Martlesham Heath - An Unorthodox Development

Over the last three decades much has been written about Martlesham Heath and the unorthodox approach taken in its development.

A Revolt Against Convention

A new development, rather than the spoliation of existing village communities, seemed a possible way of breaking out from the orthodoxy of the now traditional housing estate...

A Village of Vision?

The qualities of a village are notoriously hard to define. The only certainty is that the physical and social mesh of the village, that most subtle thing, is slow to evolve, slower still to dissolve...

The Garden City: Past, Present and Future

Just a few other precedents exist of private villages on green field sites. The design and layout of all these schemes has stuck closely to the standard formula favoured by the volume builders, based on discrete clusters of houses along loops or culs-de-sac, to maximise marketability and minimise capital locked up in the ground...

History of The Bradford Property Trust Limited 1928-1978

The largest of the wartime purchases, the 7,420 acre Brightwell estate near Ipswich Suffolk, formed the basis of a thirty five year project that is only now (1978) coming to fruition. Brightwell included freehold rights to the Royal Air Force airfield at Martlesham...

The Culpin Partnership

Typical housing projects include: Master plan and some neighbourhood areas in the new village at Martlesham Heath...

The Bidwell Dynasty

Since 1840 surveying firm Bidwells has been quietly building a reputation in East Anglia...

Urban Regeneration - The Importance of Place Making

Fifty years on, they are not gated worlds, they are enclaves, (middle class ghettos maybe), of owners bonded together by a compulsory management company. The Bradford Property Trust behind Martlesham Heath in Suffolk demonstrates the same management priority on the scale of a small town. This thinking ahead is what so few developers appreciate and only makes sense when building on a large scale...

Community Support and Neighbourhood Size

This paper is a commentary on previous material on neighbourhoods...

Suffolk Coastal Local Plan

Basically, the overall physical and design principle which emanates from the original social concept is one of a series of hamlets separated from each other by wide areas of open space. The District Council has sought, and will continue to uphold the principles of this concept, and, accordingly, once these hamlets have been fully developed there will be no potential for further development...

A Revolt Against Convention

Christopher Parker (AJ Information Library, September 1979)

Who can be proud of post-war housing in Britain? The ribbon development of early council houses in the late '40s gave way to the private developer's housing estates of the '50s: by the early '60s a pattern had been set for the

repetitive rows of near identical houses with the occasional 'setback ' being introduced to relieve monotony. Planning as introduced by Silkin's Act of 1947 had sadly failed to create a pleasing environment through its insistence on control and careful avoidance of any design function. The time was ripe for a revolt and this was led by Eric Lyons and others who rejected the inevitable as being so.

I was fortunate at that time to be the lessor's land agent responsible for Martlesham Heath when the Air Ministry surrendered its lease of the aerodrome in 1960. I was even more fortunate in having as a client The Bradford Property Trust Ltd with its long established interests in housing.

A new development, rather than the spoliation of existing village communities, seemed a possible way of breaking out from the orthodoxy of the now traditional housing estate. The Bradford Property Trust Ltd was attracted by such an idea and decided to pursue the venture in 1963. Ten years later with planning consent to hand, I was appointed project manager and allowed to form my own team of architects, quantity surveyors, civil engineers and consultants.

The village concept

At one of the first meetings to which the three firms of architects had been invited we considered the concept of a village. A sharp distinction had to be drawn between this and such nomenclature as 'housing estate' or 'neighbourhood'. It was important, therefore, to define what we understood by a village and to avoid designing and creating anything else. As a village comprises both buildings and people we were in some difficulty but three distinguishing features were identified:

- mixed age and income groups across a wide spectrum
- the architecture is incoherent, being in both different styles and materials; roof pitches at variance with one another and the buildings themselves angled (not in a planned sense) to produce interesting and intimate groupings
- generally a lack of uniformity.

The most pleasing villages have accordingly been developed slowly over several hundred years, generally using local material, but with the individual taste of the owner or architect harmonising with existing buildings or complementing them.

It was equally important to identify what was not a village and broadly we adopted the housing estate with its stupefying monotony as typifying what we would not accept. For example, large houses in minute gardens and small bungalows in large gardens would be incorporated in our overall design. The brief to the architects was summed up as a direction to create coherent chaos. However, while chaos is inherent in nature, it is abhorrent to the trained mind; hence the need for a mixture of architectural talent. As the development proceeds other architects have been added, either to the consortium or for individual buildings.

The initiative of private enterprise superimposed on a conventional triangle of management is an inverted triangle forming the Steering Committee which is, in effect, a standing committee of my client company's board, which can give executive financial decisions. The six members are all individually experienced in the various disciplines of finance, planning, commercial development and estate agency. The diabolo formed by these two triangles is an experienced, simple and effective managerial team. The layouts of hamlets, design of houses, the marketability of the product, the financial viability of the scheme and the timing are all critically examined, the evidence sifted and amendments made.

If a new type of development, sited on a windswept heath, is to be accepted by the buying public, clearly it must be occupied quickly. A bold policy of aiming for the whole concept was adopted for the first hamlet and Clifford Culpin and Partners were given a cost yardstick of council house standards plus 15% to guide them. This phase was designed almost entirely for the second or third-time buyer in the belief that it would need the courage of experience to pioneer the human element of a new community.

The first house was ready for occupation in the depths of the depression at the end of 1975, but sales slowly but surely took place so that at the first Christmas party a year later the residents already included families of three generations. However, the building societies and the valuers were slow to accept the development and it was not until the upsurge of prices in 1978 that sales could be freely negotiated and early buyers moving up-market within the development achieved good profits on a resale. The successful opening of the village stores last December finally gave credibility to the development and a twentieth century village was born.

An instant village

Have the original ideals had to be sacrificed? Certainly the discipline of the market place (where the selling price must match the customers' will and ability to purchase and leave a profit to the developer) has had its influence and the generous cost yardstick built into the first phase has not yet been repeated. This would not seem to be of great concern as an enclave of 1000 pioneering families would seem unlikely to form a coherent community in a short time scale of 10 years rather than centuries.

The grouping of dwellings in hamlets built to varying cost levels as applied to the specifications authorised by the Steering Committee allows a diversification of both large and small houses throughout the development at several price levels, while at the same time maintaining some architectural compatibility. So far all houses have been sold but

as the development grows it is intended to introduce some rented accommodation; not as another hamlet or council estate, but as an admixture within hamlets. The Bradford Property Trust Ltd has a reputation for being a good landlord and renting houses is not strange to it.

A unique development or a precedent?

To what extent can this village concept be adopted elsewhere? In its entirety it would need an enlightened developer with the patience and resources which back this development. Nevertheless it is now demonstrable that individual hamlets do provide a pleasing environment and command a modest premium over conventional housing estates: there seems no reason why such developments should not become common if developers have the courage to brief their architects correctly and retain them throughout the development.

The revolt against the conventional housing estate gains strength but the pressures to conform remain. It would be premature to declare success at this juncture, but in five years time I hope to write QED.

A Village of Vision?

Gillian Darley (AJ Information Library, September 1979)

The qualities of a village are notoriously hard to define. The only certainty is that the physical and social mesh of the village, that most subtle thing, is slow to evolve, slower still to dissolve.

