today you have got three participants in that experience, the Rev. Charlie Hall, who was Chairman of the St Mary's Street Group, John Burton who was researcher and organiser and myself, an architect who has been involved in this kind of work since the early 70s.

The concept of what has come to be known as a CUDAT, that stands for Community and Urban Design Assistance Team, was and is based on need. Urban communities as I see it are without the necessary format to order their own affairs, they don't have the equivalent of the parish council, with genuine teeth, anymore. Communities, and let's face it these have been decimated, need channels of expression, but equally well they require advice on possibilities which are untainted by, dare I say it, local authority interests. They need to turn to someone sometimes who is not part of an unreachable department.

I understand that Lewisham seems to have broken through that, but that is a pretty unique experience, and they want someone with a new eye to an old set of problems. The CUDAT never promised any miracles in June 1985 and I know that the St Mary's Street group itself expects and expected a five-year programme at least. Personally, I firmly believe in self-help and my view is that St Mary's was left with a ground plan, some visionary ideas which they are canying out quietly and firmly. John today will tell you about how it was done and Charlie will give you his view of what has and hasn't happened and I think we can view this as a genuine progress report.

Johnny Burton, CUDAT Researcher

I am going to write briefly about the Southampton CUDAT and it's build up and obviously there will be a whole lot of stuff which I won't mention and hopefully we can deal with some of that in the questions afterwards.



The St Mary's Area of Southampton

Firstly, I will give you some general points. CUDATs are very experimental. To date, there has been one in Southampton and there was one scheduled for Hull which had to be abandoned. They help focus attention on particular areas, rather than particular projects. Now I think that is a very important distinction to make; they are planning based more than individual project based. They involve an independent, multi-disciplinary team giving up their time voluntarily and that again is another key point. The people are not paid to come to the area and the team must be multi-disciplinary. They depend on being invited to an area and must not be imposed and again that is another key point which we'll pick up later.

As a means of consultation, they provide an interesting method of approach, but there will always be questions about how consultative they really are. And their success must ultimately be measured in what effects they have firstly on the particular people in the area. Are they able to equip prime movers with the energy and confidence and the ability to get any relevant recommendations implemented? Do they galvanise the forces at work into action to produce results, as with Lewisham bringing together the statutory bodies and the people that are needed to actually get things going in a positive manner without being too isolationist about it? And do they awaken local interest in local planning, by local people? And do they bring together future allies for positive change and regeneration?

The idea of a CUDAT is to enable a community with a complex planning problem to call on the independent advice of a team of voluntary "professionals" or "experts" to help them devise a plan for their area. That team is, by definition, multi-disciplinary, not just made up of architects, although it is under the RIBA auspices, it is very important that architecture is seen in its place rather than as the be all and end all. In fact the Southampton scheme included a planner, a traffic engineer, a sociologist, an architect and a regeneration economist and myself as researcher.

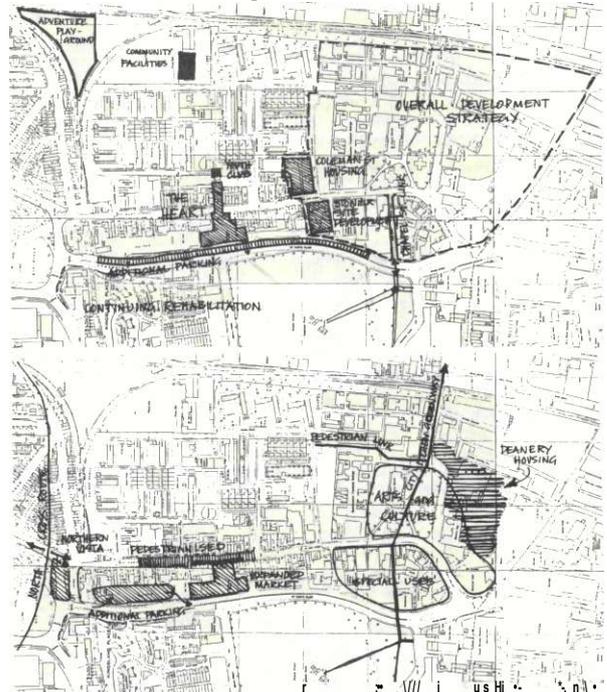
The focus is area-based and not project-based as I have said. But the team also has no axe to grind and I think that is part of the reason for being voluntary and also partly the reason for people coming from outside the area and not undertaking any work as a result after the event.

CUDAT is made up of three stages:

- Firstly an invitation by an umbrella group, in this case it was constituted called the St Mary's Street Group, which had actually been going I think since 1981, so the Street Group had a kind of life of its own and was made up of Charlie Hall and the clergy, the residents, local shop keepers, the education people in the area and the ward councillors. The acceptance by the RIBA came after there was an initial appraisal in the area and its

problems. The chairman and the team were chosen to reflect the situation on the ground rather than having a set format, so as traffic and parking was seen as one of the major problems in the area, a traffic engineer was taken on to the team, which may not be necessary in every case.

- The second phase is a period of research and background consultation leading up to this long weekend of intense consultation and brain storming. Its outcome was a report which sums up the present situation and highlights opportunities setting out recommendations and possible steps for implementation for the community to carry forward as the team sees it. And, hopefully, reflecting what people involved in the consultation have said.
- The third phase involves the after-effects of the event, any back-up involvement needed plus the monitoring of achievements and problems.



The short and long term objectives

The Southampton CUDAT took place in the summer of 1985 to do several different things.

Firstly, and most importantly, this was an initiative invited to the St Mary's area of Southampton by the St Mary's Street Group as part of their efforts to improve the image of the area and also to try and get the area rejuvenated and re-energised. Thus it was a way of focussing energies and objectives by providing an independent assessment of the area and its opportunities.

The second thing was a test of a successful American approach which has been going on in the States for ten or fifteen years now, called the RUDATs, Rural/Urban Development Assistance Teams, which are seen as very successful. But three main differences must be noted:

- **local government** over here has got much wider executive budgetary powers than in the States and is much more involved at a grass roots level;
- the **voluntary sector** here is a **very** different animal in very many respects to the States; and, a gross generalisation,
- the **culture of public participation** here is much less developed than in the States. That may not be the case, but I happen to think so.

The whole CUDAT was, and I presume still is, sponsored by the RIBA, part of their interest in community architecture as a method of countering urban decay, though the emphasis is much wider than simply just architecture.

In fact the CUDAT took two years to actually come to fruition and this was largely due to initial non-acceptance from the Local Authority. They first of all saw it as a meddling affair likely to interrupt the processes at work. The Council, as a result of St Mary's Street Group's pressure before the CUDAT came in, had actually put a lot of investment of time and investment into the area, so there was a background of things happening.

The background research lasted for about five months. There were several team visits to the area and individual visits by members of the team. There were meetings with local authority officers and the key prime movers in the area as well as local community representatives, and people who weren't representatives. There were also surveys of residents and shopkeepers and there was some traffic and parking work as well done. In effect, it was a detailed consultative process, though in a five-month voluntary effort it is difficult to get all the information you require in the consultative way that you would wish. In the States in fact, the team do not go on previous visits and consultations in the area. They are provided with a pack of information on arrival and that is got together by the people in the town that they are visiting. I think we in this country have a deep distrust of experts and so would not put up with such a "parachuting" exercise.

The Street Group were also involved in various ways in the build up work, primarily carrying out surveys and this was not easy to co-ordinate. As usual there are a few people who give up limited time to run voluntary organisations and do not have much left for other activities. The long weekend was an event which involved a series of public meetings, discussion groups, site tours and team meetings. There were six Southampton Polytechnic architecture students there to help out. The start was on a Friday night at the end of May, an open meeting in which issues were aired and perceptions were laid out by both the team and also the Street Group.

There were about 80 to 100 people attending. On

Saturday morning there were discussion groups on particular issues that had been thrown up from the previous night. Again, these were open so anyone could attend. The afternoon was spent wandering round the area and talking to people who either couldn't come, like market traders, or who didn't know about the event, or who weren't particularly interested. On Saturday evening and night the team discussed the public input and came up with ideas aimed at solving particular problems. The whole thing was written up into a report which was typed and copied on Sunday for presentation at two public meetings, one to the Street Group itself and another, more general public meeting.

I will just mention some points of interest. The CUDAT had the same problems that many initiatives do. It is very hard to motivate people on planning issues especially if you are in a mediating position with no power to do things. People do not see you as someone who is holding either money or resources of some kind so although that can have advantages, it has disadvantages too.

The input of local people throughout the process is vital, but this may not be adequately dealt with by the CUDAT; in other words you could question how representative it was, and how consultative such a process can be, being such a quick although detailed event, spanning six months in total? I would argue that the mechanism can be manipulated. There are things that need to be changed in the idea, but it comes down to the kind of people who are involved, and the experience and sensitivity of the team are also key factors. It is all too easy to quit an area after such an event, without leaving any other support than the report. There must be some way of helping the group in the medium term to attain their goals and to enable them to develop the skills to go on alone. I think this needs particular attention and it probably wasn't dealt with enough in Southampton. Charlie Hall will touch on that, but I think it is a key problem for community organisations trying to get things off the ground. It is not knowing who to turn to once they have done that but is actually developing the confidence and skills and the abilities to go on themselves and develop proposals and see them through to implementation.

Two final points need to be made: the question of who the client is, and getting the local authority and community organisations to agree can be a major benefit. The fact that they agree at all is a good thing, but it can also create a sense of ownership by both parties with the team trying to maintain independence as well as trying to consult with all sides. I don't think that was a particular problem in Southampton, but it is something to watch out for.

Finally it is very useful as an educational event, and I could give you two examples. One is that the professionals involved must rearrange their normal vocabulary and put things in plain English if they are to relate to people outside

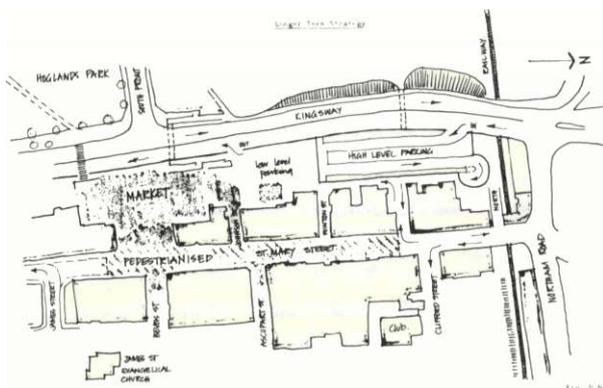
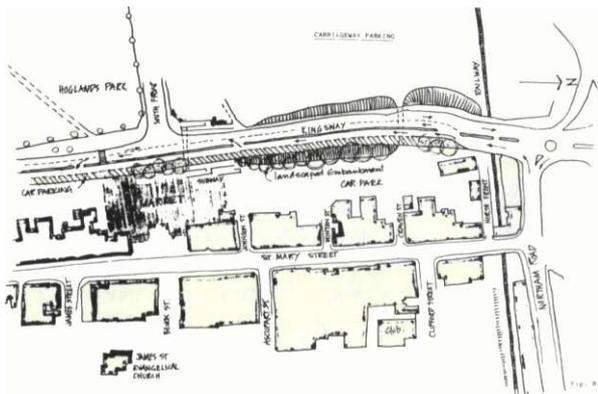
their professions. To have any credence at all in the local community they must not talk the semantics that they are used to with each other. On the other hand the local community may well see the planning process demystified and opened up, warts and all, by something like this.

