1951 Exhibition of Architecture

Guide to the Exhibition of Architecture, Town Planning and Building Research

Harding McGregor Dunnett

With an introduction by Alan Powers

1951 EXHIBITION OF ARCHITECTURE

The Festival of Britain is perhaps best known for its South Bank Exhibition promoting British science and art to the post-war world, but one of the most important elements was the Architecture Exhibition, based in Poplar in East London. This exhibition was used to demonstrate the principles of modern town planning that had been laid out by Abercrombie, in particular in his *County of London Plan*.

The project was named after George Lansbury, the Labour MP, London County Council (LCC) member and Poplar councillor. It was an effective demonstration of planning ideas adopted since the 1930s by influential planners, taking the village as a model and retaining the terraced house as a housing option among medium rise flats. Small squares and open spaces were favoured, with paved pedestrian spaces, all at lower than pre-war densities.

The guide is revealing of the broader thinking in English planning in the mid century. It provides an opportunity for looking at conflicts among advocates of different planning ideas in the period of reconstruction and the move by architects to regain control of LCC housing from the Valuer's Department. It offers the model of integrated professional specialisms that was seen as central to Modernism's mission. It is also an opportunity to describe in more detail the interaction of different professions, including, for example, a sociologist, employed by the LCC in the creation of a model for reconstruction.

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INTRODUCTION

Bearing Abram Games's famous emblem of a helmeted Britannia on a compass, strung with bunting below, the publication reprinted here was part of a series created for visitors to the 1951 Festival of Britain, covering its major sites and displays. A similar-looking guide was issued for the South Bank site, the main focus of the Festival in London, as well as for the displays in Glasgow and on board the Festival Ship, S.S. Campania. In addition, visitors to London were urged to visit two other new open-air attractions. One was the Festival Pleasure Gardens in Battersea Park, where the focus was on entertainment, the other was Lansbury, a new settlement of housing, marketplace and other buildings, north of East India Dock Road in the Borough of Poplar, which was promoted as a 'Live Architecture Exhibition', with the inclusion of exhibition displays on Town Planning and Building Science, a demonstration of sober facts and everyday life in contrast to the nostalgia and fantasy of Battersea, their disparity epitomizing the Festival's ambition to combine instruction and amusement.

The book itself shows the three-part nature of the Lansbury site in 1951. After a general introduction, 'Plan for Posterity', with its attention-grabbing questions and documentary film voiceover diction, it first describes the new buildings, followed by the Building Research part of the exhibition, finishing with an eight-page summary of the Town Planning Exhibition themes. Strangely, however, this was the reverse order to that in which visitors were expected to move through the site.

The editor of the guide, Harding McGregor Dunnett (1909–2000), was a former Secretary of the Design and Industries Association who worked after the war for the Architectural Press and published a book, *Inside the Pub* (written jointly with Maurice Gorham, initially as a special issue of the *Architectural Review*), in 1950 (Slythe 2000). Dunnett's role as editor involved dealing with many suggestions from the members of the Festival Architecture Council and other participants, so as a text it should be seen as a collective effort rather than the result of a single authorial voice. A memo in 1950 proposes that the postscript should be based partly on a text by Lionel Brett, with additional text contributed by Francis Forty, plus Jaqueline Tyrwhitt and Eric Bird, the

editor of the *RIBA Journal* (WORK 25 A5 E3, Exhibition of Architecture Poplar Guide Book).

The *1951 Exhibition of Architecture* guide, like the other official festival guides, had to be prepared ahead of the opening so that only drawings by Hugh Casson and photographs of architectural models were available to illustrate the new buildings on the site. In some ways, this was unfortunate, since the main showpiece, the new market square, was in use by the Festival opening in May 1951 and photographs with people inevitably make it seem more real than the models on p. 14.

Of the three aspects covered by the book, the two exhibitions exist now only in photographic form, although with substantial archival background. The buildings largely remain today as they were in 1951, with the exception of the Old People's Home (pp. 18–19), demolished after a fire in the early 1990s. The Catholic church had only reached foundation stage, however; something that might have been seen by the organizers as a stroke of good fortune since on completion its ponderous interwar style and pinkish brick stood out in contrast to the relative homogeneity of the surrounding yellow London brick buildings with their restrained compositions. These Lansbury buildings have been extensively studied in relation to urban design and landscape theories of their time, but less consideration has been given to positioning their style, halfway between Modernism as generally understood and a more traditional set of forms and materials. Their critical reception in 1951 and subsequently will be discussed later.

Visitors to the site did not have the opportunity to go inside many of the houses or schools, since, to the regret of organizers, the LCC decided that it could not afford to leave them empty for the six-month period of the Festival. However, some furnished interiors were shown, in conjunction with local shops. These show houses were evidence of a sincere attempt by the organizers to exhibit more affordable items than other displays, such as the Homes and Gardens Pavilion on the South Bank.

The temporary exhibition element, reflected in the guidebook in a rather generalized manner, has received much less subsequent commentary than the actual buildings. While some of the illustrations used in the book were presumably incorporated in the displays, the overall effect of the striped exhibition pavilion, both inside and out, along with its companion structures such as the Rosie Lee Café, and 'Gremlin Grange', the attempt to make the subject of Building Services more entertaining, are missing from the pictorial record. With the many photographs taken officially to record the Festival, and further documents in the National Archives and other holdings, the experience of visiting these temporary displays can to a large extent be reconstructed, including some of the proposals for the display that were discussed but abandoned owing to financial constraints, and this introduction aims to add such material.

Among the existing accounts of the Lansbury Estate, the most detailed is found in volume 43 of the *Survey of London* for Poplar, published in 1994 and

available online. This is recommended as a reliable detailed source on the actual buildings, while the focus here is placed on the origins of the scheme and its context in planning and design literature.

Lansbury's historical context

The content and message of Lansbury were considered a vital part of the Festival's mission of bringing building and planning further into the national consciousness, while demonstrating the progress of recovery and improvement on the past to foreign visitors. The appearance on p. 30–1 of the 'Model Houses' designed by Henry Roberts was a significant link with a small element from the Great Exhibition of 1851, to which the Festival was, to some extent, a successor. These are shown as they were built next to Hyde Park alongside the Crystal Palace on the future Knightsbridge Barracks site, before being reconstructed in Kennington Park. Like Lansbury, they were aimed at the virtuous poor and marked a transition from the beginnings of philanthropic housing reform to the house-building commitments of the Welfare State. With novel hollow brickwork for scientifically improved damp prevention, the 1851 houses could be claimed as a precursor of largely invisible technical innovations displayed in the 1951 demonstration housing.

The idea of promoting planning and housing through local exhibitions had a long history before 1951, although actual construction was not a feature of subsequent major national exhibitions in Britain but rather of stand-alone enterprises such as the Cheap Cottages exhibitions in Letchworth in 1905 and 1907. The actual buildings at Poplar were linked to the more conventional type of planning exhibition using drawings, photographs and models. This had become a regular feature of life during the wartime years, so that exhibition aspect of Lansbury was only a bigger version of its predecessors, although one in which a conscious attempt was made to avoid the mistake of promising too much by keeping the visions grounded in achievable reality.

Building Science, the other section of the exhibition area at Lansbury, took the visitors from the macro scale of the city or regional plan to the micro scale of construction and materials. Although it was thought to be rather a specialist subject area for a general audience, its inclusion showed how enthusiastically the architectural profession had embraced this aspect of Modernization and wished to promote knowledge of it as part of the whole range of housing improvements. The balance between Science and Culture was at the root of the Festival's mission, expressed in Humphrey Jennings' 1951 film *Family Portrait*, the title of which also stresses the pervading metaphor of the nation as a family, expressed literally in the focus on conventional 'nuclear' households and provision for small children, and its wider interpretation as a metonym for national cohesion.

The project was named by the London County Council in memory of the local politician and leader of the Labour Party in the 1930s, George Lansbury

(1859–1940). Lansbury's name and the name Poplar itself would have had a powerful and challenging resonance for many in 1951. As Mayor of Poplar in the 1920s, Lansbury led a revolt against the regime of local taxation that penalized a poor borough and particularly those of its inhabitants receiving welfare support. Lansbury and his fellow councilors were imprisoned, but owing to popular sympathy they were released and as a result of their protest welfare legislation was made more equitable. 'Poplarism' became a term describing their revolt. This conspicuous and effective example of civil disobedience was never directly referred to in the literature of 1951, but it was part of living memory. As Minister of Works under Ramsay MacDonald's second administration, Lansbury had made his mark on London by promoting the Serpentine Lido, opened for free mixed bathing in 1930 and emblematic of the Festival's ideal of overcoming the religious, social and political constraints of the past, opening the good things of life and the physical body to all, and enabling the pleasures of the country to be enjoyed as far as possible in cities.

Architecture and planning in the Festival

The decision to display architecture, building and planning in the Festival reflected the greatly increased state investment in housing, public buildings and infrastructure made possible by the social legislation and financial policies of the post-war Labour government led by Clement Attlee. The origins of the planning ideology it represented lay further back in the philanthropic and public health impulses of the nineteenth century, so the opening sentences on p. 5 of the guidebook show the continuing relevance of public health in relation to the condition of the majority of the housing stock. The physical unfitness of the majority of the rented housing stock in London had been brought to the attention of middle class audiences by various means, of which the most striking in retrospect were in the interwar films commissioned by the St Pancras Housing Association, and in the 1935 documentary *Housing Problems*. The war had not only delayed improvements but also increased overcrowding owing to losses in the Blitz. The text on p. 5 goes further, in the manner typical of planning literature of the time, to present a range of problems and remedies on a holistic scale, reflecting back on the experience of the ordinary citizen and their daily life. Despite the attempt to exclude issues of social class and varied income levels, the problem of 'spending your spare time in traffic jams after a hard day's work, or after a Sunday in the country' was, however, not one that the residents of Poplar at the time were likely to worry about.

Concerns about quality of life at all social levels had long been crucial in the thinking of the Festival's Director General, Gerald Barry (1898–1968). They were evident during his time as editor of the *Week-end Review* (1930–4), when he featured a series of articles on physical and organizational planning as a means of lifting the country out of recession and thereby protecting it from extremist politics (Waters 2001). Planning grew in public consciousness

between the wars, as the original simple question of improving the extension of towns and cities was joined by a desire to prevent expansion of any kind that appeared to deprive future citizens of access to open country. The architect Clough Williams-Ellis (1882–1975), who contributed articles to the *Week-end Review*, spoke in later years of an informal 'Amenity Brigade' of the period that included himself, journalists such as Christopher Hussey of *Country Life*, and planners such as Patrick Abercrombie and S. D. Adshead who used their connections and influence in an attempt to stir reluctant governments to action. At this time, with right wing politics capturing a popular audience, it was important for the more socially progressive and left-leaning commentators on the environment to lay claim to such ideas of physical improvement, or, as the 'Plan for Posterity' in the Lansbury guidebook put it, 'this national spring-clean' with its aim of achieving 'elegance and order, efficiency and gaiety in our everyday surroundings' (p. 5).

It was in tune with the times that planning should play a major role in a post-war national celebration such as the Festival, but the connections were closer and more personal. Among the proposals presented in the *Week-end Review* in the early 1930s was one for the revival of the South Bank in London, anticipating the Festival's use of the site by a couple of decades. Gerald Barry formed part of a circle of progressive thinkers, including his colleague on both the *Week-end Review* and later at the *News Chronicle*, Max Nicholson (1904–2003), a naturalist and pioneering ecologist, who during 1951 was secretary to Herbert Morrison, the Lord President of the Council in the Attlee cabinet, and the Festival's representative in government (Atkinson 2012). Nicholson was also a leading figure in the early progressive think tank, PEP (Political and Economic Planning).

These planning concerns were longstanding and increasingly pressing among the country's politicians and opinion-formers, and an inescapable part of everyday life for almost every citizen. Gerald Barry's awareness of this pre-war discussion ensured that the Festival's committee structure (detailed on p. 49) included an Architecture Town Planning and Building Research Council, whose role was partly to create the physical setting for the Festival, but also to ensure that the whole subject of architecture and planning was brought to the attention of the visitors in other ways. More difficult was to find appropriate and achievable ways to represent such a complex and sometimes highly technical theme.

The Council was chaired by Howard Vicars Lobb (1909–92), an architect who achieved a modest reputation before 1939 as a designer of youth hostels, in both Modern and traditional styles, and subsequently specialized in schools. The other architect members were the ubiquitous Hugh Casson, named as the Festival Director of Architecture, Robert Matthew (1906–75), Chief Architect of the LCC who was in the process of building up what became a world-famous local authority architects' department, and Howard Robertson (1888–1963), representative of an older generation but seen as progressive in spirit, and

known to many of the younger participants from his role as Principal of the Architectural Association School from 1926 to 1935. At the end of his life, his practice, then Easton, Robertson, Cusdin, Preston and Smith, were architects for the Shell Centre on the South Bank, built on a substantial part of the former Festival site. The chemistry professor, H. V. A. Briscoe from Imperial College, scientific adviser to MI5 during both world wars, represented the sciences, and was one of four members of the Building Research Sub-Committee. Rowland Nicholas was a planner and future president of the RTPI, while Sir George Pepler (1882–1959) and Professor W. G. (later Sir William, and ultimately Lord) Holford (1907–75) were better-known members of the same emergent profession. J. M. (later Sir James) Richards (1908–92) had been an influential writer on architecture since the mid 1930s, principally in the *Architectural Review*, while his Pelican book of 1940, *An Introduction to Modern Architecture*, was the most comprehensive popular guide to the subject. Richards sought to render the subject less alarming and more sympathetic to a general readership by assimilating it to aspects of national tradition, just as the members of the Festival Council for Architecture aimed to do.

The Planning Sub-Committee, chaired by Pepler, undertook the initial thinking about the displays at Lansbury, together with the Building Research Sub-Committee. The composition of the Planning Sub-Committee changed during its lifetime, but most of the meetings were attended by Holford, who was conspicuous as the public voice of planning for a younger generation. The two sub-committees included John ('Jack') Ratcliff, an architect who was a contemporary at the Architectural Association in the 1930s of several of those who took part in the Festival. He effectively acted as Secretary to these committees and played an important background role.

In terms of the continuing conflict between traditional and modern architecture, both committees represented a spectrum from the centre (Robertson, Holford) towards the Modern (Casson, Matthew, Richards), but excluded more extreme views at either end. There was much suspicion of the Festival among the diehard classicists and Royal Academicians whose careers extended into the post-war years. The Festival has been seen as a turning point when there was a changing of the guard in the architectural 'establishment', marking a shift in a stylistically more progressive direction. If, as is generally believed, Modern architecture was generally disliked by the public and its spokesmen feared that it could only be a bitter pill in terms of taste, it was sugared at the South Bank with colour and pattern and enough of a sense of fun to win the favour of a doubter such as John Betjeman. The most outspoken opponent was Professor Albert Richardson (1880–1964), designer of the Memorial Garden and Information Kiosk to the south east of St Paul's. This relatively small project, referred to in the minutes as 'Project X', provides a sub-plot in the committee's activities and reveals the way that stylistic censorship was beginning to be exercised. Francis J. Forty, representing the City of London on the Festival Council for Architecture, was responsible for reporting

progress. Matters came to a head when J. M. Richards wrote in April 1950 as a member of the Council for Architecture to Lobb, its chairman, to criticize the design. Avoiding a direct attack on its classical character, Richards argued that in relation to the irregularity of the site, its 'formal style of design, axially planned … is quite the wrong thing' (Richards to Lobb, 28 April 1950, WORK 25 A5 E3). This late protest was to no avail, and the matter disappeared from the records of the committee. Richardson's sunken pool fed by a small cascade with terraces and pleached trees remains in place, but his office's design for an adjacent circular Information Kiosk was, surprisingly, more or less Modern in character when built. Given Richardson's disdain for the Festival, it is ironic that it was the only Festival structure in central London apart from the Royal Festival Hall to have lasted beyond the early 1960s, after being moved to a site closer to the west end of St Paul's. Here it remained in its original use until replaced by a new kiosk designed by MAKE architects in 2007.

The genesis of the Lansbury project

The initial idea for a 'Live Architecture Exhibition' came from outside the committee, albeit from an architect, Frederick Gibberd (1908–84), who had been invited to become Director of Architecture at the outset, but declined owing to the extent of his existing commitments. In a memorandum to the TP&BRSC of 19 July, 1948, Gibberd argued that 'there is only one method which can really explain the subjects of Architecture, Town Planning and Building Science to the public in an Exhibition. That method is to put people in the environment that these arts and sciences make possible. Such an environment does not now exist. This proposal gives a method by which it can be created, and at no extra cost above ordinary exhibition technique' (WORK 25 A5 E3). As Gibberd went on to argue, all the previous planning exhibitions had failed to convey the reality of what was on offer, remaining only 'pious hopes of a brave new world', while 'at "The Ideal Home" Exhibition, it is at the actual houses that one finds the queues'. Similarly, Gibberd believed, arcane aspects of Building Research such as sound insulation would only catch the imagination of the public if demonstrated *in situ* in a cut-away wall of an actual furnished flat.

Gibberd certainly was busy in the lead-up to 1951 and wise to limit his involvement in the Festival. In 1946, he was appointed as Planner to Harlow New Town, and proved himself over the next 35 years to be the most committed of all the new town designers. He was also replanning the centre of Nuneaton and the Borough of St Pancras, while working on new buildings for the new London Airport at Heathrow. During the war, Gibberd gave himself the task of shifting responsibility for housing layout plans from traffic engineers and Borough Surveyors to architects. In June 1943, he lectured on 'Three Dimensional Aspects of Housing Layout' at the RIBA, writing in his diary beforehand, 'This must make a quite new contribution. I must take the

lid off present day housing layout, + really get the profession [to] see what has happened. It is my first talk to a large professional society + it must make an impact' (Gibberd Papers, 1948 diary June).

As for 'what had happened', Gibberd later claimed 'we have become so immersed in technical problems, so blinded by the squalor around us, that we have almost lost the art of looking' (Gibberd 1948, 433). The hybrid art that he proposed was described at the time as 'Visual Planning', to distinguish it from the earlier term 'Civic Art' which had connotations of Beaux Arts symmetry and the City Beautiful. In 1948, a culture of Visual Planning was starting to emerge from writer-practitioners such as Thomas Sharp, who was outside the architectural profession, and in a more theoretical form as Townscape, in the pages of the *Architectural Review*. Gibberd went on to become one of its major exponents in his book *Town Design*, where he wrote in the Preface, 'town planning is but a prelude to town design … Town design embraces architecture landscape and road design, and these arts being so embraced lose their identity to become a new thing, "The Urban Scene"' (Gibberd 1953, 5).

To achieve real buildings for the Festival, Gibberd suggested that a bombed or cleared site as near as possible to the South Bank Exhibition should be chosen to 'develop the cross section of a Neighbourhood, with such other additional permanent structures as may be necessary to complete the visual picture, providing such buildings are of ultimate use to the neighbourhood' (WORK 25 A5 E3). While there would be temporary exhibition and visitor facilities, such as a café, the major part of the site would outlast the Festival and 'form a permanent record of the stage we had reached in solving the aesthetic and scientific problem of creating a new environment. As such it would have immense historical significance for future generations.'

The London County Council and the battle for housing

Gibberd imagined that his proposal would take shape as a result of collaboration between the Festival and the London County Council, to which fell the major responsibility for post-war reconstruction in London, in combination with the relevant borough council. The Poplar site (known as 'Neighbourhood Unit 9') was only one of a number of possible sites considered by the Festival's Council for Architecture after Gibberd's proposal had been accepted. Chosen in the summer of 1949, this area had been heavily bombed, and unlike the neighbouring area towards Stepney that was initially preferred, no plans had yet been agreed for it although a Public Inquiry in 1947 had opened the way for compulsory purchase by the LCC of all the sites. In the meantime, piecemeal development had been prohibited until a complete plan could be made.

The role of the LCC in housing design at this time was a problem, however. In the years between 1947 and 1951, there was an internal battle over who should control this important part of the Council's activity. As an

emergency measure at the end of the war the Council's Valuer, Cyril Walker, had been allowed to take over responsibility for housing for three years, extended to five, believing that he was better able to deliver new housing quickly and cheaply than if architects were in charge. His method was based on building according to pre-war plans, mostly for five storey flats in parallel rows with gallery access, a form that the more progressive architects and planners considered obsolete. The criticism was against their old fashioned elevational design combined with their lack of imagination in layout, which meant that the external spaces lacked character or intimacy (Harwood 2015, 66). Having failed to change this situation, Forshaw resigned in 1946 and was replaced by the younger and more ambitious Robert Matthew, who was able to stage-manage a campaign to discredit the Valuer's approach, through letters to the press, even including some from architects employed in other areas in the LCC. In May 1949, an exhibition of recent LCC housing was held at County Hall to counter these criticisms, but the uninspiring work on show only served to weaken the Valuer's position, leading to Matthew's victory by the beginning of 1950 (Glendinning 2008).

The battle at the LCC explains how the design of Lansbury began as part of a protest movement, although this was past history by the time of its unveiling in 1951. New battle positions in architecture were by then beginning to emerge. The Lansbury architecture and planning represent a particular ethos in shaping the Modern Movement after the war, well described in Lionel Brett's article 'Towards an Architecture: Flats' in the *Architectural Review*, November, 1949, which considered the opposition between Domesticity and Monumentality. 'But can domesticity be expressed in ten storeys?' Brett asked, 'or should the Little Man have to live in a monument? And there are other forces pulling in opposite directions – correct orientation, for instance, versus free and intimate grouping; what people want versus what they ought to have' (Brett 1949, 315). The result, Brett considered, was an absence of 'Myth' in relation to public housing, an absence that, in his view, the 'inhumane and frightening' *Unité d'Habitation* at Marseilles by Le Corbusier, then taking shape on the ground, was unfitted to provide, although some young recruits to the LLC housing division a few years later disagreed.

Closer to home, Brett viewed the LCC Valuer's recently constructed Woodberry Down and Minerva estates on the *Zeilenbau* principle as another negative example: 'blown-up versions of Victorian bylaw housing in which every humane consideration has been sacrificed to a theory of orientation which probably runs counter to many of the tenants' preferences' (Brett 1949, 316). While J. H. Forshaw was credited with part of the Woodberry Down Estate, he had little room for manoeuvre, since the majority of the blocks were based on pre-war schemes. Ironically, the older LCC architects had hardly succeeded in putting an end to *Zeilenbau* schemes before a younger generation, working on the Alton West Estate and elsewhere, took Le Corbusier's recently completed *Unité d'Habitation* as a model for creating many more of them.

Hugh Casson's announcement to the Architecture Council in relation to the possibility of making Neighbourhood Unit 10 in Stepney into the Festival site gives a sense of the significance of the Valuer issue. As he informed the Council, 'The Planning Department of the LCC intend to mix the housing types, and for your private information, have so far withstood pressure from the Valuer's Department to develop high density flats in isolation. You would, therefore, at least have the support of the LCC Planning Department.' Howard Lobb, as Chairman of the Architecture Council, gave his opinion on 12 November of the unsuitability of Woodberry Down as a site for the 'Live Architecture Exhibition', because 'the buildings …. did not come up to the standard which the Architecture Council could be compelled to apply to any exhibition for which they were responsible' (WORK 25 A5 E3, Meeting of Nov. 12 1948).

In his proposal to the Architecture Council, Gibberd mentioned as a model for the Festival project a group of buildings forming a pedestrian precinct off a main road, at Somerford Road, Hackney, which he had completed in 1947 (Fig. 1). When this scheme was published in the previous year, the commentary explained it as an attempt 'to obtain a sense of urbanity, and to capture the charm and character of the eighteenth-century square, but with the dwellings properly oriented'. Vistas across the site were created, combining buildings of different character, 'no close being built up into a solid square, and no group of buildings being symmetrically disposed for the sake of symmetry or axial

Figure 1 Frederick Gibberd, Housing at Somerford Road, Hackney, 1947. Photo Alan Powers

planning' (Gibberd 1946, 149). A communal hall and laundry were included in the site, as well as children's play facilities, and existing trees preserved with new buildings around them. Somerford Road was recognized by Brett in his 1949 article as 'the most promising' of the few examples and 'a viable line of advance', owing to the 'mixing of heights and types, and a loose and seemingly artless juxtaposition of forms'. As he commented, 'It seems – if one must risk a generalization – that even where the site has nothing to say to the architect and a formal rectilinear layout seems inevitable, it should nevertheless be avoided. This is, of course, clean contrary to our classic building traditions; but can, perhaps, be justified by the fact that the individual dwelling is so tiny an element in the total effect that humanity and domesticity can only be preserved by a deliberate muffling of the dominant rhythms' (Brett 1949, 318). These were to become the design principles of Lansbury, to a considerable extent.

The programme for Lansbury

In his 1948 proposal Gibberd went on to elaborate on the scale of the Festival project, listing the different building types to be included: 'Single floor old people's bungalow. Multi flat blocks for single persons and young married couples. Three storey flats or terrace houses for small and medium families. Two story houses of terrace and semi-detached form for large families. Detached houses for very large families.' Apart from housing types, he anticipated a civic hall, a civic restaurant or café, suitable for use by exhibition visitors, and a small sub-shopping centre, and perhaps a factory that could be used initially as exhibition space. These buildings would sit within a complete environment, in which all the street furniture was specially designed or carefully selected as examples of industrial design. The improvement of the urban environment was one the main themes of the South Bank and other parts of the Festival, so that, Gibberd's Memo of 22 Feb 1949 proposed, 'we should thus have a complete street picture from the broad layout down to the smallest detail' (WORK 25 A5 E3). This, he argued, would be greatly superior in effect and less wasteful than building simulations or models for the 1951 visitors.

Gibberd outlined the role of 'Chief Architect and Planner' that would be necessary for creating 'a master plan showing the layout of the site; the masses and grouping of the buildings, the circulation and design of open spaces, and so on.' Although, as the Survey of London suggests, 'the inference is that Gibberd himself would have liked that role', it was in fact undertaken by the LCC, through a combination of Robert Matthew, Arthur Ling and Percy Johnson-Marshall, while Gibberd was given the most prominent single commission in the project, that of the new market place and the housing surrounding it, including, a tower that was only constructed in 1952 (Survey of London).

The crucial paragraphs of Gibberd's proposal set out that the permanent buildings 'should exhibit the highest visual and technical standards', without 'overriding limits of cost'. In order to avoid 'undesirable variation of quality in different parts of the site', the names of architects involved were to be vetted by the Festival authorities, with the ultimate sanction of excluding from the official presentation anything that failed to meet their standards. For the sites not owned by the LCC, compulsion would be more difficult; the best that could be done was to 'strongly urge' the Catholic and Congregationalist churches to employ approved architects and 'share in the responsibility which the ownership of these sites implies'. A clause was included to place responsibility for any additional costs arising from the fact that normal buildings were being developed for an exhibition on the Festival, including 'employment of additional architects, clerks of works, etc.' (WORK 25 A5 E3).

The lead time was short for such an ambitious project, as a memo by Hugh Casson of 18 February 1949 pointed out, and it was going to be important to prioritize those buildings that provided 'the most visual value', listed at this point as 'primary school, shopping centre, Health Centre, Old Folks Home, and an agreed area of housing'.

Gibberd's proposal was accepted by the Festival Council in August 1948, and the Lansbury site was identified as the best option by November that year. One of the advantages of the Poplar site (Neighbourhood Unit 9) was that it was close to the Thames and visitors could come downriver from the South Bank and then take a short bus ride. In addition, it was felt that some of the few surviving buildings on the site were in themselves attractive examples of the late Georgian and early Victorian styles then favoured among architects.

At the turn of 1948–9, Robert Matthew and Cyril Walker presented the LCC's proposals for the layout and the selection of architects, which were accepted despite an apparent lack of prior consultation with the Festival's Architecture Council. No tall flats would be built, since the LCC wished to assess the success of the 10 storey slab blocks at Ocean Street and Woodberry Down. The architect Raglan Squire of ARCON Architects made an alternative proposal in May 1949 for high rise flats consisting of 'a multi-storey structure supported by a high tensile steel grid with prefabricated internal partition walls, and light curtain wall construction for the external walls', which would allow for variable floor areas within each flat. This would have represented the kind of experimental construction that 'Live Architecture' was initially intended to present, but Squire suspected the LCC of 'a certain hesitancy' and the proposal faded away (WORK 25 A5 E3). In the event, the most technically ambitious building seen by visitors to Lansbury was the Congregationalist church with its external concrete frame. The lightweight steel frame of Yorke Rosenberg and Mardall's school was by then a standard product, and in any case largely concealed by cladding.

This was not in fact the only 'Live Architecture Exhibition' proposed. In a letter of 1 April 1949, Sir Frank Mears, Patrick Geddes's son-in-law and a

leading figure in Scottish planning and education, sent in a scheme for a display on planning in Edinburgh, supported by a 'Live Architecture Exhibition' in the New Town of East Kilbride. The proposed content had a Geddesian tone, 'emphasising the continuity of the Scottish tradition through the ages. This would be followed by a more detailed exposition of developments in architecture and the crafts since the beginning of the industrial revolution.' Mears wrote 'we should seek to avoid the "show case" method and would hope to add interest by means of film shows, demonstrations, lectures and organized visits. The latter might include conducted tours to a hydro-electric scheme, the Comrie coal pit with its modern layout, a health centre in Edinburgh, an afforestation area and the like.' There was to be a much stronger emphasis than at Lansbury on conservation as an aspect of the future city. This project was canceled, with other Scottish schemes, owing to budget cuts in March 1950, neither were any equivalents to these more active engagements of the audience attempted at Lansbury (WORK 25 A5 E3).

The *County of London Plan*

The Lansbury project cannot be understood except in the context of the *County of London Plan*, by J. H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, the most famous of all the reconstruction plans made during and after the war, published in 1943 (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943). In its pages, the planning concept of the neighbourhood was promoted through relatively detailed and realistic case studies of areas in the East End and Bermondsey. The *Plan* was one of a pair, followed in 1944 by the *Greater London Plan*, attributed to Abercombie alone, which looked outside the relatively tight boundaries of the 1888 London County Council area to complete the policy of rationalizing communication routes, access to open space, and the decentralization of industry and populations to New Towns. Both were attractively produced books printed in large numbers with the intention of making them accessible to a readership well beyond the relevant professions.

John Forshaw (1895–1973) was the Architect to the London County Council, while Patrick Abercrombie (1879–1957), Sir Patrick after 1945, was his former teacher at Liverpool University and the pivotal figure in the development of planning and its pedagogy in Britain. His public career began with his appointment in 1907 to the School of Architecture at Liverpool University, under the leadership of Charles Reilly. He continued his involvement through Liverpool's Department of Civic Design from its foundation in 1909, becoming Professor of Civic Design in Liverpool in 1914 and subsequently Professor of Town Planning at University College, London (Dix 1981). He undertook the research and writing of many planning reports for cities and regions between the wars and after, helping to establish a consensus about moderate densities, controlled use of vehicles, ample greenery

and open space. A popular digest of the Plan was produced by Penguin books in 1945, edited by E. J. Carter and Ernö Goldfinger, a further indication that it was seen as a document of widespread public interest (Carter & Goldfinger 1945).

Inspired by the ideas of Patrick Geddes, Abercrombie had a romantic and philosophical side, which was deployed to help overcome resistance to change and the removal of privileges of land ownership in the name of a common future for all levels of society with more equitable access to the benefits of life. Ideas of nature, as a spiritual necessity for humanity and a balancing element to modernity, were central to his approach. A leader in organizing pressure for the preservation of the countryside, Abercrombie acted as if the twentieth century was an unruly force in need of taming and containment. Before the war, he had been one of the principal advocates of the London Green Belt, and he shared the general consensus among British planners that saw the problem in terms of city regions with their rural hinterland and economic links rather than the literal urban areas.

The *County of London Plan* was published at an important turning point during the war, soon after the successful conclusion of the North Africa Campaign for the Allies. German bombing had created the necessity for reconstruction of London and other cities, and planners could not conceal their excitement at the opportunities offered for radical change. Planning was a propaganda exercise as well as a practical one, since it was intended to inspire the continuation of the war effort, similar in this respect to Sir William Beveridge's report on Social Insurance and Allied Services, published in December 1942, the foundation for the post-war Welfare State. The *County of London Plan* was preceded by two alternative plans of 1942, the Royal Academy Plan for London, with a radical approach to restructuring roads, envisaged with conservative monumental architecture as its counterpart. The RA Plan was exhibited and published in short form as a pamphlet. The MARS Plan, produced by a small group from Modern Architectural Research, the English group founded in 1933, represented the avant-garde in English architecture, and was only published in excerpts in magazines and books. This was radical in a different way, schematically reconfiguring the suburbs into linear bands of building based on main transport routes, with corresponding bands of green space between them, in accordance with the planning policies of CIAM discussed at the congress of 1934 that was held on board a ship travelling between Marseilles and Athens, the latter city giving its name to *The Athens Charter*, 1941, a version of proceedings published anonymously by Le Corbusier according to his own personal ideas, rather than those of the Congress as a whole, and proposing 'Four Functions' of a city that would be spatially zoned in different quarters. While such a proposition could have been applied to a completely new settlement, it was clearly impractical in terms of treating an existing city such as London as a *tabula rasa*, however bomb-damaged and formerly dysfunctional it might have been (Gold 1997).

Abercrombie and Forshaw took a more pragmatic line than either the MARS or the Royal Academy plans, declaring their aim 'to retain the old structure, where discernible, and make it workable under modern conditions', in a manner similar to Geddes's concept of 'conservative surgery' (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 2). Among the 'Defects of Present-Day London' listed in the Preamble to the Plan were 'Traffic congestion' and, second in order of priority, 'Depressed housing areas and obsolescence of the East End', from which are picked out the 'general drabness and dreariness', and 'the absence of local community centres'. The substitute for these had historically been 'the main roads with their somewhat garish splendour', but these 'were an inadequate substitute for the old town square or village green' (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 4). Other defects were 'Inadequate and maldistributed open space', 'Indiscriminate mixed development' and 'Lack of coherent architectural development'.

The *County of London Plan* followed the lead of the Barlow Report of 1940 in seeking the dispersal of industry from cities and aiming to spread the population more evenly (Barlow 1940). Pressure was imposed by Frederick Osborn of the Town and Country Planning Association to argue Abercrombie down to their maximum of 85 persons per acre, to which Abercrombie was sympathetic but instead suggested 136 and 200 as densities that 'would not entirely disrupt the employment base of the capital' (Hebbert 1981, 188). Pre-war Bethnal Green and Stepney had densities of 180 to the acre, while the new target for these areas was 100, to allow for adequate open space. The Plan called for four acres of open space per 1,000 people even in Inner London, a reduction from the proposed national norm of 10 acres, but as Lionel Esher (formerly Lionel Brett) commented in 1981, 'even this meant colouring substantial areas of old housing green, and it was never achieved' (Esher 1981, 98). As John Gold has written, neither of Abercrombie's London plans 'embraced modernist approaches to London's planning, but both contained ideas that modern architects regarded as being of considerable interest', to the extent that the MARS Group was willing to 'adopt it', rather than continuing to promote their own alternative, as was evident from Goldfinger and Carter's willingness to produce the simplified version (Gold 1997, 179–80).