The difference between Martlesham Heath and the next private development is that its promoters call it a village. Not a New Town, not a housing estate or neighbourhood, but clearly and distinctly a village. Their stance implies that, first, a village can be created on a green field site within perhaps 10 years and, second, that the developers themselves know what a village is. However, reading the sales brochure one finds no definition, merely an evocative quote from Crabbe: 'Thy walks are ever pleasant; every scene is rich in beauty, lively, or serene'. The Bradford Property Trust has had the wisdom to confine itself to a list of the features 'for a new kind of living': village green, pub, shops-not much new there - and 12 hamlets of assorted sizes.

If, then, Martlesham Heath is to be a village, it seems reasonable to ask 'Why?' Is it a sales ploy, a planning gambit or a more idealistic aspiration to create a place just a little bit superior to the norm? I have set this study against the background that, whether or not it is possible to create a village overnight, the process has a historic precedent stretching back for almost three centuries. Planned villages have been growing up at the gates of country mansions, around the mill and factory or out in the countryside since at least 1700. Our self-consciousness about the village is a nineteenth century phenomenon; increasingly we have romanticised both its fabric and its people to the extent that the idea of founding a village has never seemed as unreasonable, or as impossible, as it does today.

In many respects, of course, it is an impracticable notion. The cost and exigencies of planning requirements, the pressures of the market and its dogged conservatism, together with the extraordinary resilience of the buying public to existence in drab environments combine to make the idea of building a village a distinctly oddball notion. Plenty of developers have dignified the most desolate housing estates with flowery names; 'parks', 'groves' and 'villages' abound. If the notion was merely a sales ploy, a far less conscientious approach would have done quite well and a lot of expense could have been spared.

Mixed motives

The villages created in the past were, with very few exceptions, the brainchildren of an individual. The motives for the building of an estate village were generally a mixture of aesthetics and practicality: an attractive architectural setting for house and park, offset by the advantages of a local 'tame' workforce. The industrial village was built with the motives of philanthropy and expediency, the two often inseparable. Only the 'Utopian' community-religious, political or loosely idealistic-was, sometimes, the product of a joint initiative and motives which accurately reflected the aspirations of the inhabitants themselves.

Christopher Parker, clearly the modern equivalent of squire or paternalistic industrialist in this respect, has different motives and is directed by a different kind of pressure. Above all there is his responsibility to the developer, who requires the investment to be repaid with considerable interest.

Nevertheless Parker has motives of his own-both in his unusual personal crusade for a higher standard of design (and with that, his responsibility for matters normally dealt with by the planning authority) similar to Lord Dorchester at Milton Abbas, for instance, and his own antipathy to planning dogma, the 'revolt' to which he refers above.

In respect of design and amenities Martlesham Heath does seem to aspire to standards well in advance of the usual. Yet arguably these standards are the danger; economics dictate housing aimed very largely towards a clearly defined area of the market. A village built as a speculative development brings together a random group of people; they have the resources and the need for a certain kind of housing that is their only tie. The new village community might as well have emerged from a bran tub; only the physical fabric of the place, the provision of communal facilities in particular,

will determine whether these people find any incentive to mix, or whether they remain peering out from behind the curtains.

There is no doubt that Martlesham Heath is a village for the relatively affluent. It is by no stretch of the imagination a properly mixed community; no local authority housing and no housing for rent means that a sizeable social chunk is missing. When Eric Lyons and Span set up New Ash Green, the GLC commitment to provide housing (which they then reneged on) was integral to the scheme.

In this sense, despite Parker's reference to Lyons and the implication of similarities between the two schemes, Martlesham Heath is planned only on physical lines and is determined by market forces. Any attempt at social planning is rendered useless by those forces. Martlesham Heath is not comparable with the aims of local authority housing in any way-its guidelines, inevitably, are economics. It is, then, odd that Parker's first definition of a village is by social factors of 'mixed age and income groups across a wide spectrum'. Just as Henrietta Barnett's dream of Hampstead Garden Suburb, to 'buy a huge estate and build so that all classes could live in neighbourliness together', proved unworkable because of costs (and prices which escalated as the environment became pleasanter) so too Martlesham Heath, without the housing provision that could actually allow in a wider variety of people, remains well beyond the means of many.

When looking at Martlesham Heath and considering Christopher Parker's own aspirations for it, I wanted to establish whether the built form of the place has, so far, been conducive to the establishment of a sense of place-if not the sense of living in a village. Such a judgment must essentially be based on a far from complete picture; quite apart from the distortions inherent in such a brief glimpse, there are the special features of a growing community, hardly a fifth complete. The pioneering role of the first residents is an easier one to sustain in these early days-as the population edges up much of the resolution and the dynamism of the active members of the community will be diluted by sheer weight of numbers.

Nevertheless patterns are emerging; Martlesham Heath is three years old. What kind of village has emerged from Parker's pipedream?

History of the site

In 1942 the Bradford Property Trust bought the Brightwell Estate, of which the aerodrome at Martlesham Heath was but a small part. In 1960 this was released by the Ministry of Defence and the first planning application for a village on the site was submitted in 1963. The place seemed to be an inspired choice. Land unfit for agricultural use, but well suited for building; excellent communications and a site equidistant from the growing port of Felixstowe and the county town of Ipswich; a scheme which fell neatly into the regional planning strategies of the time and which was wholeheartedly supported by the county planning officer. In fact by 1965 the idea of a village had given way to a town. Clifford Culpin and Partners produced a master plan for a town of 10,000 but 'the plan has been so drawn as to be capable of being the first part of a much larger scheme'. By coincidence, this was the year that Richard Crossman gave the go-ahead for New Ash Green, 'a new model village'. In view of the unhappy vicissitudes of that project in succeeding property booms and slumps, it may have been a blessing in disguise that planning tangles, hinging mainly upon the provision of roads and drainage, delayed the successful planning application for Martlesham Heath, once again a village, until 1973-almost 10 years to the month after the first one.

Land values and the cost of infrastructure, together with a perennially uncertain and mercurial housing market, are the major deterrents to the development of new settlements on a relatively small scale. It was a shrewd purchaser who sniffed out the Brightwell Estate in the middle of World War II; it was a shrewd seller who released plots to the Post Office for the construction of its Research Establishment, and to the Suffolk County Constabulary for its new Headquarters; it was a shrewd developer who leased the units on the industrial estate, first in the hangars and outbuildings of the aerodrome and then in a series of new warehouses and factories. The development of Martlesham Heath could, therefore, support a few uncertainties and marketing hiccups as well as the considerable financial commitment to a new link road, the spine road of the village itself and extension of drainage facilities, only feasible because of low original outlay.

The unusual mixture of factors where Martlesham Heath is concerned-the poor quality land, the low price at the time of sale, the location, the neat equation with regional planning policies over a lengthy period-have allowed Parker's scheme to come to fruition. It would be highly unrealistic to expect to find a similar selection of fortuitous circumstances elsewhere. It would be flying in the face of evidence-the struggles at New Ash Green and Bar Hill, even the delays and problems encountered by Parker himself-to imagine the possibility of a rash of new villages, whether developed by local authority or private initiative. There is little doubt that the way forward lies in an incremental policy-whether this be envisaged as village infilling or additional hamlets according to the existing settlement patterns.

