

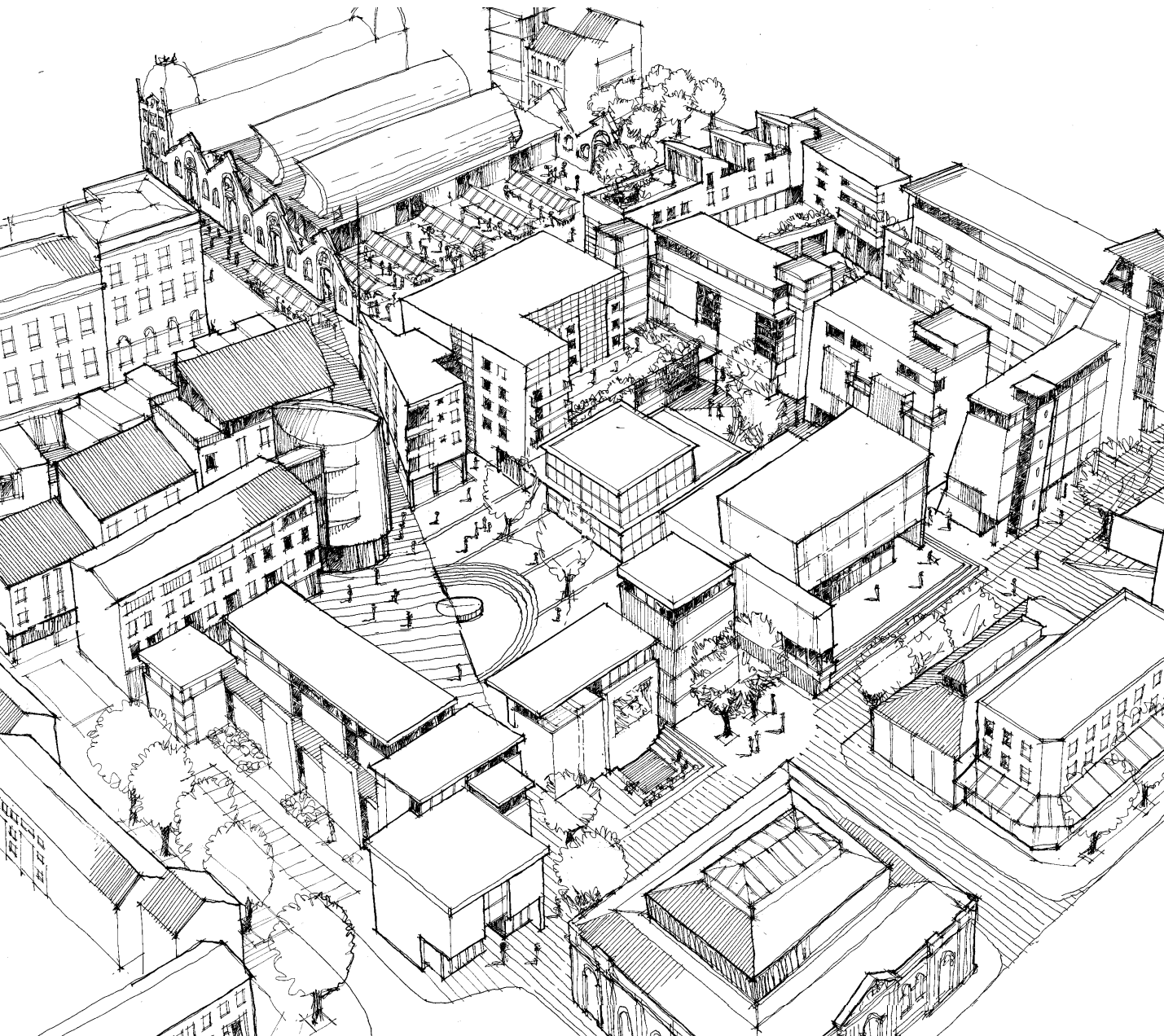
Building the 21st Century Home



David Rudlin & Nicholas Falk

Building the 21st Century

The sustainable urban neighbourhood



Building the 21st Century

The sustainable urban neighbourhood




David Rudlin & Nicholas Falk
URBED (The Urban and Economic Development Group)



Architectural Press

Oxford Auckland Boston Johannesburg Melbourne New Delhi

Architectural Press
An imprint of Butterworth-Heinemann
Linacre House, Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8DP
225 Wildwood Avenue, Woburn, MA 01801-2041
A division of Reed Educational and Professional Publishing Ltd.