Lansbury succeeded in demonstrating most of the positive aspects of the *County of London Plan*, although it lost its Health Centre on East India Dock Road (personally designed by Robert Matthew), owing less to budget cuts at an early stage than to a change of policy at the Ministry of Health (Glendinning 2008, 111). Lansbury did not include any major open spaces within the Festival exhibition site, nor did it encompass any of the larger employment uses such as factories, so that to this extent it was unrepresentative owing to the limitations of time, cost, and the size of the site. Hugh Casson even saw some potential benefit in the lack of obvious attractions of the location, telling the Council for Architecture, 'the disadvantage of the site is, of course, the rather congested approach through the city and the fact that the surroundings are so depressing but, in my view, this would only enhance the splendour of

the new development' (WORK 25 A5 E3). When it came to 1951, the route by river bus from the South Bank was promoted instead.

It was not in the nature of these plans to predict the kind of architecture that would go with them, although the *County of London Plan* loyally included illustrations of a variety of pre-war LCC housing, mostly neo-Georgian in style, with a few early Modernist exemplars such as Kensal House. On the score of 'coherent architectural development', the idea of 'Georgian urbanity' was upheld as an ideal, and earlier examples of groups and terraces of houses (mostly by the LCC) were cited as preferable to the 'monotonous iteration of the semi-detached unit' (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 78). Among the intelligentsia, there was agreement on the unacceptability of the interwar suburbs in respect of their semi-detached housing types, and supposed lack of well connected social amenities. In the Building Science exhibition at Lansbury, 'Gremlin Grange' was a caricature of one such house, but perhaps to avoid the charge of snobbism, it was only held up for ridicule on grounds of 'jerry building' rather than on grounds of taste. The result was that the whole official presentation of the future London in 1951 managed to avoid offering any positive comment on how the majority of 'out-county' Londoners, beyond the LCC boundary, actually lived in the products of interwar speculative building. These outer boroughs were not incorporated officially in London until the creation of the Greater London Council in 1965.

The rebirth of the terraced house

There was another 'prehistory' concerning appropriate ways of reconstructing the East End that would have been known to many of the participants in Lansbury. In the years before the war, the area around Ocean Street, Stepney, included in 'Neighbourhood Unit 10', was up for redevelopment. In 1937–8, a group of students from the Architectural Association, tutored by the architect-planner Max Lock and architect John Madge, were introduced to the social survey techniques being used from 1937 onwards by the voluntary Mass Observation organization of which Madge's brother Charles was one of the three founders (Darling 2007). The subsidy conditions of the time demanded that existing two storey terrace houses should be replaced by flats, but with the training given them by Mass Observation, the students questioned the existing tenants who were due to be rehoused in the new development. By a small majority, they favoured being rehoused in terraces similar to those that had hitherto been largely condemned by housing reformers. Although this outcome was not widely reported, it seems to have operated influentially to raise questions about the appropriateness of flats and to emphasise the value of private gardens in such districts.

Around the same time, the housing 'consultant' and reformer Elizabeth Denby declared in favour of houses rather than flats as a general solution, despite meeting opposition for her views, and despite the fact that she was chiefly known for her participation in the Kensal House flats scheme. Travelling for research for her book *Europe Re-Housed*, Denby had the opportunity to see many schemes

of Modernist terraced houses, which began to influence housing designs by English architects at the end of the 1930s (Denby 1938). Plate XXXI in the *County of London Plan* illustrated a group of flat-roofed two storey terraces round a green at Thearle, near Newbury, built in 1942 to designs by Geoffrey Jellicoe, one of the design team for Lansbury, these being indicative of a new planning orthodoxy and widely illustrated in wartime design literature.

A contributor to the *County of London Plan* was the celebrated perspective artist William Walcot (1874–1943), most of whose life had been given to making stirring impressionistic renderings of the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Herbert Baker and other Edwardian classicists. It was predictable that Walcot, well past the age for military service, was employed by Lutyens, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and the other authors of the Royal Academy Plan to make their Beaux Arts vistas come alive, but it is evidence of how closely interlinked the planners and architects of different persuasions were that Abercrombie also chose him for the *County of London Plan* as well (*London Replanned* 1942). A pair of Walcot's renderings presents two of the choices for housing types the were considered eligible for Lansbury: 'Multi-Storey Flats', reminiscent of Woodbury Down, and, on the same page beneath them, 'Terrace Houses' (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, Plate 6, facing p. 43) (Figs 2–3). These took the form of terraces with an equal pitched roof and deep eaves. This shape of

Figure 2 Perspectives of imaginary housing schemes, drawn by William Walcot. Forshaw and Abercrombie, *County of London Plan*, 1943, plate 6

Figure 3 Perspectives of imaginary housing schemes, drawn by William Walcot. Forshaw and Abercrombie, *County of London Plan*, 1943, plate 6

house was a practical return to a London tradition, following the lead of the Ocean Street research. Walcot gave his drawing a Modern twist, probably inspired by a mixture of Swedish and Swiss examples, and a distinctive aspect of wartime and post-war housing. Among the notable examples of this semi-modern type were those by the Norfolk architects Herbert Tayler and David Green, in rural council housing dating from 1944 onward (Fig. 4). Tayler and Green

Figure 4 Tayler and Green, Smith's Knoll, Hedenham, Norfolk, 1948–50. Photo by David Green (Alan Powers collection)

were friends of Frederick Gibberd, who in 1944 designed the prototype of the widely reproduced British Iron and Steel Federation House, which was of similar character. One argument in favour of a shallow pitched roof rather than a steep one was that it used less scarce timber, while the flat roof may have been seen as a liability after many failures. Aesthetically, the continuous shadow line of a deep eaves overhang on a terrace served to reinforce the desired quality of horizontal repose.

A 1949 article by the Liverpool-trained architect Tom Mellor in the *Town Planning Review* identifies the evolution of this 'contemporary English style', paradoxically based on examples in Switzerland and Sweden, consisting typically of terraced houses on an updated model with shallow pitched roofs, indicating 'a reaction from the rigid solutions of the functionalists as well as from the monotonous diversity of the majority of suburban layouts' (Mellor 1949, 153). The problem, Mellor claimed, was that these buildings were too expensive, although he felt that more economical plans might save the day.

Advisory literature in the final months of the war also stressed the desirability of terraces. The Ministry of Health's *Design of Dwellings* acknowledged the objections to terraces owing to noise, lack of privacy and difficulty of rear access, but argued that 'the continued prejudice against terraced houses is mainly because so few people have had the experience of living in a well-designed modern terrace' (Ministry of Health 1944, 19). In respect of the monotony of developments consisting entirely of flats, the publication recommended 'mixed development' on the lines demonstrated by Frederick Gibberd at Somerford Road. The Ministry of Works' *Housing Manual* followed the same lines, criticizing 'the monotonous repetition of identical units' arising from streets of semi-detached houses, and stressing the positive virtues in appearance and economy of broad-fronted terrace houses (Ministry of Works 1944, 15). The illustrations showed examples of terraced house layouts around shared open spaces, as developed at Lansbury, going back to Adshead and Ramsay's Courtenay Square in Kennington (1913), through Welwyn Garden City and other rural, suburban and urban examples, all of them essentially neo-Georgian or vernacular (including one with coloured concrete blocks and thatch) and a couple of wartime examples with flat roofs, but all of the plainest description.

Also in 1944, the RIBA Housing Group, chaired by Geoffrey Jellicoe, with Judith Ledeboer as Vice-Chairman and Frederick Gibberd among its 18 members, issued a pamphlet on *Housing*, emphasising the relationship between houses and community facilities, 'to plan residential areas without recognition of the need to relate them to schools, shops and work places, and places of recreation is to deny the inhabitants the benefits of modern civilization' (RIBA 1944, 13) (Fig. 5). The question of personalization and style, which underlay the aesthetic and social argument over the design of private sector semis, was addressed in a manner reminiscent of Adolf Loos, 'The relation of the man in the street to his house should be similar to his relation to his clothing: he does not have it specially made for him, he chooses from a number of

Figure 5 Cover photograph, *Housing*, 1944, published by RIBA, showing terraced houses round a green in Welwyn Garden City (Alan Powers collection)

types, but by the manner of use and the combination of accessories, he does achieve his own individuality, within a general conformity to pattern' (RIBA 1944, 29). In front of the houses, low walls were recommended.

Speaking on the BBC Third Programme in 1950, William Holford referred to the book *London, the Unique City*, by the Danish architect Steen Eiler Rasmussen, published in English in 1937, and commended the author's unusual belief that the geometric order represented by Christopher Wren's post-Fire plan of 1666 would have been a mistake, and that the more organic development based on 'little terrace houses with their lively and untidy gardens' was preferable to 'large regimented blocks of flats and tarmac-covered playgrounds' (Holford 1950).

Thus when the Lansbury development challenged the orthodoxy of 'high density flats in isolation' by offering several streets of small houses similar in scale to the 'slum' houses previously on the site, it was carrying out a programme that had been growing in momentum through the course of the war and amounted to an official consensus between the architectural profession and the government. There was perhaps a special significance in the frontispiece of the *County of London Plan*, showing a slum street after bombing, with a quote from Winston Churchill, 'Most painful is the number of small houses inhabited by working folk which has been destroyed … We will rebuild them more to our credit than some of them were before' (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, frontispiece caption).

Persuading the public

Abercrombie's *Greater London Plan* looked at the wider area of the South East, and set out strategies for reducing population density and industrial uses in London by the creation of the first set of government-sponsored New Towns, including Stevenage, Harlow, Crawley and Basildon. The plans for these were in preparation during the lead-in to the Festival. Although the New Towns figure in the guidebook on p. 36, where their locations are mapped, and in the text on pp. 38–9, little had been built by 1951 that could be shown in the exhibitions.

In the last years of the war there was much activity concerned with providing public information and persuasion of various kinds in favour of the principles of re-planning, including films, printed books and magazine articles, to counter local opinion in favour of returning to pre-war arrangements. The most famous instance was in relation to the *Plan for Plymouth* by Abercrombie and James Paton Watson, 1943, which proposed a major reconfiguration of the commercial centre of the town and was resisted by owners of buildings destroyed by bombing and clearance who wished to rebuild on their own sites. The young film director Jill Craigie was encouraged by Abercrombie's mentor, Charles Reilly, to make a semi-documentary short feature film, *The Way We Live*, 1946, in which Abercrombie himself made several appearances,

wrapped in a fictional narrative of a bombed-out family's hopes for the future. The outcome was that in 1947, the Town and Country Planning Act fulfilled the hope of a long campaign to bring greater control into land use and development on behalf of citizens by restricting their development rights so severely that it almost amounted to a nationalization of land. The Lansbury development and the Town Planning Exhibition were shaped in the light of this new legislation and were intended to show the possibilities for the reform of existing urban areas and the creation of new ones.

The Plan acknowledged the cultural preference for houses over flats, but identified the problem as one of density against available space, advocating a mixture of the two types (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 77). Consistent with Abercrombie's humanist priorities, the Plan argued that 'whilst matters of aspect, air, light and access of sunshine, can be used as a partial basis … at some point the individual element of the local condition must enter into the calculations and the scientific reckoning breaks down' (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 77). The provision of such houses, in addition to flats for childless and older couples, was seen as a necessary condition for achieving the highly desirable prevention of the migration of 'larger families and the newly-married to outer districts' (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 78–9). The prediction was that about 55% of the population could be accommodated in two or three story houses.

Much has been written about the merits and defects of the 'Abercrombie Plan', owing in part to its compromise quality, which failed to satisfy either the low density anti-urban thinkers, among them Lewis Mumford, or the advocates of higher densities. The paragraph introducing Mumford's review of Abercrombie's *Greater London Plan* in the *Architectural Review* in January 1945 explained the divergence of a new generation in Britain from the low-density orthodoxy on the grounds that it took too pessimistic a view of the future of cities: 'The Mumfordian attitude will, of course, be passionately opposed by a section of the young planning movement, which though in many respects admitting their discipleship to Mumford, do not share the Neo-Spenglerian "gloom" of his predictions nor his faith in the remedy of decentralisation' (Mumford 1945, 3). Mumford was pessimistic enough to warn that Londoners would be unwilling to have children without the amenities offered by very low population densities, so that if it remained even as a modified version of its previous self, 'it would, by that very fact, dwindle away, doomed by its sterility' (Mumford 1945, 7). It is this barely veiled eugenicist and hetero-normative anti-urban strand in post-war planning thought, in contrast to the contribution to urbanity made by a feared and suppressed gay subculture, that was picked out in the criticism of the Abercrombie Plan by Richard Hornsey in *The Spiv and the Architect* (Hornsey 2010).

Between the wars, the LCC resisted the urging of many campaigners for taller buildings, residential or commercial, with arguments about fire safety. At Woodberry Down and in the Modernist slab blocks of the Churchill Gardens competition of 1946 the LCC first allowed an exceptional height of 10

storeys. These were 'slab blocks', and their counterpart 'point blocks', square on plan and served by a central stair and lift, were not, as yet, an issue (Esher 1981, 104). At Harlow, Gibberd showed his willingness to experiment with the point block form with a nine storey tower, The Lawns, 1951, but this was an exception in New Town terms, introduced to create visual contrast according to picturesque principles and to preserve a fine ring of oak trees in the Mark Hall neighbourhood.

The perception that London's East End represented a serious problem was a longstanding one that peaked in the 1880s with fears of revolution and immigrant populations, and compassion over poor living conditions amid small but noxious industries, and it was almost inevitable that those involved in selecting a site for a Festival planning exhibition should turn in that direction. In the *County of London Plan*, the 'industrial boroughs' of east and south London were highlighted for priority redevelopment, to transform them into places 'with their dwellings grouped about their social and shopping centres, interspersed with open spaces, their schools spaced according to the new population requirements, and their industries collected into more compact areas' (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 19).

The Preamble to the *County of London Plan* identified 'congested areas' in 'industrial boroughs', asking how reasonable living conditions could be provided close to work, without the need for commuting from distant suburbs. It was impossible to expand living space and maintain pre-1938 population levels, and very dense high rise living was deemed unattractive, with the result that some decrease of population was considered to be right and inevitable, partly because it would continue a pre-war trend in which businesses and their workers tended to relocate further out (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 8). This decentralization, the Plan argued, had happened in an unplanned way, leaving behind an elderly population, but would now be controlled.

One result of the uneven distribution of uses was shown in the Open Space 'Deficiency Survey' in the *County of London Plan*, where a dark band, indicating an average distance of three-quarters of a mile or more from open space, extended from central London to the River Lea, including the Lansbury site (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, Plate XI). As part of the remedy, the planning of open spaces included a new linear park running north and south alongside the Regent's Canal, joining Victoria Park and the Thames, pieced together and finally achieving its finished form as Mile End Park around 2000. Closer to the Lansbury area, the *Plan* proposed what is now Bartlett Park, to the north of the Roman Catholic school, although this was not begun until 1959 and only completed in the 1980s.

Neighbourhood

The description of Lansbury as a 'neighbourhood' was not just a figure of speech. An important aspect of the *County of London Plan* was to define the

ideal neighbourhood as a self-contained social unit of housing and public facilities. As a theory, the neighbourhood had been promoted in America by Clarence Perry through the New York Regional Survey of 1929 as the primary building block of planning, and the idea was reiterated by Mumford in *The Culture of Cities*, 1938, a book widely read in Britain. Mumford identified the 'new dominants in the opening biotechnic economy' as 'the dwelling house and the school, with all their specialised communal aids' (Mumford 1938, 472). The Stepney and Poplar areas were chosen by Abercrombie as demonstration models of a better way of achieving more space, through the demarcation of 'neighbourhood units' of between 6,000 and 10,000 persons related to the elementary school and the area it serves', so that children going to school (on foot and mostly unaccompanied, as was normal at the time) would not have to cross any major road. Belts of open space, acting like a microcosm of the London Green Belt created in 1938, would form 'a natural cut-off' between one neighbourhood and another (Forshaw & Abercrombie 1943, 9).

The shortcomings of the concept as a model for working class life were beginning to be argued at the time, most notably in a criticism by the sociologist Ruth Glass of the plan for Middlesbrough in 1948, regarding the arbitrary separation of one area from another by main roads. Arguably, some sort of scale and ordering device was needed for zoning and traffic control on a micro scale. It was an easily understood concept that was likely to work well with a socially coherent population such as that of Lansbury, if not with a newly transplanted one in a completely new place such as a New Town. The concept continued in use in Britain up to the creation of Milton Keynes which, however, used the neutral term 'grid squares' to describe its neighbourhoods.

Interlocking with the neighbourhood concept was the precinct, defined as an area bounded by major roads, developed in 1938 by the London Police Commissioner, Alker Tripp, at a time when traffic congestion and road safety were major concerns (Tripp 1938). Lansbury was naturally bounded by East India Dock Road to the south, and to the east by a railway line in a cutting parallel to Chrisp Street, so that although it was smaller than a complete neighbourhood, it demonstrated the idea of different scales of road, and, most notably, the idea of limiting through access and giving priority to a pedestrian network that in many cases provided the main route to and from dwellings, and was interspersed with small open spaces. The major demonstration of a pedestrianized space was the new Chrisp Street market itself, paved at a single level, connecting with Market Way. The buildings containing shops at ground level beneath a covered arcade were serviced from the rear, where access was given to the flats above. There was nothing new in this, since shopping parades in the suburbs were built to this model between the wars, but the generous vehicle-free paved square was very different to the streams of traffic normal in the suburbs.

Gibberd removed the existing market from its historic straggle along Chrisp Street, and he took this as his main contribution to the detailed architecture of

Figure 6 Chrisp Street Market before bombing. From *Administrative County of London Development Plan*, London, London County Council, 1951

the site (Fig. 6). John Summerson suggested that 'in the free-enterprise world of twenty years ago', the freedom of traffic and the recession of shops beneath their arcades would have been fatal to commercial success. 'Unless, indeed, the old instinct for marketing in noise and glare compels them to register at shops in East India Dock Road'; however, he imagined that the new market would succeed simply by absence of competition for essential supplies (Summerson 1951).

The rest of the site extended westwards with streets of terraced houses and flats, two school sites, one containing two LCC schools and the other a Catholic school, plus an old people's home and two churches. It was intended to have a Community Centre on East India Dock Road, which would have formed the natural entry point for visitors to the exhibition, but as the funding for this was lacking, its site was therefore adopted for the exhibition.

The LCC Press Release for Lansbury explained that there was an intentional trade-off between unfamiliar planning layouts and what were meant to be familiar materials and building forms. 'The buildings, of varying heights, will be grouped round closes and spaces of different sizes, each with its individual character. In some cases there will be children's playgrounds in the centre of blocks, completely protected from traffic. The layout is in fact a series of neighbourly groups linked by open spaces. While this type of layout is new to the East End of London and the contrast between new and old

forms of development is likely to prove striking, the architectural treatment of most of the buildings will include the use of London stock bricks and purple grey slates which are traditional building materials for this part of Poplar' (Banham & Hillier 1976, 140).

The architects of Lansbury

A 'club' mentality has often been noted as a characteristic of the professions of architecture and planning, especially in relation to the Festival, and the personnel involved in creating Lansbury were a closely interconnected group of practitioners and associated educators and publicists for planning. Even at the outbreak of war in 1939, there was a sense that the disruption might provide the opportunity for a new interlinked generation to move into positions of influence, closely aligned with state agencies. Individuals such as Leslie Martin pursued a deliberate strategy from the beginning of the war to ensure that like-minded colleagues should be selected for key positions, to the exclusion of either the more extreme traditionalists or Modernists, and both Lansbury and the Festival more widely were part of the outcome (Saint 1987).

Some of the networks went back to architectural schools, where friendships were formed among students and between them and staff. The Liverpool School was the prime example. Patrick Abercrombie was succeeded as Professor of Civic Design there by William Holford, who served on the Festival Council for Architecture and had recruited a team of like-minded young men for work on wartime hostel design.

Frederick Gibberd made a conspicuous mark at an early age in the relatively small world of progressive architecture and planning. He trained at Birmingham School of Architecture and made his name with the completion of Pullman Court Flats in Streatham in 1936, flat-roofed and smooth-rendered in the 'International Style' although this was his only work in the style. F. R. S. Yorke (who worked with Holford during the war) was Gibberd's Birmingham student friend and they co-authored *The Modern Flat*, 1937, for the Architectural Press. Rejected for war service on health grounds, Gibberd became Principal of the Architectural Association School between 1940 and 1944, in succession to Geoffrey Jellicoe, another of the Lansbury team of architects. Yorke was also exempted from military service and worked on prototypes for prefabricated housing (the Braithwaite House), as did Gibberd (the British Iron and Steel Federation House).

At Lansbury, Gibberd designed the buildings in the immediate vicinity of the new Chrisp Street market, whose visual and spatial function is to define the northern and western edges of the space and create a small pocket of urbanity where the pedestrianized Market Way enters at a right angle. In his book *Town Design*, 1953, Gibberd analysed the different areas, including the open market, a small paved garden at the foot of the clocktower 'in which shoppers can sit and recover from bargaining' and 'a shopping parade adjacent

Figure 7 Market place buildings. From *Building*, July 1952, p. 250

to the shop windows, formed by the recessed colonnade (Fig. 7). There were maisonettes over the shops (a feature of interwar shopping parades in the suburbs), and car parks to the rear where the single-storey back extensions of the shops provided an access walkway to the maisonettes with potential for roof-top gardening. The elevations towards the market were patterned with projecting brick headers and their domestic function emphasized by tall chimneys on the ridge of the slate roof and shallow bow windows, evoking the Regency period. The composition was managed with 'one large shop designed on three floors' to act as 'a fulcrum to the shopping spaces' and to mark the beginning of the precinct. This is also differentiated with tiled front elevation in the 'encadrement' or framed border popular at the time, and apparently derived from the design of Ernö Goldfinger's 1–3 Willow Road in Hampstead, 1939. The 18ft module of each shop set up a grid whose lines were carried across the paved surface of the market place, thus helping the stall holders to position themselves in a regular fashion.

The design of the market square illustrates Gibberd's knowledge of the theories of Camillo Sitte, on which he made notes, possibly around 1943, as part of his town planning course. In *Town Design* he discussed the need to create enclosure at the corners of the open spaces, illustrated at Lansbury by

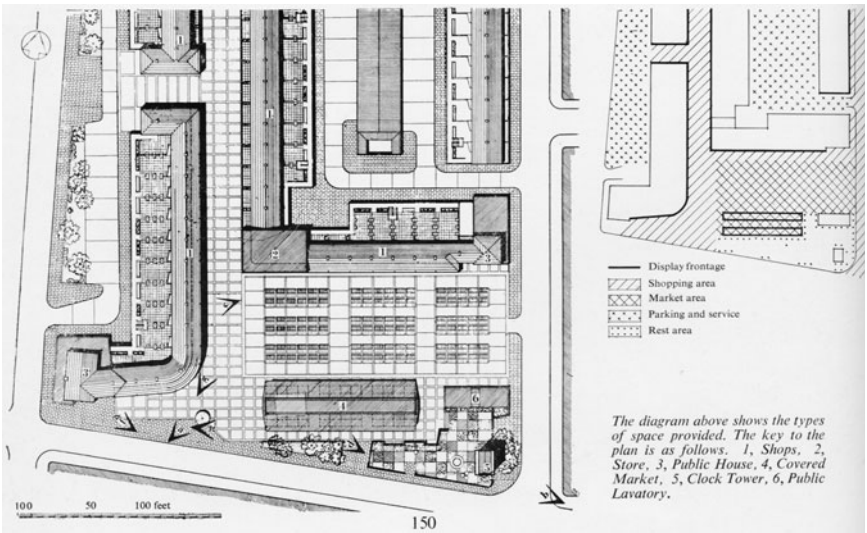

Figure 8 Analysis of types of space in Chrisp Street Market, from Frederick Gibberd, *Town Design*, London, Architectural Press, 1953, p. 150

the way the two shopping buildings overlap to create spatial enclosure where the pedestrian walk enters the market square from the north (Gibberd 1953) (Fig. 8). The colonnades may even evoke the Piazza San Marco, with the clock tower playing the role of campanile. The official Festival Press Notice explained 'this would close the long vista of the principal road leading up to the square and would provide contrast to the comparatively low shop buildings' (WORK 25 A5 E3).

Gibberd recalled in 1976 that the tower was commissioned by the Borough of Poplar, 'who wanted that Victorian symbol of civic pride'. As well as its role as a landmark, Gibberd carried his suggestion that it should also be an 'Outlook Tower', a phrase that recalled the naming of Patrick Geddes's headquarters in the former Camera Obscura close to the gates of Edinburgh Castle and his prescription for raising civic awareness in any situation. With its fancy intersecting double stair to give architectural character it was, Gibberd wrote, 'a practical folly that gave pleasure, but only for a short time' (Banham & Hillier 1976, 139). The fear of suicides caused the viewing platform to be caged and access only granted for special events (Fig. 9).

The eastern end of the market place was intended to remain open towards Chrisp Street, while the southern side was still unbuilt in 1951, remaining so until the 1970s. Two public houses were placed at the ends of the block of shops, signaling the limits of the market place.

The Ministry of Food requested that a covered market should be included to protect food on sale from dust and weather, and also required indoor provision of cold storage. The long low shed structure that served these functions

Figure 9 Clock tower (Gibberd Garden Trust)

was demolished in the 1990s and replaced by a high glass roof with open sides covering the western half of the market. Further proposals for the market stalls and the replacements of the flanking buildings to the south were made in 2015 (Johnson-Marshall papers).

It is difficult now to reconstruct the scepticism with which the idea of a pedestrian market in London was viewed by traders and critics alike. Indeed, according to a much later article by the planner Walter Bor, the market traders were pessimistic, predicting that 'this shopping precinct experiment would fail and they would be ruined "because shops and stalls rely on passing motorcars for trade"'. 'For once', Bor commented, 'the planners were proved right', and 'an unassuming and restful, civilized and humane environment has been achieved which is of credit to its designers and users' (Bor 1978, 11). Chrisp Street market continues to thrive in the early twenty-first century with much trade in lightweight and boldly patterned saree fabrics.

Gibberd was one of the few architects of his generation to discuss his detailed elevation design strategies in public, in a lecture to the RIBA in January 1952, 'Expression in Modern Architecture' (Gibberd 1952). He explained the many different ways of detailing a window opening, and the

conflicting demands of legibility, cost, rational use of materials, plus the effect of weathering. For Summerson's taste, the elevations to the market place were overworked, writing that 'it looks as if, in seeking to supply incident in the elevations, he has lost sight of the more important considerations of a general harmony; the pictorially striking curved entry into Grundy Street would surely have been incident enough for so modest a composition' (Summerson 1951). In other respects, however, Gibberd's Lansbury buildings may be more original in their detailing than the critics realized. In response to an adverse criticism by J. M. Richards in the *Architectural Review*, Gibberd explained to Christopher Hussey, 'the so-called modern critics jump on any form that has its roots in tradition. J. M. Richards condemned my Poplar market because, among other things, it had a tight eaves section with no deep projection. I spent hours detailing that roof (it is in slate), and tried to get the equivalent of the secret gutter Lutyens used, which enables him to let the slate just project in front of the wall face to cast a thin precise shadow. I think I got the answer, at a cost that the L.C.C. could afford! But I doubt whether anyone at all appreciated it' (Hussey Papers, 14 February 1952).

Gibberd's name has been linked to Lansbury to the extent that it is easy to imagine that he was the master planner for the whole scheme, but in fact that role was taken by Arthur Ling (1913–95), director of the LCC Planning Division and thus in a key position to push the project forward. Early in the war, Ling worked on the MARS Plan for London and was then among the assistants employed on the *County of London Plan* and author of its often-reproduced 'bubble' plan of 'Social and Functional Analysis' showing the neighbourhoods of London in colour. After Lansbury he went to work in Coventry, where in 1955 he succeeded the Chief Planner, Sir Donald Gibson. Working with Ling at the LCC was Percy Johnson-Marshall (1915–93), another Liverpool graduate, a pre-war member of the Coventry team and a Senior Planner with the LCC 1949–59, whose responsibilities included more directly overseeing the Estate. Johnson-Marshall's book *Rebuilding Cities*, 1966, includes many photographs of Lansbury before and after development, with informative captions that stress Ling's role, while Walter Bor in 1978 commended 'Arthur Ling's wise decision to use London stock bricks and slate roofs which give the area a welcome sense of cohesion' (Bor 1978, 11).

The housing, regardless of authorship, is very similar in external design beyond the consistency of materials. The elevations of Geoffrey Jellicoe's houses, flats and maisonettes south of Grundy Street (Site 2) and in the block between Grundy Street and Ricardo Street (Site 4) were described as 'intended to be urban and classical in character, although there is no specific classical detail', a comment that could be applied throughout the Estate in relation to the flat fronts and even rooflines.

The LCC had an 'approved panel' of 'private' architects who might be employed in addition to their own staff, and this provides a partial clue to the selection of designers for Lansbury. The names were Edward Armstrong

(a specialist in urban housing who was prolific in south London in the 1930s), Bridgwater and Shepheard, and two further practices now largely forgotten, Hawes & Jackman and Riches & Blythin. From this list, Armstrong and Bridgwater and Shepheard, acting as architects for 'Site 3', were selected. Two names from outside the panel were proposed by the Festival's Architecture Council, Geoffrey Jellicoe and Norman and Dawbarn. Armstrong withdrew owing to pressure of other work, and his allocation of housing was amalgamated with Jellicoe's.

Derek Bridgwater studied at Liverpool in the 1920s and became the son-in-law of C. H. Reilly, the head of school who in several ways was a posthumous godfather to Lansbury. It was Reilly who created the Department of Civic Design at Liverpool in 1909 and gave his student Abercrombie his first job teaching there. Peter Shepheard, whose father was a Liverpool architect, was a Reilly student in the early 1930s and the godson of Abercrombie, who recruited him to work on the *Greater London Plan*. After the war, he went into partnership with Bridgwater, and developed his specialism in landscape design. Geoffrey Jellicoe (1900–92), designer of the East Site housing, was a little older than most of the other architects involved, a precursor to Shepheard in his interest in gardens and landscape, having toured Italian Renaissance gardens and published a book on them with his fellow AA student J. C. Shepherd, in 1929, that brought him commissions for simplified classical layouts in the gardens of several English country houses before the war. Jellicoe had a breakthrough as a Modernist architect in 1934, with the Caveman Restaurant at Cheddar Gorge, but in several pre-war projects, such as a new colliery village at Calverton, Nottinghamshire, he showed himself willing to use pitched roofs again. Jellicoe taught at the Architectural Association through most of the 1930s, and so had contact with many of the younger architects working on the Festival. He also developed a habit of touring European cities with Frederick Gibberd and measuring piazzas and squares. Gibberd also gave him a taste for collecting modern British art.

The other housing architects, Norman and Dawbarn, would not be seen as natural members of the 'club' to which so many Festival designers were connected. Sir Henry 'Nigel' Norman (1897–1943), who succeeded to a baronetcy, was not even an architect, but a civil engineer specializing in aviation, and skilled at bringing airport commissions to the practice he set up with Graham Dawbarn (1893–1976) in 1935. After Norman's death in a wartime flying accident, Dawbarn continued and diversified the practice, specializing in efficient delivery rather than aesthetic refinement. One of the last buildings he designed before retirement was the BBC Television Centre at Wood Green. Norman and Dawbarn were probably selected on the strength of their work for St Pancras Borough Council, on the corner of Agar Road and St Pancras Way, which was praised by Lionel Brett in his *Architectural Review* article of November 1949 for avoiding a strict *Zeilenbau* layout, which, as Brett argued, 'probably runs counter to many of the tenants' preferences' (Brett 1949). This project was

mainly the work of a pre-war assistant at Norman and Dawbarn, John Whitfield Lewis, who was recruited to the LCC by Robert Matthew in 1950 and probably created the link that gave them the Lansbury job.

The housing was counterpointed by more individual buildings for community functions. Judith Ledeboer (1901–90) was the architect of the Old People's Home, in partnership with David Booth, the only woman architect involved at Lansbury (pp. 18–19). In 1930, she was one of the founders of the Housing Centre, a voluntary research and advice service, and wrote a study for the RIBA Housing Group with Jane Drew on accommodation for ageing people, which made her a particularly suitable choice for this commission. The Housing pamphlet of 1944 already mentioned, for which she acted as Vice-Chairman, includes a statement on the significance of a varied skyline, which could be 'illustrated by the silhouette history of chimneys' (Ministry of Health and Ministry of Works 1944, 30). The prominent row of chimneys on the Lansbury building, built for the fireplaces of a series of communal sitting rooms, amply demonstrated this intention, in accord with Casson's belief that this building could stand out from the rest of the housing. The chimneys were semi-redundant, since the Home was also centrally heated, a discrepancy criticized in a review of the building by Sherban Cantacuzino (*Building* 1952, 42) (Fig. 10). Fire damage in 1988 caused the closure of the building, followed in the 1990s by its demolition.

Figure 10 Old People's Home by Booth and Ledeboer (demolished). *Building* magazine, February 1952, p. 43

Early in his career, F. R. S. Yorke (1906–62) took on a number of roles editing technical columns at the Architectural Press, and editing its annual volume of information, *Specification*. From this position, and as a result of a taste for European travel, Yorke became well connected with Modernists in other countries, leading to his partnership with Marcel Breuer (1935–7) and his friendship with Eugene Rosenberg (1907–92), whom he helped to get out of Czechoslovakia in 1939 and took into partnership in 1944. Cyril Mardall (1909–94) joined them to make a productive practice, which designed large numbers of schools from the 1940s until the 1960s, the majority being in the Midlands.

The large Susan Lawrence School for infants and juniors was named after Susan Lawrence (1871–1947) a celebrated interwar Labour MP and Minister (a convert from Conservatism), who as a Poplar councilor was imprisoned in Holloway for five weeks in 1921 for her part in failing to set a rate for poor relief. This and the Elizabeth Lansbury Nursery School next to it, were designed by Yorke and his brother-in-law Randall Evans with Gordon Michell as assistant using the Hills 8'3" light steel frame system, developed in 1945 by architects at the famous Hertfordshire County Architects Schools Division, led by Stirrat Johnson Marshall, the brother of Percy. The system was economical and specially adapted to the Ministry of Education's requirements for classroom areas, so that it was almost inevitable that it would be used.