The physical reality

With planning permission granted and road wrangles left behind the translation of the village into reality could begin. Of course, historically, villages grew up on, not away from, main routes; they were sited close to water, good land and sources of building materials. Martlesham Heath, very much a blasted heath of sandy soil bearing gorse, birch and scrub as natural vegetation, is the antithesis of a typical village site.

Christopher Parker's insistence that the place should bear relationship to traditional East Anglian villages becomes curious viewed against the realities of the site. Approaching from Ipswich along the main road the building type is exclusively that of the 1930s ribbon development bungalow or villa. The distinction between Kesgrave, then Martlesham (the original village of that name) is only made by the road signs. The suburbs of Ipswich overspill along the roadside, to be then emulated by the villages.

Not a glimpse of traditional materials, not a glimpse of the forms of vernacular architecture in this area can be got to key the place into its locality. Instead, taking the link road, there is a sudden heap of tiled roofs ahead. Bright colourwashes punctuate the monotone of the heath. Driving in on the spine road one passes groups of houses clustered each side of the road to the left while ahead, off to the right, is another such group. At first glimpse nothing much distinguishes one hamlet from the next; housing by now familiar enough in Essex and elsewhere by its simple forms, predictable range of materials and tight plan on the site.

The car park is by the village centre and on the green. This vast expanse ('big enough for County Cricket') is the most visible amenity and planning in the early phases concentrated on maximising it. "Unfortunately, flat as a billiard table, with no mature vegetation whatsoever, the green is not quite the visual asset it might be. In fact, in windy, winter conditions its prairie-like dimensions make it more of a liability than an asset.

Christopher Parker, who in many respects holds the traditional village mantle of squire,' decided to draw on a consortium of, originally, three architectural practices. This, he considered, would introduce the essential element of a village, its lack of uniformity. Clifford Culpin remained in charge of the master plan and designed Hamlet F [Lark Rise, Swan Close, Avocet Lane] and the neighbouring village centre-the first phase of the scheme. Peter Barefoot and Partners was landscape consultant and was given Hamlet G [Warren Lane]. Mathews Ryan was responsible for Hamlet L [Coopers Road].

Determining the exact nature of the design brief proves rather a puzzling quest. It seems to have evolved in discussion between Parker and Culpins, in acknowledged response to the 'just-published Essex Design Guide. The local authority, Suffolk Coastal District Council from 1974, found itself in the happy position of dealing with developers whose attitude to design was far more rigid than its own; in Parker's words 'a conscientious developer can exercise stronger control than any planning officer could do or dares to'. The architectural forms were to be varied within a certain range, similarly the materials. Culpins, the first to test the temperature of the water, looked long and hard at the Essex Design Guide 'and then, with some skill, put together Hamlet F/1.

Undoubtedly the best feature of its work is the relationship made between housing and the green. By pushing some of it hard up against the peripheral path and then, unexpectedly, dropping the houses back to give long front gardens, the spatial variety works to good effect. This can be clearly demonstrated by comparing the hamlet across the green, G [Warren Lane]. Here the houses are placed fair and square in their plots, sited entirely in relation to the cul-de-sac in their midst. Seen from the green they make little sense and the furthest line makes an uncomfortably bulky ridge through the hamlet, a rigid block of steep-pitched roofs which dislocates the grouping.

Hamlet L [Coopers Road], which was systematically pushed down-market and therefore consists of very spare housing indeed, has no direct benefit from the green. This being the case the housing, some of it in terraces, forms up as a street attempting to turn its back on the omnipresent PO Research Establishment tower, a rather menacing Big Brother for a country village. There is a slight curve in the street and the hamlet is quite cohesive- despite the ugliest garages in any of the hamlets.

As the showpiece phase of the village Culpin's original sector of Hamlet F [Lark Rise, Swan Close, Avocet Lane] seems to have been constructed on the maxim 'nothing but the best'. It had a generous range of high quality materials at its disposal and also a much greater range of house types was tolerated here than elsewhere. This included blocks of flats and maisonettes-one of the few ingredients for the kind of mix that was hoped for and, it might seem, not wholeheartedly planned for. The older people and single individuals living in these three-storey blocks on the green dilute the preponderance of young married couples with small children-they are, in the words of the secretary of the Neighbourhood Association, 'the saviours' of the community.

With its relatively large scheme, Culpin's aimed at variety and occasional eye-catchers, what Philip Vallis terms 'oddities'-for example a steep pitched little detached house, one of which is glimpsed down an alley under a bridge linking two houses. Bricks of many hues, rendered colour washed walling and varied roof tiling all contribute to the village scheme. Such juggling, both in siting and finishes, produces an often jumpy overall effect; it tends to the self-conscious (and, in particular, modern pargetting is an aberration) but from time to time the efforts tell and are justifiable.

Later on the expensive materials, the walls and fencing, disappear-even on the more expensive sites. On Hamlet E [Manor Road], now under construction, a local firm (Hoopers) have produced a, range of somewhat sickly colour washed houses (no rendering here) at relatively low cost. Unable to resist 'vernacularising' its minimal designs a rash of crinkly barge boards has broken out-even over the blank gable of the double porch. Parker's iron-clad design standards seem to have suffered by the variety of architects involved; the second phase of Culpin's Hamlet F/2, enclosing the end of the green is proof of the superior expertise of that practice within this area. With much more limited materials the effect is still assured. In the village as a whole-the architectural diversity hoped for has tended to mediocrity-the lines are already too firmly drawn.

Inevitably price has determined more than the simple question of materials and finish. It also determines location-it is noticeable that Hamlet L [Coopers Road] finds itself furthest from the village green, closest to the threatening form of the PO Research Establishment tower and closest to the link road running through the site. Developers know well that people pay high prices for location-it is a factor which comes well ahead of their concern with tile colours or wall finishes. Similarly the lowest end of the price scale determines somewhat meagre garden areas; despite the considerable open spaces in the village, garden plots constitute an extravagance which can only be, recompensed by grading them according to house prices. Given the importance of the overall environment in a scheme such as this, the architects working in the cheapest sector are constrained by this aspect-nothing makes a simple house look meaner than inadequate surrounding space.

Martlesham Heath-village or not?

The physical fabric of the village, its various hamlets, its similarly 'traditional' pub and shopping centre are largely unremarkable. In the vein of Bowthorpe, South Woodham Ferrers and the better 'design guide' developments it offers little new. The plan is predictable, the landscaping minimal, the-setting drab.

Returning to the basic assumptions of Parker and the guidelines provided for his design team, the aspirations seem to consist of raising the common denominator-just as the better design guides intend and sometimes succeed in doing. It is, at the end of the 1970s, less easy to be excited.by this ultimately reasonable standard of taste and, in any case, palates are getting jaded. A question which remains rhetorical is whether Parker's ideals in design and in spatial organisation within the village would have remained constant independent of the market. Design guide schemes have proved very saleable-all over East Anglia one can see proof of that fact. Martlesham Heath, its promoters making no secret of their dependence upon the whims of the market for changes of direction and prevailing choice of housing type is, by now, planned more by these factors than according to the wider aspects that a wish for a proper social balance might have dictated.