Rev Charlie Hall, Chairman, St Mary's Street Group

I have a funny feeling that I was the only person at the conference who has to live in other peoples' mistakes, because the people around me in Southampton actually live in the mistakes of planners and architects.

So, what was it like to be on the receiving end of the first CUDAT with all the razzamatazz, including a message from Prince Charles and a Radio Four programme to cover it? And a team of high-powered experts crashing in to what was a small and rather moth-eaten shopping street in Southampton. Crashing in to help the David of a community group to tackle the Goliath of the local authority, the power of the profession versus the imperishable obstinacy of the planners and the Council.

We were at the stage in our development, from 1981 onwards, where the chairman of the appropriate committees within the local council wouldn't even talk to us.

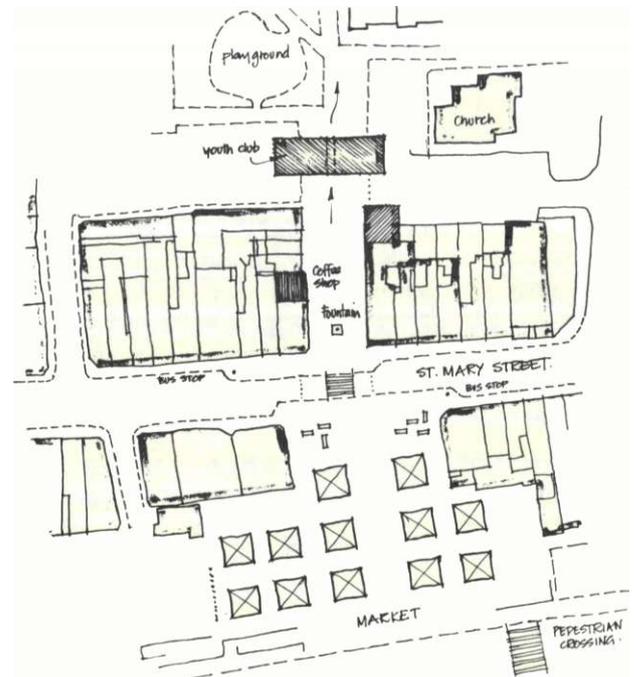


Short and long term proposals for the shopping area

us. They knew best and we were getting desperate and frustrated even though we had ward councillors on the group. So what could we do? We needed our own experts to convince these other experts that we were right. And that's, in fact, what happened. The report enabled us to talk to the local authority on equal terms. Some departments have moved; the planners now accept us much better. But the City Engineers are rather more difficult to move. The first benefit of the CUDAT for the St Mary's Street Group was that change of attitude which resulted from the plan that was left with us. A plan for a local area, not for a particular building or part of an area, but for a whole area. It enabled us to be consulted by a local developer who was redeveloping part of the bottom end of the street, an area that was in mixed council and private ownership. We were seen to be an important group within the area who had views and who should be consulted.

Secondly the self-confidence of the group was boosted by being presented with a plan, albeit with only five months research, but it was a plan which made concrete our aspirations. It used some of our ideas, some things weren't altogether new. It worked on our problems, the problems that we perceived, and enabled us to talk to other experts with a chance of being heard. We who lived and worked in the area could then say, "look, we are right about our area because another group of your own establishment have said that we are".

But why do local groups have to use a battering ram to be heard? Why do we have to use the battering ram of a CUDAT to be heard by other experts?



Proposals for the new heart of the community

A little later I will refer to the positive benefits that we have had and the way things are progressing now, but now, the *process*. It was very important that the team spent time in the area working with us before the big, trouble shooting weekend. The visions that they produced only had credibility for the St Mary's Street Group because they arose out of our experience. So they had sympathy. The CUDAT team had seen our experience and put it into the report. They answered our questions. They weren't someone else's questions. And where there were defects in the plan, or superficialities, they mainly arose from those members of the team who hadn't spent as much time in the area as others. So, for instance, the covering of an open-air market was rejected by the team, but in fact it has been a success and is well-liked by the public and by the stall holders. To a certain extent that lack of understanding showed on the presentations on the opening night. Those who had been around a long time spoke with an understanding of the area, an understanding of our views. Those who had come in somewhat later were not quite in tune with the locality and the practicalities and the aspirations of the people.

It is very difficult to produce a plan for an area which takes into account the views of all sections in the area and the consultation process is very difficult without more detailed work over a period of time with all the sectional interests. It was difficult to produce something that would hold everyone together and I think that showed in the poor response on the Saturday afternoons in the workshops and the consultations. There were really very few people who came to those things. And the St Mary's Street Group is still plagued with that. We are pretty certain that we are not as representative of the area as we ought to be and so to get something agreed for the whole area is a very long and detailed process. And the work needs to be done, even by local authorities who don't always know everything.

And what happened when the team went away? Did it all fall to pieces? Three problems emerged. One was to do with the nature of the changes proposed in the plan; one to do with support; and funding. We got a report but we were still tied to the apron strings of the City Council. We still had to wait on their laborious committees. The way the changes that were proposed by the team were referred to the city council's responsibilities caused additional problems. Local groups can't go along and change a road; they have actually got to wait for the City Council to do it. After two and a half years that is still to happen and we are still annoyed and frustrated.

The lack of support. In a sense it was a necessary process that we should go through the trough after all the euphoria. There was frustration that we couldn't move so we actually did something, and that was a creative step forward in the process. We had help, we had planned, but we had to grab what was available ourselves. So

where we got our funding from and where we got our technical support was an issue.

Thirdly the funding. Local authorities really do have limited funds; money just can't appear. But I heard about all this money that can come if you find a way. We need support to help us find it. We are now attempting to overcome that problem by a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. We started that in August 1986 and we have been stuck in the charity commissioners for the best part of this year.

So what positive things have come out of the CUDAT? One of their proposals is that housing should be developed at the bottom end of the street. A housing scheme of 25 houses and 25 flats is being built at the back of the vicarage - some vicarages have big gardens and the vicar said he did not want such a large garden. Everyone has their problems and we had problems with the church commissioners and charity law, but we now have relatively inexpensive housing being built on a piece of church land.

Half way down the street some council housing, houses and flats are nearly finished. An adventure playground is to be placed on local primary school grounds. Funding has been approved, but in the war between the County Council and the City Council, we are stuck somewhere between Hampshire and Southampton. I am not sure who is holding it up, but it is another thing that was proposed and will go forward.

We are making a bid for council funding out of the Southampton City Council's local projects fund for a footpath across one of the city parks to link the street and the city centre. We gained expertise, we gained the design skills necessary by employing a community architect funded by RIBA's community projects fund. But that is going forward and that is under negotiation at the moment.

And smaller but vital changes to the street are promised this year and funds are available for those things from the City Council. The Council have also promised more funds for a further part of the footpath. All that arose out of our plan, our CUDAT, our work, so thanks to CUDAT #

Community Environmental Improvements

Walter Menzies

Director, Macclesfield Groundwork Trust

Community environmental improvement is a terrible topic to discuss, because both the word community and the word environment are massively misused and a tremendous amount of clap-trap is talked about both topics. I will start with the debunking of four important myths which I think are still current and widespread.

Four Common Myths

The first is that **environmental problems are in the inner cities**. There is something magical about inner cities; they are dramatic and exciting. The Liverpool riots created further environmental problems. But outer areas have dreadful environmental problems too, sometimes even worse than the inner cities. Like outer estates on Merseyside; you can imagine the quality of the environment there. Small towns have environmental problems. This is a shot from the centre of a small and quite attractive Cheshire market town and not all villages are chocolate box places. A village in Merseyside with a dreadful and squalid environment. So myth number one, environmental problems equals inner cities, has to be done away with. Even in the countryside we see people treating the place in a most dreadful fashion.

Myth number two: **self-help can solve all our problems**. Well here is a marvelous example of community enterprise. Who else but a community group would publicise a public meeting with a brass band? So there is tremendous enterprise, but it is not the answer to everything. The centre of Stoke on Trent, the abandoned site of the Sheldon Steel Works right in the middle of the town, became ultimately the national garden festival. Well, whether you like garden festivals or not, that site would not have been dealt with without a massive injection of public funds and local self-help would not have been the answer to it

Myth number three, I know people still subscribe to this: **professionals know best what is good for people**. Well there is a specially exciting example in Birkenhead, an award-winning architectural scheme in the '50s. We acclaimed an architectural and housing management disaster of horrendous nature which was demolished amidst local acclaim by high explosives in 1979. The tragedy of this is that people lived in it for years and a local authority will still be paying the interest charges in 20 years time. So, myth number three that

professionals know best I think, really isn't correct.

Myth number four: **environmental improvement is cosmetic**, it is trivial, it is not worth bothering about, it is not addressing the real issues like Glasnost and Rod Hackney and important things that matter to people. I learnt my lesson in the mid-70s in Eastleigh in Hampshire being involved in an attempt to upgrade an entire, fairly tatty, residential area. And I discovered that for example, where a seat is placed is of paramount importance to a lot of people. Which roads are closed can really affect peoples' lives. On the one hand some people said they want their roads closed. "It's a rat race, children are being run over by cars tearing through the area." Traders were saying, "we will close down, we will lose their passing trade if traffic can't pass our shops." So modest things like road closures really do matter to people.

Small Scale is Beautiful

Planting trees in streets. Some people really do think trees emit toxic fumes, that they undermine foundations and the leaves clog up gutters and they are the worst possible thing to happen. Other people quite like having trees in front of their houses and where the trees are placed must be discussed with the local people. And the back lanes. Improvement to the back lanes in Eastleigh included new fencing paid for courtesy of the Council. We had to hold up one contract for a bit of widening, and everyone agreed, because one particular man had a pigeon loft in his back garden and the pigeons could only be moved during a certain period of the year without affecting their homing abilities. So one has to get down to tremendous detail when fiddling about trying to improve peoples' environment and trying to create a place to be proud of. Even the architects were proud of it at the end of the day and they got a nice award for the whole project.

That was community involvement, consultation; people were in control of the process and they were consulted. In Liverpool many organisations have pioneered community control of environmental projects. A typical example is off Lodge Lane in Liverpool East, an abandoned former kindergarten. It was local authority land, the building no use to anyone and the land just a sort of desolate wasteland. It was taken over by a community group and a massive amount of money was raised, job creation schemes, local fund raising and so on. The community centre is now used by people and a magical garden has been laid out which is not vandalised because it belongs to the people, not to some remote authority. So community control can play a tremendous part particularly in very run down areas.

Everyone can get involved in community environmental improvements, it is not all that difficult to do basic things. A bit of space left over after architecture and school children can plant it out and try to make it into something. They can

make it into a very attractive *place*, as opposed to a non-place.