Yorke used two storey classrooms, as illustrated on p. 16, presumably to save space, with infants at ground level and juniors above, a typology used in the same period by his firm at the Barclay Secondary School, Stevenage. Each section has its appropriate assembly hall, these being stacked one above another. The height, unusual in school buildings at this time, adds monumentality at the northern boundary of the 1951 site. In the long classroom block, corridors are placed to the north and light wells are opened up through the upper level to bring double aspect lighting to the rooms below.

Especially striking was the double-height entrance lobby for the assembly halls, with its broad concrete stair on a central support (similar to those in the Royal Festival Hall), rising up at a jaunty angle and standing forward from the wall with its repeat pattern of yellow and grey tiles, among the early designs by Peggy Angus (ex-wife of J. M. Richards) that Yorke arranged to have manufactured by Carters Tiles of Poole. This space acts as the main entrance to the school, fronting onto a courtyard paved with a mixture of Hornton Stone slabs and granite setts. Ian Nairn, writing in 1964, was captivated by this small architectural episode, calling it, 'just about the best new street corner in London … there should by now be half a hundred London variations on it; there aren't' (Nairn 1964, 25). The same brown stone is hung from the end wall of the administration block that forms the second side of this enclosure, where there is also a bracket supporting a nineteenth century artificial stone figure, apparently salvaged from the Horn of Plenty public house nearby and incorporated at Yorke's suggestion (Survey of London). No doubt owing partly to these special features, the building was substantially over its budget.

The School was the first building on the Lansbury site to be completed and occupied. In his review in *Building* magazine, Sherban Cantacuzino described its 'dazzling success' by contrast with the surroundings, 'the playgrounds not yet properly surfaced, the shrubs and trees in puny infanthood and the surrounding area littered with builders' debris and the ugly telegraph poles, ruined hovels and soot-streaked hoardings of a previous civilization' (*Building* 1951, 264). Cantacuzino considered the Lansbury School to be in many respects an improvement on its precursor at Stevenage, and commended the tile decoration 'which by its formality enhances the feeling of freedom' (*Building* 1951, 270).

The Trinity Congregational Church replaced one formerly on the site that was bombed, so that funding was available for a replacement from the War Damages Commission (Fig. 11). The two architects, Cecil C. Handisyde (1908–2000) and D. (Douglas) Rogers Stark, had not collaborated before.

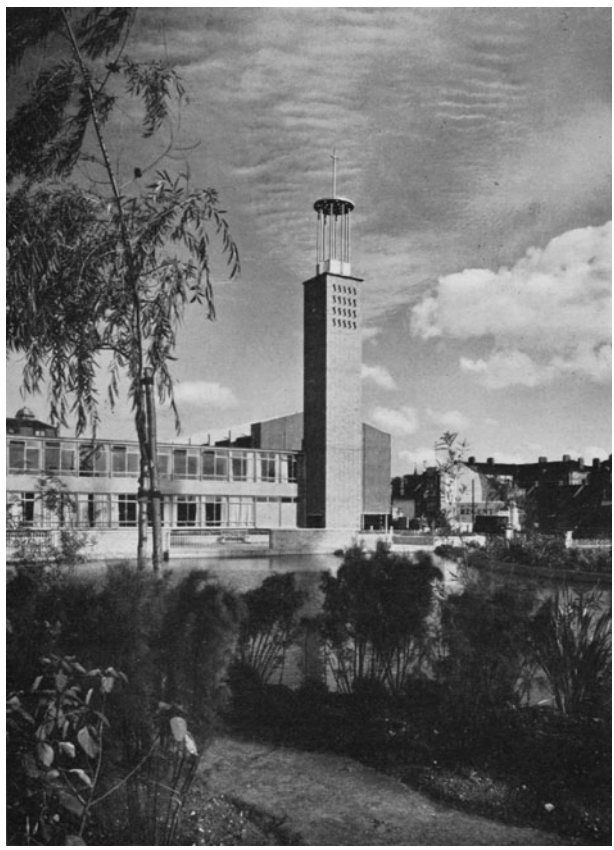

Figure 11 Trinity Congregational Church, *Building* magazine, October, 1951

Stark's father was a member of the church and an LCC architect approaching retirement, who got the commission but passed it to his son, who was also at the LCC, and did not have time for it, hence his invitation to Handisyde who was an architect member of the Building Research Station team and lectured on construction at the Architectural Association in the 1930s. He also took the role of script writer for the Building Science pavilion at Lansbury. Handisyde was largely responsible for the technical aspects of the design in which innovations were made in structure, with partly external concrete portal frame trusses, acoustics, roof lights and underfloor heating. The exposed concrete frame was the most obvious evidence at Lansbury of changing building technology. Handisyde designed the tower with its Swedish style finial to hold a bell and act as one of Lansbury's landmarks. Stark mostly designed interior details.

Cantacuzino explained to readers of *Building* how the simplicity of the design, especially the church interior, reflected the non-hierarchical and straightforward principles of Congregationalist worship. He had praise for the courtyard formation of the group of buildings and the way that the space beneath the church gallery was opened up externally to become a covered walkway. In other ways, he was critical of the way the different parts were joined, and how the bell tower was visually weakened by being opened up at the base and clumsily attached to the adjacent parts of the building. J. M. Richards' criticism in the *Architectural Review* was focused mainly on the discrepancy between the visible mass of the concrete frame members emerging from the raked windows, and their lack of visible support. The tower was part of the brief, because the bell of the bombed church on the site had been salvaged, but the Swedish-style cupola built to house it appeared to Richards as 'the sort of immature detail that only lends strength to the argument that is often put forward: namely that modern architecture becomes completely sterile in ideas as soon as it leaves the sphere of technical ingenuity' (Richards 1951, 364). The church stands beside the largest area of green open space in the original Lansbury scheme, raised above street level and bounded by a low retaining wall along East India Dock Road. In the original landscaping, a pond reflected the west side of the church complex, later filled in because it did not hold water.

The Catholic architects Adrian Gilbert Scott (1882–1963) and David Stokes (1907–93) were outside the club, being members of a different one consisting of 'Catholic architects' which subsisted largely on commissions for churches and Catholic schools. Both worked in the shadow of another family member, in Scott's case, his elder brother Giles, and in Stokes's, his father, Leonard A. Stokes.

Scott's church of SS Mary and Joseph, the first London building to be funded through the government's War Damages Scheme, was commissioned in 1948 to replace a bombed church of 1843 which stood slightly to the north. It was coincidental that it formed part of the Lansbury site, and the choice of architect was independent of both the LCC and the Festival

committees. The natural entrance to the site was from the east, where Pekin Street makes an axis whose other end is the clock tower in the market place. The church is thus oriented in reverse, and this factor may have suggested a centralized plan. The altar is against the west wall but the plan ensures that all the seats are relatively close to it, and thus its relatively conservative architecture is combined with a plan that was liturgically progressive for its time. Interior and exterior both use catenary arches, a feature found in work by both Scotts at this period, as is the pinkish brickwork that rises sheer with raised patterns. The mass of the building, offering such a contrast to the skeletal nature of the Congregational church, is well served by the geometry of the plan, coming to an octagonal tower capped by a squat copper-clad spire suggestive to later eyes of the work of the Italian Rationalist, Aldo Rossi.

The Cardinal Griffin Secondary Modern School (demolished in 2010) was partly complete for 1951, but the dining hall was only added in 1953. Although Stokes trained at the Architectural Association, where he graduated in 1930, he resembled other 'Catholic' architects who drew their clients chiefly from their co-religionists with work that represents a middle ground between Georgian and Modern. Compared to Yorke's Ricardo Street school, Stokes was more concerned with composing large masses of building, especially in the recessed concrete frame around the upper level of dining hall range, which abuts a sort of 'chancel box' with square panes of side lights similarly framed, attached to the assembly hall and clearly intended to allow for its unconsecrated use for worship. This building could be said to represent better than almost any other on the site the pejoratively named 'Festival Style' involving the inclusion of gratuitous decorative 'features'.

Sidney Howard, an architect 'from the Valuation Department of the LCC', as the Guide carefully described him, was also not part of the club, representing an older type of architect who was attracted to the stable career of public service architecture. Howard was responsible for the 'West Site' of the 1951 Lansbury buildings, beyond Saracen Street, consisting of six storey slab blocks, three of them in the approved *Zeilenbau* orientation, with one turned at right angles to face due south, and some three storey blocks with the standard shallow pitched roofs and overhanging eaves. The footprint of the blocks in their lawns and pathways achieves a closed corner at the south east, but otherwise an avoidance of enclosed spaces typical of the legacy of earlier hygiene-inspired housing reformers. The designs, which quite possibly were produced by other hands in the design offices of County Hall, were no disgrace to the project as a whole, although described in lukewarm terms by J. M. Richards as 'much less offensive than the housing lately put up elsewhere by the same department (for example at Woodberry Down)' (Richards 1951, 363). Despite the lack of notice given to them at the time, they have worn well.

Style controversy at Lansbury

In 1937, the essay by Henry-Russell Hitchcock on 'Modern Architecture in England' in the catalogue of the eponymous exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York recognized that brick was an obvious and natural material for use in England rather than concrete, and that it should not be deemed less Modern. This was partly the result of the British climate, in which concrete tended to be covered with smooth render finishes or paint which deteriorated rapidly. When the aesthetic of Modernism required that copings and other weathering details be eliminated in the name of purity, the building wisdom of centuries was forgotten. The blatant impracticality of the resulting buildings was an unnecessary hostage to adverse criticism during a battle to win popular support for the other basic principles of Modernism. By 1939, Yorke, Gibberd, Maxwell Fry, Ernö Goldfinger and other leaders of the movement had largely rejected the concrete cube style in favour of brick, thus setting the course of architecture for the next 15 years.

Architectural critics, such as John Summerson and J. M. Richards and the critic-practitioner Ralph Tubbs, wished to stress to the public that the version of Modern architecture on offer in the post-war period would involve a degree of compromise between past and tradition, believing among themselves that this was an acceptable price to pay for public support and sympathy in the task of rebuilding Britain after the war, lest the numerous neo-Georgian and classical architects still in private practice and public service should strengthen their hold on patronage.

The simple brick buildings of Lansbury, with their traditional scale and window openings, represented a well-rooted modified version of Modernism. Their aesthetic merits were to be found either in the larger scale of the informal grouping of masses and their relationship to each other and to open spaces, or in the small scale of details, the texture of materials, and good craftsmanship. It was a solution in the spirit of Raymond Unwin and the early Garden City movement, although the density was higher and the ambition more urban. The skill of the architect-planner was brought to the fore, and the architecture as such relegated in a belief that traditional towns relied on 'background' buildings composed in strong urban forms, with the merits of Georgian planning often invoked in support. Gibberd's Lansbury work followed on from his Somerford Road scheme, with yellow London stock brick making a gesture towards local character, unlike the red brick of the usual LCC Valuer's housing (Fig. 1).

Critical writing on Lansbury reflected the need to find an acceptable point between the polarities of the safe and the adventurous. Critics tended to divide according to generation, so Gordon Stephenson, the planner who succeeded Holford as Professor of Civic Design at Liverpool, although he criticized the 'safe and cautious approach', which he felt had combined with a muddled sense of plan, commended the 'decided break with the barracks

building of form slum clearance schemes'. Stephenson saw Lansbury as important evidence for the country at large about the capability of local government to deliver inner urban regeneration at an affordable price (Stephenson 1951, 380).

J. M. Richards opened his survey of the whole Lansbury site with a photograph of the late Georgian terrace in Upper North Street that had been preserved for its distinctive quality, with an unusual street elevation consisting of one bay of windows on three storeys flanked by a bay of plain brickwork, apart from the front door, achieving thereby a strong rhythm. Richards found the new housing too modest and horizontal in effect, with too much intervening space: 'In several parts of Lansbury, the impression is of great expanses of road surface bounded by relatively diminutive rows of houses, an effect one is all too accustomed to in the LCC out-county estates, but in metropolitan London, the low suburban skyline is surely out of place' (Richards 1951, 362). Richards thought that the penny-pinching austerity of the time was responsible for the lack of visual interest, but still felt that the architects had failed to take advantage even of low-cost ways of achieving a more unified effect, as demonstrated in the painted stucco reveals and sills of the Upper North Street houses. His overall verdict was 'worthy, dull, and somewhat skimpy'.

For John Summerson, fresh from his researches for *Georgian London*, the surviving early terraced houses, while closely resembling the new terraces, had the upper hand aesthetically, despite their practical shortcomings. 'The old houses, the work, probably, of a drunken bricklayer, subcontracting for a shark, are no less pleasant in design than the new houses by the distinguished architect and scholar of gardens, Mr. G. A. Jellicoe' (Summerson 1951, 679).

Although Summerson, like Richards, was reluctant to condone any form of Georgian revival, he would have been aware of the terrace of three houses in Aubrey Walk, Kensington, designed by Raymond Erith of 1951, whose elevations resemble those in Upper North Street, which show that the results of attempting continuity with the 1830s did not need to be a pale reflection of the original. The Aubrey Walk scheme was shown at the Royal Academy in 1950 and Summerson was probably referring to himself when much later he wrote about the effect of Erith's drawings: 'to some they seemed the work of a brilliantly eccentric deviationist but they deeply impressed those who were sceptical about the universal validity of the modern manner' (Summerson DNB).

That an even younger generation of architects and critics than Summerson, Richards and Tubbs reacted against the compromise style of Lansbury and its anti-urban village scale has become one of the well-known facts of the period, especially as told in the colourful version of the story, 'The Revenge of the Picturesque' by Reyner Banham (Banham 1968). This contribution to a *Festschrift* for Nikolaus Pevsner, blamed the staff of the *Architectural Review*, chiefly Pevsner himself, for diluting the original ideas of Modernism through advocacy of late eighteenth century doctrines of landscape design based on subjective and associative responses. Lansbury's planning certainly was picturesque, as was

the layout of the South Bank Exhibition in 1951, but its authors would have claimed that it was a beneficial shift away from the even looser low density planning of the Garden City movement, which the *Architectural Review* identified as the enemy on one side, with the tabula rasa of the MARS Plan on the other. Although Hugh Casson had been given a place on a newly constituted editorial board at the *Review* in 1947 and the magazine was fulsome in its praise of the South Bank, the harsh treatment of Lansbury by Richards throws doubt on Banham's belief that there was a conspiracy by all members of this group to water down Modernism.

The viewpoint of Banham's group of anti-picturesque rebels reached the general public through Colin St. John Wilson, a young recruit in the LCC housing department. He was briefly employed as an architectural columnist for *The Observer*, where he wrote what was probably the most hostile review about Lansbury early in 1952:

> This extraordinary effeminacy promises to convert London into the most overblown and "tasteful" village in the world: three- and six-story blocks of flats with the pitched roofs, peep-hole windows and "folky" details of the current Swedish revival, picturesquely sited around market-places, have been offered to us in the name of "live architecture."
>
> This, on the contrary, can lead to an architecture of "cold feet": fear of city-scale, fear of the machine, fear everything that the architectural innovators of the past twenty-five years have promised us. It is symptomatic of that post-war loss of nerve which, from a sense of guilt towards scientific methods and machines that have been used for destruction, reacts with a split-minded desire to retreat into a world of cosiness.
>
> (Wilson 1952)

The underlying dispute was between formalism in architecture and its opposite, as offered at Lansbury. It was not readily forgotten, and in 1956 *Architectural Design*, which aimed to be the tough alternative to the *Architectural Review*, printed a review of Pevsner's *The Englishness of English Art* including the phrase 'Who can to-day look at Lansbury and Harlow without nausea' (*Architectural Design* 1956). The generation that called for small-scale unaggressive architecture soon lost ground to a new one. Wilson's contemporaries in the LCC, all still in their 20s in 1952, identified themselves with the more radical early period of Modernism and the emerging late works of its masters, especially Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation*, which became their preferred model for *Zeilenbau* housing, most famously demonstrated in the array of slab blocks at Alton West on the Roehampton Estate on which Wilson worked.

Thirteen years later, a different opinion was possible. Ian Nairn picked out the Bridgwater and Shepheard housing for an entry in *Modern Buildings in London*, countering the criticisms from a dozen years before by looking for the human and empathetic as well as the formal qualities of the design. 'These seem

lived in', he wrote, 'where some architectural masterpieces are barracks after even a hundred years'; Pekin Close 'will be marvelous when the trees grow up.' Finally, 'this is what building for people, real people, means. It is almost diametrically opposed to conceptions of building for the masses, the electorate or any other political shibboleth.' By contrast, Nairn was especially critical of the later LCC housing that continued the Lansbury plan to the north, calling it 'lengths of blocks chopped off this way and that; no attempt to make a pattern for people – it must have looked grand as an architectural model' (Nairn 1964, 24).

Colin Ward, the Anarchist former architect, turned writer and editor, recalled in 2001 working for Peter Shepheard on the semi-detached houses in Pekin Street that, of the housing types, were the greatest provocation to Modernists, 'I remember the critical reception of his contribution as "backward looking" and "reactionary". Unlike plenty of the public housing of the post-war decades, they have survived half a century of change. Shepheard and I have lived to see those particular houses as the most envied and sought-after in the whole area' (Ward 2001) (Fig. 12).

Presenting planning to the people

The planning agenda in Britain that was represented in the Poplar exhibition in the form of a built example and in the form of an exhibition, demonstrated

Figure 12 Housing in Pekin Close by Bridgwater and Shepheard. *Building* magazine. January 1952, p. 8

a high degree of correlation between the two. The point of view represented was the product of half a century of thinking, writing, meeting and teaching that produced new hybrid forms of professionals in the space between planning, architecture and landscape design. While it had themes in common with planning ideas from other countries, these in most cases had originated in Britain at the turn of the century in the social thinking of Patrick Geddes, the polymath polemicist and activist prominent at that time. The transmission of Geddes' influence is discussed later in relation to the Planning Exhibition at Lansbury.

Although Geddes was not a designer, his followers believed that planning must connect the spatial and visual skills of the designer to the range of knowledge about people and places, in the past as well as the present, that formed the basis of Geddes's method. These humanistic concerns were contrasted with the more technocratic and administrative approaches to planning that usually constituted the professional skills of locally appointed Borough Surveyors and Engineers, in whose hands the future of Britain's cities, towns and regions might lie. As already noted, the alternative approach was given the name Visual Planning. Aesthetic considerations were primary, as might have been expected from a group of practitioners whose formation was usually as architects. The *Architectural Review* played a significant role in interpreting and promoting this approach through its rediscovery of the Picturesque aesthetic and through commentaries on the spatial and kinetic appreciation of existing places, both being themes developed by Nikolaus Pevsner after joining the *Architectural Review* staff in 1942 (Aitchison 2010).

Gibberd, who was unfit for military service, used the wartime lull in practice to qualify as a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, and developed his existing interest in the organization of spaces around buildings to embrace a larger scale of planning. The 'architect-planner' was a new semi-official term for those who combined these disciplines, as Jellicoe had done before the war. The architect-planners combined technical knowledge with the aesthetic creativity of their first profession, while planners who had come by the route of surveying or geography were often assumed to be less sensitive towards landscape and the lived experience of places, involving issues of scale, enclosure, outlook, and small details of surfaces, pathways, and carefully composed 'street pictures'. This repertory of effects, involving buildings, spaces and planting, was tried out by Gibberd in the Somerford Road development, with its mixture of housing types, its 'gateway' effect onto Stoke Newington Road, and its landscaped pedestrianized 'groundscape' with a variety of spaces between the housing and short lengths of access road that prevented through traffic, unlike the uniformity of standardized housing. Nothing like this had been done before, and it stood out in the difficult years after the war.

The method by which Visual Planning was used to turn Lansbury from a collection of demands into a unified composition was explained in the LCC's Technical Appendix to its Press Release of 5th June 1951, under the heading 'Three-Dimensional Planning'. This statement, presumably drafted by one of

the leading members of the planning team, would have been useful as an inclusion in the printed guide to explain the design intentions and therefore seems worthy of inclusion at length.

> … a diagram was produced which was little more than a chequerboard of different site uses but even this stage represented many months of detailed negotiation, comprising anxious calculation of site acreages and readjustment of boundaries.
>
> The next stage was the building up of this paper plan into solid masses of buildings by means of small scale models which could be arranged and rearranged until a satisfactory massing and grouping was achieved. Each grouping had to be tested to see if it would give the required proportions of different housing units, and to be checked for standards of daylighting. Finally a preliminary solution was worked out which was not intended to be a rigid framework into which detailed plans must fit but rather a broad indication of the lines on which the plan was expected to evolve.
>
> In producing this three-dimensional layout the neighbourhood has been regarded as a series of visual groups. The buildings have been planned round open spaces of varying sizes and shapes each with its own type of tree planting and its own character and linked by roads and pedestrian ways. This idea is, of course, by no means new but it is something of a novelty in the East End and in the contract between new and old forms of development is likely to be striking.
>
> Pedestrian ways and linked open spaces have been used to a considerable extent, as the design evolved. Thus the Upper North Street open space which it is proposed will include a formal terrace and ultimately an ornamental pool will provide a setting for the public buildings placed around it – two churches, a Health Centre and a Community Centre. From it a pedestrian way leads past school playgrounds and the gardens of the Old People's Home to the principal open space which will be mainly occupied by playing fields and recreational facilities of various kinds.
>
> The market place will be a formal open space of another kind with the interest given by the bustle of the street traders and their gay and colourful stalls; to the north of the market place will be a small rectangular place bounded by a school, a few shops and a library, and this in turn will lead to a parkway curving away to the north.
>
> In the same way the housing and flats are grouped into closes and squares of different sizes, each with their individual character. In some cases there are children's playgrounds in the centres of block[s] completely protected from traffic.
>
> From this point of view the layout can be regarded as a series of groups linked by open spaces. The grouping has its importance from

> a sociological as well as from a visual point of view. A feeling of neighbourliness and social responsibility is much more likely to develop where dwellings are grouped than where they are strung out in long terraces or repetitive blocks of flats. Children are also more likely to behave well if they are part of a community and if they have their own playspace adapted to their needs.
>
> (Johnson-Marshall Papers)

This passage relates to the material on pp. 45–7 of the Guide, but what visitors read was a more administrative and technical version of the story, more focused on problems than on the achievement of an aesthetic effect which was intended to have a positive impact on social relations.

A complaint against the technocratic approach to planning, and often against the aesthetic approach too, was that the views of ordinary people were not sought or fed back into the schemes. It was assumed that the professionals, being middle class, would not have much insight into these lives of others. The Guide indeed makes no mention of the sociological survey work carried out prior to the planning of Lansbury by Margaret Willis, a young sociologist employed by the LCC, that included a survey of the needs and problems of the non-white population, mostly single men, in the Poplar and Stepney area, described as an urgent issue. The application of sociology to planning and architectural matters had been one of the contentious issues in the attempt to reform architectural education and professional attitudes in the late 1930s, especially at the Architectural Association where in 1957 Willis described the common aims of the two disciplines for the creation of 'physical, mental and emotional well-being among the residents'. In her view, it was a complicated matter for architects to make the right assumptions about the needs of working class residents, against a general background of antipathy to council housing. Her evidence from Lansbury showed that the cautiousness of the architects and planners was misplaced, and that 'the occupants themselves criticized the scheme as not being adventurous enough. If people are being upheaved from their traditional houses, they expect to be rehoused in something quite new and progressive and are disappointed if they are not. But the change should be in the right direction, with the grain not against it' (Willis 1957, 204).

Given the later emphasis on user-satisfaction with the low-rise housing at Lansbury, it is surprising to find this view expressed. The verdict in favour of flats was contradicted by an earlier user satisfaction survey of the housing undertaken by a visiting Housing Manager, Stella Diamant, and published in 1952. She found complaints of isolation among those in flats, who missed the friendly contact of the terrace and the garden wall, and were applying to move out of London to enjoy a house and a lower rent. There were inadequate play facilities for children, and the carefully designed landscape details of 1951 were suffering as a result. A 'free activity' playground, 'furnished with concrete blocks and boulders' between rows of houses and flats might have been ideal for smaller children, but attracted 'active schoolboys', with complaints

of broken windows. Despite the careful planning to exclude through traffic, Grundy Street, the main east–west axis of the site, was used as a rat-run by lorries to avoid traffic lights on the main road. These issues apart, the residents were happy with their new homes, apart from some problems of noise in the flats.

In a general comparison with the housing types normal in other developments in recent times, Diamant was unequivocal about the improvement on 'the grim "Buildings" of the nearby Isle of Dogs with external iron staircases and asphalt yards, and even the more modern LCC "Houses" and Poplar Borough Council flats with their unlandscaped siting'. ('Buildings' was the normal designation for a group of walk-up tenements.) Diamant's article was published in the *Town and Country Planning* magazine, issued by an organization committed to lower densities, and she argued that if a density of 136 persons per acre could be achieved with the predominantly low rise Lansbury, there was little justification for making families with small children have to live in flats (Diamant, 1952).

Longer term evaluations of Lansbury

In terms of the longer-term assessment of Lansbury, Walter Bor's article of 1978, written at a time when post-war public housing was at its reputational nadir, shows how far the wheel had turned. 'Many house types which are now considered very popular and desirable had already been built there and then', Bor wrote, 'the G.L.C. District Housing Manager reports a high degree of satisfaction and hardly any management problems with the 1951 Lansbury housing' (Bor 1978, 11).

Thus, the modest virtues of Lansbury eventually became its lifebelt as its successors were sinking. As Arthur Ling, who was so closely involved in the origins of Lansbury, wrote in the *Architects' Journal* series 'Buildings Revisited' in 1974, 'the design quality of the buildings is rather naïve, but it is of the kind that people understand'. Noting the continuation of housing on the western portion of the site as 'a thrilling surprise', Ling recognized 'complete sympathy' with the original concept, which would not have been surprising had he known that the architects were Shepheard and Epstein, the later practice of Peter Shepheard. Yet ignorance made the impression more powerful, as the text continues, 'we have come full circle after ignoring the lessons of Lansbury. The designers of this latest development seem to be saying: we respect the intentions of Lansbury, we reject almost everything that has since gone on in the East End, which does not seem to be concerned with people – merely with housing units or housing estates' (Ling 1974, 30–1). Ling felt that architects and planners should learn from Lansbury about the mistakes they had made in the years between, hoping 'that they will come away, as I have from Lansbury, with a better understanding of what town planning and housing could and should mean to people, and resolve to be more human than artfully inhuman, and with a resolve that their talents will serve people's needs rather than departmental or individual egos' (Ling 1974, 33).

The architect Christopher Woodward, representing a younger generation with more rigorous standards, wrote a companion article, recognizing

Lansbury as 'part of a very strange episode in British urbanism'. Noting the many ways in which the visual structure of Lansbury tailed away into disorder at the boundaries, or contradicted its intentions by, for example, admitting traffic to what would have been better as pedestrian streets, he wrote, 'The formal intention of the overall scheme appears to be derived from what must have been either a violent dislike of the pre-war East End, or a complete blindness to the qualities of its previous urban pattern. The model suggests that, under the Abercrombie–Forshaw plan, large areas of London were to be rebuilt with no formal guides other than a debased image of the garden city, and the 1949 Housing Manual' (Woodward 1974, 38). Woodward concurred with J. M. Richards' low opinion of the architecture in his 1951 *Architectural Review* piece, adding, 'Today one would still agree, adding that it could have been more worthy and perhaps even duller, with a clearer idea of the image of the scheme as a whole, a more rigorously critical attitude towards the use of modish ornament, and more knowledge of and respect for the real build traditions of the area in which the planners and architects were working' (Woodward 1974, 40).

The contrast in tone between these comments from different generations also reflects the different professional priorities of the critics, planner and architect respectively, and Ling's broader view of the social context. If Lansbury was not completely successful, he suggests, it was still much closer to what was needed than most of what followed it, in which the formal qualities sought by Woodward were paid for by loss of popular sympathy with the professionals' intentions. It is probably true to say that during the 1990s and 2000s, with the return of interest in more demonstrative forms of Modernism, Lansbury attracted less attention than the later alternative visions of housing nearby, both commissioned from 'outside' architects by the LCC at the point of its transition to the GLC – Ernö Goldfinger's Brownfield Estate (including Balfron Tower, 1968) and Robin Hood Gardens, south of East India Dock Road, by Alison and Peter Smithson, 1968–72. Each reflected a characteristic set of attitudes of its time, resulting to a large extent from the nature of government funding.

The Town Planning Exhibition

The 1951 *Guide to the Live Architecture Exhibition* offers a general introduction to the temporary exhibition displays on the site that originally complemented the streets and buildings, but only lasted for the five-month period of the Festival. It does not convey in much detail what it would have been like to visit them, however, and the twin pavilions at Lansbury, although well recorded in photographs, have been largely ignored in such surveys of the Festival as have been published, perhaps because there are no especially striking images to recapture the effect of visiting them.

Contemporaries were divided about the success of these exhibitions, which failed to attract the anticipated number of visitors, despite the committee's concern to turn the information into an accessible argument and in doing so

to catch a wider public. While some responsibility for their shortcomings could be attributed to inadequate budgets and uncertainties during the planning stages, plus the effort needed on the part of the visitors to travel to Lansbury, there was an underlying problem of making exhibitions of planning interesting for the public without becoming too technical. *Building* magazine commented that 'Perhaps the least visited of the Festival exhibitions is Lansbury, and certainly the emptiest part of Lansbury is the exhibition enclosure marked by a giant crane' (*Building* 1951, 336). Indeed, the theme of Building Science, the subject of the companion exhibition to the Planning one, was even more difficult to present in a compelling way, although it was this section that succeeding in producing the single image by which the whole exhibition aspect of Lansbury has usually been represented, the cautionary demonstration model of poor building practice called 'Gremlin Grange'.

The Lansbury exhibitions were the outcome of a failed attempt to include planning in the displays on the South Bank. As Holford remarked at the second meeting of the Town Planning and Building Science Committee on 5 April, 1949, it was 'extremely difficult to express the planning idea in the main exhibition' (WORK 25 A5 E3). He floated a proposal that he had previously discussed with Hugh Casson for a running commentary comparing 1851 (the year of the Crystal Palace) with 1951, presented in large picture frames. 'One or more pairs of actual comparisons should be shown in each frame, and if the frames were kept consistent throughout the Exhibition the visitor would glance at them in passing from one building to another and so become aware of the planning story told in a series of comparative cartoons' (WORK 25 A5 E3). A publication could show these images and become 'much more than a memento of the Exhibition'. Such a publication would presumably have been more substantial than the Lansbury catalogue, but the visitor's experience would have been disjointed and unsatisfactory, and planning as a theme would be present only in fragmented form in the South Bank, while Lansbury would offer a concentrated introduction to the subject.

The Town Planning Exhibition appears to have been conceived to meet a brief formulated by the Planning Sub-Committee of the Architecture Council, with William Holford and George Pepler as key members, and Jack Ratcliff as 'Theme Convener'. In considering how to present planning to the public, the committee members acknowledged that 'conscious planning' was a relatively new activity, but one that led up to legislation and professionalization. Land Use was to be a major theme, because planning was invented to control competition for space. 'This is a subject of interest for lay people', they claimed, 'as well as foreign technical people' (WORK 25 A5 E3).

Several of the features seen in 1951 were proposed at a meeting in July 1949, including an introductory section on 'The Battle for Land', and a feature to be called 'New Towns for Old'. As the committee continued to discuss the

scope of an exhibition at Poplar through 1949, it was learnt that no purpose-made building would be available to house it, and in the first instance one of the schools at Lansbury was imagined as the location. Another suggestion that emerged at this point was to make the exhibition more appealing to non-specialists by building a miniature town, which was described as 'Lilliput', to be constructed by film set builders from the Ealing Studios on the school playground. They discussed Lilliput in detail over the course of a year before budget cuts eliminated it. In the event, the school had already opened by the time of the Festival, so neither playground nor indoor space would have been available.

Three names were suggested as 'script writers' for the Planning Exhibition, including John Earley, a member of the Architecture Council, and Max Lock (1908–88), an architect and planner, teaching at the AA in the late 1930s, and prominent in planning during and after the war, especially in the Middlesbrough Plan. It was Jaqueline Tyrwhitt (1905–83), however, the third name considered, to whom the task was assigned. She attended her first meeting on 3 March 1950 and was co-opted to the committee (WORK 25 A5 E3).

As Ellen Shoshkes relates in her monograph of 2013, Tyrwhitt moved from training in horticulture to studying architecture at the AA, followed by international travel, work at Dartington and planning study in Berlin. She finished the 1930s as a student at the post-graduate School of Planning and Research for National Development, an offshoot of the AA, brainchild of E. A. A. Rowse, the displaced Principal of the architecture school. Rowse, who trained in Edinburgh, had been strongly if indirectly influenced by Patrick Geddes, as had Tyrwhitt, who represented a new generation of Geddes followers too young to have known him personally. Rowse, Tyrwhitt and others interpreted Geddes' lessons in the light of more fully-formed Modernist ideas and Tyrwhitt became the principal interpreter of the master through her short and approachable collection of texts *Patrick Geddes in India*, 1947, together with her heavily edited version of his book *Cities in Evolution*, in 1949. During the war, Tyrwhitt went to research and teach at the privately funded Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction which grew out of the AA Planning School. Her career followed a complex path thereafter, involving teaching in Britain and the USA, and administration of professional organizations, including a major involvement in CIAM and a close friendship with Siegfried Giedion. Through all these activities, she was able to continue promoting the holistic nature of Geddes's vision (Shoshkes 2013). The 1951 exhibition can hardly be claimed as one of her greatest achievements, however.

Tyrwhitt's working papers for the 1951 exhibition in her archive at the RIBA, London, provide detailed information on her research processes. She collaborated with the designer Ronald Avery, who also designed the Building Science exhibition. Some of her letters were sent on the headed paper of the architect Wells Coates, whose home office was at 18 Yeoman's

Row, South Kensington, but there is no evidence that it was a collaboration with him and she was presumably simply using this as an office address. The budget cuts announced for the whole Festival in 1950, combined with the refusal of the LCC to allow the newly built school to be used for display, led to a much reduced exhibition space in a tented structure, designed by the architects Hening and Chitty. Their red and white striped tent, standing next to the bombsite of the Congregational Church on East India Dock Road, was hung from a series of light steel 'A' frames joined by wires which were gathered as guy ropes and fixed to the ground at each end. Acting as the portal to the whole site, it was intended to instruct the visitor and set the new buildings of Lansbury in context. Nearby, a tower crane, lent by the contractors, Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons, carried the numbers – 1951 – as discs and was dressed with a typical Festival string of bunting, all lit up at night.