 A member of the Reed Elsevier plc group

First published 1999

© URBED 1999

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this publication) without the written permission of the copyright holder except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd 90 Tottenham Court Road, London, England, W1P 9HE. Applications for the copyright holder's written permission to reproduce any part of this publication should be addressed to the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

ISBN 0 7506 2528 7

Designed by David Rudlin
Printed and bound in Great Britain



Title sheet illustration: A proposed mixed-use development
in Smithfield Manchester (see page 225)

Contents

Case Studies	vii	The taming of the city	39
The authors	ix	■ Comprehensive redevelopment	41
Acknowledgements	x	■ The neighbourhood unit	42
Preface	xi	■ The free flow of traffic	42
		■ The benefits of open space	44
		■ The curse of overcrowding	44
		■ Post-war plan making	47
		■ The lost urban vision	48
		■ The suburban conspiracy	50
		■ New planning disasters	51
		CHAPTER 4	
		The shaping of the English home	53
		■ The nineteenth century home	53
		■ Middle-class suburbs	55
		■ The development of flats	58
		■ The twentieth century home	59
		■ Housing since 1945	61
		■ Housing since 1980	66
		■ Towards the twenty-first century	69
		PART 2: THE INFLUENCES	
		CHAPTER 5	
		Conservation: Environmental pressures on future settlements	73
		■ The environment and the shape of settlements	73
		■ The impact of environmental concerns	76
		■ Global warming	77
		■ Other global issues	81
		■ Pollution	81
		■ Water and sewage	82
		■ Domestic waste	83
		■ The impact on development	84
		■ The stranglehold of the car	85
		CHAPTER 6	
		Choice: Changing household characteristics and the 21st century home	89
		■ Changing household composition	91
		■ The mechanisms of demographic change	93
		■ Future trends	94
		■ Changing social and economic trends	96
INTRODUCTION	1		
■ The pressure for change	2		
■ Rediscovering the city	3		
■ A divided society	4		
■ Structure of this book	6		
PART 1: THE ORIGINS			
CHAPTER 1			
The flight from the city	11		
■ The golden age of cities	11		
■ The industrial city	14		
■ The great escape	16		
■ The inner city	19		
■ American experience	20		
■ Continental experience	21		
■ The urban renaissance	25		
CHAPTER 2			
Lost Utopias	29		
■ The garden city pioneers	29		
■ The modernist reformers	33		
■ Paradise lost	37		
CHAPTER 2			

CHAPTER 7		
Community: Social sustainability in the suburb and city		101
■ The value of community	102	
■ Communities are good for you	103	
■ Different types of community	105	
CHAPTER 8		
Cost: The economies of urban development		111
■ Innovation and cost	111	
■ Continental approaches to cost	112	
■ Market constraints	113	
■ Cost constraints in social housing	115	
■ The future influence of cost	116	
■ Where we build	116	
■ How we build	117	
 PART 3: THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD		
CHAPTER 9		
Urban repopulation		125
■ Government policy to stem dispersal	125	
■ Sustainability and the compact city	128	
■ The loss of countryside	130	
■ The need to regenerate our cities	132	
■ The people: where will they go?	132	
■ The limitations of urban land capacity	133	
■ Brownfield land	135	
■ Other sources of urban housing capacity	138	
■ The ‘curse’ of town cramming	141	
■ Will people return to cities?	143	
CHAPTER 10		
The eco-neighbourhood		147
■ What is urban sustainability?	147	
■ Sustainability and the city	149	
■ The eco-neighbourhood	152	
■ The walkable city	153	
■ Energy use	158	
■ Urban recycling	161	
■ Water and sewage	164	
■ Green space	165	
CHAPTER 11		
Urban building blocks		169
■ The importance of the street	170	
■ A framework of streets	173	
■ Hierarchies	174	
■ The urban block	178	
■ Urban grain	181	
■ Places not spaces	182	
■ The identity of urban areas	187	
■ A critical mass of activity	189	
■ A rich mix of uses	191	
CHAPTER 12		
The sociable neighbourhood		195
■ The challenge of creating sustainable communities	196	
■ Continuity	198	
■ Balance	199	
■ Neighbourhood-based development	200	
■ Robust urban development	200	
■ Crime and the urban neighbourhood	202	
■ Community and stewardship	203	
■ Balanced incremental development	206	
CHAPTER 13		
A model neighbourhood?		207
■ The development of Hulme	207	
■ The great urban experiment	211	
■ A model neighbourhood?	215	
■ Autonomous urban development	221	
■ The sustainable urban block	226	
CHAPTER 14		
The process of urban generation and regeneration		231
■ The natural process of urban growth	233	
■ How we lost the art of city building	236	
■ A new planning approach	238	
■ New life for urban Britain	243	
Epilogue	247	
Index	260	
Notes and References	264	
Images and Illustrations	269	