But some community projects are very ambitious and they require persistence against the odds. The Eldonian Community Association in Liverpool, in Vauxhall, a run down dockside area, decided they would do no less than transform the entire area. With total opposition from the City Council, I may add. A massive effort, public meetings, enormous amount of involvement, organisations set up, an architectural competition entered, professionals giving their time for free, some disqualified because when the community group said in the press before the judging date, "they are going to win, it is going to be the only good entry." Some architect shopped them and it was a breach of the conditions. They won their war and the war in this case was looking for £4.5 million worth of public money to redevelop the entire Tate and Lyle site in Liverpool, a massive land reclamation scheme and housing development. That project taught me the significance of persistence because that group fought extremely hard and are still fighting to transform their entire area.

But smaller scale examples of community involvement are just as important and demonstrate the point about packaging resources. It is nice to get £4.5 million but not every community group can operate on that sort of scale; often resources are not just wadges of money, they are people. For example, these school children working on a voluntary basis during their school holidays trying to help create a wonderland out of what was a desolate wood. And they did that extremely well. So resources include people as well as money and many people who are given the chance will give their time freely.

People have talent. The quality of lettering in much graffiti, and it is quite hard writing on walls, is better than that produced by many architectural students and I think that it is very important that that sort of talent should be encouraged in community organisations. But it is not quite enough because some problems really are daunting and overwhelming. I have to say that professionals have an important role to play in this. Professionals can help to draw up plans, they can help to deal with practicalities, and they can help to produce visions for the future working closely with local people. They can produce models too which is an extremely good way of discussing proposals; and they can produce presentation material which is so often important in trying to convince for example funding bodies that a particular project should be supported. It is often terribly important to have convincing reports and drawings and presentation material to show that you mean business and for many community groups it is not easy to do this kind of work.

Local authority support. Well would that all local authorities had the enlightened views of Lewisham. Support is terribly important and my advice to any

community group is try and get it. "Mayor plants tree" is a good thing for the Mayor and the community group as well as the tree. An environmental improvement is a positive thing, so try to get them involved, they have got money, they have got resources, they have got expertise. Try to get local authorities involved, it is an essential part of any project moving forward.

The media too are extremely important. The environment is perceived to be a good thing. And the wonderful thing about environmental improvement is that you actually see the media. The local television, the local press will often come in; they have tremendous interest and support for community projects and there is nothing like building up political and media support to get people to take you seriously.

Community involvement in environmental improvement is very satisfying and enjoyable although it is difficult. But people feel that they have done something, they have planted a few trees, that's positive, they have enjoyed it, they have improved the environment and they have learnt something in the process.

There are some serious issues. One could go on for hours on end about positive examples that are happening up and down the country and we will hear about more today no doubt. We have got a society in which environmental improvements are widespread, not just in the inner cities, maybe in Croydon, I don't know. Now that people have increased leisure time, either voluntarily, or forced, people will want more involvement in their environment, I believe, and I certainly hope and expect that they'll want higher standards and a higher quality of environment in which to live and work. Community organisations have an enormous role to play in making sure that that happens.

To undertake environmental improvements the community group needs the entrepreneurial skills of Arthur Daley, the persistence of General Montgomery of Alamein and access to professionals of saintly quality who will give freely of their time for nothing. These are the ingredients for success and they are not always there. I certainly think the future has to be in the setting up of more, not for profit, third arm, third wave voluntary organisations, whatever you want to call them. Organisations which will be independent of local government like Groundwork Trusts which work closely with local government, that see their role as helping the community. With the present political regime I can't believe that local authorities are really going to get into this field in a big way, so I think the third arm, the third wave, the third force is coming and I hope you will get involved in it, in practical projects, in the future #

Community Economy

Pauline Nichols

Director, Community Economy Ltd.

It seems to me that what a lot of you want to hear about today is money. So along with giving you some brief introductory information I will attempt to talk about money.

Community Economy is a non-profit making company. It was formed by a group of people who were community development workers and who were involved in community enterprise development at a time when it wasn't the flavour of the month. As I am sure you are all aware, the last two years, with popular ownership promoted by this government, it has now become flavour of the month.

One of our major pieces of work is something called an Action Research Programme. While we are a national organisation, we found as community development workers that one of our biggest problems was working in isolation. The splendid Gladstonian fashion of one key worker who, once he left, caused a project that they had spent three or four years on to collapse abisimally.

We also found, as a group of seven, that we were doing very similar work across Britain and we wrote something called The Action Research Programme to look into the development of local economies on housing estates. It was our belief that there was such a thing as a local economy outside that of the grand economy and, more importantly, outside that of the local authority's economy. We therefore set up the programme with action research workers based alongside projects on seven housing estates. For your information they are Scotswood in Newcastle, Hattersley, which is an overspill estate in Thameside eight miles outside of Manchester, the Shover Estate in Oldham, the Downham Estate in Lewisham, North Woolwich and Silvertown in the Docklands, Clathe Lane in Newham which is unique as it is the largest new build housing co-op in Britain and houses a thousand single people, and Clapton Park in Hackney. The estates are of very different sizes. Downham has a population of 22,000, Clathe Lane has a population of 1000. They are inner city, outer city, garden city, you name it, they have been given a label for it. They have several key factors: they all have higher than the national averages of unemployment and they all have what are classed as deprivation problems and the usual barrage of clichés that go with housing stock that is in poor condition and has not been upkept.

We did something called economic and social profiling to start with and we discovered some amazing information

which confirmed our suspicions. I employ people, people on supplementary benefit that don't have a lot of spending power and as individuals that's true. But on a housing estate in Hackney where we have 1,700 households from every ten pounds a week they spend £2.10 on food. That is £165,000 a week. You need only a turnover of £45,000 to support a seven-staffed supermarket. It isn't a large enough profit for Sainsbury's and Tesco's. If it is networked ten estates give you enough to compete with the market leaders and to run a warehouse.

I would like to say something about community enterprises. They take many different forms. They are not just workers' co-operatives, community co-operatives, community businesses. As well as providing a service to their community they ought to be able to intertrade. You oughtn't to think of them as "small", "subsidised", or as third sector therefore "third-rate". They are able to compete. In Hattersley we have a group of people who have been working on an inflatable manufacturer. It has taken nearly five years for the workers' co-op to go through the process of training to be able to run and manage their own accounts, to be able to manufacture their inflatable products, but we are now exporting to Europe. Any surplus that is made by that workers' co-op is re-invested and the residents of the estate, who own the idea and who own the assets by the virtue that they live on the estate and are members of the community, can therefore vote as to how their surpluses are spent

One of the problems that many of us face with Tenants Associations, Residents Associations and unincorporated bodies and groups, is that they neither have the skills nor the knowledge to handle large sums of money. Local authorities in the past have been very good at handing out large sums of money to community groups with ideas. They have not necessarily provided the training and the back-up. What we have worked on is the basis of ownership and control. If people who live on estates and who work on them own the ideas, then they control them. If they become companies limited by guarantee, then they also have a structure from within so that they don't take on personal liability. How many of you are management committee members, how many of you are liable to staff and how many of you are liable for a £50,000 building? I would say at least a third of the audience. Do you ever understand the liabilities that you are taking on? Probably not! Neither do an awful lot of Tenants Associations and residents and members of community groups. So we have looked at an overall structure and have devised a model for people to use on housing estates.

The type of examples I can give of community enterprises are varied. They are far too many to mention. One hundred and ten that have been started and have been running for several years on those seven estates, but they cover things like community launderettes, community cafes, creche facilities and services, many sorts of service

industry, but by far the most successful has been the manufacturing groups and the groups that have been able to intertrade with, if you like, the outside world.

Community Banking

Banking and money is obviously something that is very difficult if, you live in an isolated area and you are on Supplementary Benefit. However the statistics show that you can save an amazing 38p a week if you are on supplementary benefit. Credit unions need only slightly more than that. There are ninety seven of them currently registered in Britain on the basis of individual saving. Unfortunately our legislation is not quite as wide as the Canadian system. People save, or are encouraged to save up to £1 a week, and after a ten-week period or thirteen week period, they are entitled to withdraw up to a certain level in the form of a loan while they continue to save, up to four times their saving. The benefit of a credit union is that the rate of interest is just one percent.

In Newcastle on the Scotswood estate a group of five housewives, for want of a better term, got together and formed the first credit union. You need twenty two people and they have to go through a training programme. At the moment that training programme is run by a body called ABCU, the Association of British Credit Unions. Having passed the training period which takes you through book keeping, maintenance, loan supervision, you are then entitled to set up and start collecting savings. It is not an answer to loan sharks, especially if you don't have the funds to buy in, initially, the bad debts. There are cases on the Hattersley Estate and many others I am sure you could all mention, of the elderly woman who borrowed £68 last year for a television licence and has to borrow another £75 this year to pay for this year's TV licence, but still hasn't paid last year's £68 interest off and if she has a loan of £150 or £200 which is ever-increasing, so the £1 a week saving scheme is ideal for her if you can encourage her to save and to move on.

The thing about the credit union though is that in Scotswood £10,000 has been saved in the last five years, they believe, in interest charges. You only need £250,000 to set up a Bank. The Bank of England are currently trying to make it £3 million because they have realised £1/4 million is too low an amount. If you combine a grant income of three, four or five local groups on your housing estates I am sure there is a potential of £1/4 million.

The Europeans have certainly got their acts together, in Spain and Holland to name but two. There are possibilities of combining the grant income and the amount of money which circulates within a housing estate to do some of the work and provide some of the developments that have been talked about at the conference.

The reality is though that credit unions are for individual

savings. Surpluses made from community enterprises, if they are within an overall structure, can be used to benefit the community as a whole. The community creches are usually the area which has been sponsored or supported by other businesses. However, there are examples of the tenants' bar being refurbished. I would advise you as professionals not to get upset when they want to do that or go to the football for the afternoon, or buy a hotel in Spain for holidays. We have had all manner of ideas come up with of how groups want to use their services and surpluses.

Untapped Resources

One of the things that is most obvious is that there are grants available that aren't being tapped. We have often been asked where all this money is coming from?

Every Italian local authority claims its full amount of European social funding. The European Social Fund was set up for local authorities to claim grants. Britain is hopelessly under-represented in its claims and although in the South East it is argued that it is difficult to justify projects, there are possibilities providing training that leads to economic regeneration and possibilities for businesses. The DoE has all the information but they are not taken up. Last year the Innovation Scheme was cut by 1%, from 5% to 4%, because there wasn't enough take-up of new ideas for economic regeneration in England. I think it is appalling, especially when we continuously talk about not having enough money.

Our work, that is the work of Community Economy, is not purely about finance but involves looking at all the resources on the estate. We are community development workers on the whole. Finance was a side line that we developed when we realised that we needed money to carry out the ideas. We are looking at an integration of economy, ecology and social needs and values. Some of the projects were described at the conference and many that are in existence have equal social value. Of course they have to be paid for; and how can they be paid for?