What then is the evidence of a village? Martlesham Consultants, the management company which transfers shares from Bradford Property Trust to the residents as each house is completed, is nominally the governing body of the village-yet it remains for the moment dominated by the developers. Once it becomes 50 per cent (and more) representative of the residents a turning point will have been reached. The maintenance of the communal open spaces, in particular the green, lies with this body. It has the responsibility of employing two handymen/gardeners and the system, increasingly common in such private developments, prevents the depressing spectacle of uncared-for public areas which are so much the rule in badly managed public housing estates. Individual financial contributions are minimal and the onus is spread.

In fact the increasing involvement of the people of the village (as opposed to the developers) with the care and development of their surroundings seems part of a growing-up process; the kind of mechanism for casting off authority that the founders of the paternalistic villages such as Saltaire and Port Sunlight (two of Bradford Property Trust's own present concerns) were never able, or willing, to build into their creations. The village has a Neighbourhood Association, just a year old, formed to provide an effective voice for residents' concerns. There is also an active Social Club, a Mother and Toddler group, seven residents stood in the recent parish council elections, a pub is under construction for Tolly Cobbold, a small pavilion to serve as a social centre is also under construction, with some of the work being carried out by Heath residents themselves and cricket is being played on the green. Does all or any of this add up to proof of a self-contained .community, with a sense of identity?

Perhaps the recent dissents over one issue illustrate that most clearly. The village was split on its attitude to existing parish boundaries and 60 per cent of those who voted wanted a change, to emphasise the identity of the new Martlesham. The village, now nearing two hundred households, clearly does not, either physically or historically, see itself connected to the village on the main road. Buyers of the housing (1975 prices between £9000 and £30 000: 1979 middle range housing in the area of £25 000) have paid over the odds for the amenities, the careful design supervision and the other claims made for the development. They have, it might be said, 'bought' the concept of a new village. Sales literature, sign boards and the publicity all suggest that this is somewhere .special. In the words of one resident 'everyone is bending over backwards to create the village environment'; yet essentially the residents, mostly from towns and with the scantest idea of what traditional village life really adds up to, are busy trying to make a recognisable place. As Alan Willis of the Neighbourhood Association points out, it is not really a village if everyone refers to 'Martlesham Heath Village'-no one refers to 'Lavenham Village'. Playing games with words has little to do with the gelling of this particular' community.

Martlesham assessed

Martlesham Heath is no one's idea of a traditional East Anglian village. It is in the wrong place, the rough edges rubbed out of the design, with hamlets of different housing types strategically positioned around the village green which will never see an animal grazing. The more one considers the-differences between model and copy the more preposterous the idea becomes. But-that does not rule out the aim of building a place out of which it is hoped a sense of identity, a community of interests, will emerge. For the moment the divisions in the place are brought about by housing types and thus income levels. Hamlet L [Coopers Road], up to now the only possible route into the village for first-time buyers is, both physically and socially, a little apart. Hamlet F [Lark Rise, Swan Close, Avocet Lane], on the other hand, with a wider range of housing types has formed much the most cohesive community.

The scheme as it is planned, responding to a burgeoning market and overwhelming demand, seems devised less in favour of a balanced village community than of exploiting the financial good cheer of the present. Hamlet H [Forest Lane] consists of plots for sale with design guidance from Peter Barefoot and a considerable advantage in terms of existing mature landscape. The first 14 plots offered disappeared overnight. Other phases with, planning permission include Hamlet B [Westland] (Mathews Ryan, whose L/2 was 'a bit up-market' of L/1); C [Carlford Close] (under construction, Culpin again); and F/3. As the report to the directors of The Bradford Property Trust put it at the end of the financial year 78-9 'the Martlesham concept has been established, found to be acceptable, and in current markets is profitable'.

Although sites have been earmarked for a housing association scheme, for single 'working person' accommodation for 41 and for a sheltered housing scheme for 40 to 60 elderly people there is no provision for rented accommodation ('plenty of demand, no encouragement') nor is there any likelihood of a limited amount of local authority housing. Parker says a firm 'no' to that possibility, though an officer from the district council referred to a scheme for 150 units within the village as 'a nice thought' since they have almost no waiting list at present. So Martlesham Heath is to some extent a concept well tailored to sales. The embarrassingly fey names (Lark Rise, Farrier's Close) are part of that ploy and it is tempting to dismiss the whole venture then and there.

Yet the property interests of The Bradford Trust are somewhat out of the ordinary. Its holdings include a number of the early Co-Partnership schemes at Letchworth, Brentham Garden Village in Ealing and in Liverpool, as well as large amounts of workers' housing such as the model villages of Port Sunlight and Saltaire already mentioned. Modernising and selling off these houses, the firm has traditionally been immersed in communities of unusual cohesiveness. Parker's personal obsession with the making of a village is something of an historic continuation of the thread to which all these places belong-the establishment of clearly defined settlements rather than the amorphous process of suburban development.

With Martlesham Heath now well into the first stage of its existence, the overseeing, omniscient presence of Christopher Parker is somewhat irksome to the owners of these expensive properties. His creation is growing up, becoming independent, from time to time quarrelsome, and less inclined to listen to advice. Yet this intermittent friction is further evidence of the measure of success of the original aspirations. The residents of a suburban cul-de-sac would not evidence such strong concern about the direction their neighbourhood was taking, unless the issues concerned the colour of their own front doors or the form of their garden fencing.

Christopher Parker likes to think that 'village is an adjective, not a noun'. He admits it is impossible to adequately define what he, or anyone else, considers to be a village; 'it's the way you see it'. His objective was to prove that the typical post-war estate was not the only potential form in which to provide housing; he wanted to employ good architects, he wanted to take trouble, he wanted to induce a sense of identity into the end result. There is undoubtedly an element of idealism in this, especially when matched to hard-nosed financial development, not supported by subsidy or short-cuts. Prices have undermined some of the original intentions. Under no circumstances could Martlesham be defined as a village with people of widely varying social backgrounds, but then many 'traditional' villages have long ceased to represent wide social differences. Everyone at Martlesham is an owner-occupier and this bundles everyone into a single economic bracket, however big a bracket.

With no permitted development rights and a string of 27 covenants on the housing, the form of the village seems inviolate; even after Parker ceases to exercise his function as squire. Whether the place could absorb expansion while retaining the intended plan above the limit of 1000 houses seems unlikely.

Its future, therefore, seems set. A tasteful, prosperous, one-off enclave, but a place of distinctive and original character. It is clearly evolving into a distinct entity; quite possibly into a village.

The Garden City: Past, Present and Future

Stephen Victor Ward (Taylor & Francis, 1992)

Just a few other precedents exist of private villages on green field sites. The design and layout of all these schemes has stuck closely to the standard formula favoured by the volume builders, based on discrete clusters of houses along loops or culs-de-sac, to maximise marketability and minimise capital locked up in the ground.

Perhaps the best example is Martlesham Heath (3500 population), developed by the Bradford Property Trust on the 600-acre site of an old aerodrome in Suffolk. The land had come to the Trust as a windfall - by reversion of the lease from the Air Ministry - and had clear development potential because of its location on the edge of Ipswich and nearby the expanding container port of Felixstowe.