Jack Ratcliff, the secretary of the Town Planning Committee, explained the role of the 'script writer': 'to collate material to illustrate the broad proposals of the Planning Sub-Committee, to decide what emphasis should be given to the various parts of this material' (WORK 25 A5 E3). The exhibition aimed to show real projects completed in Britain since 1937. As Tyrwhitt wrote 'In Britain we have been concerned for so long with programs for a better future that we have naturally become somewhat skeptical of "plans." In arranging the exhibition, therefore, my associates … and I decided to show nothing that is not actual' (TyJ/14/13). Her proposal started with two aims; the first, that 'Town Planning means more fun for more people', echoing a phrase used by Clough Williams-Ellis that reflected the spirit of the Festival, and the second, 'Towns are being planned and built at this moment' (WORK 25 A5 E3).

An opening section 'The Battle for the Land' was intended to fulfill Tyrwhitt's ambition for attention-grabbing opening and closing sections to the exhibition. It would convey the pressures through history that created the need for planning. Tyrwhitt and Avery both hoped that the subject be represented by a mural painting, but the committee had misgivings. The idea of 'different interests symbolized by figures tugging at a carpet' was explored. A letter from the artist Ivon Hitchens outlines a narrative that resembles the Geddes valley section as a sequence from virgin forest to a 'wilderness of miner's cottages & factories' and finally 'the same reconstructed and laid out with modern buildings, parks, trees etc' (TyJ/14/12, 3 November 1950). Hitchens said he was too busy to undertake the work, but Tyrwhitt still wanted a largely abstract treatment of the subject and proposed two young St Ives painters, Bryan Winter and Peter Lanyon. At a later stage, Stephen Bone (1904–58), a more conservative artist, is mentioned, and he was the final executant for the work, although not credited in the official guide.

There was clearly some tension about what kind of artist to choose. As artists concerned with landscape but close to abstraction, Lanyon or Hitchens

would have satisfied the organizers but might have left the public confused about what they were supposed to learn from the painting. Bone was better known as an art critic than as a practitioner, but had painted murals in the 1920s. His 'Battle for the Land' took the form of a curved panorama, depicting the transition from agricultural landscape through the Georgian mansion and its park, to an industrial and urban landscape. By 1951, this was a familiar trope from exhibitions and illustration, rendered here without any acute dystopian finale, and hardly living up to the expectation of an 11 July 1950 meeting that it should 'make manifest that only by planning could order be brought out of chaos'.

On 5 July, the committee discussed 'The Heart of the Town', using the same title that was adopted for the 1951 meeting of CIAM, the second British location for this biennial series, held at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire with a particular view to the international delegates visiting the various Festival sites. Tyrwhitt's proposal, drawn out in plan form, was for a display model of a town centre, 'not an entirely new town centre but rather the adaption of an existing town centre or "Heart of Your Town as it might be"'. The next section 'The Needs of the People' was divided into a series of bays relating to different stages of the life cycle, linked to photographs of actual buildings. This was to include three dimensional figures in cut out aluminium, felt and copper by Dorothy Rogers.

Tyrwhitt sent out forms to planning offices across the country to ask for their suggestions for recent buildings that could connect the vision of the future to an existing reality. Wartime exhibitions, such as *Reconstructing Britain*, 1942, mixed European and American photographs with British ones, but despite the unpromising content, this temptation was resisted. Having tabulated the responses according to building type, Tyrwhitt added her comments. Although there were not enough buildings with real Modern Movement credentials to help depict all the necessary events in daily life, she was relatively tolerant of more traditional styles, including Walthamstow Civic Centre by Philip Hepworth ('better than some Georgian') although perhaps more critical of streamlined semi-modernism, simply writing 'NO' against Greenwich Town Hall by Ewart Culpin. In her critical gamut, there was a narrow band of acceptability, falling, in the case of Swimming Baths, between Morecambe ('slightly flashy but not bad') and the LCC Parliament Hill lido ('would do but not much fun'). Generally, these buildings, culled from illustrations in the pages of the *Architects' Journal* and other periodicals, were examples of what John Summerson, in a wartime article in *Horizon* magazine, had called 'Bread and Butter and Architecture', acknowledging that it was unrealistic to expect all the new buildings of the reconstruction period to be first rate architecture, and arguing that a good level of mediocrity was acceptable: 'Altogether it seems to me that the high fliers – the Lloyd Wrights and the Corbusiers and their satellites – have broken as many barriers as needed breaking for the present' (Summerson 1942, 243).

In the event, however, these exemplars were a minor aspect of the display. After passing 'The Battle for the Land' visitors entered a darkened space displaying 'The Needs of the People'. Planner and educator Gordon Stephenson (Holford's successor in the Civic Design Chair at Liverpool) called it 'the multifarious activities of people during what Mumford calls "the phases of life"', adding that 'incidentally some of the activities shown would surprise the ordinary family' (Stephenson 1951, 380). The schema of 'a day in the life' was adopted by Tyrwhitt in order to relate the material to the visitor's own experience, with the selected recent buildings reconfigured in an imagined relationship, used to show the physical setting in an attempt to ground the argument in reality. The 'types' represented were the baby, schoolchild, industrial trainee, young married woman, factory worker, office worker and finally an elderly couple. In each case, the individual was shown taking part in Working Life, Home Life, Social Life, Private and Personal Life, Civic Life and 'some form of Outdoor Life' (TyJ/14/13 Memo 237. March 21, 1951 'Exhibition for Town Planning Specialists').

John Summerson found this display over-complex and at the same time simplistic, writing in the *New Statesman*, 'there is some embarrassing over-insistence on the obvious and a considerable effort of will is needed to follow the gambits of the display artists to their ludicrously simple conclusions. A screen dedicated to a day in the life of a baby, a child, an adolescent and an adult,

Figure 13 Town Planning Pavilion interior (WORK 25/209 FOB/3856)

consists of a series of dolls-house tableaux, co-ordinated with sinister-looking clocks which, as they flash round a miniature day, illuminate each tableau in turn. Clever: but hardly worth the trouble of watching, since the information gained is commonplace and could better be conveyed in fifty lines of lucid prose.' His conclusion showed that the earnestness of Tyrwhitt and her committee's intention had not been tempered by understanding of the audience, as Summerson continued, 'This is a misuse of display. It challenges the visitor to brace himself for a communication of some import, then tells him that a mouse is a mouse. There is too much of this kind of thing, both here and at the South Bank. Display is defeating its own ends' (Summerson 1951).

Although the exhibition space was not large, there were alternative pathways, one of which siphoned off material likely to be of more specialist interest, with examples of the implementation of planning policies, notably at Plymouth. In Stephenson's view, however, 'the attempt to explain survey and plan technique is guaranteed to confuse the nimblest-witted', adding 'It may be that these techniques cannot easily be explained' (Stephenson 1951, 380). The conclusion of the display, housed in a drum-shaped addition to the main tent with a vermiculite dome, took the form of a three-dimensional diorama with a model of an imaginary town, called Avoncaster, as it would appear in the near future (Fig. 14). Trywhitt's draft caption described how the visitor

Figure 14 'Avoncaster' display (WORK 25/209 FOB/3854)

should imagine themselves looking out of a hotel corridor window overlooking the river, where a timber yard had been cleared away to create a miniature South Bank combined with elements of Battersea Pleasure Gardens. It reads like a third image in the sequence of Pugin's 'Contrasted Towns' in the 1841 edition of *Contrasts*, where the despoilment of the nineteenth century has been banished, and replaced by a new harmony with nature: 'there is a bandstand, and a restaurant and a dance hall; also a new art gallery and the public library with a little theatre attached. The health centre is here and a block of administrative offices. The old church maintains its dignified position beside the bridge and across the way are brightly lighted shops, some offices and the old Town Hall' (TyJ/14/7 'The Heart of the Town'). This is the layout rather baldly depicted in the plan on p. 43 of the guidebook.

The Planning Sub-Committee, at its meeting of 5 September 1950, made various detailed comments on the early proposals, acting as if planning a real town and requesting, among other changes, the addition of a central library and criticizing the juxtaposition of a department store with a ruined church, and stating that in general 'a greater effort should be made in achieving a satisfactory architectural grouping as a whole' (WORK 25 A5 E3).

There was a lot of Patrick Geddes in this vision, especially in the demonstration of overcoming the 'Paleotechnic' age of coal power by the cleanliness of the electric 'Neotechnic', while preserving the best of the old through 'conservative surgery'. The medieval bridge is closed to heavy traffic, we are told, while the offices of Avoncaster's professionals are remodeled Georgian houses, with a 'pleasant Victorian pub' alongside them. The best of the old would stand next to the best of the new. 'A town, like a person, must continue to grow and to alter throughout its life. This is just the next stage in the re-building of a town centre, at present cluttered, uncomfortable and inconvenient, but yet containing several attractive and very English features that are worthy of new neighbours and a pleasant setting in which both can express together the continuity of human life in the heart of the town' (WORK 25 A5 E3).

Tyrwhitt's notes to her committee suggested 'this scene must be handled by an architect-painter and should not be treated with nostalgic sharrawaggy'. The last word had been resurrected by the *Architectural Review* editorial team from eighteenth century proto-picturesque landscape theory to act as a comical shorthand for the qualities of revived picturesque in post-war planning that were manifest in the South Bank site, although only to a moderate degree at Lansbury. The designer credited with the 'Heart of the Town' on p. 49 of the catalogue was Tom Mellor (1914–94), an architect and planner educated at Liverpool and a colleague of Holford's during the war. Mellor was an accomplished artist, although his work on the model was shared with a younger architect-planner, Patrick Horsbrugh (1920–2014), who had worked voluntarily with Max Lock on the Middlesbrough Plan before attending the AA School. Horsbrugh later became famous for his 'High Paddington' scheme

of 1952 with Sergei Kadleigh but built nothing and ended his career as an academic in the USA.

In the model that was seen through the open folding casement of the imaginary hotel, the portrayal of a square fronted by the preserved Georgian houses and the old town hall, on the far side of the imaginary river, succeeded in avoiding the feared sharawaggy (Fig. 14). Summerson found it 'a large, lively model of a reconstructed town-centre, on very ordinary conservative principles' (Summerson 1951). To Gordon Stephenson, it looked 'like a new centre for Norwich – under a Lancashire sky' – Horsburgh was a friend and admirer of the painter John Piper, famous for his dark skies (Stephenson 1951).

The final phrase 'The Heart of the Town' was the one adopted as the theme of the eighth CIAM Conference, held in the small English town of Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire in the summer of 1951, in which Tyrwhitt played a major role, including editing the book of the proceedings with J. L. Sert and Ernesto Rogers, published in 1952 by Lund Humphries as *CIAM 8: The Heart of the City, towards the humanization of Urban Life*. The contribution by Sigfried Giedion, the Swiss historian of architecture and culture and Secretary of CIAM since its foundation in 1928, is significant, since Tyrwhitt and Giedion developed a close professional and personal friendship in 1948 that lasted until Giedion's death in 1968. Reflecting the anti-technological message of his second major book, *Mechanisation takes Command* (1948), Giedion's address to CIAM 8 recognised a desire among the generation then aged around 25 to 'return to the human scale and the assertation [sic] of the right of the individual over the tyranny of mechanical tools' (Tyrwhitt et al. 1952, 17). He identified this right particularly with the pedestrian, a human right that he believed had been overridden by the petrol engine, that had also destroyed open air meeting places. The idea of the citizen's day that included walking to and from different activities, as demonstrated in such an apparently laboured way in Tyrwhitt's display, becomes more understandable in the light of Giedion's passionate concern to control the cars that while still hardly a problem in 1951 Britain were already destroying the sociability of American cities.

Summerson claimed to have overheard a Cockney visitor murmur 'Too good to be true', adding that it was a problem of perception that 'architecture is expensive nonsense, better left to foreigners, and with no conceivable relevance to his own conditions of life' (Summerson 1951).

For Susan Cowan, writing about the exhibition from documentary sources, 'the struggle by the organisers to balance accuracy and accessibility highlights a larger concern about whether planners could communicate their ideas to the public', although she believes that the exhibition was 'the culmination of both the advances and limitations in planning presentation techniques' (Cowan 2014, 178). It may well have been an improvement on earlier efforts, but if Summerson's lack of enthusiasm is taken into account, then it is hard to make a balanced retrospective judgement. As with most cheer-leading literature for planning at the time, the alternatives of dystopian past and semi-utopian

present were depicted too simplistically, lacking a strong enough vision to lift them above the ordinary.

The Building Research Exhibition

After viewing the Town Planning Exhibition, visitors were expected to progress to the Building Research display alongside. A memo of the Council for Architecture (WORK 25 A5 E3) identified the audience for the 'Live Architecture Exhibition' as a whole rather broadly as:

> The general public
> The interested layman (member of Housing, Planning, Local Authority committee)
> The technical visitor (architect, builder, etc.)
> The foreign visitor

The Building Science section of the exhibition was a showcase for the nationally funded Building Research Station, founded in 1917 at Garston, Hertfordshire, which engaged with building professionals rather than the public, although it was proper for this state-funded service to present its findings to a wide audience. In addition, putting this material before the public was consonant with the intention to present science accessibly throughout the Festival exhibitions as a representation of a British approach to the modern world, demonstrating a balance between humanities and technology. While Building Science was an area that touched the daily lives of all citizens, only a few of them (categorized in the memo) were in a position at this date to act either as producers or empowered consumers whose approach could be altered by this knowledge.

Jack Ratcliff acted as architect and theme convenor for Building Science, with Cecil Handisyde of the BRS as script writer. The display designer was again Ronald Avery. The low-level structure consisted of a series of small linked pavilions, 'each of which expresses in its external shape the nature of the exhibit within', as the *Architects' Journal* put it, with an illustration showing the section on structural stability in the foreground, featuring two angled precast concrete supports with counterbalancing projections above the roofline (*Architects' Journal* 1951, 281). Other topics covered were Heating, Lighting, Stability, Durability and Rain Penetration. A section on Noise featured a giant ear, through which visitors could listen to a recording of 'noises such as radios, babies' cries, and suburban orgies', which would have made it more entertaining.

A full-size cutaway of a house demonstrated 'good methods of building – from correct foundations to weather-proofing', in contrast to the cross section treatment of Gremlin Grange, the most memorable and spectacular feature of the exhibition compound, designed by the versatile Jack Ratcliff and originally titled 'Building without Science'. It was a pantomime house in the still-current

suburban developer's mock-Tudor mode constructed with leaning walls to act as a demonstration of short cuts and ignorance on the part of some builders. Reprising a familiar pre-war theme, it suggested that there was some kind of cross-infection between the superficiality of the architectural styling of such houses and their structural soundness, as if the money squandered on fake half-timber necessarily robbed the essential but hidden qualities of building to trick the unwary. In a combination of aesthetic and social snobbery about the 'by-pass suburbs' and 'ribbon development', a united front of architectural critics and other members of the intelligentsia found this a reasoned way to air their prejudices. A famous law case of Mrs. Elsy Borders and the unsatisfactory house she had purchased in the 1930s on the Coney Hall estate in Kent was widely publicized and her costs were met by the left-wing Architects and Technicians Association, confirming their worst fears, even though there was no evidence that 'jerry-building' was as prevalent as its critics suggested (Russell 1939; Reynolds DNB).

By 1951, there was perhaps an additional political dimension to Gremlin Grange. Seen in the context of Lansbury, it represented a lifestyle choice involving separation from the 'organic community' of the East End (a community also implying a vote for Labour), and its reincarnation as social housing rented from the benevolent LCC, and choosing instead the isolation of the suburbs and the risks of private enterprise building in pursuit of social climbing through home ownership.

The exhibition compound included the Rosie Lee Café, named after the generic gypsy fortune teller, who in turn was Cockney rhyming slang for tea. It was designed by Sadie Speight (1906–92), the wife of Leslie Martin who joined the LCC team to work initially on the Royal Festival Hall. She was assisted by Leonard Manasseh (1917–2017), the young designer of the '51 Bar on the South Bank. It was a tented structure, like the Town Planning Pavilion, displaying a different kind of structural ingenuity with only slender steel columns creating an open feeling.

Domestic Furnishing

Among the visitor's others experiences at Lansbury, preserved only in photographs, were the Show House and Show Flat, each with furnished rooms. In contrast to the more ambitious interiors of the Homes and Gardens Pavilion on the South Bank, or those in the Land Travelling Exhibition, the Lansbury interiors aimed at a realistic level of taste for the socio-economic group in the district, or, in the words of the Press Release, 'the latest ideas of good interior decoration bearing in mind the average income of the ordinary tenant' (Johnson-Marshall Papers). The LCC stipulated in 1949 that while they would be prepared to delegate the selection of furnishings to the Council of Industrial Design, they skirted around the issue of taste by reserving the right 'to reject any proposed furnishing on the grounds of unserviceability or excessive cost', which was presumably in an effort to avoid anything too alienating in its

Modernism. The East End remained an active centre of furniture manufacture at this time. All the rooms seem to have shown the products of a local firm, George M. Brown, based in The Grove, E.15, just beyond Stratford town centre across the River Lea from Lansbury. In one of the photograph captions, these were described as 'simple but highly attractive', and without going far outside the normal, the plain but substantial pieces made a contribution to the long march of taste against the resistance of working class folk culture of kitsch and clutter. The rooms seem to have been set up to suggest different occupations; the Living Room, for example, being 'shown as if occupied by a naval man, with his books, his model ship, his chart of Flag signals, and his desk' (WORK 25/199, caption to photo FOB/3355). The decoration and selection were overseen by Marjorie Holford, the wife of William Holford, a former Rome Scholar in painting (WORK 25 A5 E3). The rooms were relatively bare, with framed lithographs by contemporary artists from the 'School Prints' series hanging on the walls and, in the living room, a 'feature wall' with a dark wallpaper patterned with 'a diaper of larger and smaller dots', assuring that 'simplicity and elegance are the home key of this interior' (WORK 25/209, caption to FOB/3872). In the dining area was a sideboard, demonstrating as the caption to the official photograph announced, 'Sheraton's language spoken with a 20th century accent; traditional British craftsmanship at its best' (WORK 25/209, Caption to FOB/3873).

A separate brochure with colour illustrations was printed for the Show Flat. This was designed and equipped by the London Co-Operative Society, part of the national Co-Operative movement. The designer W. J. Simpson is photographed working on the designs, but it was apparently the work of many hands, including Grace Lovat Fraser, widow of a well-known graphic artist, as consultant for colour. The ivory white walls of the kitchen were made 'cheery and gay' with door frames in signal red, and 'shelves lined with thick turquoise American cloth with a small star' (London Co-Operative Society 1951).

Probably more typical of the residents of Lansbury as a whole, however, were the furnishings of Albert and Alice Snoddy's flat in Gladstone House. They were the first residents to move into Lansbury in February 1951, with their two children and pet tortoise. Their house was not on display but was photographed for the press, showing three generations of women in the living room, furnished with signifiers of upper working class respectability: net curtains, potted plants on the window ledge, dark stained and vaguely Jacobean extendable table and dining chairs, and an art deco mirror hanging over the mantelpiece clock. Although ostensibly similar to the approved products of George M. Brown, these items, which might equally have been found in a real-life Gremlin Grange, were of the type against which the new Council of Industrial Design ran an unceasing campaign of denigration though the post-war decade, with relatively little effect.

In 2001, Mrs Snoddy, whose previous house had been bombed, told the *Architects' Journal*, 'I'd always lived in a house and it took a long time to get used to being shut up in a flat. I don't think my husband ever got used to it –

he'd always had a shed in the back yard where he could bang and clout about, whereas he couldn't in this place' (Singmaster 2001).

Visitor numbers and the impact of Lansbury

The high initial expectation of visitor numbers at Lansbury can be judged from an entry in the minutes of the Council of Architecture in 1950, concerning the print run for the guidebook. On an assumption of 5,000 people per day, it was hoped there could be 700,000 in the Festival period. The reality was rather different, with a total of 86,646, making an average of only 577 visitors per day. This compared to the South Bank with a total of 8 million, but the competition was unequal to the same degree. The South Bank meant the Festival itself, and there was at least enough diversion for a full day's visit, finishing with dining and outdoor dancing. It was situated in one of the best-connected places in London, whereas Lansbury was then (and even today remains) unknown territory to Londoners, let alone to visitors from other parts. Rumours of its attractions are unlikely to have lured the uncommitted.

From this point of view, the exhibition element of Lansbury can be deemed only a moderate success, but unlike the South Bank (the Festival Hall excepted) the rest of Lansbury was built for a longer future. In Tyrwhitt's defence, it is hard to imagine how an exhibition on Town Planning could have been done in a different way that would have broken through to a mass audience. Maybe 'Lilliput' would have been the solution, but even then, only if it had abandoned its serious intentions and become an adjunct of Battersea.

As partly recounted, Lansbury underwent quite a lot of kicking in the professional press. Reflecting on the commercial failure of the exhibition, the *Architects' Journal* countered the negative view of its sister paper, the *Architectural Review*, by supportively commenting that 'to the architect and town planner – to anyone, in fact, with a little imagination – it strikes a most impressive note in London's contribution to the Festival of Britain.' The emphasis was less on the architecture as such than on the potential for observing the experiment of creating a neighbourhood unit with a view to 'bringing a sense of community to residents' (*Architects' Journal* 1951, 275).

Louis MacNeice's 1939 poem, *Autumn Journal*, whose message of moderate expectation would have resonated with the generation that created Lansbury, includes in its closing sequence a question:

> Or shall our dream be earnest of the real
> Future when we wake,
> Design a home, a factory, a fortress
> Which, though with effort, we can really make?
>
> (MacNeice 1939, 95)

As the *Architects' Journal* put it, 'Lansbury shows us the world we can build in spite of these restrictions' (*Architects' Journal* 1951, 275). William Holford appeared to be answering MacNeice's question by stating that it was actual people and places rather than the abstractions or representations favoured by the professionals that mattered. At the end of his broadcast on Lansbury, he proposed that 'if the festival spotlight reveals anything behind the temporary displays, it will reveal this fact: that what skill we have in construction is not primarily a matter of technique or materials or organization or salesman. It consists, above all, in finding new ways in which our old pleasures in practical adaptations and informal designs, can be given a sort of social sanction, and thus fitted into the long tradition of our building craft' (Holford 1951, 495).

Opinion on Lansbury has continued to be divided as it was in 1951, largely between those whose architectural taste requires stronger flavour, and those whose understanding of people and their lifestyles finds merit in avoiding just these qualities. In terms of planning history, it was either very radical in its departure from established Modernist norms (which did not always imply the most Modern of architecture), or otherwise very conservative in its reversion to older and more familiar patterns. In this respect, it is a reminder that definitions of the appropriate response to the economic and social conditions of Modernity has never been a settled or agreed matter for very long.

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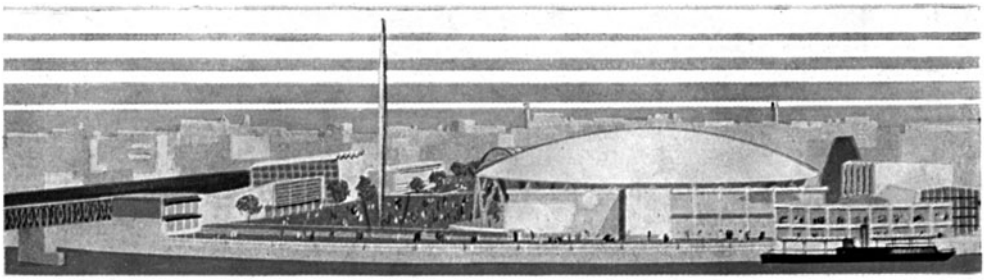

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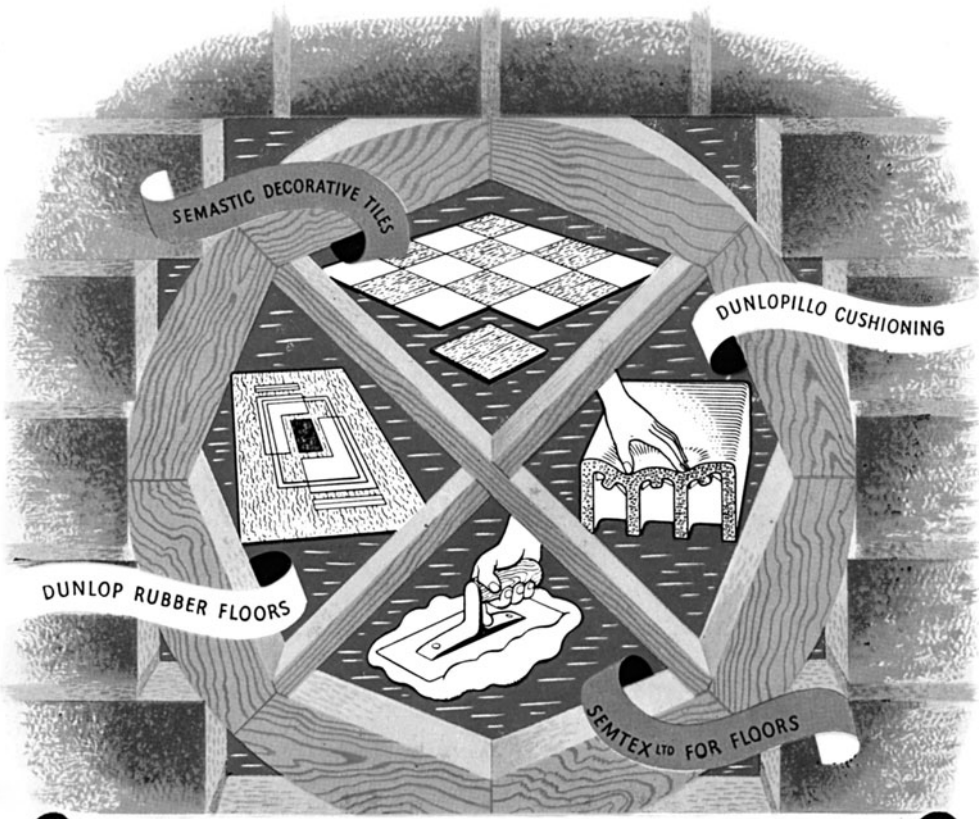

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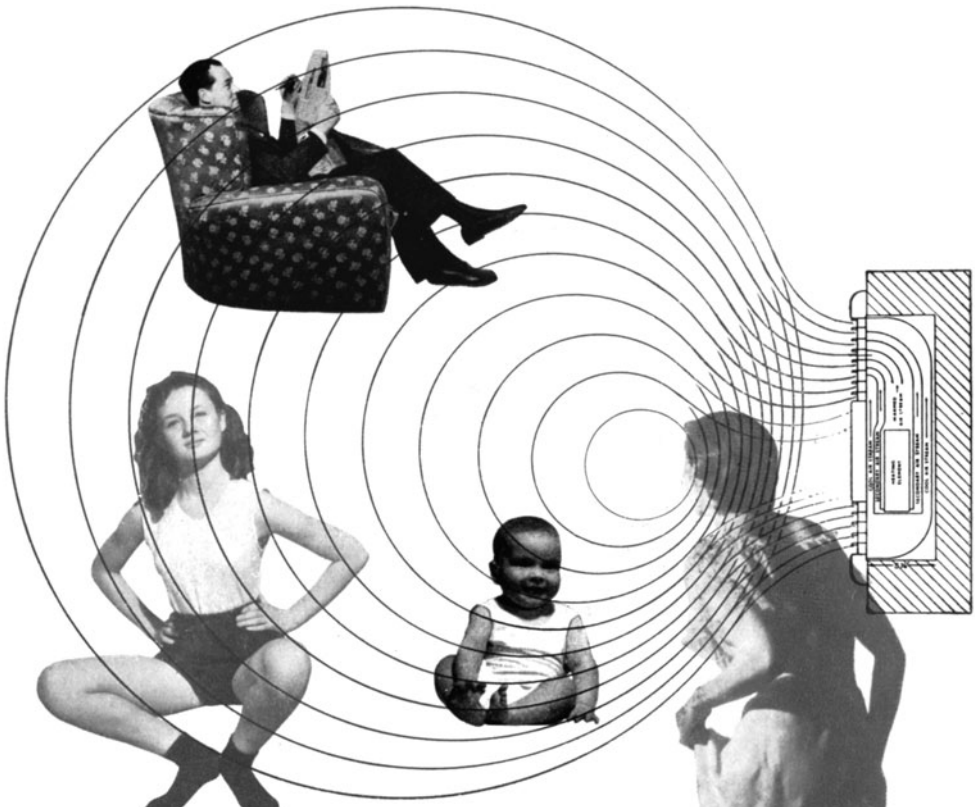

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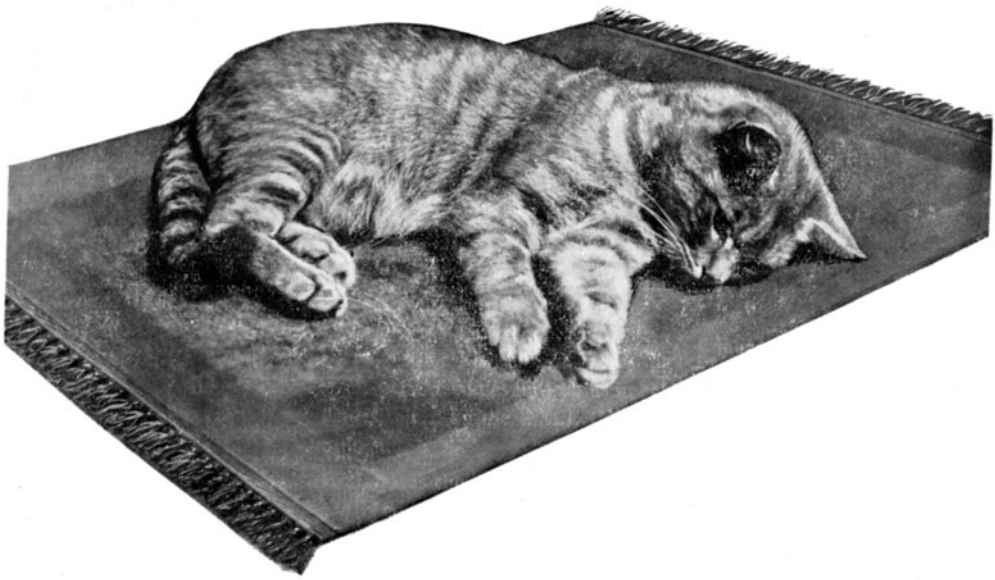

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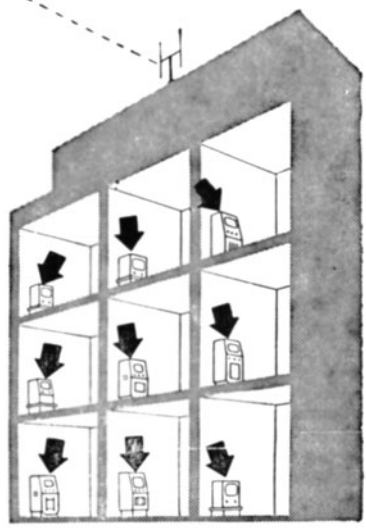

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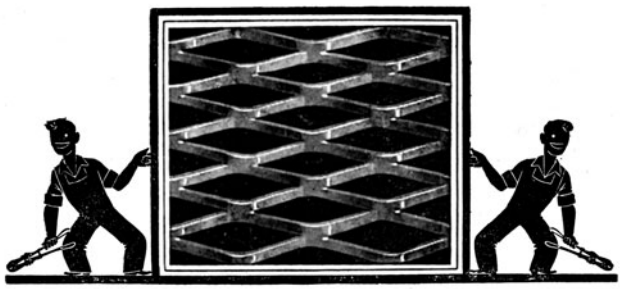

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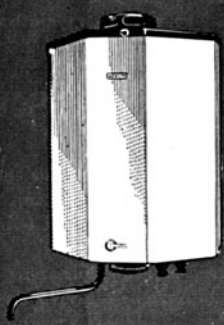

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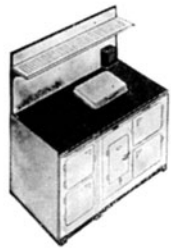

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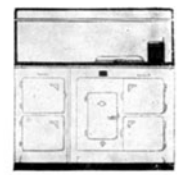

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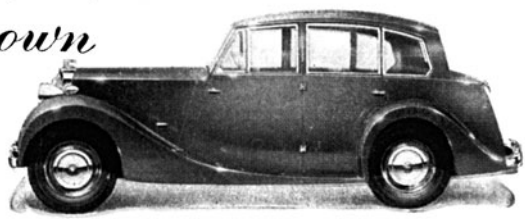

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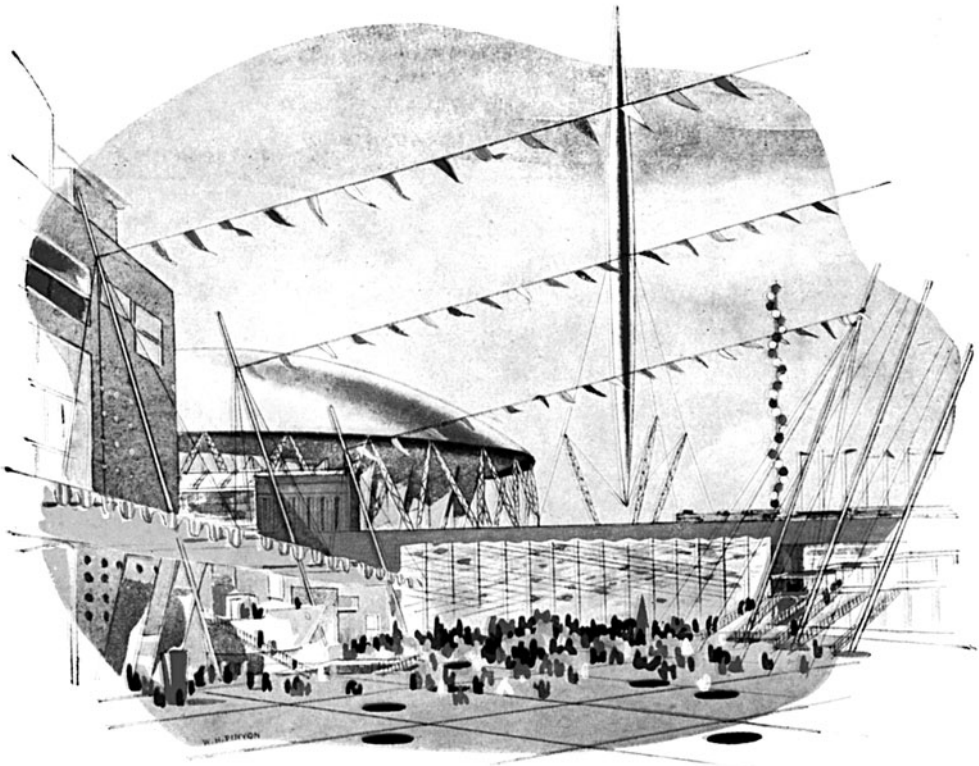

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GUIDE TO THE EXHIBITION OF

ARCHITECTURE TOWN-PLANNING AND BUILDING RESEARCH

Edited by H. McG. Dunnett

H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE

THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN
PATRONS OF THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN
VISIT LANSBURY

THE STORY OF THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN

The Exhibition of Architecture is part of something far larger—the Festival of Britain.