Community Industry

In Downham the first community factory is about to open. A feasibility project has been carried out. Downham has 8,000 households, they are 60 years old and the Direct Labour Organisation cannot cope with the replacement of window frames and joinery works. In order to attempt to keep that work going we have talked to the London Borough of Lewisham about a contract to a community-owned factory that will contract both the woodworking and the manufacture and the installation. Our negotiations, however, start with the trade union and start with the people who live on the estate who are about to become redundant or unemployed. By skilled surveys and by negotiation we have an agreement with the unions before we go to the authority, and so we aren't taking other

peoples' jobs. We are looking at creating new employment, but keeping money within a set area and allowing that community to decide how its money is spent and how its work is done. The community factory has got DoE backing, there are lots of different sources in terms of the Urban Programme if you are fortunate enough to be eligible. Downham has a population of 22,000. Do I need to tell you what 10p a week is for four weeks? A lottery would raise a £22,000 levy and the possibility of share capital with no more than a £50 share per household with voting rights, seats on the boards nominated street by street, road by road for people who live within the area. They will not make a great amount of profit even if there is a large surplus because the surplus has to be ploughed back into the estate.

We need to look in terms of community work and community planning and market gaps and we need to consider far more seriously the training of our community workers and our planning officers and, more important, our residents in terms of finance and funding. They pay for our work by their rates. The grants we give them back are the money they have put in in the first place. It is theirs, they own it and they have a right to it. So, it is a matter of enabling people by training and by putting together approaches like this to actually take part and have a say in the development of their communities; the training is available and so is the funding.

Community Economy is a non-profit making organisation, but we also have to fund the fourteen staff and the nine workers, so we also offer a consultancy service to local authorities #

Community Economic Development

Dr. Nicholas Falk

Director, URBED Ltd

What is URBED?

I am going to say a little about the kind of things we do. I am going to then share some results from research we have been doing about the roles of community initiatives or community enterprises in environmental improvement and the problems they can encounter. Then I want to talk about some of the projects with which we have helped to succeed, and finally our Re-use of Industrial Building Service.

URBED is concerned with four main types of things. We do research into the problems of local economic development and over the past two years we have done a major project on the training needs of project managers which has got us to grips with the difficulties that people who are starting projects encounter. We have also done an interesting piece of work for the European Foundation, which is to be published soon, on environmental initiatives in six countries in Europe, which found a surprising similarity in the kinds of things that community groups are doing - even though they were very rarely in touch with each other. There is a grassroots movement of some proportions. We hope this report will begin to make local authorities and bodies like the EEC take community initiatives more seriously.

We also act as consultants in the re-use of industrial buildings, mainly for local authorities, but also for community groups and voluntary initiatives. I will be giving you some examples. We have a fair amount of experience of the difficulties that people face in getting things going. We run training programmes for people starting their own businesses, some of which are community businesses, and we are also involved in a few joint ventures, including a Unit Trust which invests in property lets to small firms.

Problems of Community Enterprise.

We highlighted four common problems in the research carried out for the EEC:

- **vulnerability;** projects fall by the wayside because they have few resources and often are dependent on a charismatic leader.
- **unrealistic objectives;** trying to do too many things all at once.

- **fragmentation;** groups are frequently isolated and all bidding for a place in the sun and this makes it difficult for them to be taken seriously.
- **non-professional approach;** they aren't able to relate to authority convincingly.

However, whilst there are many problems, there are many projects which actually succeed in breaking through the obstacles and they seem to share a number of common aspects or key factors for success in going from vision to results. The first is finding the right driving force. At the end of the day it is the individual who is the key in getting something going and one of the great problems, as many people will know, is the problem of what you do when that individual drops out or burns out from sheer exhaustion.

The second key factor to success is forging a partnership between the community and authority. Most groups start by fighting projects. It is usually resistance that gets a group going, but then there is the process of creating an alliance and that requires special skills.

The third is tapping professional expertise. I rather like the phrase about "having professionals **on-tap** rather than **on-top**".

The fourth is showing a few results. However great your vision it is crucial to begin somewhere. We were involved in a major scheme at Limehouse Basin, and though we did quite well in terms of getting the scheme shortlisted on behalf of the Limehouse Development Group, we were told by the Docklands Corporation that the great mistake we made was not to have got anything going on the ground, however small. It would have created confidence on the part of the people whose backing we needed. In fact the group did subsequently go on to convert one of the arches into a childrens' project and from that time onwards it had much better relationships.

The fifth is spreading the administrative load and that's an organisational problem. While there may be a driving force he or she should not do everything. And finally, most important of all, is having fun so that the thing really does become a community initiative and not just an initiative of a handful of people.

There are a number of common problems in the management of community projects: the people lack training; there is a lack of management support systems; people need help to contact people who had tackled similar problems, emphasising the importance of networks; and the major shortage is entrepreneurial rather than administrative skills.

I now want to turn to a few case studies which will illustrate some of these points and some key factors of

success.

Case Studies

I have mentioned that many projects start in resistance. A good example is the Dartford Society who we have helped to fight proposals for demolishing an historic hospital. It is a very important role - simply to present convincing cases why buildings should not be demolished, to show that there are alternative uses, to get them listed and, if there are public enquiries, to present a convincing case. But a lot of the best groups are those who go beyond just fighting things and go on to play in disseminating information and advice and generally animating an area.

Sowerby Bridge

Sowerby Bridge is on the edge of Halifax. It is quite a small town which was built around a series of mills, some dating from the late 18th century. We were called in as a result of a community initiative led by a local butcher who had seen the trade in the town collapse till his shop went bankrupt on the day our study started. The town itself looked very sorry for itself.

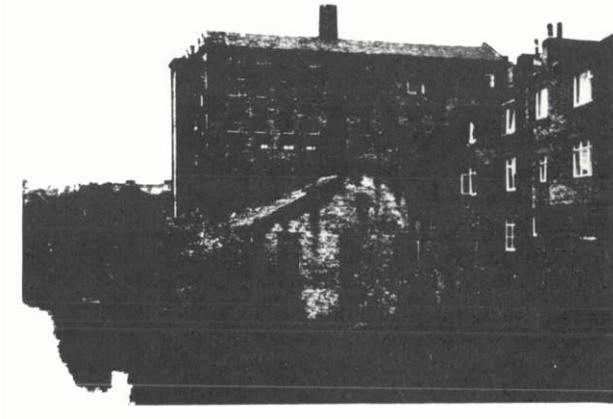
Buildings actually fell down during the course of the study, though as there are 180,000 square feet of mill space on the site, it wasn't such a bad thing from our point of view. The key to this area, given the derelict state of the buildings in an area with masses of empty buildings, was that there was a lively community that cared.

The Civic Society had got together with the Chamber of Commerce, they had produced a marvellous colour guide to the tourist attractions of Sowerby Bridge, and they had agitated until they were taken seriously. The feasibility study which we did was commissioned and we produced a report called "*Reviving the Heart of Sowerby Bridge*". The key thing was a drawing by Andrew Sutton which was reproduced on a large scale. It was the thing that convinced the Councillors of West Yorkshire to put half their Economic Development budget into this little town because they could see from this picture, this vision, that it was possible to turn a lot of derelict buildings into something that might look quite good.

Because this was a project that was going to take ten years and £6 million, it was important to get the process going and we saw the possibilities which needless to say local people had already identified, of a canoe slalom course in the River Aire. They had proposed sending the canoes through tubes coming from the mill wheels. We proposed sending them down the river. We got an expert to show that was perfectly feasible. Funds were raised partly from the Sports Council, partly by fund-raising by local people and the canoe slalom course was able to open a few months after our report had been done. That drew the attention of the world to Sowerby Bridge, because suddenly Sowerby Bridge was going out on television as

a canoe venue which put enormous pressure on the local authority, Calderdale, to carry on the work of renovating the buildings. People were coming to the town and the Council felt embarrassed at its state.

Some of Sowerby's marvellous collection of warehouses

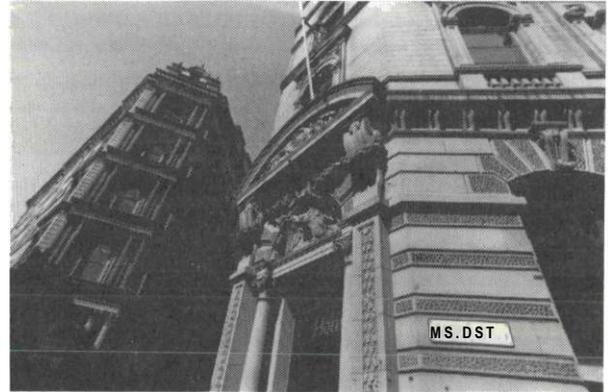


Canoeing on the river at Sowerby Bridge

Since the report, the warehouses in the centre have been renovated, and work is about to start on a major managed workspace scheme and on environmental improvements. Three people are I believe the key to any success of any scheme, any community initiative. One is a local person who cares, in this case the headmaster of the local school who was concerned that people would despise the area they grew up in. The second person is the chairman of the

planning committee who wanted to see something done. And the third person is a planner who conspired to get things moving. A visitor information centre was opened early on. And of course the other secret ingredient you need today are Prince Charles lookalikes!

Little Germany, Bradford



Reflections of Bradford's Merchant Wealth

The next project that I want to talk about is a place in Bradford called Little Germany. It is 20 acres of mainly empty stone warehouses. A key element to promoting interest in Little Germany was to make people aware that it existed. There were enough businesses who cared about the area to form a Little Germany Improvement Association and they joined with the Council to have the first Little Germany Festival. So successful was it that this year there has been a Bradford-wide festival for a whole week. The key to getting the festival going was having a place to hold it. We found a derelict area in the middle of Little Germany. We realised that there was very little we could do to show results in terms of re-using buildings, but if we could get something going in the form of a new square, this would create the confidence perhaps for other things to happen. We produced a drawing as part of a strategy. I think the report had only sixty lines, that was all, and we said to the Council, "look there are people in the area who care, are you able to get your act together such that we could produce a square by September, the latest time that one could have a festival". And we said, "the

Bradford's Little Germany Festival

MSC are prepared to back the project, so could you back it with funds for materials and so on". They thought about it and said, "Yes, we will do it". 100 people descended on the area for months; the area was really exciting because you couldn't move through it for people creating the square.

The point about doing this, particularly as this is an Urban Design conference, is that simply getting something going of high quality early on gave the people involved a certain confidence and that confidence would spread over to organisations who were considering investing in the area. Now there are a number of major house builders proposing schemes, firms of architects talking about moving in, a community arts centre, and so on.

The final examples I wanted to talk about is about projects which go further and promote development schemes

Rossendale Groundwork Trust

Rossendale Groundwork Trust managed to negotiate good terms with the owners so that they could develop an area of land as a visitors' centre and open space as well as a base for their own operations. They are now in the

process of convincing all the parties to put together a scheme for re-using mills in the vicinity. The fact that they have got a project going which could attract visitors to an area which most people haven't even heard of is a key element in building the confidence to get a very much larger scheme off the ground involving several million pounds. That is one kind of project where community initiatives are getting buildings back into use.