The owners and their advisors, Bidwells of Cambridge declared at the outset that their aim was to build 'a village', not 'a housing estate', i.e. a place with:

- groups of houses rather than rows of identical buildings
- a village store shops and pub overlooking a green
- schools

- open space
- variety
- a community pride in itself

Martlesham Heath received planning permission in 1973 and was completed in 1990.

Described in its publicity brochure as 'an internationally admired model of town planning' comparable to the public new towns of the 1950s and 1960s, the master plan by Clifford Culpin provides for housing to be developed in twelve hamlets strung along a looping distributor road. There is a village centre, built around a square with shops and a pub. The messes, barrack blocks and hangars of the aerodrome have been transformed into a thriving light industrial estate that the premises of two major employers - the British Telecom Research Centre and the Suffolk County Police Headquarters - stand on adjacent land.

Since 1988 the county and district planning authorities have given Martlesham the accolade of designating it a village and approving policies that should protect in perpetuity the landscaped spaces between the hamlets. Gillian Darley has described Martlesham Heath as 'a tasteful prosperous one-off enclave but a place of distinctive original Character'. The developers have achieved all their original objectives except that of social variety, for although some of the stock has been developed for renting none of it is affordable to the manual worker.

History of The Bradford Property Trust Limited 1928-1978

John Brennan (Watmough, July 1978)

The war brought [BPT] housing deals to a near standstill. But the company was able to continue an occasional trade in agricultural estates and six estates with a total of well over 20,000 acres were bought and traded by BPT during the war years. The largest of the wartime purchases, the 7,420 acre Brightwell estate near Ipswich Suffolk, formed the basis of a thirty five year project that is only now (1978) coming to fruition. Brightwell included freehold rights to the Royal Air Force airfield at Martlesham. The RAF eventually gave up the field and Martlesham became the site for BPT's current 1,000 home development.

However, BPT soon found itself with enough development activity to keep its fiercest critics silent, for in April 1962 the Royal Air Force relinquished its lease on the Martlesham Aerodrome in Suffolk and the Martlesham Heath project was born.

Martlesham Heath lies to the east of Ipswich, near the small Suffolk town of Woodbridge. In 1942, when BPT bought the Heath as part of the Brightwell agricultural estate, it also acquired the freehold of Martlesham airfield, one of the oldest Royal Air Force stations. As the RAF held a long leasehold on the airfield land at a near peppercorn rent, The Brightwell purchase price discounted any possible future commercial use of the airfield land and the price of the farmland included a discount for the disturbance caused by being next to a wartime air base.

Twenty years later, when the Ministry of Defence decided to close the airfield, the terms of the lease granted by the previous owners of the Heath meant that the land reverted to the freeholder, now BPT. The company decided to let the hangars and other buildings for industrial use and to develop the airfield land for housing in the pattern of a traditions al Suffolk village.

Plans for an Ipswich by-pass road through the Martlesham land could have killed the 1,000 home project at the outset but after more than a decade of planning battles, including a public inquiry, the company finally received informal approval of its scheme in 1972. The Secretary of State for the Environment indicated that a revision of the initial plans taking account of the by-pass road would be acceptable and the Minister handed detailed planning negotiations over to the local authority.

This informal ministerial approval came just as the Post Office was completing a multi-million pound scientific and technological research complex on part of the Heath, a complex that world employ over 2,000 people and create significant additional demand for the housing in the area.

Detailed planning problems took a further three years to iron out with constant negotiations between the East Suffolk County Council and Christopher Parker, a partner of Bidwells, the Cambridge based chartered surveyors, who acted as BTP's project manager for the Martlesham development from the earliest days of the scheme. Mr Parker had to agree to integrate the village's road system into the specially diverted A1093 road. Planning approval was also given for the new factories and warehouses to re-house tenants affected by the road diversion and to give scope for an increase in the size of the industrial estate as the village developed.

Detailed planning permission for the first Martlesham hamlet of ninety dwellings was granted in 1975 and by September that year the first show houses were completed. Martlesham's first family moved to its new home on 27th May 1976, nearly fifteen years after the plans were first conceived.

The company's initial capital investment in the project by that stage topped £2 million and all the road and other infrastructure works that were necessary before the first houses could be marketed, as well as the costs of the house

building programme itself, came from BPT's own cash resources. Bidwells have managed both the housing project and the industrial estate from the beginning but the company decided that nobody could handle the sales better than its own staff and Harry Higgins, the senior branch manager, moved from Walthamstow to become the village's sales manager. As a variant of BPT's estate management techniques his responsibilities have, as the project is still in the building stage, necessarily involved a considerable amount of after sales service.

Clifford Culpin and Partners, the architects for the scheme as a whole and for the first phase of housing, worked to a BPT brief that incorporated the random mixture of house styles, sizes and materials that would be found in an established Suffolk village. In that first phase of houses and flats, which were built around a seven and a half acre village green, the dwellings ranged in price from £9,000 one bedroom flats to £29,000 five bedroom, two bathroom houses with double garages. That range of houses and flat sizes will be seen throughout the whole of the Martlesham Heath project, and BPT has ensured a variety of house styles by retaining from the outset three different architectural firms to work on the twelve hamlets that will form the whole 1,000 home village, and subsequently at least one other architect has become involved.

It has been the company's intention to create the framework of a community rather than a housing estate for both social and commercial reasons. If, unlike so many modern estates, Martlesham continues to be a place where people wish to live, the value of the properties will be enhanced as the development progresses. That will benefit both the earlier house buyers and the company. In the meantime the industrial estate developed alongside the village has become BPT's most import and most profitable, commercial property holding. Letting income from the estate already accounts for more than ten per cent of the company's total rental income, and these industrial buildings now produce more each year than Martlesham Heath as a whole cost back in 1942.

The Culpin Partnership

Culpin Limited is a firm practising architecture, urban design, planning and building surveying, also acting as Planning Supervisor and Client's Agent. The practice was established by Ewart Culpin in 1918 and was continued by Clifford Culpin who retired in 1971. Fifth generation directors now run the practice. We approach design with a sustainable development philosophy.

From its inception the practice has specialised in town planning and housing. This developed into a wider range of commissions; first civic buildings and then extending to include schools, churches, shopping centres, banks, bus garages, leisure and health facilities, libraries, fire and police stations, magistrates courts, laboratories, and various other building types. We have recently been accepting domestic commissions.

Typical housing projects include: Master plan and some neighbourhood areas in the new village at Martlesham Heath; Expansion of housing at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands; Sheltered housing, frail elderly housing and housing for special needs with warden accommodation for various local authority and housing association clients; Shared ownership and housing for rent for housing associations; Rehabilitation and refurbishment of high-rise flats, some with tenants in occupation; Estate master planning, layouts and house-type development for national house builders; PFI estate layout and house-type development; Local Authority housing estate upgrading, including an estate- wide video surveillance network. Restoration and refurbishment projects include work to listed buildings and in conservation areas such as the headquarters of the Royal College of Nursing in Cavendish Square, The King's Observatory Kew, work in the Palace of Westminster and the German Ambassador's Residence in Belgrave Square. Rolling programmes of property inspection and planned maintenance were undertaken for Barclays Bank plc and London Transport Executive in various regions.