The Festival is nation-wide. All through the summer, and all through the land, its spirit will be finding expression in a great variety of ways. Taken together, all these activities will add up to one united act of national reassessment, and one corporate reaffirmation of faith in the nation's future.

HOW THE FESTIVAL BEGAN

In 1947 His Majesty's Government decided that the centenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851 should be marked by means of national displays in the Arts, Architecture, Science, Technology and Industrial Design, so that this country and the world could pause to review British contributions to civilisation in the arts of peace.

To advise how this decision should be most fittingly carried out, the Government set up the Festival Council, a voluntarily serving body of thirty-two men and women, all of them distinguished in some province of the national life. The Chairman of the Council is General Lord Ismay. To plan and implement the Festival projects, a new official organisation was formed—the Festival of Britain Office—with Mr. Gerald Barry as its Director-General.

Associated with the office in certain branches of its work are the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Council of Industrial Design, the British Film Institute and the National Book League. In addition to these, two new Councils were formed so that the Festival Office should have appropriate specialist advice—one for Architecture, Town Planning and Building Research and the other for Science and Technology.

A CONSTELLATION OF EVENTS

As planning began, it soon became evident that the Arts would best be displayed in a series of country-wide musical and dramatic performances and special exhibitions, continuing throughout the Festival summer. In order that Religion should play its full part, an Advisory Committee of Christian Churches was set up. Achievements in architecture could also be presented in dynamic form by the display to the public of part of a new neighbourhood which was planned to be built and occupied in the Poplar district of London.

To demonstrate the contributions to civilisation made by British advances in science, technology and industrial design, it was clearly necessary that they should be exhibited in their practical and applied forms, against a background representing the living working world of to-day. To provide a setting for the presentation of this theme the South Bank Exhibition was conceived.

As this great project grew, it became the centre-piece of the whole Festival. But the South Bank site is relatively small for a national exhibition of such consequence ; for that reason the Exhibition is supplemented by other Festival displays and activities elsewhere—each complete in itself, yet each a part of the one single conception.

Heavy Engineering, which has necessarily to be represented by a number of bulky exhibits, is the subject of the Exhibition of Industrial Power in the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow. Certain important aspects of Science do not properly fall within the terms of reference of the South Bank Exhibition ; but, since they are essentially part of the British contribution to civilisation, they are displayed in a new exhibition in South Kensington. Linen technology and science in agriculture find a place in the ' Farm and Factory ' Exhibition in Belfast. Reclaiming of agricultural land is seen in practical form in the Dolhendre Hillside Farm Scheme in Wales. There are also Book Exhibitions in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

SHOWING THE FESTIVAL FLAG

It was always intended that the Festival should be nation-wide and that the lead given in planning the official events might encourage independent organisations all over the country to contribute to it in ways of their own choosing. This has, in fact, happened in full measure, and the summer of 1951 will see a wonderful display of the many facets of our national life.

Independently organised events naturally centre round subjects of particular local interest or prestige and most of them are some distance away from the Festival's centre-piece—the South Bank. Now, the story told there is fundamental to the full expression of the Festival theme, so it was decided to create special versions of this Exhibition that could bring the story to the main centres of population throughout the country.

There are two of these travelling exhibitions. The Festival ship *Campania* contains a miniature version of the South Bank Exhibition and will visit a number of British ports during the summer. The Land Travelling Exhibition is based on the industrial design and production aspect of the South Bank story and will visit Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Nottingham in turn.

The displays which embody the Theme of the official Exhibitions were planned under the responsible direction of the Festival Office's Exhibitions Presentation Panel, which has the following membership :—

GERALD BARRY, *Director-General, Chairman*
CECIL COOKE, *Director, Exhibitions, Deputy Chairman*
MISHA BLACK, O.B.E.
G. A. CAMPBELL, *Director, Finance and Establishments*
HUGH CASSON, *Director, Architecture*
IAN COX, *Director, Science and Technology*
A. D. HIPPISLEY COXE, *Council of Industrial Design*
JAMES GARDNER, O.B.E.
JAMES HOLLAND
M. HARTLAND THOMAS, *Council of Industrial Design*
RALPH TUBBS
PETER KNEEBONE, *Secretary*

CONTENTS

PLAN FOR POSTERITY

Would you like a slag heap at the bottom of your garden?

★

Do you mind if your child plays in the street amid the traffic?

★

Or crosses main roads on the way to school?

★

Do you dislike spending your spare time in traffic jams after a hard day's work, or after a Sunday in the country?

★

Do you often long for a little peace and fresh air away from smoke, soot and noise?

★

There is no need to answer these questions. The answers are obvious to everybody.

How has all this happened? It results from the mistakes of one hundred and fifty years of a 'free-for-all' philosophy and a policy of "I'm alright Jack!"

These mistakes were made in the name of progress, but they have left us a dreadful legacy. It is true that many advantages have resulted from the Industrial Revolution. Better communications, better sanitation, higher standards of living and all the material benefits of mass production.

But we have got them at the price of dirty, drab, congested towns, squalid waterfronts, polluted rivers, scarred and blackened countryside. Many of our finest buildings are hidden by factory chimneys and grim looking warehouses. We still have far too much disease, juvenile and adult crime, too much cruelty to children. And some of us *do* have slag heaps at the bottom of the garden. All this is traceable directly to lack of planning.

For planning means no more than thinking ahead. Its purpose is not to reduce us all to a dull uniformity but to release each one of us from the restrictions imposed by squalor and irresponsibility. Much has been done to put matters right. Much more still remains to be done. It is slow and costly, but it pays dividends in health and happiness.

The Festival of Britain gives us a breathing space to assess what we have achieved so far. In 1951 we are hosts to the world. Throughout the country we have put on show our architectural heritage—our cathedrals and churches, our castles and palaces, our country houses and villages. We can rightly be proud of these. But even here, there was still room for improvement and so that everything should be at its best, a tidying-up campaign has been carried out on a national scale.

This national spring-clean is part of the function of architecture, the real purpose of which is to achieve elegance and order, efficiency and gaiety in our everyday surroundings.

What architecture in the true sense can do for us in the future is presented in the South Bank Exhibition. Here, at Lansbury, can be seen what is being *done* to-day.

BACKGROUND TO LANSBURY

Within and to the north of the sudden loop in the Thames which almost encircles the Isle of Dogs, close to the heart of London's busy dockland, lies Poplar—part of the East End home of the traditional Londoner, the cockney. Its name is derived quite simply from the many poplar trees that once grew there.

For more than fifty years, Poplar has been one of the metropolitan boroughs which, with the Cities of London and Westminster, comprise the Administrative County of London. At one time, it was part of the Manor of Stepney, later becoming a parish in its own right. But long before it became a borough, Poplar was a firmly established community, rich in historical associations and with its own local loyalties, traditions and customs, which have endured to the present day.

The history of Poplar during the last three hundred years is part of the history of London as a port, and of Britain as a maritime nation. Indeed, the growth of Poplar was entirely due to its position on "London River," its historic Blackwall Stairs being a well-known point of embarkation for sea-going ships as early as the sixteenth century. Martin Frobisher sailed from there in 1577 on his second voyage to attempt the North West Passage as did Captain John Smith, on his expedition to found the first permanent English Colony in America.

The East India Company. In 1614, the East India Company began the construction of a dock there for the building, repair and victualling of their famous "East Indiamen." The dockyard attracted workers, local trade expanded, secondary industries grew up, and this process continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as the Port of London grew in importance and more docks were added. Contemporary prints show these reaches of the Thames dominated by the forest of bare masts and yards of the countless ships that carried trade to all parts of the world.

The development of iron-built ships and the passing of the sailing ships, however, caused a gradual decline in shipbuilding on the Thames, and finally, this industry almost died out. But the docks still remained, for their importance as a terminal and distribution point was as great as ever, and the population of Poplar to-day is still largely dependent on the fortunes of the shipping industry.

George Lansbury. Like many parts of London which became urbanised in the early nineteenth century, and particularly in Dockland, where the inhabitants were mainly poor, the standard of living and housing conditions were of a low standard. Parts indeed became very dilapidated, and although improvements were made, the task of rebuilding such a vast area, quite apart from the cost, was almost too enormous to contemplate.

The names of many well-known men and women are linked with schemes for improvement, and some of them came from Poplar itself. The best known, and one of the best loved of these was George Lansbury. For forty years he served Poplar as a member of the old Board of Guardians of the Poor, and of the Poplar Borough Council. He was its first Labour Mayor in 1919 and again held this office seventeen years later. From 1910-1912 and from 1922 till his death in 1940, at the age of 81, he was Labour Member of Parliament for one of the Poplar Divisions. He devoted his life to working for a better world and a new Poplar.

The County of London Plan

The urgency of rebuilding increased greatly as a result of the war, for the areas round London's docks suffered much damage from bombing in 1940, and Poplar was one of the chief casualties. But with this urgency came opportunity. In the same year, while the capital was still under air attack, the London County Council appointed Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Professor of Town Planning in the University of London, and Mr. J. H. Forshaw, then Architect to the Council, to examine the whole problem of London's future

development. The result was the publication, in 1943, of the County of London Plan.

This was a most comprehensive study of the major defects of our Capital, followed by proposals for long-term development, divided into stages. Apart from emphasising the general lack of coherent architectural standards throughout London, the Plan presented four main physical problems for solution :—

(1) Traffic congestion
(2) Great areas of depressed housing
(3) Inadequate and badly distributed open spaces
(4) Intermingling of industry with housing.

London has grown in a sprawling fashion, gradually swallowing up the surrounding villages and open fields, and replacing them by drab suburbs with ill-defined boundaries. In spite of this, recognisable communities still survive with strong local loyalties.

A sense of community, of neighbourly responsibility, satisfies an essential human need. The underlying purpose of the Plan was to encourage this sense and stimulate or revive these communities and loyalties. The Plan proposed that each community in an area to be redeveloped should be composed of several smaller units of convenient size to be known as " neighbourhoods."

The Three Square Miles. One of the most urgent problems was the reconstruction of Stepney and Poplar, an area of over three square miles.

It was proposed that the whole of this enormous area should be redesigned and rebuilt. The overcrowded, insanitary and obsolete buildings, with their drab, monotonous and cramped surroundings were to be swept away, and in their place, eleven new neighbourhoods were planned. These neighbourhoods were to house between five and eleven thousand people, each as it were a small town within a town, with its own houses and flats, schools, churches, parks and public buildings, grouped to maintain or recreate the three old communities of Stepney, Bow and Poplar. Each community was to have amenities and public buildings appropriate to its larger size and complementary to those of the neighbourhoods.

The Festival of Britain

In 1948, the Council for Architecture, Town Planning and Building Research of the Festival of Britain suggested that one of these neighbourhoods would be an ideal site for the Exhibition, which was to be one of the Festival's most important features. What could be more effective than to demonstrate the possibilities inherent in good town planning, architecture and building, by putting on show part of a re-planned, living community in the process of going about its daily life ?

Lansbury. After careful investigation by the Festival of Britain authorities in co-operation with the London County Council, the choice fell on one of the three neighbourhoods making up the Poplar community, plans for which were already well advanced.

This neighbourhood, since named as a memorial to the late George Lansbury, is a triangular-shaped area of one hundred and twenty-four acres between the East India Dock Road on the south, the Limehouse Cut—a canal —on the north and a railway on the east, and was designed to house some nine thousand five hundred people. A complete neighbourhood would, of course, have been too large for a manageable exhibition. A carefully devised cross-section of a neighbourhood would, on the other hand, be more suitable in size and still demonstrate satisfactorily how the proper planning of open space and buildings would ultimately transform the East End and, later, other parts of London. The development of a thirty acre site, one quarter of the area of the future neighbourhood, was therefore accelerated.

To complete the picture a special temporary Exhibition has been organised for the Festival of Britain as an introduction to the whole Exhibition of Architecture. There is a Town Planning Pavilion and a Building Research Pavilion in which are explained in diagrams and models, the principles to be followed in providing for the needs of a new community. It is part of the object of this Exhibition that construction should go on through the summer, thus putting on show current building methods and materials.

WHAT TO SEE AT LANSBURY

THE EXHIBITION ENCLOSURE

In this enclosure above which—a symbol of Britain's reconstruction—towers a giant crane, are the Administration Block, the " Rosie Lee " Cafeteria, " Gremlin Grange," and the two special exhibition Pavilions in their garden setting. All these buildings are temporary and, as is traditional in exhibitions, experimental in character.

We are taken through the Building Research Pavilion and shown how good and economical building must depend on scientific methods developed from well-directed research. Then we see in the Town Planning Pavilion why New Towns are being built and how they are planned.

Remember that the purpose of this section is to explain those principles of good planning and sound building which later are demonstrated in the full size and living community of Lansbury itself.

* * *

The tour of Lansbury begins here. Since one of the first purposes of all building is to provide shelter from the weather, we start, appropriately enough, with a meteorological station. Here will be seen some of the instruments that are used to measure and record daily changes in temperature, humidity, rainfall and sunshine. These conditions change constantly and obviously affect the life of all building materials and methods of construction.

"Gremlin Grange"

This is a full-size demonstration of how many things may go wrong when scientific principles in building are ignored. On the outside we find :—

- Structural cracks and leaning walls : due to bad foundation design.
- External plaster coming off : because the mix contained too much cement.
- Damp rising up the walls : because there is no damp course.
- Leaning chimney stacks : often the result of chemical action on mortar joints.

On the inside we find :—

- Fireplaces smoking : owing to bad design of chimney and flue.
- Tank leaking : because it lacks protection against frost.
- Cracks in walls : because poorly designed foundations have subsided.
- Bad artificial lighting : causing discomfort and eyestrain.

These defects illustrate some of the problems of building but by no means all of them.

The Building Research Pavilion

How science can help is explained in this Pavilion. The building itself is unusual enough, since its outside form has been designed to illustrate the story told within. Each of the main problems in building is presented in a separate bay. Stability, Rain Penetration, Heating, Lighting, Noise and Maintenance. All are vital in building. All bristle with practical difficulties. All can be solved through scientific research.

Finally, as we leave this Pavilion, we see how this knowledge can be applied successfully in actual building. The section through the full-size bungalow shows how the faults of " Gremlin Grange " are avoided by the application of scientific method.

The Town Planning Pavilion

This is housed in a large tent on a frame of tubular scaffolding. Within this structure we are shown the principles of town planning and how urgent is the need for new towns.

Follow the process section by section :—

(1) " The Battle for Land " illustrates the many and often conflicting uses for our land. Only by planning can we assess the best ways to use it.

(2) " The Needs of the People " sets out the needs of different members of the community and explains how our old towns fail to provide for these.

(3) " How can these needs be met " shows what new towns and the replanning of old ones will achieve.

(4) " Work in Progress " explains what is already being done. Services, Roads, Factories, Housing and Amenities are dealt with in turn.

(5) " The Heart of the Town " shows how a town centre might be remodelled, in order to make it once again the focus of social life.

When we leave the Exhibition Enclosure, black and white posts mark the route round the whole of Lansbury, and there we see how practice follows precept.

THE BUILDINGS AT LANSBURY

Lansbury itself is not yet complete. There are playing fields to be provided and many more houses and flats, a church and schools still to be built. But there is already sufficient to show what sort of a place the rebuilt East End will eventually be.

Houses and Flats. These have been arranged in four sites—East site, Central site, North site and West site. There is living accommodation for about fifteen hundred people in the four hundred or more dwellings, which comprise flats, houses and maisonettes. The blocks of flats have three or six storeys, each flat with from one to four rooms, with kitchen, bathroom and w.c. in addition. The separate houses have two and in some cases three floors with similar or greater accommodation and small private gardens. The maisonettes, which are two-storey dwellings, are in three or four storey blocks or over shops, with private gardens or small terraces. There are also some flats in the blocks of maisonettes.

Churches. One of these, Trinity Congregational Church is complete with its assembly hall. A Roman Catholic Church has been begun, but will be completed later.

Schools. The Ricardo Street Nursery and Primary Schools are administered by the London County Council. The Holy Child Primary School existed before but has been enlarged. This and the Cardinal Griffin Secondary School are administered by the Roman Catholic authorities.

Shopping Centre and Market Place. The shops are arranged under arcades round the Market Place, which has been kept free from road traffic.

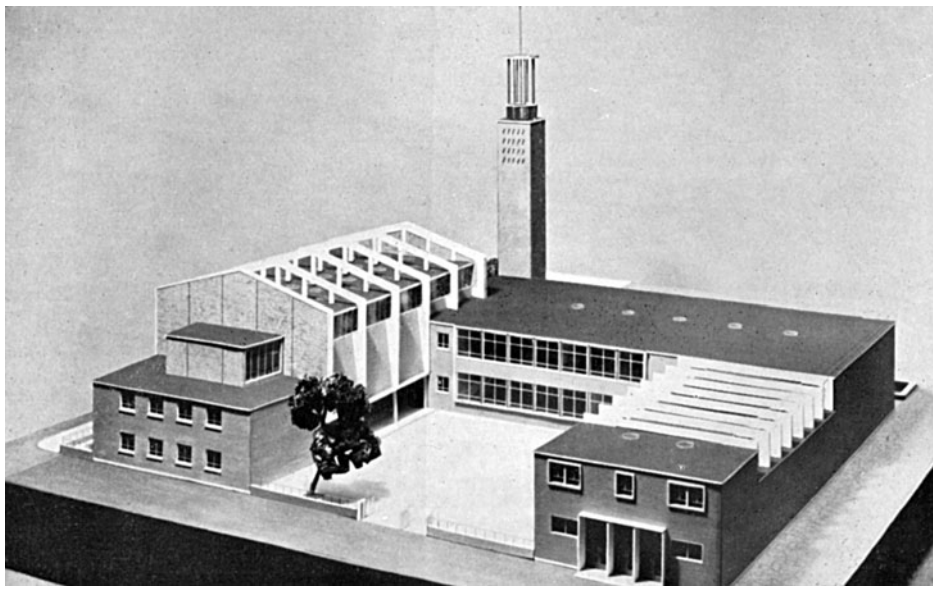
Old Peoples' Home. This has been specially equipped for old people who are unable to manage for themselves.

Public Houses. Two are in the Market Place, one is on Central site and one on North site.

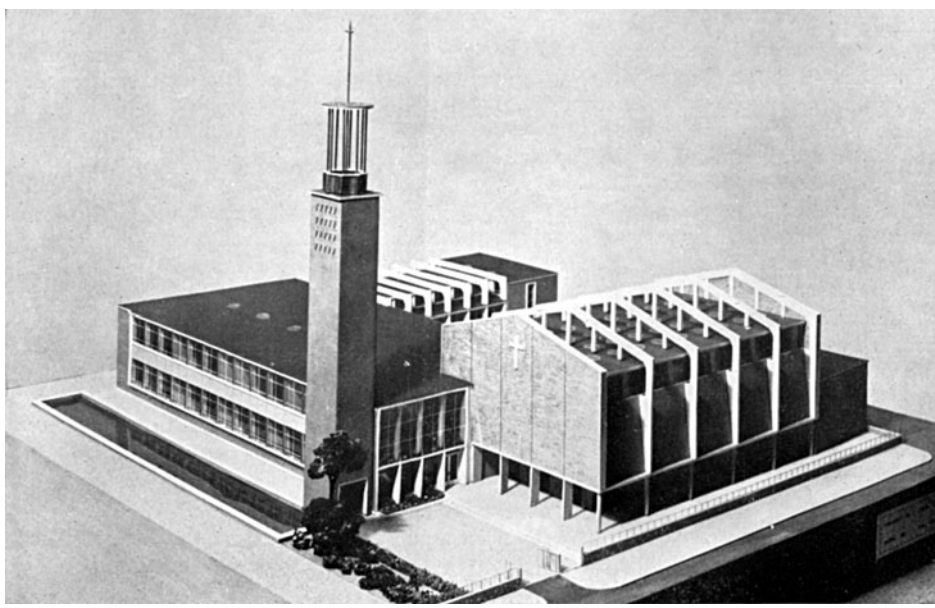
Open Spaces. These include a small park, gardens, playgrounds and sandpits. Footways link all parts of the neighbourhood.

Show House and Flats. A house, a flat and a bed-sitting room in the Old Peoples' Home have been furnished and are open to the public. The L.C.C. schools may be visited during the summer holidays, in July and August. The Plan shows where these are.

The Town Planning Department of the London County Council planned the grouping of buildings and open space. The principal buildings are described and illustrated in the section that follows.



Church and Assembly Hall, seen from Augusta Street



Church and Clubrooms with main entrance on East India Dock Road

10

TRINITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND CHURCH HALL

Architects : CECIL C. HANDISYDE *and* D. ROGERS STARK

The church has for centuries been the focal point of community life and in this new ' neighbourhood ' that tradition is continued. Trinity church stands on the site of its predecessor, which was completely destroyed by bombing. With its new church hall and clubrooms, it is one of the chief architectural features of Lansbury. Its main frontage and entrance are in the East India Dock Road and to the west it adjoins a small open space.

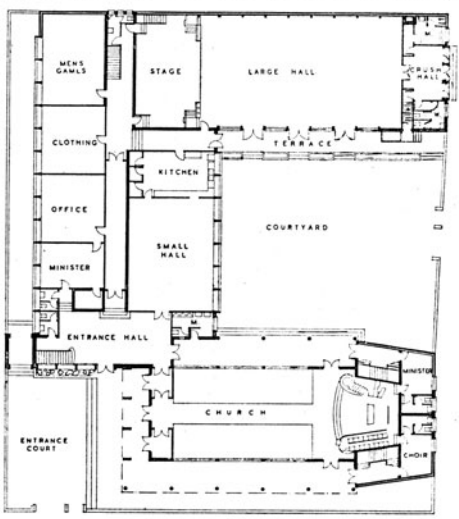
The church has been designed with a gallery on three sides. This projects on the outside and is supported by columns to form a kind of cloister. The panelled effect along the sides of both the church and the main hall is contrived by exposing the structural framework, and contrasts with the smooth surfaces of the end walls. Inside, the effect is light and airy with ' windows ' in the flat roof as the chief means of day-lighting, the small side windows at ceiling level being intended to counteract any glare from these roof lights.

When the gallery is in use there is room for 400 people but it is also possible to arrange smaller congregations in a compact body on the narrower ground floor.

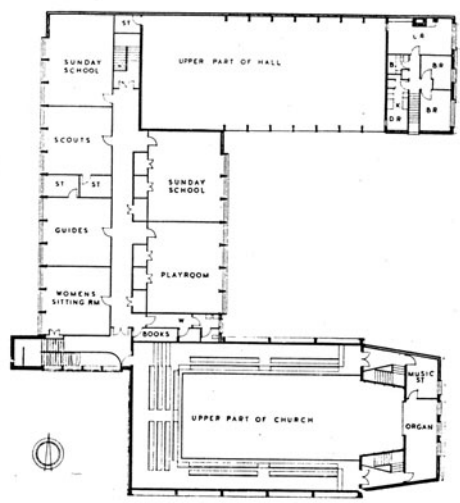
The main entrance to the clubroom block is at right angles to the church entrance with the tower to the left. The clubrooms, which are on two floors, provide accommodation for Sunday schools and youth activities, a children's playroom, a games room for the older men, a sitting room for the women and facilities for the service of meals.

The main hall lies parallel to the church, with a stage at one end and its principal entrance at the east end. Above the entrance is a flat for the caretaker.

Construction. The main structure is in reinforced concrete frame throughout. The tower is faced in London stock brick to harmonize with the general scheme for the neighbourhood. The end walls of the church are in textured concrete panels made from a brick aggregate, the exposed framework of the church has a bush hammered concrete finish, the columns to the cloister are in light grey terrazzo, and the sloping side walls are covered with copper sheet.



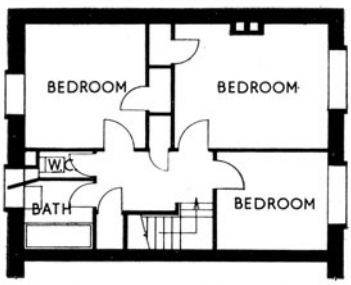
Ground floor plan



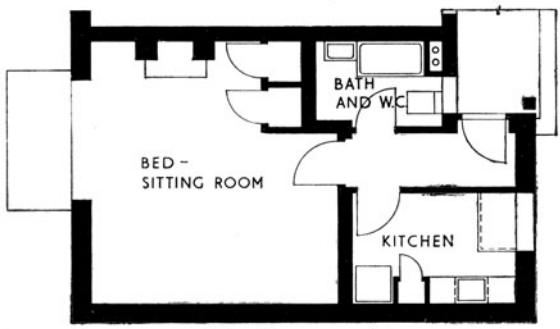
First floor plan

11

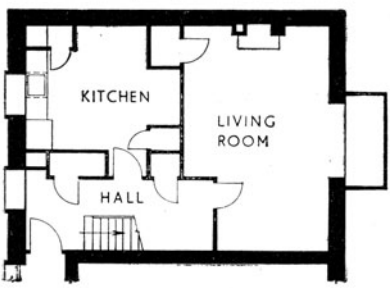
Terrace houses and close in Grundy Street

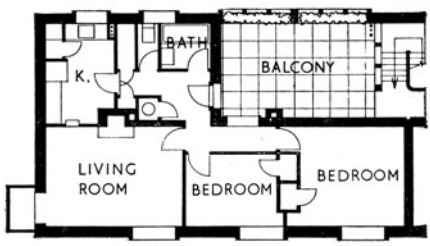


A maisonette, ground floor and first floor plans



Plan of a one-room flat





Plan of a three-room flat

HOUSING: EAST SITE

Architect : G. A. JELLICOE

This is the largest site in the Exhibition, consisting of flats, houses and maisonettes in a wide variety of sizes totalling in all 166 dwellings. Variety is in fact the keynote here, less perhaps in the design than in the interior planning, for there are sixteen different type plans and variations within each type. The general architectural character of the facades aims at giving a feeling of unity.

The Houses—(1) The two-storey houses, each with its own separate garden, are arranged as two short and one longer terrace to the south of Grundy Street. Each house has three bedrooms, a living-room, kitchen, bathroom and w.c. and covered ways give access to the gardens.

(2) The three-storey houses have front gardens, and are arranged round grass planted closes opening on to Grundy Street, in the form of six small blocks. Houses with three bedrooms, a kitchen and living-room on three floors are mixed with one-room ground floor flats and three-bedroom maisonettes on the two floors above them.

(3) Facing the Ricardo Street School are two connected blocks of four storeys each with two sets of maisonettes one above the other, combined with a smaller number of one and two-room flats. The upper dwellings are approached along an access balcony on the second floor. Each maisonette has from two to four bedrooms and a living room, with its own garden and clothes drying area.

(4) Yet another combination is used in Bygrove Street, where a three-storey block has two-storey maisonettes with flats above. The staircase to each pair of flats is at the rear, and each has two bedrooms, a living-room and a small terrace garden. The maisonettes have three bedrooms, a living-room and a dining-room kitchen and, like the others, have private gardens.

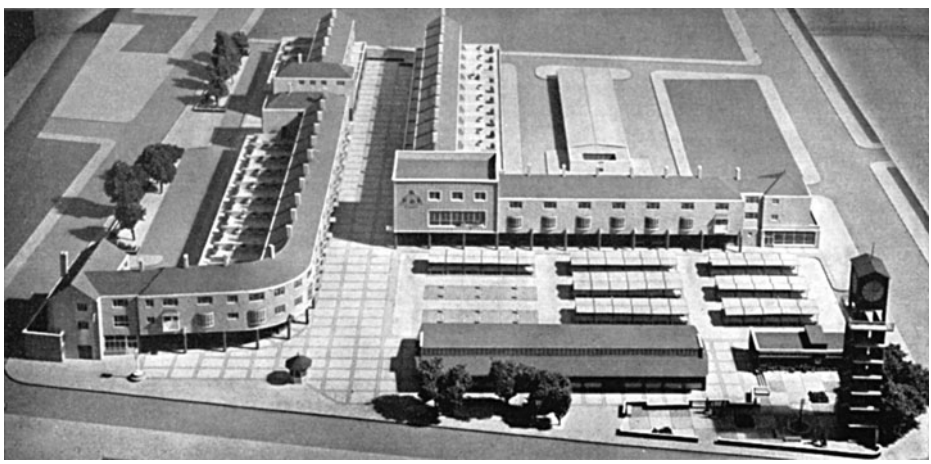
(5) Provision has also been made here for old people who are still able to manage for themselves, in a two-storey block of one-room flats, directly across Grundy Street from the Old People's Home. Each flat has a bed-sitting room, kitchen and combined bathroom and w.c., while the upper floor flats have separate sun balconies on one side and an access balcony on the other. The garden on the south-west side is laid out specially for older people and provided with sheltered seats. Nine garages will also be built.

Equipment—The living-rooms are equipped in every case with open, smokeless fuel fires and immersion heaters are provided for use in the summer months. All bedrooms have built-in electric panel fires.

Construction—Foundations are generally of mass concrete, though piles were necessary in some blocks. External walls are of load-bearing brick, faced with London stock bricks. Floors are of boards on wood joists in two storey houses, and in the multi-storey blocks are of fire-resisting construction between dwellings, and fully insulated against sound. Roofs are covered with Welsh slates and door surrounds are of reconstructed Clipsham stone. Windows are standard metal casements in wood frames. Internal walls are in cement gauged lime plaster finished with washable distemper.

Shopping Centre and Market Place seen from Chrisp Street

Plan views of a maisonette over a shop, showing lower and upper floors



View showing double arcade of shops and paved Market Place

14

SHOPPING CENTRE AND MARKET PLACE

Architect : FREDERICK GIBBERD

The new Shopping Centre and Market Place, which provides an open space for the stalls of the street traders, is restricted to pedestrians and thus avoids the dangers from traffic. It has shops on two sides, set back beneath maisonettes and flats to form covered arcades for shelter in wet weather. On the south side is a covered market with permanent stalls for the sale of meat and fish, giving protection from dust and the weather. Adjoining this is a public lavatory, and a clock tower will be erected with a look-out platform at the top.

Along the southern boundary of the market square is a small garden, laid out with a pattern of paving stones, flowers and trees, to provide a place where one can sit, away from the bustle of the market area.

The Shopping Centre will serve not only the whole of Lansbury, but adjoining neighbourhoods as well. It will ultimately be extended as far as Cordelia Street to the north, and southwards to include a cinema and shops flanking a wide footway leading from the Market Place to the East India Dock Road.

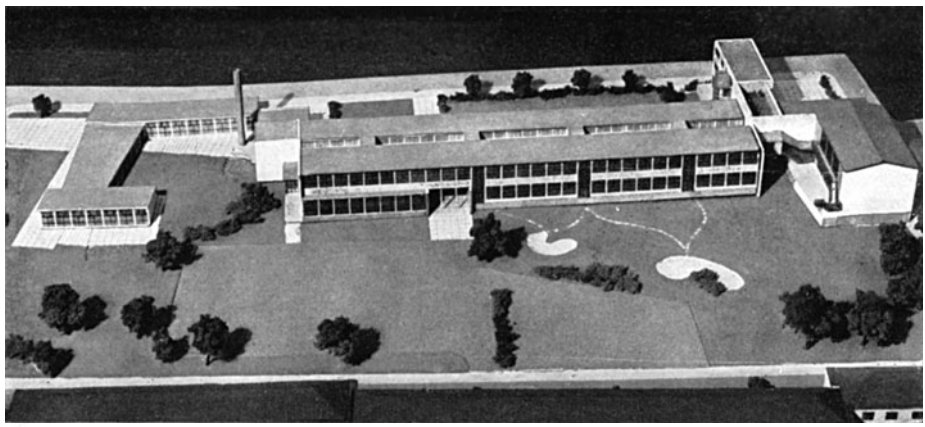
Shops—The shops are the lock-up type and will be apportioned by trades according to the needs of the neighbourhood. They will be, in the first place, offered to traders displaced from Chrisp Street. They have been built by the London County Council and will be leased by them, the shopkeepers being given the first opportunity of renting the maisonettes above their shops. The market and the stalls will be managed by the Poplar Borough Council.

The whole of the paved area is laid out in a varied rectangular pattern, to provide visual interest and to define the positions for the collapsible stalls in the market area. A public house is situated at each end of the Market Place. The large shop on three floors begins the double arcade of shops, and its different treatment adds interest to this corner of the square.

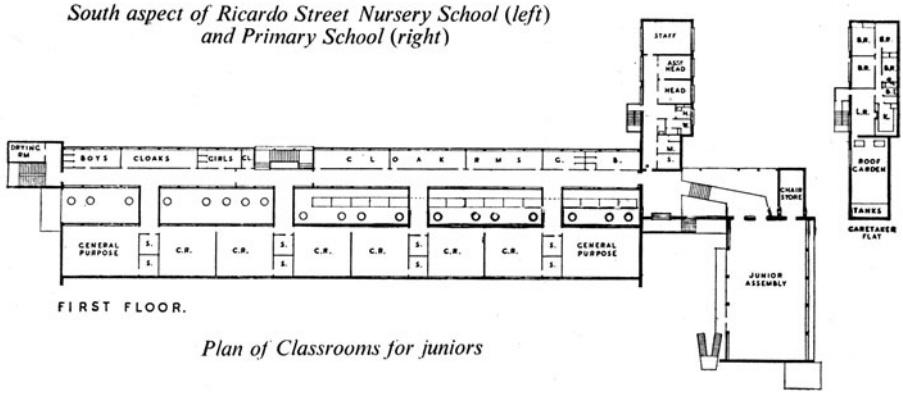
Maisonettes—The maisonettes are mainly two-bedroom dwellings, though a few have three bedrooms, with a kitchen-dining room and a living room beneath. They have bow windows overlooking the market place and private terrace gardens behind, over the back of the shops. These gardens form the main approach to the dwellings from the service road, and are divided from each other and the access way by flower boxes.

Behind the shops to the north side of the market place is a double row of lock-up garages.