Industrial Buildings Preservation Trust

We bought a Testing and Experimenting works in Southwark Street about eight years ago. It had been empty for eight years and looked pretty woe-begone. We put together a scheme which was carried out through the Industrial Buildings Preservation Trust of which I was chairman, to renovate it into workspace above a museum. By having a mix of uses, it was possible to combine a social use namely a museum, which would never get funding by itself, with something else which could help pay the rent. In fact the Industrial Buildings Preservation Trust has just sold the building and is now in a position to look for other projects so I suspect that if you have buildings that are looking for uses, they are worth talking

to.

Fitzrovia

Another trust set up as a result of pressure from local people in Fitzrovia just off Tottenham Court Road, tackles the problem of derelict and unutilised upper floors in a place where there is a tremendous shortage of housing for rent with ground floors which could be used as workshops, or showrooms, or shops. Here a trust has done a deal with Circle Thirty-Three Housing Association who are going to tackle the upper floors while the Trust, for the time being, develops and sells off the ground floor units. It represents a partnership between local people who care about the area, the local authority and other organisations.

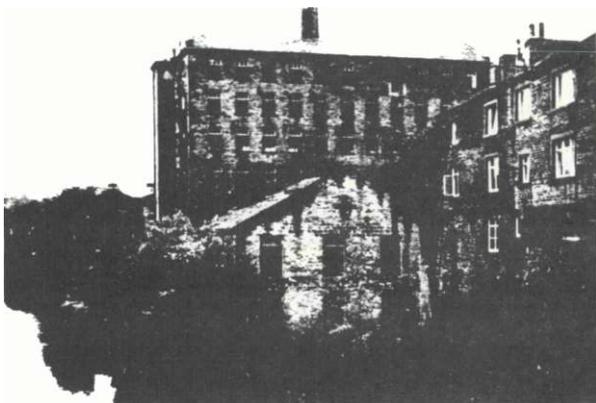
Conclusion

In conclusion, I am just going to propose four principles, or four elements, which are worth checking to see whether your project stands a chance of succeeding:

- **Vision** a capacity to visualise what is possible.
- **Insight** understanding the forces at work and going with the tide.
- **Balance** - the notion of mixing uses and mixing funding so that numbers do eventually add up. And finally, and most important of all;
- **Guts** to take the plunge! <1

SOWERBY BRIDGE
RIVERSIDE

A new heart for Sowerby Bridge



Community Architecture I

Robin Nicholson

Partner, Edward Cullinan Architects

What is Community Architecture

Necessarily, community architecture is not a discipline; it involves people from many disciplines, sometimes all of them altogether and sometimes one rather than the other. It is therefore a great relief for me to be able to talk about community architecture in the strict sense of it being a branch of architectural practice, or perhaps more appropriately today as an architectural element within community action. I don't have to offer you a whole new world all on my own and tell you that it is then up to you to make it happen. I propose to discuss the importance for me and for us in the practice of the community architecture approach, to show you three projects briefly to explore some aspects of how their communities made them so special.

Despite Richard Burton's anxiety about the commercial face of architecture, many of you will probably know that recently a book called "**Community Architecture**" is being published by Charles Knevitt and Nick Wates. I mentioned Richard Burton's anxiety because it is the book that to a certain extent we have all been waiting for and nearly all the speakers appear in it in one way or another. They seem to suggest that actually community architecture is the prime mode of architectural practice today. I think I tend to share Richard Burton's anxiety that actually time has moved on since many of us started getting involved in what is broadly called community architecture.

The thing that they also promote is the apparent ease with which, together with the communities, we can help build an harmonious society, a happy community. Unfortunately life is a bit more complicated as we have already heard in connection with St Mary's in Southampton and similarly as I am told an examination of the spectacularly successful New Eldonia shows. It is altogether easier, and I don't mean to detract from their very real achievements, if the community under discussion happens to share the same coloured skins and/or the same religion. Nevertheless, there are for me four great attractions to the community architecture approach and it is these I want to discuss.

Firstly, the untapped energies that can be released by group action and self-help. We have heard quite a lot about that today, but in the architectural field there is the exhibition this year on the contribution of Walter Segal, who I am sure will be familiar to most of you as the High Priest of self-build in this country. The other aspect of self-help is a rather interesting coincidence of alternative quote

"community action" with the present Prime Minister who both share Samuel Smyles as their philosophical background.

Secondly, the ridiculous situation of not discussing proposals with the tenants or workers who use the spaces that one is designing. It is quite extraordinary how frightened clients are about letting one talk to the people who are going to use the buildings and while there tends to be an over-emphasis on housing in this connection, the same applies to factories and other workplaces and particularly offices. When did you hear of anybody actually consulting somebody in front of a VDU in a large office?

Thirdly, the possibility of a better architecture. This I have to admit is slightly more controversial, but is something that interests me. It is very difficult to remember that modernism used to be genuinely popular and I certainly have been at public meetings in which the new-fangled conservationists said that there their community mustn't tear down these buildings, and where the owners, tenants or whatever said no. Furthermore there is a great new architecture and it is not all that long ago that the architectural profession and others have managed to abuse the space that was created by modern architecture. Alternatively conservation can fairly successfully be turned into a conservative trick and I will show you an example of that later.

Fourthly, I think there is, as we have heard ample examples today, the way in which community architecture or community action exercises democratic rights. If you can demonstrate with a counter project there is no doubt then that you will go on to make greater demands on your local authority, employer, landlord whoever.

Now none of this, as far as I am concerned, precludes the art of architecture. Indeed, for me, the productive excitement of community architecture is the very process of proposition and criticism between designer and user. The architect is a highly trained professional with wide responsibilities. The architect is trained to make space by making good use of available resources. The community architect properly takes the criticisms by the future users and uses them repetitively to develop the design into something beyond their joint first vision.

My office is one floor of a fairly usable old building in Camden Town. It is deliberately one room, because we require in the co-operative manner for everybody, from the oldest to the youngest, to join in. That means that they have rights, rights to contribute and to criticise on any project that is going on and for those of you who are designers it is not the way one is taught to design. One is taught to either do what somebody tells us to do or else be Michael Angelo. Those of you who have worked in community situations will know that the great resource is the criticism one receives from people who are not

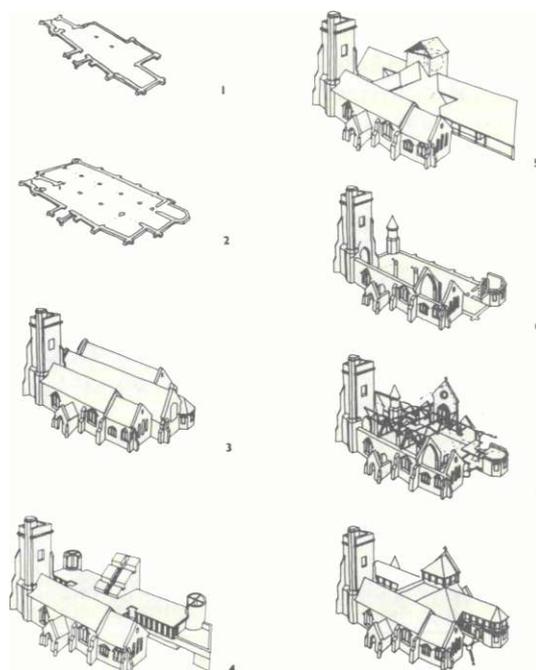
architects. Here we were, quite coincidentally, doing this happily before we got involved in our first community project. Public criticism, while sometimes painful, tended to be an even greater spur to designing better buildings together.

Three Projects

The three projects I am going to describe are the rebuilding of St Mary's Church, in Barnes, which is a public building and was designed for a small group of people, but within a larger community. The second is a public building that was invented by the community and then was developed with smaller group and presented at intervals to the community for their approval - Lambeth Community Hospital. The third one is a possible scheme for a workplace. They are all in various parts of London.

St Mary's, Barnes

The first one is Barnes Church. This Church was all but destroyed by an arsonist but was reconstructed with due respect to its history while still meeting today's demands.



The church's development showing 2 alternative proposals for its replacement and the basic shell and built scheme (7/8)

One of the reasons for describing this church is the problem of community tension; in this case it was the local Church of England church, in an area which is relatively well off with a lot of middle class people with strongly-held views. Indeed there is a campaign for almost everything and against almost everything that you could think of in Barnes and therefore structurally, as soon there was a group making a proposition for a new church, there was immediately an alternative who went to fairly dramatic lengths. The original medieval parts of the church got

progressively buried and our proposal, which stayed right to the end, was to liberate the old familiar parts of the church and an idea of memory. The importance of memory in a community is quite difficult, but in this case we were certain that architecturally, the original part was good and that liturgically the rest of it was inappropriate as well as being very expensive to restore. Our first proposal was definitely far too modern, because it recreated the existing church, pulled down everything else subsequently and proposed a flat roofed building with a roof light sticking up which was a solar-powered heating system for the church. The interesting thing in the long term is that what we built is in plan almost identical to that first stab.

The opposition was immediately launched by this and got progressively more hysterical and we were commissioned to make an alternative to the first. We weren't commissioned; we were told to go away and produce a scheme with a pitched roof, which was the same plan. We were able to convince them that we hadn't got the answer right, but there wasn't any economic sense in a simple restoration at all. So we proceeded to the third and final version, there were of course one or two bits in between, in which, over a long period, progressively more and more familiar parts of the church were re-integrated and I already mentioned one of them which is a large tracery window which has been moved four times since it started and has been re-united by us with the window above it, which it hasn't seen for one hundred years.



The Church now, acclaimed and loved by its community

Now, that's only one detail of the pressure of the community in this case to produce not the sort of projects we have been talking about, but every bit as important in terms of the particular community, which is the use of conflict of opinion to produce a very very rich result. If I tell you about the strength of the opposition, I need only say we have a letter in the office in which we are assured that God will provide us with work for the rest of our lives on condition that we resign and that Dr Mervyn Stockwood received on a slightly more macabre note one of the bodies that had been robbed from a grave that had been opened as part of the construction works, through the ordinary post. Suffice it to say that today it is immensely popular. With a fair amount of good luck the acoustics worked brilliantly, so it works as a community hall very successfully and we are, hopefully in time for this Christmas, to hang some proper lights in the main church which they never had the money for the first time round.