Planning expertise covers most facets of consultancy in the UK and overseas - master plans, negotiations, conservation, tourism studies - and includes advising on implementation and management. In developing countries we carried out pioneering work in low-income housing and the upgrading of urban and rural settlements.

The practice has won various awards, and has a long and successful record of involvement in competitions, often in collaboration with developers.

The Bidwell Dynasty

Simon Creasey (PropertyWeek.com, November 2002)

Since 1840 surveying firm Bidwells has been quietly building a reputation in East Anglia. We find out the secret of its success and what plans are in store for the future 'We offer clients a West End service with a local flavour,' says John Tweddle, Bidwells' commercial chairman, before immediately bursting in laughter at how corny he sounds.

Despite his self-deprecating sense of humour, that West End maxim, combined with a liberal sprinkling of 'local flavour', is the secret recipe that has ensured the East Anglian surveying firm's survival since it was created in 1840.

Today, East Anglia, and particularly the city of Cambridge, has remained close to the heart of the Bidwells operation, more than 160 years after Charles Muriel Bidwell set up the company from an office in Ely. With a payroll of 320

people and operating from five different offices, the firm is the largest property operation with a headquarters outside London.

Most chairmen would be happy with this situation, but not Tweddle. Here he tells Property Week the secret of the firm's success and reveals how it is poised to tackle new territory to build on its market dominance in East Anglia.

From his office in the heart of Cambridge, Tweddle looks at ease with his surroundings. This is not surprising considering the fact that he joined the firm 33 years ago straight from college, and has remained there since.

During that time he has witnessed Cambridge's transformation from a university city to one of the hi-tech capitals of Europe. This transformation coincided with the surveying firm shifting its focus, from being a firm of land agents for Cambridge University colleges and East Anglian farmers 25 years ago to being the commercially focused behemoth that it is today.

'We started out with a mission to dominate a geographical region and it has worked very well for us,' says Tweddle. 'My aim is to make Bidwells the first port of call for anyone looking to come to the eastern region. If Prudential has a problem with an investment in Ipswich then we want them to think of Bidwells.

'When Standard Life wants to do more out-of-town retail parks in the region we want them to think Bidwells. If one of the Cambridge colleges wants to do something then we want them to think, "we must use Bidwells". It is a very simple philosophy that has put us well on the way to being a dominant force in the region, but there is still a lot of work to be done.'

Market domination

Part of this market dominance strategy has been to set up offices in the region's main commercial centres. The first of these was in Norwich in 1989, which was closely followed by an Ipswich office in 1990 on the back of two projects – the purchase of a large estate of land at Felixstowe Docks for Trinity College, and the development of the technology hub at Martlesham Heath where the firm's current office is based.

Ironically, the firm's first office outside of Cambridgeshire was set up in 1985 in London's West End. A small investment team is based there which deals with East Anglia. The office is led by Patrick McMahon, who is head of investment and business space. He joined Bidwells 10 years ago, after working for Barclays bank's property division.

'We have taken in a lot of people from the West End over the years and we have a policy of going for quality,' explains McMahon. 'We constantly look at the big West End agents and forge dialogue with them. Once they get to the stage where they have two kids and don't want to be in London anymore but still want a prestigious location, we talk to them and help them build up an affinity with the area. This is the kind of high-calibre staff that we are looking for.'

All of Bidwells' team leaders are ex-West End operators, which helps the firm deliver on its 'West End service with a local flavour' promise.

The team culture environment is also something that is high on the company's agenda. Bidwells operates a commission structure based on the work completed by the team rather than the individuals within it, which is something that Tweddle says has helped them to provide a more professional service.

'Team culture is everything,' he explains. 'Our clients feel the benefits of this culture and they like it. No one in this office is allowed to talk about "my clients". They are all "our clients" and we have to look after them carefully.'

Some of the most lucrative clients on the firm's books are the Cambridge University colleges, which are big landowners in the region. The firm is retained by 20 colleges, for which it carries out the majority of their property portfolio work.

Tweddle is also particularly proud of the fact that in the past the firm helped local entrepreneur Sir Clive Sinclair with his property requirements and also sourced premises for computer firm Acorn, which grew from a small Cambridgeshire base into a large multinational corporation. The firm also advises Ipswich Town Football Club on the management of its property. As a Leeds United fan, Tweddle is suitably coy about this instruction.

Much of Bidwells' other work comes from the publication of research. Tweddle says that the biannual 'databook', which focuses on Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich, acts as a draw for pension funds and institutions when they are looking at increasing their investment exposure in the area.

'We have a very restricted client base and we like to keep it special so that we can offer a tailored service. There is a hell of a lot of interest in this region, in particular for Cambridge, and if institutions want to access the local market then we can set up a strategy for them.'

Moving out

As for Bidwells' own strategy, expansion is very much on the cards. 'We are always looking to expand and keep on growing, because you cannot retain a quality workforce unless you are going forward,' says Tweddle. 'There are more

things that we can do in the area but we are also looking to expand the region we cover. I would be very surprised if within the next 12 to 18 months we don't go elsewhere.'

He adds that they cannot go further east because they already have a monopoly on that area, so the natural choice would be towards the west and around the M25. Tweddle envisages acquiring an established company that knows the market well and that would fit within Bidwells' philosophy.

'We always go for market knowledge, and for top-quality people that know a market well and everything that hangs off it,' he explains.

By going down this route, Tweddle hopes to ensure that Bidwells upholds its West End pledge and continues to deliver the local flavour that has been so crucial to its longevity.

The Bidwell family heritage

Charles Muriel Bidwell was set for a life as a brewer until the death of his father in 1829. He was due to inherit the brewing interests of the Bidwells – an already prominent East Anglian family – but the brewing business was sold to provide for the 15-year-old Charles's mother and his seven brothers and sisters. At the age of 26 he set up a chartered surveying firm in Ely. The business prospered during the second half of the 19th century because of the draining of the Fens, the arrival of the railways and the improvement in public health and sanitation in Ely. After his marriage in 1844 Charles had 13 children. Two of his sons, Charles Jnr and Shelford, went on to play an active part in the advancement of the business. Charles Jnr took over the running of the firm in 1874 and his clients included the Great Northern Railways Company and several Cambridge University colleges. Following his death in 1922, Charles Jnr's sons John (pictured left) and Philip, who were already involved in the practice, carried on the business in his name. An obituary in the Journal of Surveyors' Institutions reported at the time: 'The character which secured for him the place he occupied in his profession and which made him an ever-widening circle of friends was well expressed in his burly figure and fine presence. There was nothing small about him.' Like his father before him, John Bidwell, the eldest of his two sons, became president of the RICS. He remained active in the firm until the age of 90 and his retirement in 1960 marked the end of active involvement by members of the Bidwell family in the firm.