Construction is mainly of London stock brick and dark plum red brick, with reinforced concrete columns carrying beams over the shops to support the load-bearing brick walls of the maisonettes above. Floors are hollow tile between shop and maisonette and timber for the second floor and roof. The columns to the arcade are faced with blue faience tiles and the three storey shop is faced with light grey faience. The roofs are of grey-green slate and the paving is of reconstructed stone in various colours.

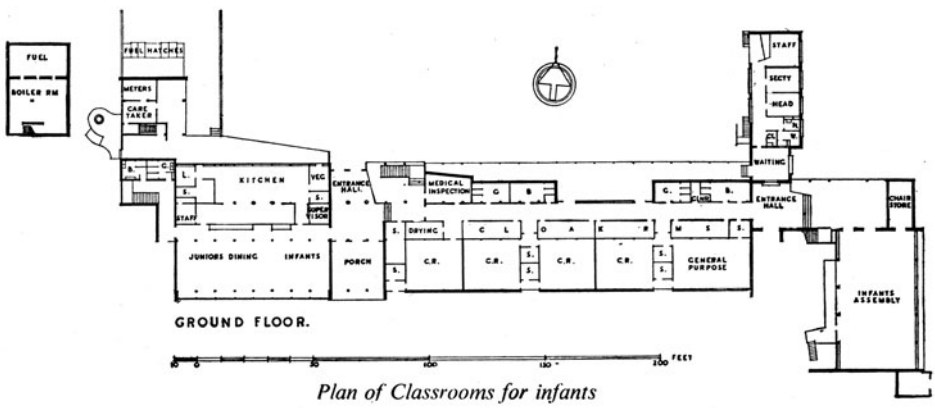


South aspect of Ricardo Street Nursery School (left) and Primary School (right)



FIRST FLOOR.

Plan of Classrooms for juniors



GROUND FLOOR.

Plan of Classrooms for infants

16

RICARDO STREET NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Architects : YORKE, ROSENBERG *and* MARDALL

These two schools are administered and staffed by the London County Council, to provide education for boys and girls from the age of two to five years in the Nursery School, and for infants of five to seven and juniors up to the age of eleven in the Primary School.

The two schools have been designed on an irregular plan, amid gardens and play-spaces which can also be used for open air classes.

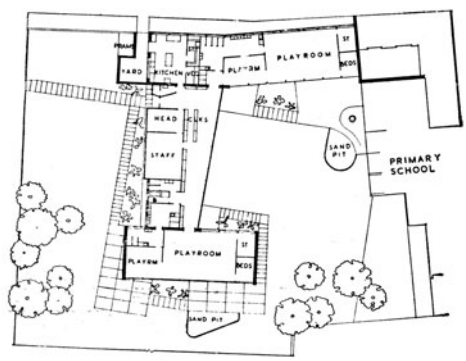
The Nursery School is in effect entirely separate from the Primary School and is built in the shape of an ' L,' one storey high, so that a little courtyard is formed with the end wall of the Primary School. Its four playrooms, two large and two small, will accommodate eighty children, there is ample provision of lavatories, a large cloakroom with cupboards, a fully equipped kitchen and staff rooms. Immediately outside the classrooms are paved play-spaces and sandpits and beyond are gardens and trees.

The Primary School has been carefully planned as two narrow blocks standing side by side, joined by four bridges. This has made it possible to design light, airy classrooms, with windows on both sides, though the main lighting is from the south through large windows, which run almost continuously through the length of the building and on both floors. The northern block forms a corridor and cloakrooms.

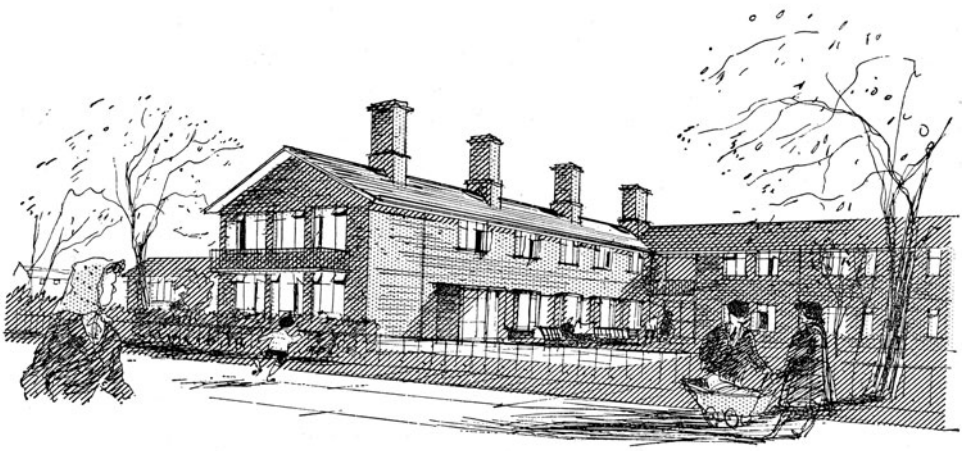
The infants occupy the five classrooms on the ground floor, the rest of which is taken up by a large dining hall for both infants and juniors, by kitchen accommodation and by an entrance hall at one end, while at the other are an assembly hall and an administration block in two small separate wings. The first floor has eight classrooms for the juniors, a second assembly hall above the first, and another floor to the administration wing. Above this last is still another floor with a small flat for the school caretaker.

There are separate paved playing spaces for infants and juniors, those for infants are on the north side and those for juniors on the south, each with their own approaches from the classrooms. Also on the south side are gardens with grass and trees, with space for outdoor classes.

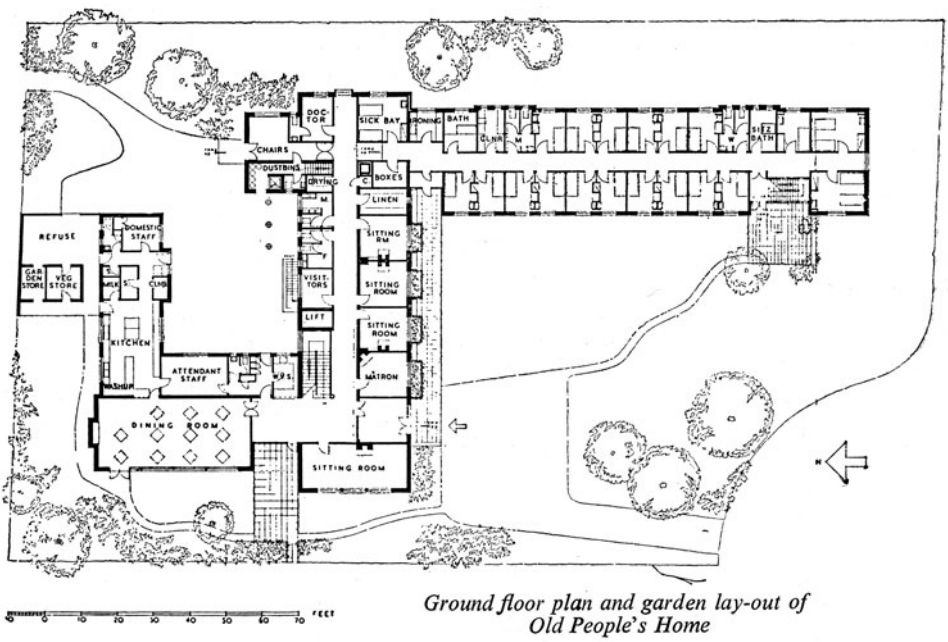
Construction. The classroom block is of light steel framework construction faced with concrete slabs, the assembly halls are of reinforced concrete and steel, faced with London stock brick and Hornton stone. The rest of the structure is in the same brick, load-bearing in the case of the administration block and combined with a light steel frame in the Nursery School.



Plan of Nursery School



Old People's Home as seen from Upper North Street



Ground floor plan and garden lay-out of Old People's Home

OLD PEOPLE'S HOME

Architects : BOOTH *and* LEDEBOER

Every community has a proportion of old people who, for reasons of age and infirmity, find it difficult to live on their own and look after themselves. The Welfare Committee of the London County Council, with this problem in mind, has therefore had this Home designed specially to meet the needs of old people, with its own staff to look after them.

The Home, which is sited in a central position near the churches and not far from the shops, is built on two floors and accommodates forty-nine old people and a staff of five in addition to non-resident staff.

Each occupant has his or her own bed-sitting room fitted with washbasin and built-in wardrobe, and there are also a few double bed-sitting rooms for couples. There are five sitting rooms which they share, a large one equipped with television, the others with radio. The common dining room can also be used as a cinema.

Special attention has been paid to such details as non-slip floors, handrails to corridors and staircases. These are designed to make them specially easy for old people to use.

The garden round the Home has been arranged to give attractive views from the loggias and to provide sheltered seats among the trees and shrubs.

Construction. The structure is of brick with reinforced concrete floors, and the roof is of slates and low pitched. The building is centrally heated, well insulated against heat losses through walls and roof, and sound-insulated between floors.

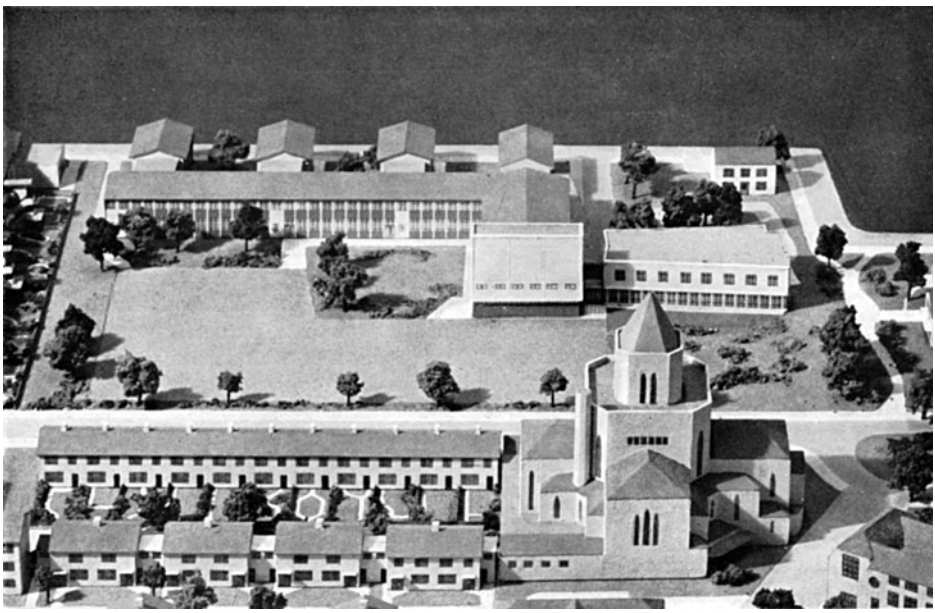
PLAYGROUNDS AND OPEN SPACES

Lansbury's parks and open spaces have been designed to link together the various groups of buildings, so that it will be possible to take pleasant walks through the neighbourhood amid grass and trees. Thus the garden, with its ornamental pool and terrace in front of Trinity Church, will open on to a pedestrian way which will eventually lead to a large new recreation park and playing fields beyond the Cardinal Griffin Secondary School. From there, a wide parkway will connect with the Market Place.

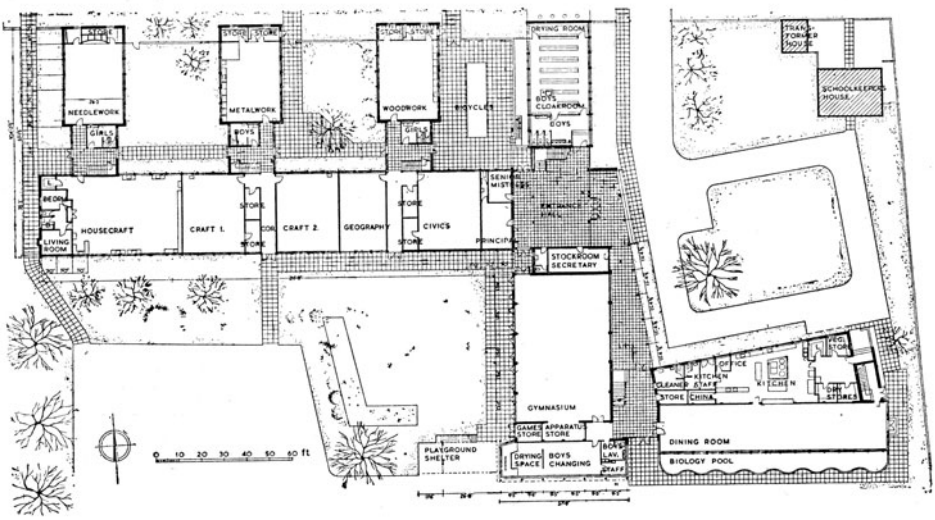
Sandpit in West site

There are other smaller open spaces for strolling and sitting in. The children are particularly well provided for, the schools having playgrounds that are far larger than any that existed previously, while there are additional play-spaces near to their homes equipped with sandpits, tree-trunks to climb on and room for them to play ball games without danger from traffic or interfering with the grown-ups.

As many trees as possible were preserved during the reconstruction. For the Exhibition, many others were brought from the country and planted as partly grown trees, so that the full benefit could be achieved in the landscaping.



Roman Catholic Church with Cardinal Griffin Secondary School beyond



Ground floor plan of school
20

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Architect : A. GILBERT SCOTT, M.C.

There are many Roman Catholics among the population of Poplar, so despite the reduction in the number of inhabitants, the new church will be large enough for 700 people, a capacity equal to that of the old one.

The church will not be completed until 1952, and will continue to be under construction throughout the period of the Exhibition.

The Presbytery will ultimately stand on the site at present occupied by the Exhibition cafeteria and be connected with the church by a covered way across Pekin Street. An assembly hall will also be built later on a site not yet chosen.

The church is designed in the form of a Greek cross, with a prominent central lantern or tower and with sacristies placed in the angles of the cross, to either side of the sanctuary. Shelters for storing bicycles and prams during services are also included in the design.

The focal point inside will be a marble baldachino over the altar, of which a clear view will be possible from all parts of the church. The walls will be finished in simple plastered surfaces with a coloured stone dado and a decorated floor.

Construction. The exterior will be faced with stone-coloured bricks and the roofs will be covered in brown Lombardic tiles with a copper covered spire to the central lantern. Floor heating and fluorescent lighting will be installed throughout.

CARDINAL GRIFFIN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Architect : DAVID STOKES

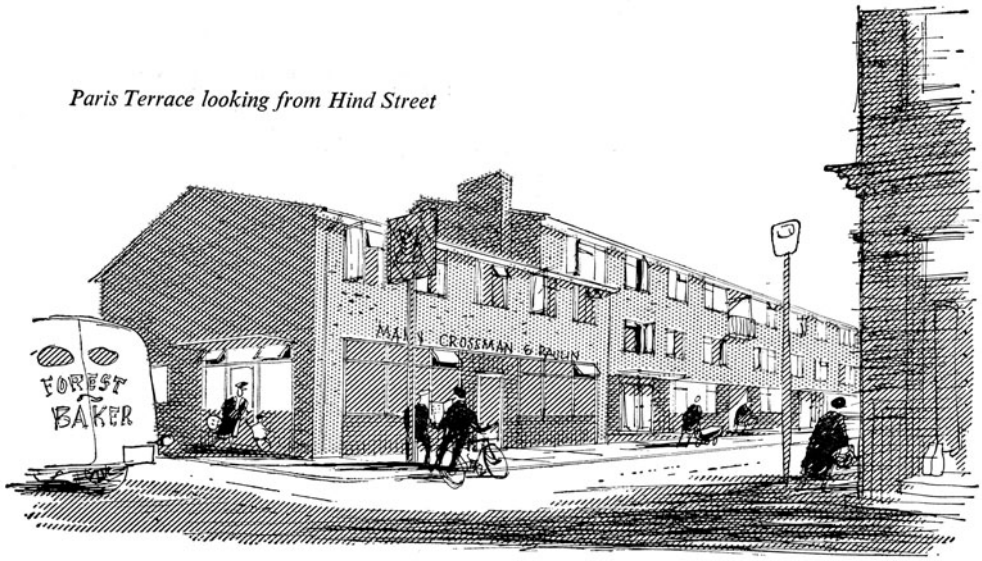
This is a Three Form Entry Secondary School for Boys and Girls designed for the Roman Catholic authorities to accommodate 450 children between the ages of eleven and fifteen.

The School is on two floors with the main entrance on the east side. To the left of the entrance hall is the gymnasium and assembly hall block jutting out to the south, connected to a second block containing a dining room and kitchen on the ground floor and staff rooms and medical rooms above. The long main block of classrooms has a south aspect through a screen of trees to the playground. Three small classroom blocks for crafts and sciences, and a fourth block containing the cloakrooms are set at right angles to this main block on the north side, connected to it by a covered corridor on the first floor only. The absence of such a corridor on the ground floor permits cross lighting and ventilation for the classrooms on that floor.

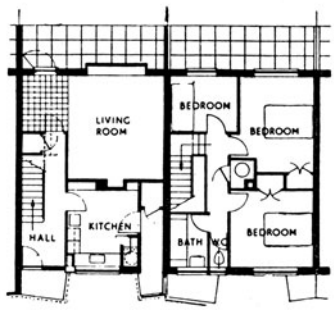
The assembly hall is placed above the gymnasium, with a low ceiling to assist the acoustics, and broadens out at the stage end. The stage, which is provided with daylighting from the sides for drama classes, can be varied to provide steps across the width of the hall or stepped platforms for an orchestra.

Construction. The structure is of exposed reinforced concrete frame with load-bearing brick walls.

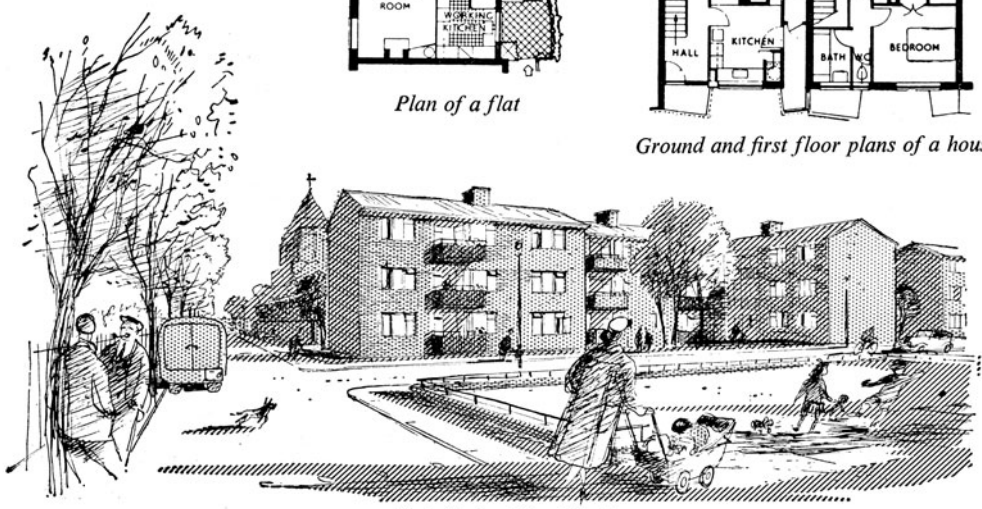
Paris Terrace looking from Hind Street



Plan of a flat



Ground and first floor plans of a house



Flats facing New Road

22

HOUSING: NORTH SITE

Architects : NORMAN *and* DAWBARN

This housing group is a continuous terrace of 21 dwellings in all with a Public House set forward at one end. The terrace consists of three similar sections, each with an interesting arrangement of three flats over four maisonettes. This arrangement involves party walls that are not vertically continuous, but the flats on the second floor have been designed so that the resulting beams are contained in the walls themselves and are not seen on the ceilings below.

All maisonettes have private gardens at the front and rear. The living room and dining space on the ground floor have been planned as a through room partially divided by the chimney breast. Access to the rear garden is from the dining space, leaving the maximum wall area for fittings and equipment in the kitchen. On the first floor the maisonettes have either three or four bedrooms with built-in cupboards, a bathroom and w.c.

Each group of three flats is approached by a free-standing staircase at the rear designed to cause the minimum overshadowing of the maisonettes. The flats have either one or two bedrooms with a living room, kitchen, bathroom and w.c. and a small private balcony.

Construction. The structure is load-bearing brick with dark plum-coloured brick facings to window head level on the ground floor and mild stocks above. Floors are of "in situ" reinforced concrete hollow tiles finished with composition tiles. Walls are cement gauged lime plaster finished in washable distemper.

HOUSING: CENTRAL SITE

Architects : BRIDGEWATER *and* SHEPHEARD

Comprising terraced houses, linked houses and blocks of flats, the housing on this site lies just behind the Roman Catholic Church and the temporary Festival buildings, and is designed to provide fifty-seven dwellings.

Flats. There are thirty flats of from one to four rooms, each with kitchen and bathroom in two three-storey blocks of irregular shape on either side of Pekin Street. One staircase serves three or four flats on each floor level, all flats have sun balconies with flower boxes and face west or south. Heating is by smokeless fuel open fire with back boiler in the living-room, and an electric immersion heater is fitted to all storage tanks for use in summer, the main bedroom in each case having a gas panel fire.

Refuse disposal is by chute and refuse chamber ; perambulator stores are provided at the foot of each staircase and are reached by a covered way ; a drying room with gas-heated cabinets is available in each block. The surrounding space is planted with grass and flowers and existing trees have been retained. Three garages have been provided on this site.

Houses. The twenty-seven houses are distributed in four terraces, three of them comprising nineteen four-roomed two-storey houses, the others being made up of eight linked houses of two storeys, each with its own garden. The terrace houses are unusual in having their kitchens at the front to give direct access to back door, dustbin and coal-shed from the street without a tunnel passage through the house. In the linked houses the living-room runs the full depth of the building, a hatch through to the kitchen enabling one half to be used as a dining room. An electric panel fire is provided in the main bedroom in each house.

Construction. The structure is load-bearing brick with yellow Uxbridge flint facing bricks, and the roofs are covered with asbestos cement slates. Floors in the maisonettes are boarded on wooden joists and those in the flats are of fire-resisting construction finished with composition tiles.

West site, with the children's playground beyond

West site frontage on East India Dock Road
24

HOUSING: WEST SITE

Architect : SIDNEY HOWARD

Situated at the western end of the Exhibition, this group of six- and three-storey flats, in its setting of gardens and children's play spaces, is the second largest housing site in Lansbury.

The buildings have been designed by the Housing architect in the Housing and Valuation Department of the London County Council. They comprise 158 flats of from one to four rooms, each with its own kitchen, bathroom and separate w.c. The two smaller six-storey blocks will eventually be extended when the old houses facing Canton Street have been demolished.

The Flats. The six-storey flats are equipped with passenger lifts large enough to carry perambulators. The majority of the flats have sun balconies attached to the living rooms, and the three-storey type has access balconies. There are fuel bunkers which can be filled from outside and refuse is disposed of by chute and container method from all floors. There is a laundry in one of the large blocks that had an existing basement and the other blocks have laundry rooms on the ground or first floor.

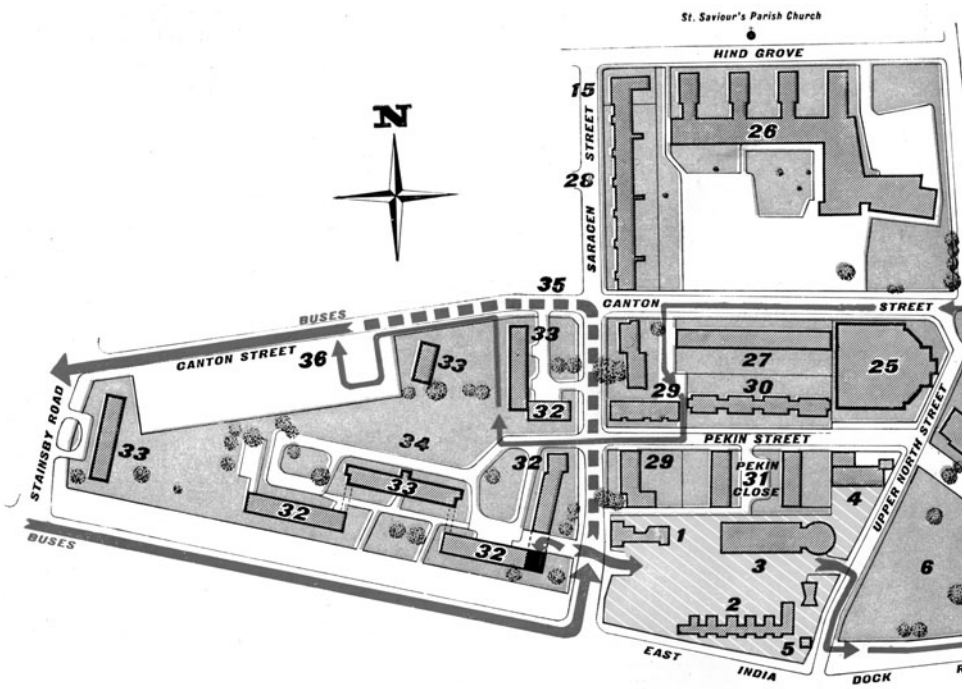
Each flat is equipped with a solid smokeless fuel fire and back boiler in the living room or bed-sitting room, supplying hot water to the bathroom, hand-basin and kitchen sink ; the hot water storage tank is in a linen cupboard off the kitchen. One bedroom in each flat has an electric panel fire and electric power points are fitted in all other rooms. Each kitchen has a larder, dresser, broom cupboard, sink and draining boards and the necessary points for a gas or electric cooker.

The Gardens. The open space surrounding the flats has pedestrian walks between the different blocks with grass and flower beds between. The three blocks with their frontage on the East India Dock Road are linked together by low buildings for perambulator and cycle storage, which act as a screen separating the garden forecourt from the service road behind. This road provides access for vehicles to all blocks not directly accessible from the street.

There is a well-equipped children's playground in the centre of the site and the landscape garden surrounding the blocks includes sand-pits. Many existing trees have been preserved and new ones planted.

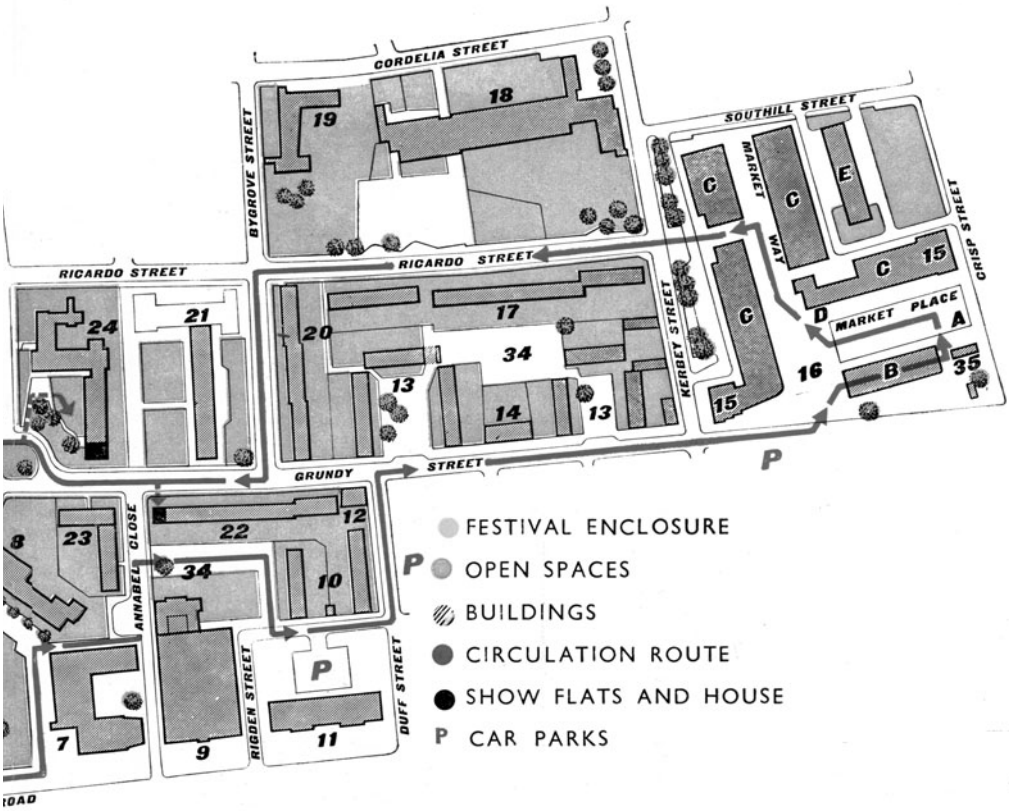
Construction. All structures are of brick with load-bearing walls faced externally with London stock brick. The six-storey blocks have low-pitch roofs with brick parapets ; the three-storey ones have purple slates with gables and eaves. Glass brick panels are set in the balcony fronts as a decorative treatment and are similarly used in the access balconies of the three-storey flats. A variety of floor constructions are used which demonstrate not only the normal filler joist and concrete construction but also a special proprietary type. Floor surfaces are finished in various plastic compositions now in general use by the Council. All plumbing is internal and is contained in ducts within the structure.

EXHIBITION O

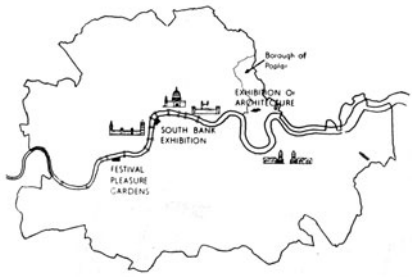


1. Main Entrance and Administration Offices
2. Building Research Pavilion
3. Town Planning Pavilion
4. ' Rosie Lee ' Cafeteria
5. The Crane
6. Open Space.
7. Trinity Church and Hall
8. Upper North Street School
9. Seamen's Mission
10. Terrace Houses—Two Storeys (*East Site*)
11. Board of Trade Offices
12. Public House (*existing*)
13. Terrace Houses—Three Storeys (*East Site*)
14. Existing Flats
15. Public Houses
16. Shopping Centre and Market Place
    - (A) Market Stalls
    - (B) Covered Market
    - (C) Arcaded Shops and Maisonettes
    - (D) Retail Store
    - (E) Garages
    - (F) Tower
17. Maisonettes—Four Storeys (*East Site*)
18. Ricardo Street Primary School

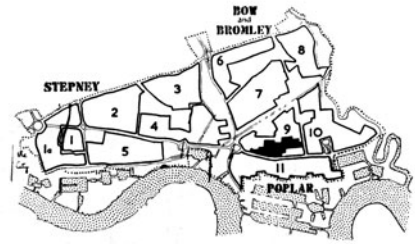
F ARCHITECTURE



19. Ricardo Street Nursery School
20. Maisonettes and Flats—Three Storeys (*East Site*)
21. Holy Child Primary School
22. Terrace Houses—Two Storeys (*East Site*)
23. Flats for Old People (*East Site*)
24. Old People's Home
25. Roman Catholic Church
26. Cardinal Griffin Secondary School
27. Terrace Houses—Two Storeys (*Central Site*)
28. Maisonettes and Flats—Three Storeys (*North Site*)
29. Flats—Three Storeys (*Central Site*)
30. Linked Houses—Two Storeys (*Central Site*)
31. Terrace Houses—Two Storeys (*Central Site*)
32. Flats—Three Storeys (*West Site*)
33. Flats—Six Storeys (*West Site*)
34. Playgrounds
35. Public Lavatories
36. Main Exit and Bus Departure Point



Lansbury is London's East End



The eleven proposed neighbourhoods of Stepney and Poplar

The ultimate area of Lansbury with Exhibition area in black

The tour of the Exhibition is now complete. The first two chapters that follow provide a running commentary on the displays in the Pavilions of Building Research and Town Planning. Chapter Three shows how Science and Planning were applied in the planning of Lansbury.

BUILDING RESEARCH

Our ways of living have changed rapidly during the last hundred years. Building methods have not always kept pace with these changes. For this reason, time-honoured methods and materials can no longer be relied on to provide the kinds of buildings that are needed to-day. Still less will they suffice for the future. So we look to the scientist to help us to produce the buildings that will suit new needs, at the rate at which we need them and at a price we can afford to pay.

With modern transport we need no longer depend on building materials produced locally. Many new materials have become available for building purposes, particularly in the last twenty years. New methods and mechanically operated plant have helped to speed up the rate of building. At the same time, new types of buildings have had to be developed for new purposes and processes, for which the older methods were often unsuitable. Finally, many important changes have resulted from the rising costs of building, which more and more determine the types of construction to be used.

The task of the scientist concerned with building problems is not to design or build—although, indeed, he may be an architect or an engineer—but to enquire into and experiment with materials and structures.

Scientific research in Britain has made, and is making, a very important contribution to the art of good building and thus indirectly to better living conditions. Much of this work is carried out at the Building Research Station at Garston, on the outskirts of North London. This, the first centralised organisation of its kind in the world, has since served as a model for the Commonwealth and for other countries. In the Building Research Pavilion some of the typical problems with which the Building Research Station is accustomed to deal are explained, together with examples of how scientific method is helping to solve them.

How Science can help

Science can help with all kinds of building from office blocks to aircraft hangars, but the buildings with which we are all most familiar are the homes we live in. For the purpose of this Exhibition, therefore, the construction of the *House* has been chosen for special study.

Here are some of the main problems which the scientist can help to solve in the most efficient and economical way :

(1) STABILITY

Take first the main structure of the house. Obviously the walls and the roof must be strong enough to resist the wind, and keep out the wet, the cold and the damp. They should continue to do so for years without constant and expensive maintenance. Many different materials can be used for this but not all are equally effective, and the question of cost discourages the use of more or stronger materials than are necessary. The scientist can help to decide on the choice of materials and methods.