Lambeth Community Hospital

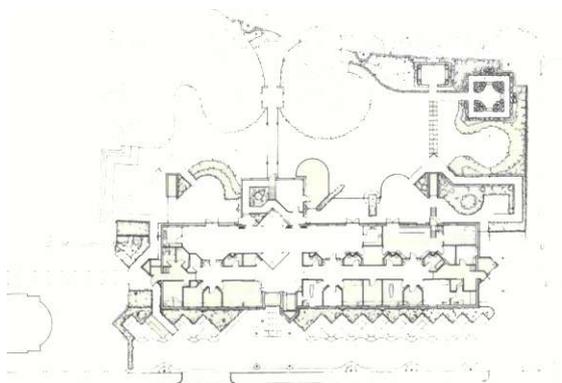
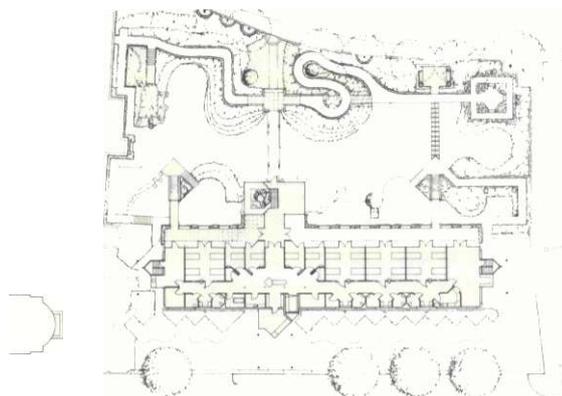
The next scheme is in Lambeth. It is fairly well documented, so I am not going to tell you all the history, but in broad outline it was proposed to close the old Lambeth Hospital in 1974 in order to open the white-tiled palace opposite the House of Commons, St Thomas' Hospital, and the old Lambeth Hospital was one of those ex-workhouses that everyone loved to hate. It was where everybody knew somebody who had died, but it was also the place where everybody had had their children and the loci community were not prepared to allow it to close without having something in exchange.

So the principle community programme here was mobilising sufficient energy and then finding out what it was that people thought they needed, what was missing. And what they came up with was a brief for an experimental health building where you could be looked after or cared for by your local doctor in a friendly and accessible way rather than going to the white palace. It is a day centre for 35, it has beds for 20 upstairs and the community uses the building, the day rooms in the building for meetings and other events. I have been rude about the white palace, but they are rude about our building too. It is called the garage. Well I think that is quite nice in a way that communities have to appropriate these things that we come up with. So after the programme was made and the money was found, which took six years all told, they set about finding an architect and they found us, for some reasons we can't go into now.

We actually made thirteen designs. There are certain similarities and certain dis-similarities among them. The health authority has a process called "project teams" by which all health buildings are designed in a so-called community manner. This one was ex-propriated by the local GPs, the local Community Health Council and other well-wishers to turn it into a very effective consultative design body whereby everything that we did, and one has

to remember that we had never designed a health building before (and this was considered to be an asset rather than a problem) was taken in consultation with them. The fact that many of the decisions that we have taken have subsequently proved in detail slightly off-beam doesn't invalidate the process; the intensity of discussion produces the richness of the result.

Models have been mentioned. Two models were made. We were at about scheme four when the local planning officer got apoplexy, it was the blue roof rather than the shape of it which gave him apoplexy, so then fortunately he went off on a holiday to France and saw zinc roofs, so he was very happy when we proposed a silver, which is what got built. Models are I think very helpful to concretise, to create images which people find much easier to understand than drawings.



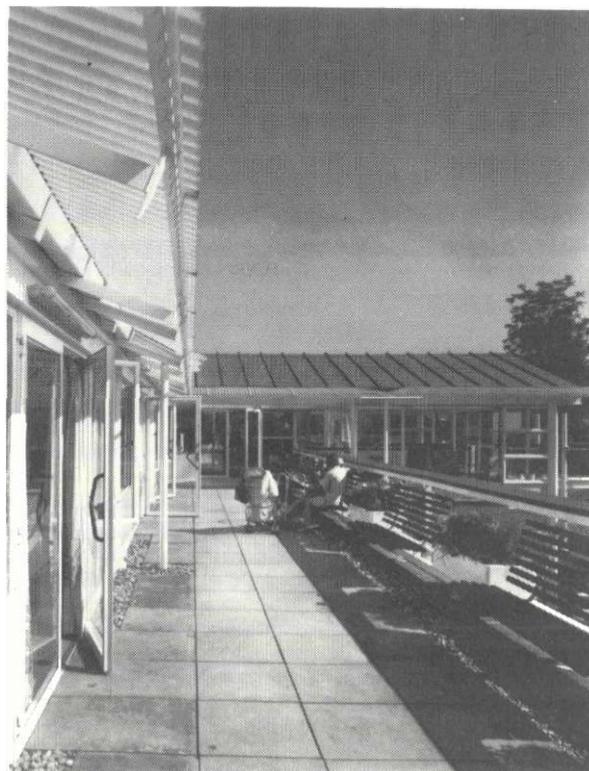
Ground and first floor levels of the Hospital

The original gardens we redesigned as a therapeutic exercise. You come out of the building across a bridge and down around the back of the building; we were telling this story so often that we were convinced that this was the answer, and people always used to laugh and clap in whatever sized group until the day came just before we were about to start on site when they said when are we going to design the garden. When you get near site you suddenly discover you haven't done all the drawings you should have done and they were getting a bit agitated.

After we had been out to tender, got the tender, accepted, got it through all the health service regulations, we suddenly found ourselves in the most dramatic row with a particular group about what was a garden. I am happy to say that the garden is now a focus of much community activity since there wasn't enough money to do it the way we wanted to. There are biennial plantings and indeed when it was formally opened everybody was told to bring some bulbs and after the officials had gone we planted bulbs, which was very nice.

There is a tendency for community architecture to be seen as all arches and dormer windows and indeed we were quite anxious when the building opened that the local community, although believing in the project, would find the amount of glass somewhat difficult and were delighted to find that for many of the residents of the local area, it was the very contrast of the south-facing light and brightness of the building that became a major therapeutical part of its success. It is a very small scale building so that people can relate to it at a human scale, but the brightness is in total contrast to the damp basement room with a small, not quite opening leaky window that they have spent the best years of their life in.

Now, when one visits it, even though we have our normal collection of leaks and everything else like every other building, there is a continuing programme of involvement of us as architects in the development of the building, and its programmes. I think there is nobody who has been there for any length of time who would not say that architecture and the community involvement, have a great deal to offer in a certain kind of building.



Care in the Community, Lambeth style

Kensington Community Workshops

The last example is very brief because it only exists as a small report financed by the RIBA community architecture projects fund. A redundant bus garage in North Kensington was bought for a certain amount of money by the Greater London Enterprise Board who proceeded to spend whatever money was available on fixing it up which included doing things like sand-blasting rotten wood and cracked brickwork rather than actually put together a project team to decide what and how to use the building. Now, despite competition from some other local powerful groups a local black group have bought it as a result of their fury with "**Them** doing things for **Us**" badly and wrong. I mention this scheme to highlight the danger of the sticking plaster view of charitable works that tends to pervade some aspects of community architecture, and as an aside a national contractor who we had to throw off a nearly completed hostel for 100 single men complained, "it is far too good for them anyway so why on earth were we complaining about the standard of their building?" And there is a very real problem about Them and Us in community projects.

I have already mentioned how the fabric of the building was very inadequate, but the principle problem was that the roof trusses were really too low to get a decent space, a decent usable space, and it was after some discussion with the users that we thought we had better make an alternative proposal, which is still fighting its way through this Ministry and that, to pull the whole thing down and start again, because it was a bad use of money to repair this building. We offered two options: one is the fixing up of the existing building; and the other was offering something more than the fixing up of an old building in order to provide places for work, which is what was originally planned by the Greater London Enterprise Board. The brief is considerably more interesting than just providing workspace. It is providing workspace, but also in such a way that it can be use for things like the Notting Hill Carnival. Now they have bought the building and are well on the way to getting the money, we are interested in working in a community way with the users of this future building.

Conclusions

In all three examples as architects we have exposed our ideas and ourselves in public in order to develop the thinking of the project. This technique is essential for many reasons. First of all that of **historical laziness**. There are many design guides and to those of us who know anything about the health service it is very apparent there were never designed in the first place. They contain advice that is wrong and inadequate. If you work with the users you are very quickly disabused of that advice. Secondly, **ignorance**. Even now, with the new building regulations coming in most of us are ignorant of

the needs of the disabled. Thirdly, **architectural laziness**. This is a sort of warning rather than an essential. When faced with the community group it is very easy for an architect to just give in and do what he is told to do rather than develop a dialogue or a dialectic. This is especially important when faced with rampant conservationists who are frequently nothing to do with the immediate users of the building.

And fourthly **democratic rights**. Without the knowledge the professionals can offer few of us can actually claim our rights. I would leave you with the caution that as the **CBI** and their friends join in the community architecture programme in a pervading atmosphere of conservatism we need to remember the original purpose of community involvement, a richer community, a better architecture made by designers and users together #

Community Architecture II

John Thompson

Partner, Hunt Thompson Associates

Reading my letter of invitation to speak at the conference I was reminded that Terry Farrell, OBE, is the President. The story goes that Terry Farrell was only marginally less surprised to get his OBE than Nick Grimshaw and I believe it was for services to housing. I think architectural gongs are obviously something which must be as difficult to receive as they are to give.

"Every Picture Tells a Story" you will remember was the title of a mega sixties rock album by that modest young fellow who for the last seventeen years or so has laid claim to be the most famous Rod in the land. That used to be Rod Stewart. His continuing claim to that title is now under threat from our very own inner city physician, President of our Institute, tireless globe trotter extraordinaire, Dr Rod Hackney, the personification in the eyes of both the public and the Prince of that exciting new phenomenon that most people assume is now sweeping through our profession: Community Architecture. Well, I can assure you that no such phenomenon is sweeping through our profession.

The Unholy Trinity

Every profession is perceived in the eyes of the people that it claims to serve, as an oppressor. It seems to me that the real interest of the vast majority of professionals lies within their own inward-looking peer group and that every profession is ultimately controlled by what you might call an unholy trinity.

- **the Institute;**
- **the educational system** that is controlled and monitored by an institute; and
- **the dependent specialists,** journalists who feed off the profession.

In all the professions, the unholy trinity is both self-supporting and self-sufficient. Within our own profession community architecture is seen as a temporary irritant and a nuisance. It would be much more interested in the rigorous pursuit of an intellectual idea of technological innovation. The attitude within the profession is typified by the attitude of our leading architectural coffee table glossy, the "*Architectural Review*", which earlier this year did a pretty good demolition job on the community architecture movement. The heading of the article was: "Community Architecture - Contradiction in Terms".

"Community architecture is many things, but it is not an architectural movement. The modern movement, despite its political ramifications, was based on profoundly architectural ideas and concerned ultimately, perhaps even to its own eventual detriment, with the product: architecture. Community architecture by contrast is little concerned with the product but almost solely with the process, the politics of building. Its leaders are politicians first, architects second. Its architects are expected to be enablers, not producers. Its press reports contain not drawings, but words and any photographs are of smiling black and white community faces".

I find that last sentence one of the most insulting sentences ever written. For me if you can't show smiling black and white community faces together with the pictures of your building, you don't deserve to show the pictures of your building. I think this is the general attitude within our profession to community architecture and I hope to be able to show that community architecture is the root to producing architecture.