Urban Regeneration - The Importance of Place Making

David Prichard (Architecture Ireland, Oct 2005)

The obvious but difficult challenge faced by the expanding residential sector in Ireland, particularly in Dublin and Cork, is place making. How we relate to our home and indeed our sense of belonging, has not just to do with the estate agents' descriptions of its interior und access to shops, crèche, schools and transport but the quality and management of streets and space between buildings and whether it is ours, yours or at least somebody's! Overlooking can have connotations of encroachment on privacy, yet 'eyes on the street' are crucial for mutual sense of safety. It is said that we have a capacity to recognise and relate to about 500 people so that becomes another bullet point on the ever expanding checklist of virtuous measures for community makers. We must remember that, because of the way ownership is now structured, housing is a 'hard' land use, which remains in place for 100 years or more whereas the development cycle for retail, workplace and leisure can be surprisingly short.

Such concerns are so obvious and have been around since Aristotle observed that a city must be planned to make its inhabitants secure and happy, yet achieving that goal is still a huge challenge despite our society's technical prowess. Camillo Sitte in the 1890s understood the city at a series of linked perspectives through public spaces provided for its citizens. Thomas Sharp author of several books on town planning writing in 1939 described towns as "the physical expression of a nation's civilisation" and saw them as "essays in large scale architectural composition". A theme extolled and brilliantly illustrated by Gordon Cullen from the 1950s to 60s. This was, of coarse, the very era of town planning, which bowed to technical concerns about traffic and land use segregation and ultimately destroyed the street. By the late 1990s, David Mackay and other urbanists described streets as the "backbone of our society".

Roles

So where does urban design fit into these concerns? Nowadays, town planning (as opposed to development control) stops with zoning at 1:1250 and architecture starts at 1:200, often on small land parcels with high land value and so development economics conspire against place making. There is a yawning gap between these two professional roles and with planners less versed in the power of design, the spatial skills of the urban designer in land parcelling and road lay out are most needed at the 1:1000 and 1:500 scales. In a decade where every practice calls itself masterplanners, does that term have any particular meaning or definition or mere grandiose appeal by word association?

Generalising town planning is about two dimensions (plan), urban design is about the third dimension (space) and both require comprehension on of the fourth dimension (time). Masterplanning implies a rigid and authoritative predetermination of outcome, whereas Development Framework is a more useful description of the skeleton of infrastructure and design principles, which can embrace diverse and evolving contributions and influences.

Identity

The identity and legibility of our towns and cities has less to do with the current obsession with icon buildings and much more with the particularity of the fabric of homes and work places and shops that make our streets.

Recent research by the New Economic Foundation (NEF) of over 100 UK towns reveals how over 40% are deemed 'clone towns' - places where the high street is an identikit strip of global and national chains. In contrast, a 'home town' has retained its character and is instantly recognizable to a visitor The decline in local shop owners is on a huge scale and NEF makes the emotive analogy to ecological diversity and the loss of species. NEF does make innovative suggestions for policy changes and has found international precedents. Such a campaign did revive 'real ale' in the 80s so roll on 'real streets'! There seems to be an over simplistic, even dangerous, myth that delivering an iconic building (Bilbao's Guggenheim is oft quoted) will be the catalyst that suddenly changes the destiny of a district or city. Indeed, what commissioning body nowadays does not ask for an "iconic building" as an "emblem of themselves and their power" as opined by Deyan Sudjik. Sadly not all sites are appropriate for an extrovert building and no city is composed only of self important and assertive edifices. This is a reminder that more attention has to be given to good ordinary buildings that make up our streets.

The Party Wall

The diversity of our cities has come about over time and is more a consequence of land ownership, patterns than intentional planning. The complexity of the Temple Bar area and London's Covent Garden has in part resulted from the multiplicity of land ownership which has made the areas more difficult for developers to acquire and redevelop in whole blocks. The consequence of whole block redevelopment is there for all to see in too many towns and cities. Build high, corporate 'cake on a plate' buildings, neglect the street's enclosure, then add some set backs for future road widening and lo and behold all sense of street has gone. Hence now the mantra for fine grain, mixed-use and the desire for codes.

The party wall is the common thread in making streets - a physical constraint which can induce a rich repertoire of responses and produce the complexity we all appreciate.

Communications

So how do urban designers best explore and explain these ideas and concerns to developers, stakeholders and the public? Conventional plans and elevations provide notoriously poor modes of explanation. Indeed, when only those are used, it is a symptom of lack of awareness, low fees and a greedy developer in a hurry. It takes time to consider context and to communicate proposals. Devices such as physical models and walk-through computer graphics provide an excellent medium to help understand the kinetic experience of our built environment. Sadly the devices are mostly used at the wrong end of the process - by agents selling rather than designers designing. Such techniques are far more valuable than the endless aspirational image boards of world class designers' work which pad out too many submissions and often fraudulently convey senses of quality and space that are out of reach of the budget, the climate and, dare one say it, the designer's skill. Precedents are important but appropriate ones are always difficult to identify.

Tall Buildings

Tall buildings come with a civic duty of quality as the minimum obligation for their conspicuous self promotion. They are more expensive to build, so only achievable when the market wants them and where land values and development economics permit, which is rare in Ireland. The Ballymun Main Street Development Framework (1 999) promotes tall buildings in only two places, both now building - at Santry Cross by Shay Cleary and at the Southern Gateway by ARP Lorimer.

Rationing the provision and careful siting of tall structures so that they provide emphasis to the architectural composition is crucial for towns and cities. Since planning law is based on precedent, subsequent applications for other tall buildings are hard to stop without clear and steadfast guidance from planners.

Management

The design professions bear society's recriminations for the failure of 60s dreams but management - that force which is invisible except when it is weak - was substantially to blame. The Ballymun project exemplifies the investment of personal effort and time necessary not just on the environmental regeneration but the sophisticated and painstaking confidence-building for the community's social and economic structures, which are the glue that keeps a community together and more resilient in the future.

There is concern about the number of unimplemented masterplans, which could be attributed to overambitious ideas, or more likely, to poor briefings on topics such as community's needs, development economics, stakeholder aspirations as well as unlucky timing in the economy's cycle. The common need of all major projects is to have powerful leadership - a champion - to drive the team and keep it going even when complexities are daunting.

Casting aside their unpleasant baggage, the great estates of past centuries demonstrate continuity of intent and continued investment. The Howard de Walden Estate in Marylebone have intervened positively with their retail

properties to make a conscious choice as to the retailers they and their residents want and are thus countering the 'clone town' syndrome.

To endure, residential areas need comparable management to maintain the lifestyle initially provided. Span Development, the child of Lyons (architect), Townsend (developer and ex-architect) and Bilsby (builder) provided a rare environment in London's suburbs in the 50s and 60s and one which is worth visiting today. Fifty years on, they are not gated worlds, they are enclaves, (middle class ghettos maybe), of owners bonded together by a compulsory management company. The Bradford Property Trust behind Martlesham Heath in Suffolk demonstrates the same management priority on the scale of a small town. This thinking ahead is what so few developers appreciate and only makes sense when building on a large scale, as at Adamstown, where the developer will be around to reap the rewards of having invested now in the landscape, the social infrastructure and a balance of facilities, which can make a new town a place to grow roots.

The development industry has a civic obligation to take a huge leap of social imagination to avoid the UK's new town blues syndrome. Patience and belief in the longer term reward is required rather than the 'quick wins' ethic too frequently associated with housebuilders.

It is salutary that in the 50s Townsend worked on a 10% margin, rather than the 20% used today. Perhaps that is the crucial ingredient behind Span's quality. Until incentives are given to the development industry to move away from short term gain, the enduring success of what we are all building remains in doubt.