Case studies

Bracknell New Town	41	The Royal Free Hospital – Islington	137
Middle-class housing in London	56	Cirencester urban infill	138
Postwar council housing in Liverpool	63	Car-free housing – Edinburgh	155
Blackbird Leys – Oxford	68	Poundbury – Dorset	156
Autonomous housing	85	St. Pancras Housing Association and CHP	160
Controlling the car – Edinburgh	86	Kerbside recycling in Hounslow	162
Freiburg – Germany	87	Urban Mines	163
Merchant’s City – Glasgow	90	Using water wisely – Kolding, Denmark	164
Whitworth Street – Manchester	90	Urban oasis	167
McCarthy and Stone	92	The A6 corridor – Manchester	175
The Wigan Foyer	93	Creating boulevards – Bracknell	176
Live/work housing	97	Crown Street – Glasgow	179
Hallwood Park – Runcorn	103	Urban design and urban capacity	181
Divis Flats – Belfast	104	Tesco/Peabody – Hammersmith.	192
St. Wilfred’s – Hulme	104	Deptford High Street	193
Bentilee – Stoke-on-Trent	109	Secure by design principles	202
The Millennium Village – Greenwich	120	Bo 100, Malmö – Sweden	203
Dickens Heath – Solihull	126	Smithfield – Manchester	225
Coin Street Community Builders	135		

The book is dedicated to Luca and Jonah
and the city in which they will grow up

The authors

Both David Rudlin and Nicholas Falk are directors of URBED (the Urban and Economic Development Group). URBED is a not-for-profit urban regeneration consultancy which for twenty-two years has pioneered many of the regeneration techniques which are now commonplace. They are currently focusing on how the threats to town centres can be tackled and on models for sustainable urban development. The latter has been developed through the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood Initiative, a project with funding from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

URBED has always combined research with consultancy and has published a wide range of reports. This however is the first time that the ideas and the philosophy of the company have been set out in a book. While the book focuses mainly on the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood it draws upon many aspects of URBED's work as well, of course, as over twenty years of experience working on the frontline of urban regeneration in the UK.

David Rudlin BA MTP: A planner and urban designer who joined URBED in 1990 to head up the Little Germany Action project in Bradford which was subsequently to receive a BURA best practice award. He studied planning at Manchester University and prior to joining URBED was a senior planner with Manchester City Council. He has worked on

numerous projects including town centre urban design projects in Bristol, Bracknell, Swansea and Coventry, strategies for housing estates in Stoke, Wythenshawe and Moss Side as well as regeneration projects in Liverpool, Manchester and Hackney. He currently manages the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood Initiative.

He is the author of a forthcoming report *Valuing the value added* on Housing Plus for the Housing Corporation and has recently completed a report, *Tommorrow: a peaceful path to urban reform* published by Friends of the Earth. He was responsible for the *21st Century Homes* report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, was a co-author of the *Hulme Guide to Development* and a member of the expert panel responsible for the *Manchester Guide to Development*. He is also a founder member of the Homes for Change Housing Co-op.

Dr. Nicholas Falk BA MBA: An economist and strategic planner with over twenty years experience of urban regeneration and local and economic development. He has degrees from Oxford, Stamford Business School and the London School of Economics and worked in marketing for Ford Motor Company before founding URBED in 1976 in Covent Garden. He was the principal author of two reports on town centres for the Government, *Vital and Viable Town Centres* and *Town Centre Partnerships*. He has been responsible for many major studies, from large cities such as Birmingham and Bristol to smaller towns such as Cirencester and Bexleyheath. Area regeneration studies have included award winning schemes for Exeter Riverside, and Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. He was a member of the Department of the Environment's Property Advisory Group from 1979 to 1988 and the Planning Research Advisory Group from 1993 to 1994.