I am going to illustrate this first of all with a project which is the renovation of a 1939 housing estate called Lea View House in the London Borough of Hackney and to parallel what happened to Lea View House with another estate which was built at the same time, by the same architects and to virtually the same design, just a slightly smaller scale.

Heaven in Hackney

Lea View House was a magnificent success. It was built in a wave of euphoria for a new form of social housing which would preserve and create new communities. Basically East End slum dwellers were being re-housed from the Bethnal Green area to Hackney where there was more land and space available for the new architectural form which gave Eastenders a flat of their own; space, light, communal facilities including tennis courts, a bowling green. They had their own morgue, this little building here, their own little electricity sub-station and a community hall on two floors. There was a communal laundry downstairs which was the social centre for the whole estate. The whole concept of creating a community and personifying that community in a very powerful building form, a building form which is of course identical to Oxbridge colleges if you think about it, a very strong architectural form.

Original tenants enjoyed privacy, daylight, sunlight and fresh air and the community thrived on the estates through the war, through the '50s and into the mid-'60s. In the mid-'60s it started to fall apart at the seams, partly because the estate began to change socially. A very homogeneous community, people with similar standards, similar expectations, the estate originally had two caretakers and three porters, basically estate cleaners, but general

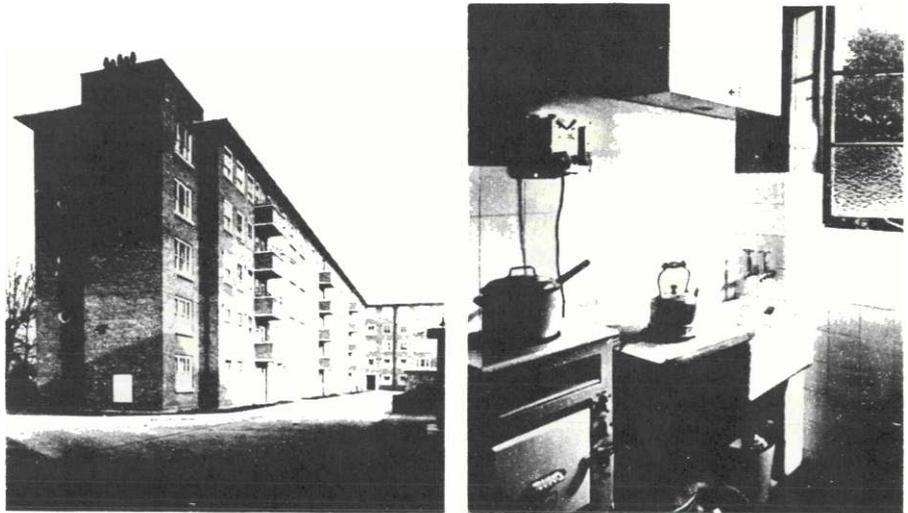
handymen on the estate. The caretakers would see that the children were off the centre courtyard by a certain time at night. There was a code of behaviour that all these people shared. The new desire for personal freedom, the movement towards more personal freedom that came in the '60s, has led towards building forms that in the past have worked for an identifiable group of people with similar aspirations and patterns of behaviour and has led to an enormous pressure being put on communities which suddenly have no established pattern of behaviour by which to judge other peoples' way of life.

Paradise Lost

In 1980 when we were first appointed to the project there was a substantial difference from the original *"Architects Journal"* article. Suddenly there is a rundown building, services were beginning to disintegrate. The local authority could not even prevent the overflows flowing non-stop and creating terrible limescales on the brickwork. The maintenance on the estate has disintegrated, the ground floor flats are being timbered because people are breaking in and beating up people. There was a high crime rate, vandalism and graffiti by people in their own habitat, which must be a phenomenon unique to homosapiens. No other animal, actually vandalises its own habitat. It is something that has been created very recently and mostly by people like architects, planners and politicians.

Lea View, a typical sink estate, people ashamed to tell their friends where they lived and fighting a campaign to get rehoused off the estate. In those days if your estate was done up, you got moved out. So the Lea View tenants were fighting to get moved out. Hunt Thompson were appointed with a brief to carry out "in situ" improvements with work starting on site before the end of the financial year of course. We are now in the eighth year of the project and we have still got about another year to go which shows I think the power architects have once they get appointed. I don't think any architects should use the excuse there was not enough money or not enough time to do it properly, because a lot of clients, to their own regret, will probably agree. Architects do actually have, potentially, enormous power to mould projects and push them in the direction they wish to go.

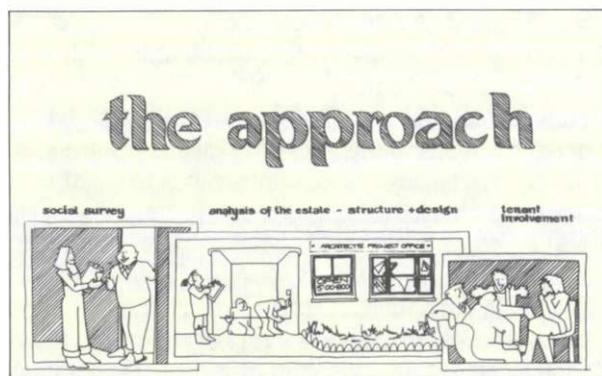
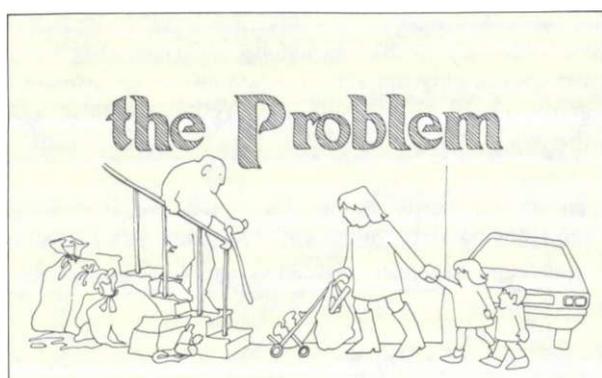
'Heaven in Hackney'; Lea View in 1939



Tenants heard that we had been appointed and agreed not to co-operate with the architects until the council in fact gave all the tenants the right to move off the estate. In a tenant's Newsletter of the time they wrote, "the architects are now using flat there as an office so beware!" We were welcomed with a wall of silence. We were seen as being representatives of a discredited profession. People shunned us and it took a considerable amount of time to establish any sort of rapport on the estate. We realised that we had for the first time in a public sector project, a *real* client.

We had three hundred homes, probably about six or seven hundred people in total, to take as our client. And we realised that the biggest resource that we had wasn't our architectural education, it was actually the tenant population living on the estate who were the experts on all the problems of their own housing. We set about the project in December 1980.

We came out with a diagram in our report which was to show the Council what our approach was. Basically this meant looking at people first and at buildings, architectural solutions, second. We set up our own social survey unit within the office and carried out a detailed survey on the estate. We put our whole team onto the estate and worked there permanently for the first year and a half of the project and we set up a number of methods of communicating with tenants, both formally through the survey, politically and strategically through the Tenants Association and also, just as importantly, on a one-to-one basis, just through being there and meeting people. So, on all our projects we never differentiate between the analysis of people and buildings. It seems to us that both have to be fully understood by the designer.

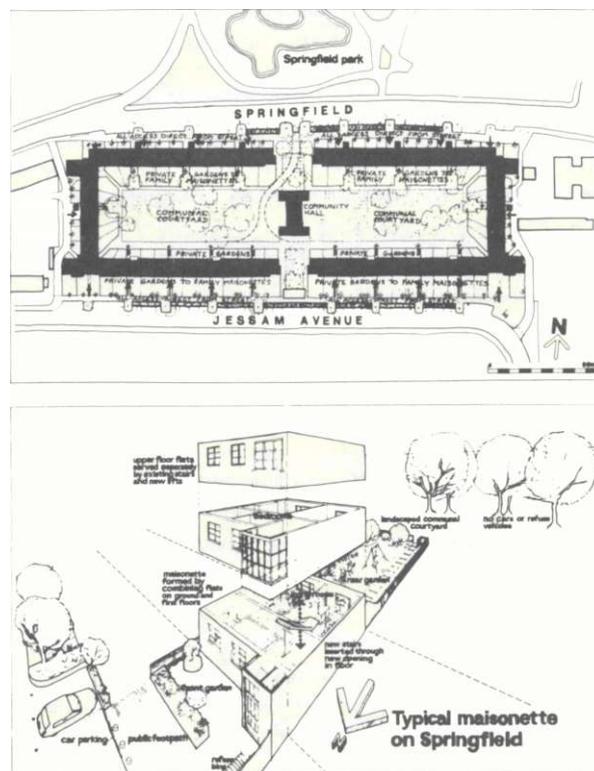


Hunt Thompson's emphasis on using people to solve problems

The original estate consisted is very similar to Oxbridge colleges, you go into a courtyard, you go round on a ring road and into twenty independent staircases serving three flats on every floor, five floors high, so there were fifteen flats on every staircase. Flats are distributed at random. In other words if you were an old aged pensioner you may be on the ground floor or the top floor. It is housing by units, rather than housing by need and we perceived one of the main problems was the mixing of single elderly people with large families, sharing staircase access, with all the other problems that go with it: car parking problems, problems with safety of kids playing, poor refuse disposal facilities.

Our solution was to look at the building we had inherited and find a way of giving everybody the housing they needed within the housing envelope. I would say that

90% of the estate modernisation programmes in the country still treat the improvements as being a basic physical upgrading of the existing housing stock and do not re-analyse the housing stock and match it to the needs of the people living there.



Restructuring the blocks to better match needs

Around the bottom of the estate we created houses. Houses with front doors on streets so each large household has a private front door and a private front garden; a house which is in fact a maisonette with a block of flats on the roof and a back garden going out into a landscaped central communal area. We put people back onto the street, we re-created traditional urban languages around the exterior of the estate and we are now in the process of closing off and privatising the entire central area of the estate. In section you get family maisonettes on the ground with small groups of flats on the upper floors. Working with the tenants also meant that we could debate how their money could be spent, just as with any client, the architect is the magician who has to make the chemistry work within a financial framework.

It is a bit like being a cook. A bad cook can take similar ingredients, mix them up wrongly and it can be absolutely disgusting. You have got to mix the ingredients in a way that produces the right result for the people that you are working with, and because we have tenants to work with we came up with a solution which was completely different to the inherited brief Housing Department.

We went beyond matching the material demands of the tenants; for example, the standard solution at that time was

to add a lift to every block on these sort of estates. There was more money in those days than there is now, but with the tenants we decided that along one avenue we were going to use a difference in level between the ground floor and the street to bring people in at first floor level, thus cutting the block down effectively to four storeys. By concentrating smaller units for younger people in this block we were able to dispense with the need for eight lifts and instead spent that money on a low energy scheme and were able to pay for a solar heating system for all the family maisonettes.

A typical maisonette had its car parked outside the front door in the street, a front garden, kitchen/dining room overlooks the front garden, a rear garden and safe play areas face the court yard.