Community Support and Neighbourhood Size

Peter Barefoot (1990)

Summary

This paper is a commentary on previous material on neighbourhoods. Its specific focus is a consideration of architectural aspects of the physical environment inhabited by clients. The paper challenges some of the assumptions of the neighbourhood care perspective and, with reference to three examples, discusses the question of an optimum size for a neighbourhood.

1. Background

In his paper, Baldwin (1987) highlights the need for a definition of the neighbourhood as a means to clarify areas of activity of community support groups. He is right to do so; to co-ordinate such activities requires definable boundaries, and preferably a sense of belonging for those who live and work there.

Neighbourhoods exist for a variety of geographic, social, economic, educational and (originally) feudal causes; in old-established communities, they can provide a ready-made boundary of activity for social relationships and for community workers. But can neighbourhoods be created artificially?

2. Historical Development of Neighbourhood Concept

In recent town-planning history, one can go back further than the sources quoted by Baldwin. A starting point might be Howard (1882) who formulated ideas leading to the garden city in 1902; in his proposals, new towns of 30000 people would be divided into six wards, each with its own school. The use of the primary school as a measure of viable size was given again by Mumford (1938) who suggested that: "A neighbourhood should be an area within the scope and interest of a pre-adolescent child". Mumford also warned, however, that suburbs which began their existence with visible marks of unity, would eventually be swallowed up in "the spreading mass of the city ".

A description of neighbourhoods coming "in and out of fashion" is given by Frank Shaffer (1970). For example, in Cumbernauld, in Scotland, designated as a New Town in 1955, the neighbourhood idea was abandoned for the greater viability of community services in the centre of this high density plan. This approach was repeated later in the New Town of Skelmersdale, in Lancashire, UK. Shaffer commented that neighbourhoods have varied from 3000 to 10000 population, and that success or failure in social terms certainly does not seem to depend on size.

In most new housing in England, there is a grouping on a much smaller scale, related to servicing. In particular, service vehicles and refuse collection, and the hierarchy of access roads should be planned to avoid the perils of motor traffic outside the front door. Thus the smallest group of dwellings may be a mere dozen. Two examples with which I have been involved as an architect will illustrate this.

3. Examples of Local Dwellings

Chorley, Lancashire, UK was designated a part of, (but not really absorbed into) Central Lancashire New Town. This was never really intended to be a new town at all (the designated area included three existing towns, Preston, Chorley, and Leyland). There is a long 'tree' of groupings; the largest (Astley Park) site of 285 dwellings was composed of 18 'courts' or closes of about 15 dwellings each (see Fig. 1). This small group does make an effective mini-community.

The social functions, however, will continue to depend on the viability of the District, in this case Chorley, (not the small group, nor the artificially imposed New Town structure planned for 430000). Growth will occur on a District rather than on a regional scale.

The second example is at Martlesham, Suffolk, England, where more than a thousand houses were built in an enterprising development by a public company. This so-called village was planned as a series of 'hamlets', separated by green landscaped spaces. In many of the hamlets (of 30 to 40 houses), there is again a sub-group of closes which could form a smaller community (see Fig. 2 and 3). It is the larger community, however, in this case the new village, together with the former old village, with a combined population of 3029 (electoral roll 1986) which provides the viability and a range of social services for the parish as a whole, which has an area of 2530 acres.

In his 1987 paper, Baldwin recommended the development of Neighbourhood Resources Directories and Neighbourhood Workers Directories. A lively community is likely to have one already; Martlesham is no exception and it lists six pages of community services. It is clearly an excellent starting point for social workers, who may wish to produce their own also, of limited circulation as Baldwin has suggested.

A third example is located in Trieste, Italy (Fig. 4). The suburb of Barcola functions as a well-defined community and also has accepted the integration of a Mental Health Centre which is open 'round the clock' and runs on truly open lines, under the direction of G. Dell'Acqua. The MHC, facing the main street, is an accepted part of community life, and this is helped by a sense of Barcola as a defined place. The Triestina USL District, with a population of around a quarter-million (which includes the city of Trieste), is divided into seven areas, of which Barcola is one. In Barcola in 1985, there were a total of 727 psychiatric calls; this is clearly a busy Centre (Dell'Acqua, 1988).

4. Neighbourhood Definitions

These three examples help towards a definition of an optimum size for a neighbourhood, if only as Baldwin says, by defining what it is not. It should be above a minimum size, and perhaps the relationship of a population needed for a primary school is right. It must be said, however, that there are many contributory factors, and size should not just be for the convenience of any one user or worker group. Also, where available, an existing pattern is better than an imposed one, even though it is in the nature of society to keep changing its boundaries.

5. Design Responsibility

Finally, I must comment on Baldwin's views on design responsibility. He says that few designers choose to live and work in the environments they have created and many decisions about final design or materials have been dictated by cost considerations. These are two different matters. On the first point, this contains a popular fallacy; most architects would prefer to live in dwellings of their own design, and some succeed. Similarly, most would prefer to work in environments of their own creation.

6. Cost

On the matter of cost, a designer would be at fault if he or she did not take this factor into consideration; it is often the client who imposes an unrealistic budget on new development, seeking immediate financial return rather than long-term gain. But a cost limitation can impose a discipline which is of benefit to a project, for example in placing a limit on the variety of materials to be used, thus giving a natural unity to a group of buildings which can be the first visual step in creating a neighbourhood.

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Suffolk Coastal Local Plan

http://www2.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/planning/local_plan/LP_ws.htm

MARTLESHAM HEATH

13.27 Martlesham Heath has been progressively developed as a "new village" on part of the former Martlesham airfield in accordance with a Master Plan, and completion is close at hand. Basically, the overall physical and design principle which emanates from the original social concept is one of a series of hamlets separated from each other by wide areas of open space. The District Council has sought, and will continue to uphold the principles of this concept,

and, accordingly, once these hamlets have been fully developed there will be no potential for further development other than ancillary to recreation of an outdoor nature. To do otherwise would be regarded as adversely affecting the village and its open setting.

13.28 Consequently, the open areas, including an area designated as part of the Ipswich Heaths SSSI, have been defined as Areas to be Protected from Development and these are shown on the Proposals Map.

13.29 As stated earlier, the protection of the areas of open space around the residential hamlets and the village centre is essential if the original principles of the village concept of Martlesham Heath are to be retained. This equally applies to the open and wooded areas which surround the village, including the land to the north and north-west of the Police Headquarters. With the development of Grange Farm west of Dobbs Lane, there will be increasing pressure on the open land lying either side of this road, which will emphasise the need for effective management and control.

13.30 The area of woodland lying to the west of Dobbs Lane contains two groups of Bronze Age or Anglo-Saxon burial mounds, as well as several other flattened burial mounds. The retention of this area of woodland as an area of informal public open space, linked to the suggested landscaping scheme to be provided on the southern edge of the Grange Farm development, will assist in the preservation of these Ancient Monuments. Although identified as part of the Area to be Protected from Development, this area will also be protected from any form of development, by the application of Policy AP7.

13.31 The Martlesham Heath Industrial Estate is considered later in para 13.42