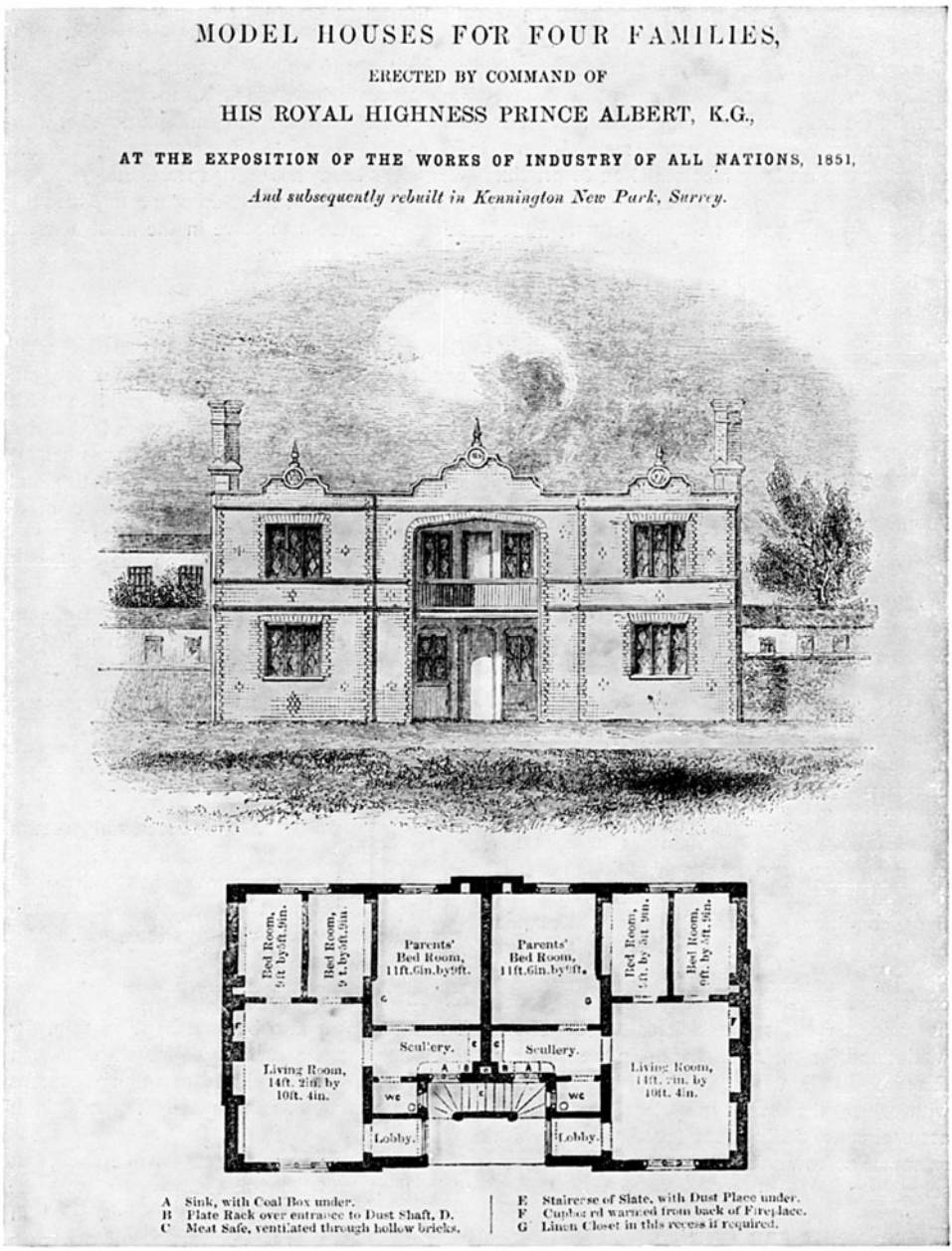
Walls, too, can be made in many different ways. In the past they were often built very thick. To-day this would require too much material and take too long. Moreover, scientific research has shown that thick walls do not always keep out the damp and cold so well as thin walls, provided these are properly designed and built.

Neither walls nor roofs, however, will be much use for long unless they rest on secure foundations. Here again the scientist is asked to find out and recommend the most effective and economical way to lay foundations in different kinds of soil.

(2) RAIN PENETRATION

The walls must also be proof against rain, for even our climate, which is not extreme, can provide sufficient wind and rain and variations of heat and cold, to demand high standards of weather-proofing.

The walls of mediaeval times were thick, but being porous they soaked up the wet like sponges, drying out again in the sun. Only if they were thick enough did the inside remain reasonably dry.



A model house erected for the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes at the Great Exhibition 1851

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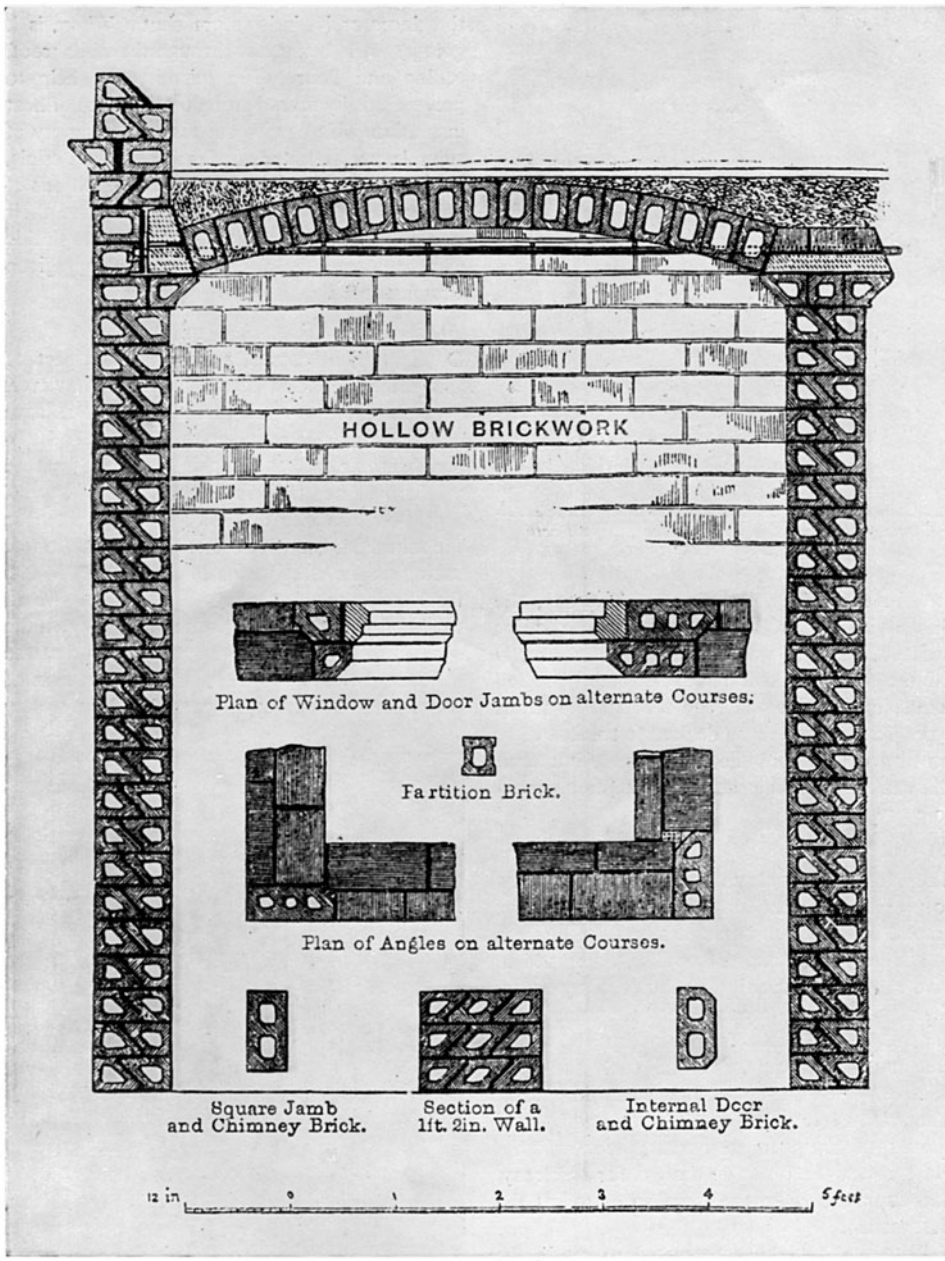

Section through the structure of the Prince Albert model house. Patent hollow bricks are used to prevent damp—the forerunner of cavity wall construction

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Chimney stack leaning owing to the chemical action of flue gases on the mortar

With the thin walls often used to-day, the difficulties of weatherproofing increase. For example, the thin wall, that sheds rain directly off the surface, must have particularly sound joints, or the wet will seep through. Various types of wall have been devised to combat these problems, including the cavity wall, but even this can have weaknesses unless attention is paid to every detail.

(3) HEATING

There are two problems here. The first is how to provide sufficient heat economically, and the second is how to conserve that heat.

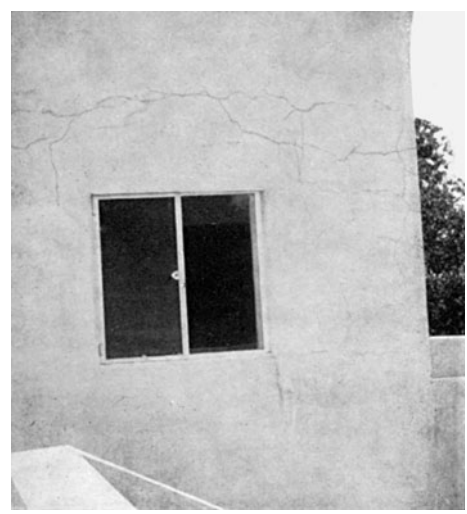
The heating apparatus should be designed to give a constant, evenly distributed temperature throughout each room for the minimum consumption of fuel. Too many fires and stoves consume large quantities of fuel and give relatively little heat and hot water in return. The scientist can find out how this equipment should be designed to operate economically. He can test the resulting designs for efficiency, and explain how to use them so as to get the best results.

Rooms should be constructed to retain the heat. Often it escapes very rapidly even when the doors and windows are shut. Where is it going ? It is being lost through the walls, roof, ceiling and floor. The scientist can help to prevent this by investigating the problem of heat insulation. He carries out tests on a variety of suitable materials and combinations of materials, in varying and carefully measured conditions of heat and cold. He can thus determine their insulating qualities. It is then possible to decide what material is appropriate in any given circumstances.

(4) LIGHTING

Daylight is, of course, an important aspect of this subject. Good use of daylight, however, depends more on the grouping and relative heights of buildings than on building methods. In Lansbury we can see how this has been achieved.

Much of our time is spent in artificial light. Again our aim is to get the best possible light for the minimum cost. It is not only a question of saving on the electricity bill. Eye strain results from trying to do things in a bad light. Much work is spoiled or made more difficult from the same cause. There are various aspects that the scientist studies. He tries out various kinds of lamp, he measures the strength of light they



Cracks in the rendering on a brick wall because the mix contained too much cement

Dry rot caused by damp rising from the ground owing to the lack of a damp course
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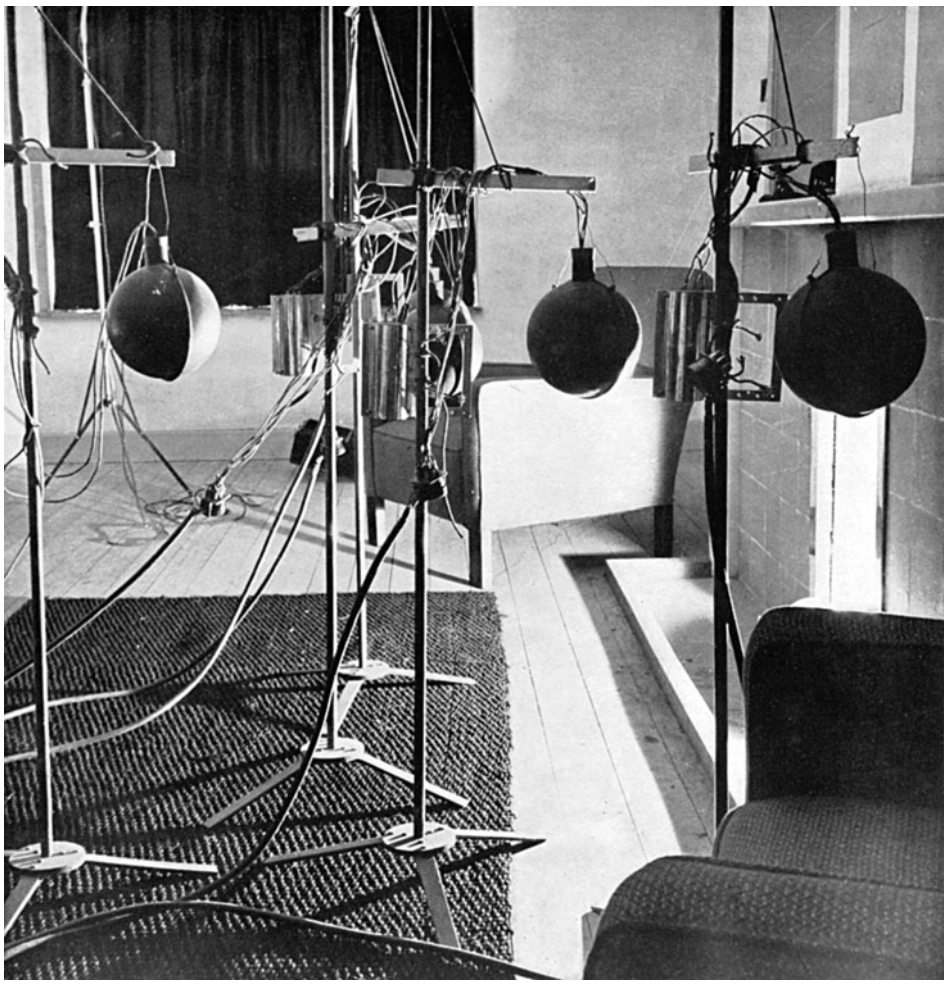

Scientific heating tests with resistance thermometers in progress at the Building Research Station

give, the evenness with which that light is distributed and the intensity of the glare. He measures all these properties accurately in terms which allow comparison.

(5) NOISE

For the town-dweller, this is undoubtedly one of the greatest causes of suffering and strain. We have all suffered from the radio blaring next door while we are trying to sleep, or from the baby crying upstairs because somebody made a noise in the next room. There is little to be done as yet about many of the noises from outside, but the scientist can do a great deal about those that occur inside. Some materials and structures transmit sound less than others. Some absorb sound better than others and so reduce echoes and reverberations. The scientist can determine

these properties in any material or structure and suggest which should be used.

(6) MAINTENANCE

All the points mentioned so far are important in a house, but there is not much object in having a house that is well heated, lighted and insulated against sound if the life and quality of the materials themselves are not satisfactory. It becomes a very expensive house if the paint continually peels off, if the doors and window frames shrink, if the plaster cracks, or even more disastrous, if the timber floors and joists are diseased.

Materials used in building must be sound and give lasting value. Here again, the scientist can help. He can analyse and measure these qualities, whether the materials be natural ones such as timber, or man-made such as bricks and concrete. He can then classify them and describe their properties exactly, so that when a particular quality of a particular material is ordered, we know what we will get, we know what it will do, and we can recognise it by its marks when we get it.

(7) ORGANISATION

Thanks to the pioneer work of the Building Research Station, building research is now well established in this country. To-day there are a number of different organisations and Government Departments, each ready and equipped to advise all who have problems connected with building. All this research should be used in everyday practice, and not wasted. A number of publications, which are of interest to the craftsman as well as to the technical man, are available at the Technical Information Point in the Exhibition, and a special pamphlet on Technical Information Services explains where assistance may be obtained on any particular aspect of building.

The Mobile Acoustics Laboratory for measuring sound insulation. It was used in the the Royal Festival Hall

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NEW TOWNS IN GREAT BRITAIN

NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION

London de-concentration

1 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
2 HATFIELD
3 WELWYN GARDEN CITY
4 STEVENAGE
5 HARLOW
6 BASILDON
7 CRAWLEY
8 BRACKNELL

Midlands concentration

9 CORBY

North East concentration

10 NEWTON AYCLIFFE
11 PETERLEE

Scotland concentration

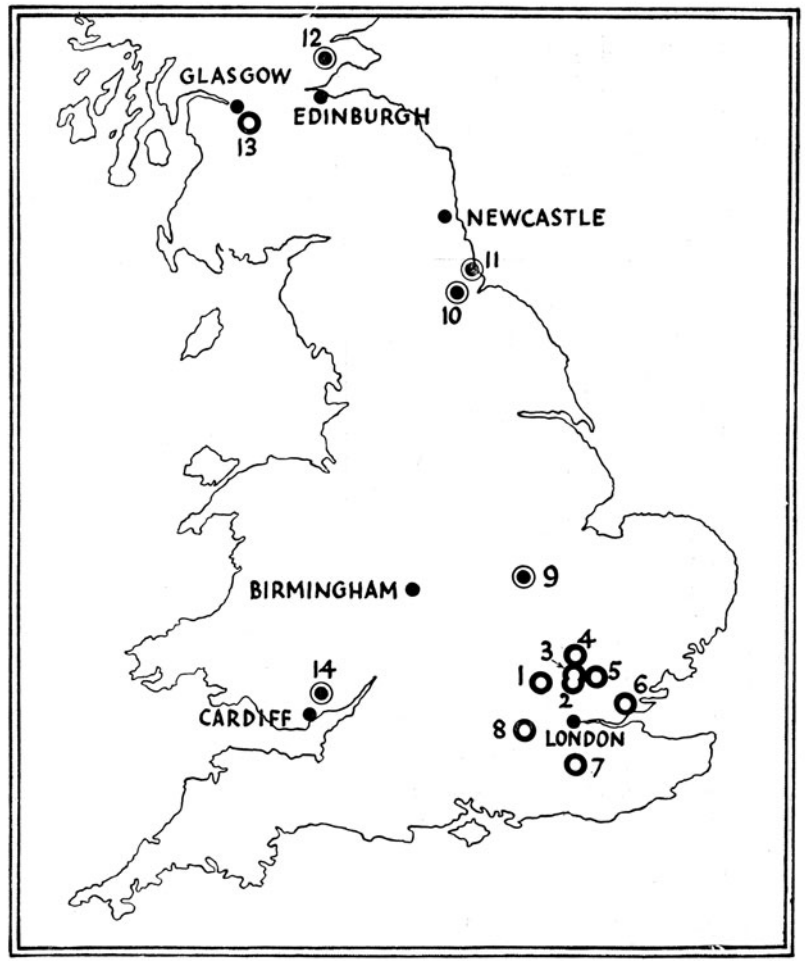
12 GLENROTHES

Glasgow de-concentration

13 EAST KILBRIDE

Wales concentration

14 CWMBRAN



TOWN PLANNING

Four out of five Englishmen live in towns. What are these towns like ? Although many cities and towns still have features of which we can be proud, most of them, and particularly those placed in industrial areas, are to-day in a sorry way—inefficient, dirty, inconvenient, shapeless, without character or colour. The symptoms of this disease—depressed housing, congested traffic, lack of open space, uncontrolled and aimless " sprawl "—are not peculiar to this country. They are sadly familiar features of almost every city in the world. One of the worst victims is London itself, already thirty miles across, with nine million inhabitants.

The purpose of Town Planning is to remedy these problems in existing towns and avoid them in the new. The exhibition in the Town Planning Pavilion illustrates in pictures, diagrams, maps and models what a large number of problems must be solved before the actual building of a new town or the re-shaping of an old one can begin.

Most towns in Britain began centuries ago as villages, but they have undergone their greatest changes only within the last hundred years. This growth has rarely been planned, so that often the original shape of the village has remained and can still be discerned even where it has apparently been buried in the expansion of later years.

Evolving in this way as an extension of the village, much of the large town development of the last century has produced far worse conditions than those enjoyed by our forefathers. Though they lived in narrow, crowded streets they could, in ten minutes, walk into the country. To-day our towns, in spite of our greatly improved scientific and technical skill, are quite unsuited to present-day conditions. Hence the present need of " New Towns for Old."

The Battle Today

The planning of new towns is only a part of the larger task of Town and Country Planning. Britain is a small island with a comparatively large population, so most land suitable for building on is already being used for other purposes, principally, of course, farming. Some parts of Britain, on the other hand, such as the Highlands of Scotland, are unsuitable for building because communications are poor, and there are no industries nearby to provide work.

When a piece of land can be used for different purposes, it is necessary to determine the best way to use it. This decision must depend upon the kind of land it is, where it is situated, and whether the national need at any one time for more food production perhaps, is greater than that for more houses.

It is also necessary to find out how the land is used and who uses it, whether for farming, mining, building, industry of all kinds or for recreation. This information must be collected, sorted out and recorded on maps which continually have to be kept up-to-date as these uses change.

If this information is to be used to give everyone the benefits of good planning, then obviously the uses to which the land is to be put must in some degree be controlled.

There is not the space here to discuss what degree of control is in fact necessary nor how it can best be applied. Clearly though, it is a universal problem, and though it may look simple it is in fact extremely complex, for many conflicting needs and customs must be balanced carefully, one against the other.

The Needs of Today

Building new towns makes a fresh start possible. They can be designed to suit present-day needs—and to-morrow's needs too, as far as these can be foreseen.

It is easy to list the obvious faults in old towns that should not be repeated. We can all see the need for properly designed road systems with no dangerous crossings or corners, for plenty of open space for recreation, and of course for up-to-date housing sited away from industrial areas and grouped within easy reach of schools and shops.

Part of West Ham in London's East End before the air attacks of 1940-45

The difficulties in Town Planning really begin when the many and sometimes conflicting needs of people of different callings, ages and backgrounds have to be provided for in the plan. The lives of a baby, a schoolchild, a teen-ager, a single worker, a married woman with a job, a mother and an elderly person are very different, but all have to live together as one community. It is not enough to guess at their needs, as important ones may be overlooked. Many detailed studies and surveys of these requirements are therefore necessary in order that any plan shall be thoroughly sound and practical.

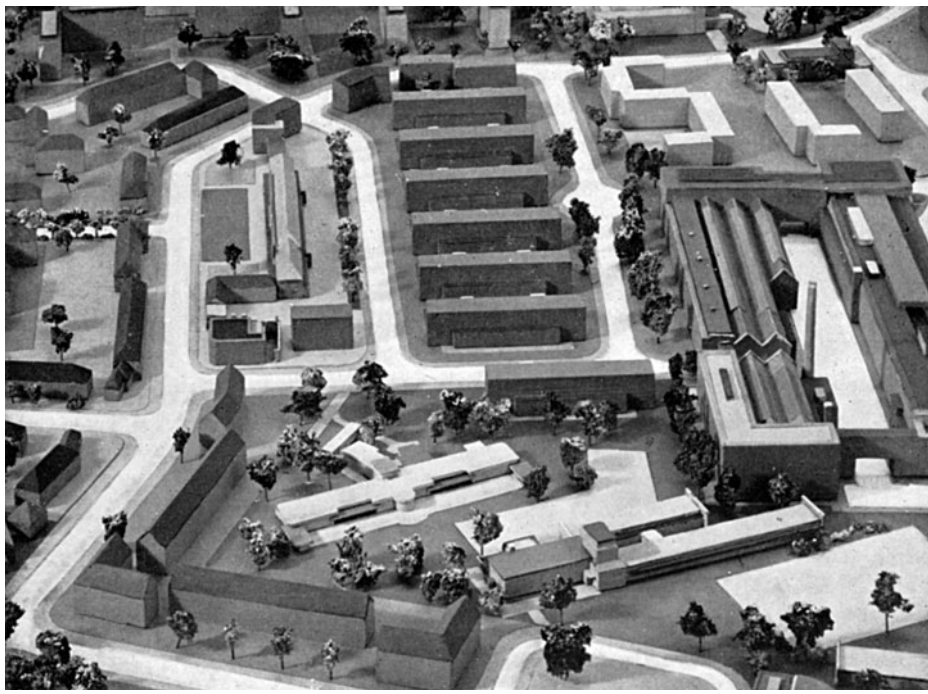
No two communities are the same. Local customs and preferences mean much and must not lightly be disregarded. Moreover each plan will take many years to complete, and ideas and needs may change in the meantime. It is therefore essential that plans should be kept flexible, and ready to meet the changes of the future.

Planning must be really imaginative and provide as far as possible for every physical facility in the growth of a community. But it takes more than the mere building of houses or even Town Planning to achieve a community that is well-balanced and self-reliant. In planning it must never be forgotten that the plans are made for people and that people are individuals. The community itself must be the creation of the people who comprise it.

How can these needs be met ?

The new towns being built in Britain are of three kinds.

(1) The majority are being built to accommodate the excess population and industry of the great cities, as they are thinned out and replanned to give their citizens adequate space for living and working.



The rebuilding plan for the part of West Ham illustrated on the page opposite.

[Lansbury itself is an example of this re-planning process. It is one of the new communities which will, in the next few decades and within the framework of the County of London Plan, replace those parts of the capital which are most overcrowded and lacking in amenity.]

The new towns round London, of which Harlow, Essex, is one, will provide new homes and new sites for industry, with far better living and working conditions than now exist in overcrowded parts of London.

(2) Those that will regroup existing populations near new or expanding industries.

Glenrothes, Fife, is being built on a developing coalfield. It will have a community mainly of miners, many from the largely worked-out Lanarkshire coalfield.

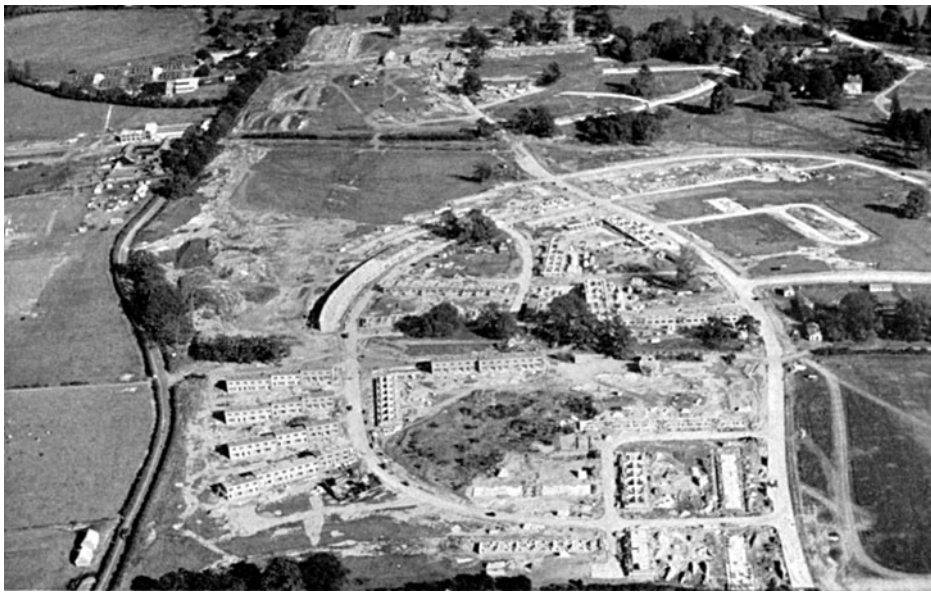
The New Town at Corby, Northamptonshire, is being built near expanding industries, to provide better living conditions for many, who otherwise would have to make long journeys to work. Newton Aycliffe will replace groups of straggling mining villages in West Durham where mining is to be supplemented by new industries to provide work for the existing population.

Peterlee New Town, situated on a rich coalfield in East Durham, will largely replace the further growth of the outworn villages round it.

(3) Those that will group within one urban community, the housing and industry that is mingled and scattered over a wide area.

Such areas lack proper amenities, shops are inconveniently distributed and children are often a long way from school. Basildon in Essex is being designed to deal with such a problem.

It might be asked why *new* towns are necessary. Why not extend the old ones instead of



Part of Harlow new town, Essex, in course of construction.

going to the trouble of finding suitable sites in the middle of the country ? The answer is that this is already being done in many small and medium-sized towns, but some big industrial towns are too large already for this policy to be successful. If London, Birmingham and Manchester continued to expand as they have in the past, they might in time join together. The result would be neither town nor country but an unsatisfactory and wasteful mixture of both.

Work in Progress

By law, all planning authorities, both urban and county, have to prepare Development Plans for their areas by 1st July, 1951. These plans will give a broad picture of how the land is expected to be used during the next twenty years. As some things are more urgent than others, development is planned in stages which will be reviewed every five years. The Development Plans will have to fit in with the general economic situation to ensure that there will be enough materials available, enough people to carry out the work, and enough money to pay for both. The object is to ensure that the land is used to the best advantage of all concerned.

It is now possible to see how this is being achieved, for the first stage in some of the plans is already under way in both new and old towns. Many practical problems have had to be solved, of which the following are the most important :—

(1) ENGINEERING SERVICES

One of the first tasks is to provide roads, railways, water supplies, sewers, electricity, gas and telephones. Many of these services have to be buried underground but must be accessible for maintenance, after the houses and roads are built.

(2) ROADS

The roads must be planned for rapid and convenient traffic circulation, but must also be safe for all who use them. Many road accidents would not happen if roads were better designed.

Roads must be of several kinds. Main high-

Hamsey Green Primary School, Surrey.

Old Peoples' flats at Beehive Lane, Ilford, Essex.

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ways for long distance motor traffic must not be routed through the town but pass to one side of it, with a connecting road to link town and highway. Roads for cross-town traffic between the town centre and people's homes must be bigger than those for delivery vans, milk carts and other local traffic circulating only between the houses and nearby shops.

live in the top flat of a ten-storey block. Most people want a separate house and private garden, others prefer to live in a flat. A great deal of information is therefore needed on these preferences and habits, before the housing can be designed.

(5) SHOPS AND SCHOOLS

Many other buildings such as churches, schools,

A block of shops, part of the rebuilding scheme for the centre of Coventry

(3) WORK

In the new towns there must be a choice of work for men and women of all ages, education and training. Factories must be within easy reach, but those that create noise, smoke and smells, should be separated from the parts of the town where people live and spend their leisure. Factories also require frequent deliveries of raw materials and other supplies. The goods they manufacture must be despatched to other factories for further processing, or to the shops. The service roads to them must be routed away from the residential parts of the town.

(4) HOUSES

Any new town or district must have a variety of houses and flats, for families vary in size, change periodically, and the needs of their members vary according to their age. There are, apart from families, single people who can no longer manage for themselves. Some people prefer to

shops, public houses, community and health centres must be designed and fitted into the plan. Open space is also essential. This may take the form of parks, playing fields, children's playgrounds, gardens or allotments, linked to factories and houses by footpaths.

(6) THE HEART OF THE TOWN

In old towns which have not grown too large, the town centre is a place where people meet in their spare time, go to church, to the theatre, to the cinema or sit and stroll in the open air. The main shops and civic buildings are usually nearby. Such a centre should be the focus of social activities, an essential part of a healthy community.

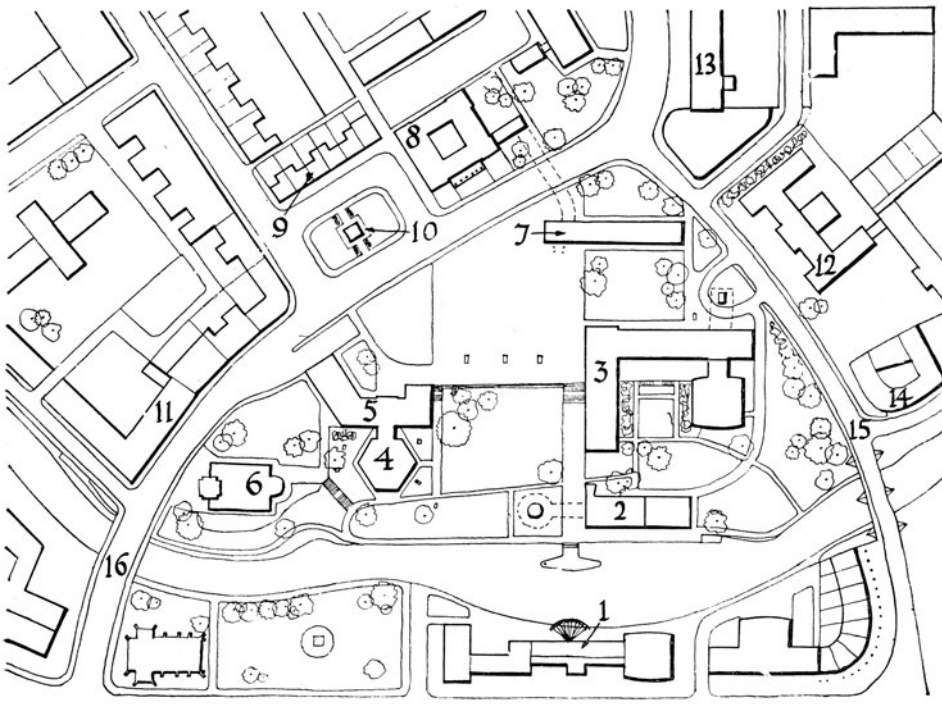
But in many towns, the centres have long ceased to perform their proper functions. They are too congested with traffic, too lacking in dignity and open space, too often a mere jumble of office blocks, shops and warehouses.

It is neither possible nor desirable to tear down all these buildings and start afresh. Some of them perhaps, are good for another twenty or thirty years of useful life. Others may be of historical or architectural interest. Rebuilding must, therefore, be done as and when the opportunity occurs but always in conformity with the plan.

In the new towns, on the other hand, it is possible, from the outset, to design the town centre to take its proper place as the heart of the new community.

. . . . .

The purpose then of Town Planning is to ensure that new towns are built and old ones reshaped to suit the changed conditions of to-day and to-morrow. Only by sweeping away the bad living conditions inherited from the past, can a fuller and healthier life be planned for present and future generations. Here in Lansbury we can see the beginning of such a new life stirring before our eyes.



THE HEART OF THE TOWN

1 Town Hotel. (*View point*).
2 Restaurant.
3 County and Government Offices.
4 Arts Theatre.
5 Art Gallery and Library.
6 18th Century Church.
7 Town Hall Extension.
8 Old Town Hall.
9 Georgian Terrace.
10 1914-1918 War Memorial.
11 Shops and Offices.
12 Technical School.
13 Departmental Store.
14 19th Century Public House.
15 Old Bridge.
16 New Bridge.

HOW LANSBURY WAS PLANNED

The Planning Team

It must be quite obvious that before a new neighbourhood or a new town can be designed, a great deal of preparatory work has to be done by a large number of people. The principal groups in such a project are the Town Planners, the Architects and the Engineers, all with their own specialised tasks to perform, but nevertheless working together as a team.

The Town Planning group almost always includes both architects and engineers as well as surveyors, valuers, sociologists and other specialists who concentrate on Town Planning rather than on the more general practice of their professions. The task of direction and co-ordination therefore falls to them. This team must, of course, work within the scope of financial and general policies laid down by central and local government bodies and is always subject ultimately to the control of the electorate.

In the case of Lansbury, the Planning Team started with the general proposals of the County of London Plan. These outlined how the Stepney-Poplar area should be reorganised into neighbourhoods, how industry and housing areas should be related or separated, on which roads traffic should be concentrated and which open spaces should be retained or extended.

The first task was to make sure that the solution proposed for this area in the Plan was really workable, that the old districts could satisfactorily be re-established in a new form, and that they and the neighbourhoods into which they were to be divided, really would meet the needs of the people who were to live and work there. A large number of surveys of all kinds were carried out. These included the history of the district and the physical uses to which every part of the area was put, in the way of houses, shops, factories, schools, churches, public buildings, roads and open spaces. Also included were the state and layout of sewers, drains, electricity and gas mains, all other services and even the state of the trees.