In order to carry out the programme the builder needed to occupy four of these staircases at a time, so in fact 20% of the estate became a building site. It has actually been a building site for six years and people have put up with it. They have put up with it because everybody knew very early on where they were going to go, and people have been able to customise their own dwelling in advance so that when they move in it is fully decorated and fitted out to their own choice.

As much design involvement as possible flows from a community architecture programme such as this but the one objective in our original report that we have not achieved is any future commitment from the local authority that the tenants would remain involved in the management after the project finished.

Needless to say, every project has its hiccups. The hiccup on Lea View was that in 1980 Central Government cutbacks began to bite and Hackney was indecisive about how to spend its reduced HIP allocation. Lea View was struck off the priority list, but the tenants by then were firmly committed towards the project and marched on the the Town Hall. The local Councillors realised where their votes were coming from and of course put Lea View back on the programme.

That was a very exciting four-month period for us as designers. We were then faced with the difficulty of trying to make it all work particularly when you haven't worked with that sort of building before and we spent the next nine months on the estate working all the details out. Very quickly we realised that there was certainly no respect for the fact that we seemed to be going in the right direction. Our office was broken into but we had real people to work with, real users, people whose judgement was not clouded by an ulterior motive towards creating architecturally exciting projects which will receive the adulation of other architects. People who just criticise everything on a purely functional basis are extremely useful for every architect.

We visited other projects which was by far the best way of communicating; we used to hire a bus at the weekend and go and see places and discuss them with people. We talked and communicated with drawings and with models, particularly when talking about the inside of dwellings, which is very difficult. Going to looking at other places was very instructive.

During the construction programme itself, which is carried out by Hackney's direct labour organisation, tenants visited their own dwellings during conversion. We constantly had to measure dwellings and go back with the tenants and measure their own room to persuade them that we were not shrinking the whole development. We were terribly excited, like all architects are, when the project started and the tenants came on their first site visit but they were absolutely appalled; they couldn't believe it was going to be anything at all. It wasn't until we finished the first dwelling that they really believed that it was possible.

The local authority appointed a single person to represent the Housing Department who was based on the estate. This made a fantastic difference. Without it the project could not possibly have succeeded.

Paradise Regained

In 1983 we were ready to open the first block to tenants. Tenants were moving from their old homes directly into a new dwelling. The richness of the architecture is directly proportional to the sweat and the tears really that go into it and certainly there was a lot of sweat and real tears, and there weren't many smiles, until we took the scaffolding down and revealed the final product. Interestingly enough we never actually drew the whole complete project at any stage. Everything was designed incrementally, responding to a functional requirement and it was only when we began to develop the language of embellishment for the features such as the lift towers and the traditional materials, pitched roofs, bricks etc., that the architectural language really developed.

Within the whole project we realised that there were special needs amongst the community so that the rolling programme has provided two sheltered blocks; two housing schemes for the elderly, all of whom have lived on the estate and are existing tenants, and some units for handicapped people.

To date there is not, touch wood, a single recorded forcible entry into any dwelling at Lea View, as a result of which I now get invited to Hendon Police College to lecture on designing away crime. The police in fact are much more interested in the relationship between design and crime and the ability of architects to influence social behaviour than our profession is. And of course, No. 10 is hot on crime at the moment because we have a wealth society but everybody is actually in a Fort Knox little box of their own

which takes an hour to get out of and two hours to get back in again and once you have set all the alarms off it is not going to be a very good advertisement for Thatcherism. So crime is a major political force and police forces up and down the country are now appointing their own architect liaison officers to work with architects to try and instill into architects, often at a very basic level to do with locks and lighting, that architecture influences and creates forms of social behaviour which the rest of society then has to live with. The courtyard is now free from cars and has play areas and landscape spaces in it. Internally the common staircases are carpeted and wallpapered and the tenants have colonised them. And the tenants have weekend planting parties in any common planted areas.

Some Are More Equal Than Others

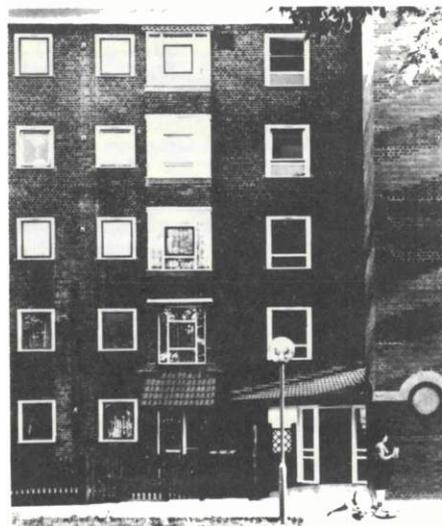
Now, the parallel history of Wigan House. It was converted a few years ahead of Lea View. There was confusion whether it was rehab or new build. We always thought of Lea View as new build with just an inherited brick structure, concrete floors and foundations. Less money

was spent initially unit by unit, although ultimately it will actually cost more unit by unit because of the work that is going to have to be done in the future.

On the Lea View march to the Town Hall, one of the placards that the tenants produced said "Wigan's been done, now it's our turn". Our tenants were asking for the standard material improvements that virtually every tenant group up and down the country asked for; bigger kitchens, central heating and lifts, plus new bathrooms, safer play areas, better refuse collection etc. Wigan got all the things that our tenants were asking for but it reverted to a slum again within a few months of being finished. At Lea View, when we building it, it was very depressing to hear the number of people both within the Council and within the Council's own workforce who said it is too good for council tenants. At Wigan it is difficult to believe that there was an identical tenant population living there as at Lea View; basically bad environments destroy people. They destroy people individually and collectively; and they pass on enormous pressures to the police, the educational system, the health system. As yet nobody in Britain is yet prepared to tackle the blight in the inner cities and realise the



'Paradise Regained'; Lea View in 1984



true cost of poor housing. So at Wigan they are already boarding up the ground floor flats, the areas around the estate are now strewn with litter. The crime rate is high; muggings, vandalism, graffiti and it is really not the fault of the people.

Defensible space, neighbourliness, people caring for one another. All of that is possible, but only if you get the architecture right.

There is not much of a future in Wigan for children whereas at Lea View there is a language which parents can use if they wish as a device for instilling in the upbringing of their children respect for other peoples' property, good neighbourliness and care. Oscar Newman way back in 1972 wrote in the opening pages of his book *Defensible Space* that if urban design is wrong you can create a whole generation of children who are brought up in a state of lawlessness and the police are very concerned about housing estates where the environment has not allowed parents to exercise any influence on the kids and the kids devise their own cultural pattern.

Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder

In 1983, the same year we finished the first block at Lee View, Maiden Lane in Camden Town was nearing completion. It is the last of the pioneering modern movement estates that were built by Camden's Architects department around Corbusier's principles and it is still today highly thought of amongst architects. This is architect's architecture.

We have been working on the estate since February because the place has turned into a slum. The tenants describe it variously as looking like a lunatic asylum in Southern Spain, Alcatraz, Colditz, etc. I know all the reasons that lie behind the design of the estate, because I am the same generation as the architects that designed it. We were trained in the '60s and there was an insidious interest in "The Section", the section through a building was always primarily what it was judged on and Maiden Lane is largely to do with the section through dwellings.

An editorial in the *"Architectural Review"* written by the Professor of Architecture of the Architectural Association described it as "being as civilised as any European solution seen" and picking some of the words from that article to highlight what I see as the real interest within our profession, "...the intriguing section of the low blocks..." "...sections are very important in this scheme...". In order to design the section that all of us were designing in the '60s, housing schemes in Switzerland on a slope which faced south with a nice step section so that you had units with double height living rooms which looked over the top of other units, they created a slope on a flat site. Instead of looking out over wonderful views of London you actually look at the flat roof of the house just below you which has currently got scaffolding up around it because the flat roof is leaking.

Maiden Lane is a very sorry place today. It is not entirely the fault of the architecture; Maiden Lane would work extremely well if it housed a different population. There is always an inextricable relationship between the social situation and the architectural solution which if you get it wrong, can be catastrophic. And it is catastrophic at Maiden Lane. For example on the first phase of the estate we have established that there is one adult per child. Research shows that if you have more children than 1:5 adults you tend to get severe social problems. It is actually 1:1 on this estate. You have to be a large single-parent family to be rehoused anywhere. All the units are let right up to their hilt of occupancy and you get enormous social problems resulting from this concentration of people, who by definition already have more stress in their lives than anybody else. Unfortunately, they have to enjoy living in housing forms which are the least supportive to people.

We have actually had to move out of our office on the estate because it has been smashed up.

Community architecture is a route towards achieving reciprocal rapport and in the work of Cullinan's office you can see that the architecture has established a rapport with the people who would be using the building. Such a rapport is tangible at Lea View House. But a reciprocal rapport is dynamic. Reciprocal rapport existed at Lea View House for about 30 years and then disappeared. Five years ago, when the tenants moved back in again to the first converted block, reciprocal rapport was recreated but there is no guarantee that this will stay in the future unless the people living there remain involved in every decision which is being made about their own environment. If people can be kept involved and if community architecture can destroy the vested interests of the "unholy trinity" and if the empty rhetoric of sterile architectural theory can be replaced in our schools of architecture, in every architect's office and in every architectural journal with a meaningful dialogue between the profession and the people it claims to serve, then and only then will we be able to go forward with confidence and be able to create buildings and environments that are truly fit for living in #

A VISION FOR LONDON?

**URBAN
DESIGN
GROUP
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
1988**

A two day conference at
THE BUILDING CENTRE
The Business Centre for the Industry

26 Store Street
London WC1E 7BT

**Monday and Tuesday
12TH/13TH DECEMBER, 1988**

This conference is an essential component of
Continuing Professional Development
for Planners, Architects, Landscape Architects, Surveyors
and Others interested in the Urban Environment

A Vision For London?

Christopher Wren had a vision for London. It was rejected! Many years later the LCC Planners and Architects of the post-war period also had a vision: one of municipal patronage, of quality architecture available to all, of centres of excellence for the masses. The Festival of Britain, Lansbury Market housing estate, the early New Towns were some of the achievements of the period.

But this Utopia seems to have gone wrong. The sixties and seventies lost the vision of the forties and fifties and today many critics look back in anger at the realities of these two decades. In the public mind everything developed after the war is the subject of derision whilst a new image of the city of the future is promoted: London Docklands is put forward as a glimpse of this image.

Was the past all that bad? Is this new "image" a vision at all? On what kind of values is it based? How does it satisfy a new Agenda for Urban Design? Are we now building without vision? And what are the models for the future: a return to traditional forms or a new wave of technological advances in the era of telecommunications?

This two-day conference will attempt to confront these issues, looking back to the fifties and trying to diagnose both what was good and bad about the period. It will then consider some of the design policies and their evolution to the present. Finally an evaluation of present attitudes will hopefully help the conference put forward its own vision for London. We intend this to be an event where delegates will be able to make positive contributions.

A coach tour will introduce some of the capital's contemporary developments. Following the tour there will be a plenary session and a conference dinner. On the second day group discussions will follow plenary sessions and the conference will end with an address by the President of the Royal Town Planning Institute, Francis Tibbalds.