Sociological surveys were made of the entire neighbourhood to find out who would live there, their ages, the sizes of families, their races and religions, where they worked, how they shopped, what shops they needed and a thousand similar details.

The age and condition of each building also had to be recorded, together with its form of ownership, for this information enabled the Planning Team to assess what property could be used at each stage of development. This was an essential preliminary to the acquisition by the London County Council, by compulsory purchase under Parliamentary powers, of all the properties involved. A public enquiry had to be held, followed by negotiations with no less than three hundred and seventy owners of more than one thousand separate properties. These owners included private individuals and companies, Church authorities, voluntary organisations, brewers and many shopkeepers, most of whom are being re-established in far better conditions than before.

The next task was the demolition of condemned buildings, which were pulled down as soon as the ownership of a site was transferred, so that building operations could proceed even while other parts of the neighbourhood still remained to be bought.

Framework for Lansbury. When all this information had been sifted and analysed, the Planning Team was able to begin drawing up the essential framework for the eleven neighbourhoods, including that for Lansbury. Its shape was determined by its physical boundaries—a canal, a railway and a main road ; within these limits, the Planning Team largely changed the face of the map. Roads carrying substantial traffic that passed through the area were closed and the traffic was thus diverted from the centre to improved roads round the neighbourhood. A number of factories and workshops that were scattered throughout the area were transferred to industrial zones at the edge—along the canal

and part of the railway, where much industry was already concentrated. The necessary service industries were also sited along the railway. Open spaces for recreation hardly existed—at least prior to the bombing—and sites were selected for these.

The existing shopping centre was Chrisp Street which ran parallel with the railway. This was well-sited not only for Lansbury but for the nearby districts, though the congestion, caused particularly by the typical London street market of stalls and barrows standing in the road, neutralised the value of the road for much of the time and rendered it dangerous for everyone. A new arrangement was necessary that would be just as handy, far more convenient to use and far less dangerous. The answer was a shopping centre and market place confined to pedestrians but accessible to delivery vehicles from selected directions. Small subsidiary groups of local shops were also planned in other parts of the neighbourhood.

How many people? A most important decision had to be taken on how many people should live in the neighbourhood. Not only did the amount of housing depend on this, but also the size of the shopping centre, the number and sizes of the churches, the schools and the public houses, the amount of open space, the extent of the electricity, gas and water supplies, even the capacity of the sewers. The number was fixed at nine thousand five hundred people to be housed at a density of one hundred and thirty six persons to the acre. This was not considered the ideal figure, but in view of the large numbers of people who worked in local factories and in the docks, and had to live there to be near their jobs, or else travel long distances to and from work, a lower density was not considered practicable. In any case it allows a population that is only forty-two per cent. of the pre-war one.

Road traffic was another major consideration. Only the minimum number of service roads were planned for the neighbourhood, with footways linking the residential parts with each other and with the schools, churches, shopping centre and open spaces, so that traffic dangers would be reduced to the minimum and the absence of the noise, dirt and smells of road transport would make life more peaceful and pleasant.

When all these various needs had been considered, a general lay-out plan was prepared for the whole neighbourhood. The time had come to call in the Architect.

Enter the Architect

The task of the architect is to visualise and create out of a great variety of materials, a design for a building or a group of buildings that will not only be fine in appearance, but will also be practical in arrangement. Provision has to be made in the planning for heating, plumbing, ventilation, drainage, services, lifts and staircases. The whole design has to be translated into working drawings, which describe down to the last detail how the building shall be constructed. The architect must specify, for example, the types of bricks and roof covering, the mixtures of mortar and plaster, the quality of electrical fittings, the shape of the smallest moulding and the make, colour and number of coats of paint to be used. He also is responsible for ensuring that his designs accord with the local bye-laws, which specify standards of safety relating to construction methods, fire prevention and similar important matters of general concern. With the help of the quantity surveyor he has to work out the cost of the complete project down to the last brick and pane of glass.

When the designs and the preliminary estimates of cost have been approved by whoever has commissioned the architect, and by the various authorities whose agreement is required, the next step, again in conjunction with the quantity surveyor, is to draw up a " bill of quantities " which is a complete schedule of all the materials and labour that will be needed.

Building contractors are then invited, on the basis of these bills of quantities, to tender competitively for each contract. When a tender has been accepted, the builder then orders all the necessary material, maps out the building programme to ensure that the various materials arrive on the site as they are required, and that

the bricklayers, plumbers, painters and other workmen are available when their part of the job comes to be done.

A Team of Architects. The planning research, and subsequently the framework of the plan for the neighbourhood, was carried out by the Town Planning Division of the Department of the Architect to the London County Council in collaboration with the Housing and Valuation and other departments. A number of private architects were selected jointly by the Council for Architecture, Town Planning and Building Research of the Festival of Britain and by the London County Council, and appointed by the latter to design for them the individual buildings and groups of buildings decided on for the neighbourhood. All the housing development has, however, been under the control of the Director of Housing and Valuer to the L.C.C. and one group has been designed by the Housing Architect in his department. Other buildings have been designed by architects appointed by the Poplar Metropolitan Borough Council and the Church Authorities, under the direction of the Planning staff.

The neighbourhood was thus to be designed as one architectural unit, but a number of architects, each with their own ideas, were to design the various buildings. To ensure that the sum of the individual efforts would indeed result in a coherent design, and not be merely an assembly of unrelated pieces of architecture, the Planning staff had to take the plan one step further.

A Model is Built. This was done by making a model of the district, with the buildings as moveable wooden blocks of different shapes, sizes and heights which could be moved about. These were tried out in various positions until a preliminary solution was reached that seemed to give the desired proportions of housing units, a proper standard of day-lighting to each, a suitable apportionment between buildings and open spaces and, most important, an arrangement of groups and masses, linked by the open spaces that would ensure a good architectural effect, or in fact an urban landscape.

The architects were then asked to conform to the general massing and groupings shown on this rough model and in the case of the housing their freedom of design was even more restricted. For instance they were asked, for the most part, to use the yellow London stock bricks and purple-grey Welsh slates, since these materials were traditional in this part of Poplar and their use ensured a general colour harmony throughout the neighbourhood. Similarly, the general massing of trees was included in the model, but each architect was left to work out the treatment round his own buildings.

When the architects had produced their preliminary schemes, a further process of adjustment ensued, till finally the present design came into being.

This is probably the first occasion on which so many different buildings have been designed simultaneously by many architects working in unison under the guidance of a team of planners. It has been in fact a very interesting experiment. The manner in which these architects willingly accepted many restraints on their freedom of design, without by any means submerging their individual personalities, speaks well for the way that architecture has developed as a social art over the last few generations.

Enter the Engineer

The specialised knowledge of the engineer is needed in the earliest stages of any scheme. He has the practical task of designing the roads, subways and bridges that may be necessary, the various services that will be buried under the ground, and, with the architect, all specialised steel and concrete structures, building foundations and complex systems of heating.

In a new town planned for a site in open country the engineer would have other responsibilities, for there would then be main water supplies to collect from a catchment area without detriment to neighbouring users. Gas capacity might have to be supplied from many miles away, electricity sub-stations built and sewage disposed of on a large scale. Even a railway might be required, certainly a complex system of new roads, possibly an airport,

factories and bridges, all of which would be the province of the engineer in conjunction, of course, with the architects and Town Planners.

In the case of Lansbury, the position was rather different from that of a new town, as there were a large number of existing services that complicated the planning. The London County Council's Chief Engineer provided the necessary facts and advised the Planning Team in the preparation of their plan and then, when this was agreed, arranged for the necessary work to be carried out.

He had, for example, to consider the old network of small local pipe sewers, which, though generally of adequate size, were laid at very flat gradients and followed no rational plan. In the new scheme nearly five thousand feet of them were abandoned, the whole arrangement being modernised.

The new roads had to be designed according to the weight of traffic that they would need to carry ; water, electricity and gas mains and telephone lines had to be laid, and street lighting and traffic signs provided. One particular problem was the Limekiln Dock sewer which crossed the neighbourhood from north to south. This was retained and will later have a new green parkway laid out above it.

The Stage is Set

So far, this has been a brief account of how the plan for Lansbury evolved. The principal actors have so far held the stage, but there are many more in the wings and behind the scenes.

The London County Council, which was responsible for policy, called on the services of no less than nine of its committees—Town Planning, Housing, Rivers and Drainage, Education, Parks, Health, Welfare, Finance and General Purposes. Thirteen departments of the Council were continuously involved and a new section had to be created within the Architect's department to co-ordinate the work of planning and progress. The committees and technical officers of Poplar Borough Council had unusually heavy responsibilities in the task of reorganising the roads, sewers and street lighting while other officers of the Borough Council were equally concerned in the development.

It must not be overlooked that this thirty acre development has had to be carried out in as many months, a period which is about half the time that would normally have been taken. This has enormously increased the difficulties which were in any case very great, for this is the first occasion on which such comprehensive planning has been carried out by the London County Council, under the new powers given to local authorities by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. Lansbury is in fact the first neighbourhood in Britain in which such a large unit has been assembled so that landscape and buildings are one coherent design.

In these pages have been described the various buildings and groups of buildings that are the result of so much concerted effort in drawing office and committee-room. Vital as this was, it was only the prelude to the work of construction where many hundreds of people have been engaged, both on the site and off, to make Lansbury not only an exhibition for the Festival of Britain, but a permanent home for some fifteen hundred people.

To-day and To-morrow

Lansbury is but one of the first steps in a national scheme of reconstruction. Even here much still remains to be done but it must be realised that nothing less than a new kind of city is slowly evolving. With a task of such complexity and size, the effects of which will be so enduring, progress is inevitably slow. Only as experience is gained in practice can the pace increase.

Here is undoubtedly a great contribution to progress, progress in the best sense, in that it aims to open the way to a new and better life—to-day for the people of Poplar—to-morrow for the people of Britain.

PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE
FESTIVAL CALENDAR

OPENING CEREMONY by H.M. THE KING St. Paul's Cathedral May 3, 1951

EXHIBITIONS

LONDON

South Bank Exhibition	*May* 4-*Sept.* 30
Festival Pleasure Gardens, Battersea Park	*May* 3-*Nov.* 3
Exhibition of Science, South Kensington	*May* 4-*Sept.* 30
Exhibition of Architecture, Lansbury, Poplar	*May* 3-*Sept.* 30
Exhibition of Books, Victoria & Albert Museum	*May* 5- *Sept.* 30
Centenary Exhibition of the Great Exhibition of 1851, Victoria & Albert Museum	*May* 1-*Oct.* 11
Festival of British Films	*June* 4-17

GLASGOW

Exhibition of Industrial Power, Kelvin Hall	*May* 28-*Aug.* 18
Exhibition of Contemporary Books	*June* 1-*July* 28

EDINBURGH

"Living Traditions"—Exhibition of Scottish Architecture and Crafts	*June* 25- *Sept.* 8
Exhibition of 18th Century Books	*Aug.* 3-*Sept.* 15

BELFAST

Ulster Farm and Factory Exhibition	*June* 1-*Aug.* 31

TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

By Land

Manchester	*May* 3-26
Leeds	*June* 23-*July* 14
Birmingham	*Aug.* 4-25
Nottingham	*Sept.* 15-*Oct.* 6

Festival Ship "Campania"

Southampton	*May* 4-14
Dundee	*May* 18-26
Newcastle	*May* 30-*June* 16
Hull	*June* 20-30
Plymouth	*July* 5-14
Bristol	*July* 18-28
Cardiff	*July* 31-*Aug.* 11
Belfast	*Aug.* 15-*Sept.* 1
Birkenhead	*Sept.* 5-14
Glasgow	*Sept.* 18-*Oct.* 6

ARTS FESTIVALS

London Season of the Arts	*May* 3-*June* 30
Aberdeen	*July* 30-*Aug.* 13
Aldeburgh	*June* 8-17
Bath Assembly	*May* 20-*June* 2
Belfast	*May* 7-*June* 30
Bournemouth and Wessex	*June* 3-17
Brighton (Regency)	*July* 16-*Aug.* 25
Cambridge	*July* 30-*Aug.* 18
Canterbury	*July* 18-*Aug.* 10
Cheltenham (British Contemporary Music)	*July* 2-14
Dumfries	*June* 23-30
Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama	*Aug.* 19-*Sept.* 8
Inverness	*June* 17-30
Liverpool	*July* 22-*Aug.* 12
Llangollen (International Eisteddfod)	*July* 3-8
Llanrwst (Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales)	*Aug.* 6-11
Norwich	*June* 18-30
Oxford	*July* 2-16
Perth	*May* 27-*June* 16
St. David's Festival (Music and Worship)	*July* 10-13
Stratford-upon-Avon (Shakespeare Festival)	*March* 24-*Oct.* 27
Swansea	*Sept.* 16-29
Worcester (Three Choirs Festival)	*Sept.* 2-7
York	*June* 3-17

OTHER EVENTS

Edinburgh: Gathering of the Clans	*Aug.* 16-19
International Documentary Film Festival	*Aug.* 19-*Sept.* 8
Cardiff: Pageant of Wales	*July* 25-*Aug.* 6
St. Fagan's Folk Festival	*July* 16-28
Dolhendre, Merioneth: Welsh Hillside Farm Scheme	*May-Sept.*

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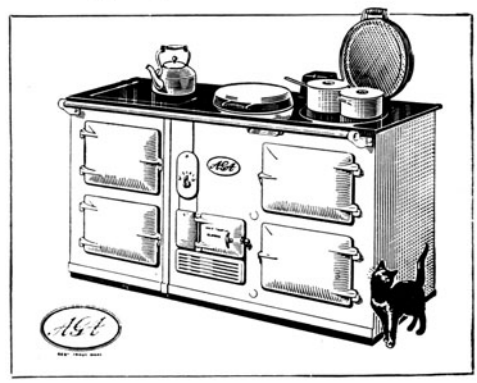

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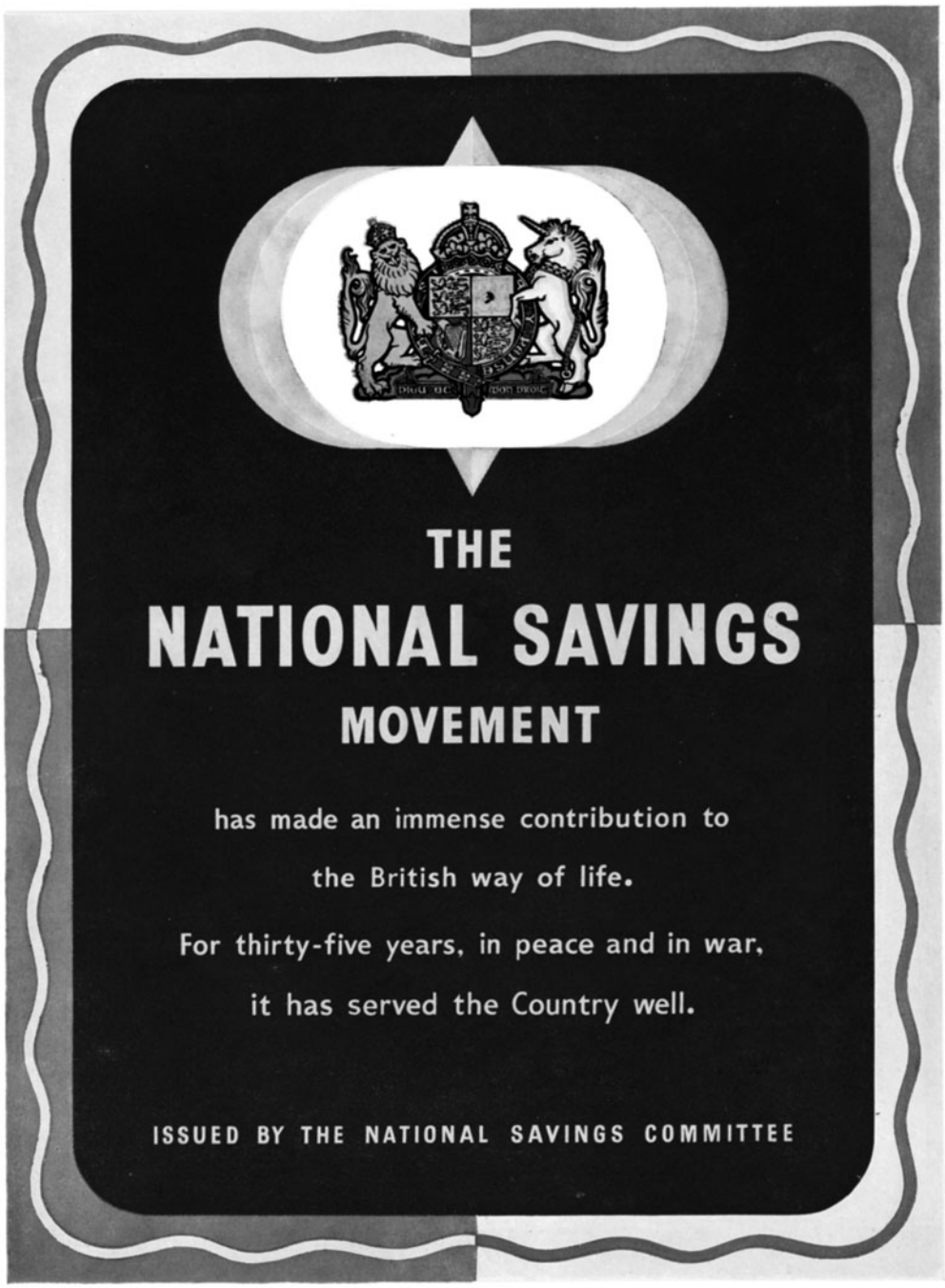
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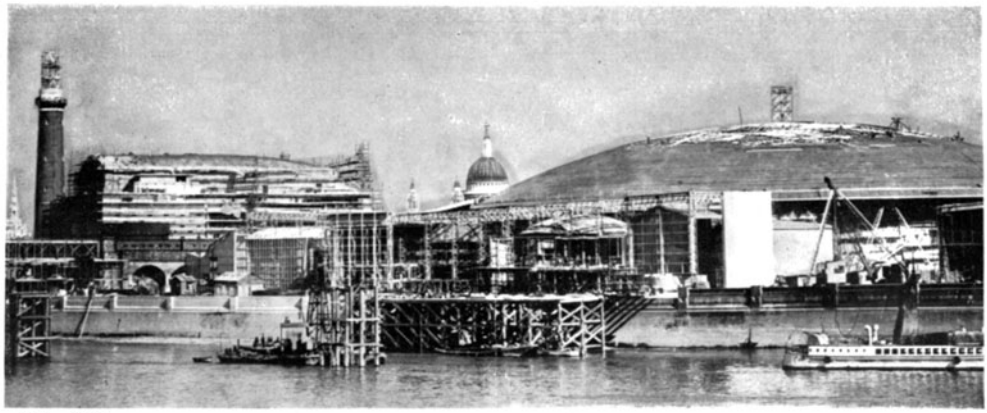

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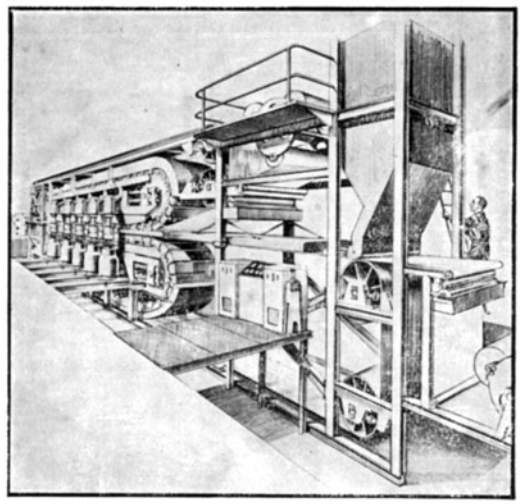
E.D.A. is a national organisation, non-profit making and independent of proprietary articles and systems. Its sole concern is that the country's power supply should be put to its most efficient use in the best interests of the community at large. To this end, E.D.A. produces every year a wealth of technical reports and publications dealing with general and specific problems in the installation and use of electric light, heat and power; it mounts exhibitions and organises displays of every kind; it produces and distributes films, film-strips and other educational and instructional aids; and it retains a panel of specialist experts from whom advice and information is freely available to all sections of the public.

The BRITISH ELECTRICAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
2 SAVOY HILL, LONDON, W.C.2. *Telegrams: Electreda Rand, London. Telephone: TEMple Bar 9434*

Soon—80 SQ. FT. OF CELLOBOARD
TRADE MARK
PRODUCED IN SIXTY SECONDS

Continuous production on new automatic press



WITH THE ADVENT of this automatic press, production will reach a new high level. For the first time it will be possible to make celloboard continuously at the rate of 80 sq. ft. a minute. Only by such methods of production will the increasing demands of industry be met. In the building trade, in coach making, in the furniture industry, for ceilings, roofing and all types of modern fittings the need for building fabrics increases daily. The non-stop automatic press, by replacing the conventional static press, will satisfy this need in the most efficient up-to-date way possible.

Visit the Celloboard Stand (Stand B 11) at Olympia, National Hall, during the British Plastics Exhibition. June 6th to June 16th. Here you will see Celloboard put to many uses — for making furniture, fittings and the stand itself.

VERE ENGINEERING CO. LTD., 3 VERE STREET, LONDON, W.1

Architects : ERNEST BATES & WM. G. SINNING
Builders : HALL, BEDDALL & CO., LTD.

By courtesy of
BRITISH TROLLEY TRACK CO., LTD. Factory at Copperfield Street, London, S.E.1, showing excellent example of slate cill and window board with slate facings between windows.

SLATE CILLS

Slate is an ideal material for cills in modern buildings and has been used extensively in the Festival of Britain's main site at Waterloo Road as well as at the Lansbury site, Poplar.

OUR SPECIALITY—a combined slate cill and window board which has qualities which make it extremely attractive for the modern school designer. A natural material, it has excellent wearing qualities, cannot harbour germs, saves labour in fixing, always looks neat and clean cut.

JUDGE OUR CILLS FOR YOURSELVES AT :—

Canton Street Schools Architects : David Stokes, F.R.I.B.A. Builders : Miskin & Sons, Ltd.

Ricardo Street Schools Architects : Yorke Rosenberg & Mardall. Builders : Tersons, Ltd.

Manufacturers : **THE BOW SLATE & ENAMEL CO. LTD.**

Office & Works : British Railways Depot, Old Ford Road, Bow, London, E.C.3, *'Phone : ADVance* 2800 & 4273

A pre-restoration view of the sombre shade of part of the interior wall, in remarkable contrast with cleaned areas.

an interesting renovation

An example of the amazing cleansing powers of CHEMICO Household Cleanser was provided by the recent renovation of the interior of Worcester College Chapel, Oxford University. All the cleansing agents tried proved unsuccessful—being too gentle in action to remove the film of stubborn grime or too harsh for the delicate plasterwork. Eventually the cleansing contractors used CHEMICO, with remarkably successful results. Authorities having cleaning problems are invited to write for a free illustrated brochure entitled " An Interesting Restoration," containing the full story

CHEMICO

Obtainable in
1 lb. and 2 lb. tins,
& 28 lb. containers.

THE COUNTY CHEMICAL CO. LTD., Shirley, Birmingham

By way of Introduction..

We present for the first time our new Cabinet Cooker called the CALEDONIA. It is the streamlined answer to the housewife's quest for a free standing unit which is both attractive and compact. The outstanding features of the Caledonia when summed up include :—

- Two commodious ovens
- Spacious hotplate
- Aluminium lift-off bolsters
- Large firebox with shaking bottomgrate
- Thermometer in oven door
- No protruding parts—no flues to clean
- Insulated throughout—low fuel consumption
- Hot water supply always
- Finished in " Pastella " Vitreous enamel
- Enamelled platerack and splash back

THE CALEDONIA CABINET COOKER

LANE & GIRVAN LTD.

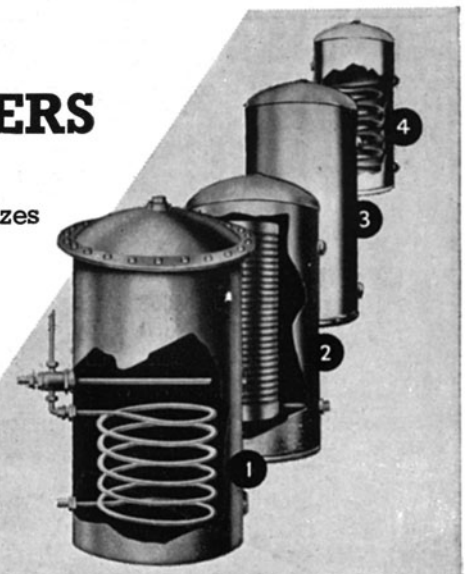
BONNYBRIDGE STIRLINGSHIRE
SCOTLAND

"CUPROCYL" COPPER CYLINDERS

CALORIFIERS AND TANKS

(Brazed and Welded) All types & sizes

Calorifiers Tanks and Copper Vessels
of various types and capacities.
To British Standard Specifications as required.
Brochure posted on application.



1. *Storage Steam Calorifier*
2. *Indirect Cylinder (Annular Type).*
3. *Storage Cylinder*
4. *Indirect Cylinder (Coil Type).*

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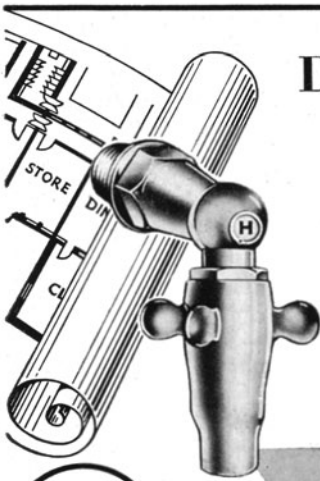


DESIGN FOR TO-DAY

MODERN TAPS FOR MODERN HOMES

Until the inception o the SUPATAP, domestic water taps had not changed in principle through the centuries. The Roman tap was crude and lacked refinement but it worked on the same screw-down action.

The elegant SUPATAP—a complete departure from contemporary tap manufacture—has rapidly become the choice of householders, municipal authorities and large users generally, because of its many advantages and enormous saving in maintenance charges.

SUPATAP FEATURES

- ★ **Washer is changed in seconds without turning off the main, emptying tanks or using tools.**
- ★ **Built-in anti-splash**
- ★ **Finger-light operation.**
- ★ **A model for every purpose—fully guaranteed.**

Roman Tap circa A.D. 50 found on Mt. Vesuvius near Pompeii

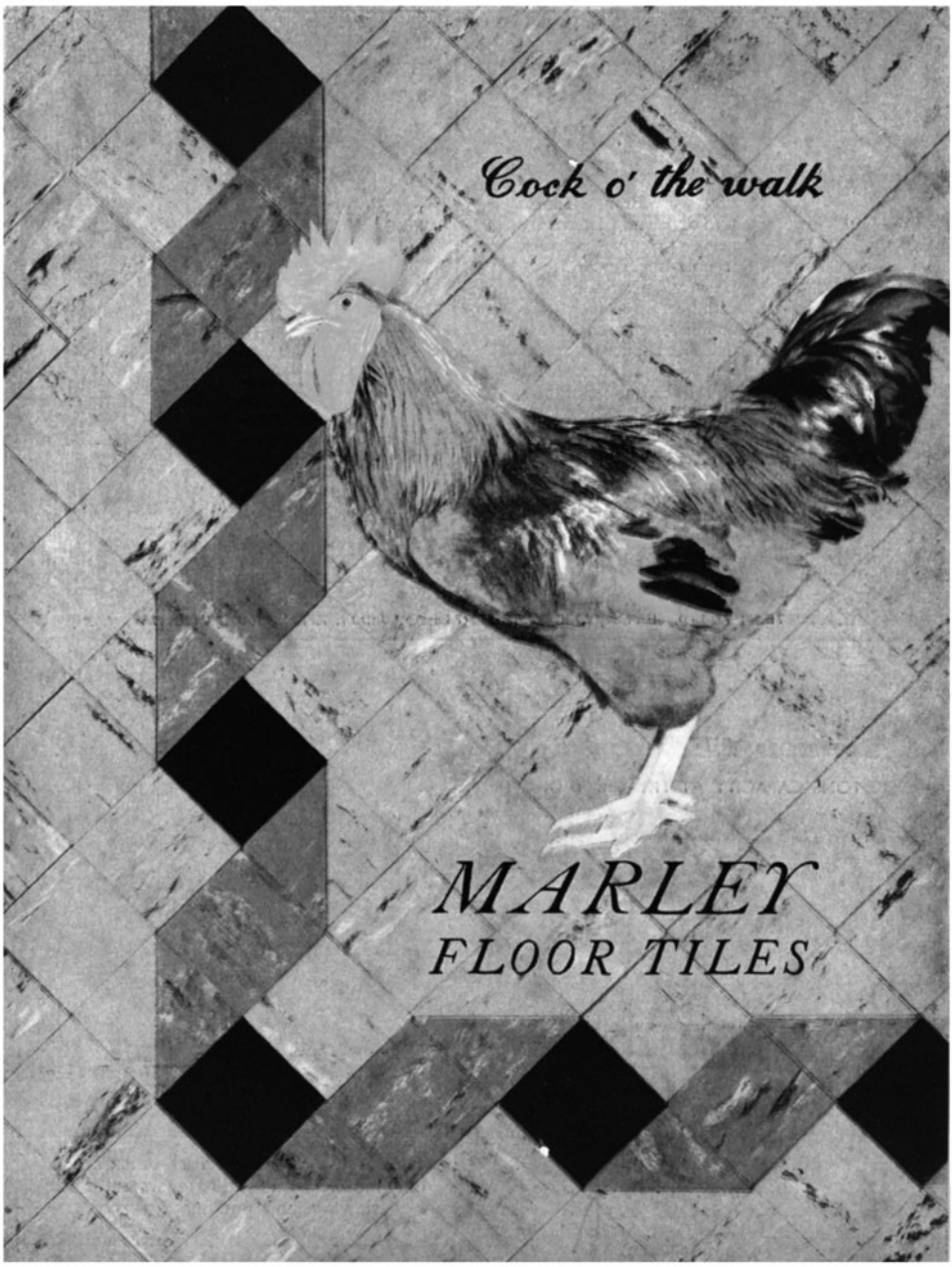
Leaflets showing full range of models post free on request.

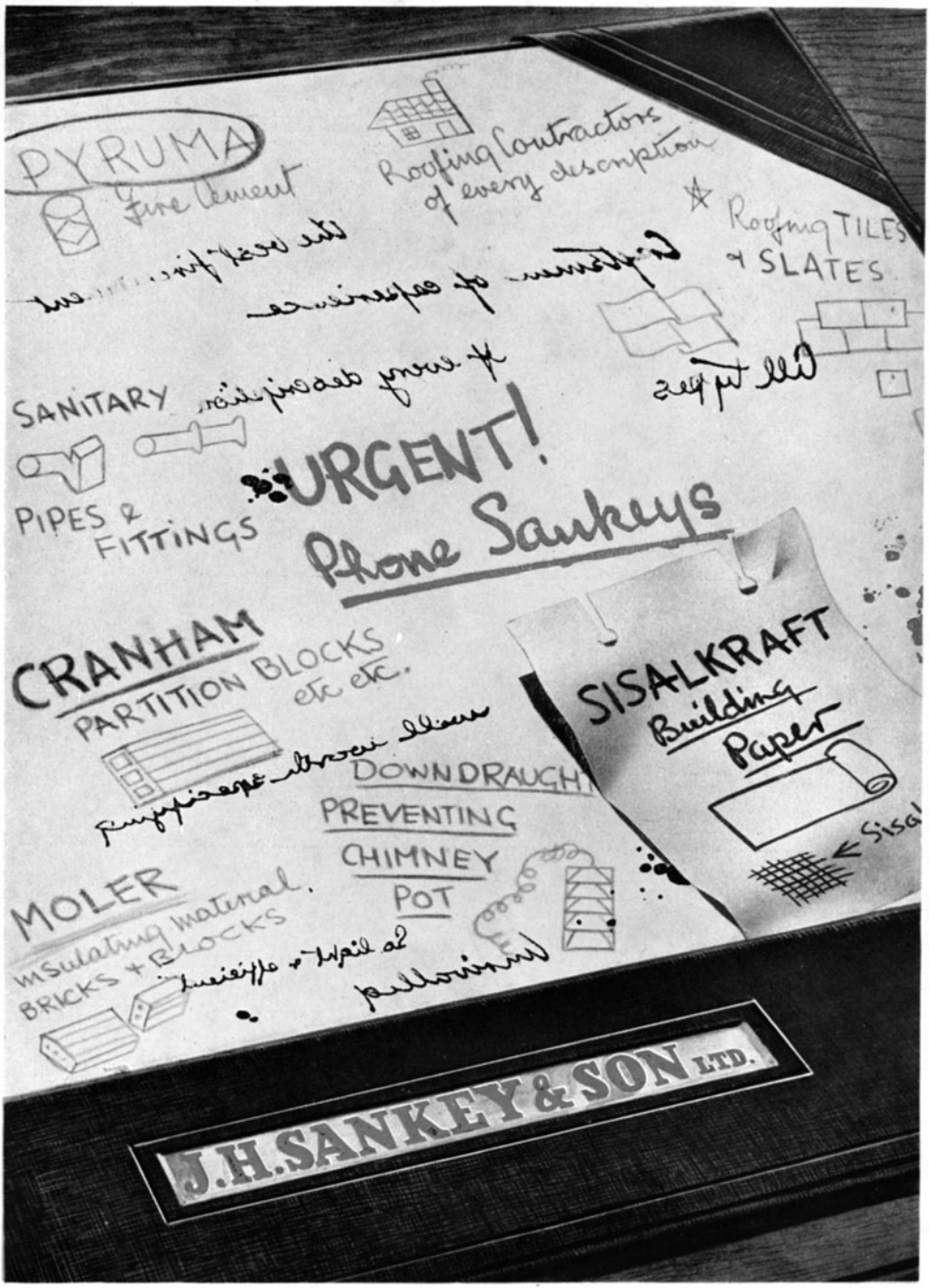
SUPATAPS

THE GREATEST ADVANCE IN TAPS SINCE THE ROMAN ERA

F. H. BOURNER & Co. (Engrs.), Ltd., (Dept. A38), Carlton Rd. S. Croydon, Surrey

CONSERVE THE NATION'S WATER — FIT SUPATAPS





ALDWYCH HOUSE, ALDWYCH, LONDON, W.C.2. *Telephone* HOL*born* 6949