Acknowledgements

This book draws upon the ideas of many people too numerous to mention here. It draws upon our research and consultancy work over many years and we are grateful for everyone who has contributed.

Worthy of particular mention are our colleagues at URBED including Christopher Cadell, Francesca King, Kate Johnson, Kieran Yates and Khoría Steward. The book draws heavily on our previous work for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Friends of the Earth as well as for Hulme Regeneration and through the DETR's Environmental Action Fund. Particularly important roles have been played either as clients or associates by Esther Caplin, Richard Best and John Low of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Simon Festing of Friends of the Earth, Charlie Baker and Sarah Hughes of Build for Change, George Mills and Ian Beaumont of MBLC Architects, Jon Rowland, David Levitt,

John Doggart, Joe Ravetz, David Lunts and Barbara McLoughlin.

Direct inputs have also been made by David Malcolm and Christina Swensson helped develop the case studies. We are also indebted to the knowledge and passion of sustainability brought by Nick Dodd although we no doubt still fall short of his high standards.

Help with design has come from Jason Crouch of M15 Design, additional illustrations have been provided by Vibeke Fussing and many of the drawings are based on photography by Anne Worthington or Charlie Baker.

Thanks also go to Cecile and Vincent in Périgueux for providing a refuge and a source of inspiration for the completion of the final part of the book. Most important of all has been the role played by H el ene as a critic and confidante without whom very little would have been written.

Introduction

If the typical nineteenth century home was the urban terrace and the twentieth century home was the suburban semi, where will we be living in the twenty-first century? Places that one generation regard as normal and even inevitable can very quickly be seen as inappropriate for subsequent generations with different needs. It is the contention of this book that just such a change is taking place at present and the housing which has dominated our towns and cities in the twentieth century will fail to meet our future needs. We argue that a revolution will take place, is already taking place, which is comparable to the switch from the predominantly urban society of the Victorian age to the suburban society which has dominated the twentieth century.

There is something remarkable about a century. We characterise history as if revolutions in technology and values take place as one century passes into the next when in practice development is much more complex. The Industrial Revolution, for example, is seen as a nineteenth

century phenomenon whereas, in reality, the key developments took place in the eighteenth century and many of the practices, such as the use of machinery and the employment of large numbers of people in one building, could be found in some places centuries earlier still. The advent of a new century is, however, a time for reflection and a reassessment of values and priorities. Such was the case at the beginning of the twentieth century when the garden city pioneers succeeded in transforming the British view of the ideal home. At the turn of the century people tend to look forward and New Year resolutions are writ large on the national consciousness. If this is the case at the end of a century, how much more should it be the case at the end of a millennium.

When we plan our towns and cities, when we build housing, we should be thinking at least 100 years ahead, something that we have manifestly failed to do in the recent past. Successful places are those that stand the test of time, that are built to last. It is ironic that



What will be the twenty-first century home?

A change as radical as that from the nineteenth century terrace to this century's suburban close is likely to take place in the twenty-first century

prefabs built as a temporary solution to housing shortages after the war remained popular for many years and some have recently been listed, yet council housing built in the 1960s and 1970s has been demolished. Huge mistakes have been made in the way that we have planned our towns and cities and built public housing. This represents a profligate waste of resources, not only in terms of the loans which are still being paid off, or indeed the materials and energy which have been wasted, but, most importantly, in terms of the blighted lives of thousands of people forced to live in someone else's flawed Utopia. Those who care about housing need to follow Ruskin's advice: 'When we build let us think that we build for ever'. This is a test that we have too often failed in the twentieth century, a failure that we must not repeat in the future.

At the start of the nineteenth century the population of the UK was booming and dwellings were required in huge numbers to house the expanding industrial workforce. At the start of the twentieth century there was also a major housing shortage due to the stagnation of private building. More significantly there was an overwhelming feeling after the First World War that standards had to be improved to provide 'homes fit for heroes'. This was translated not only into a huge increase

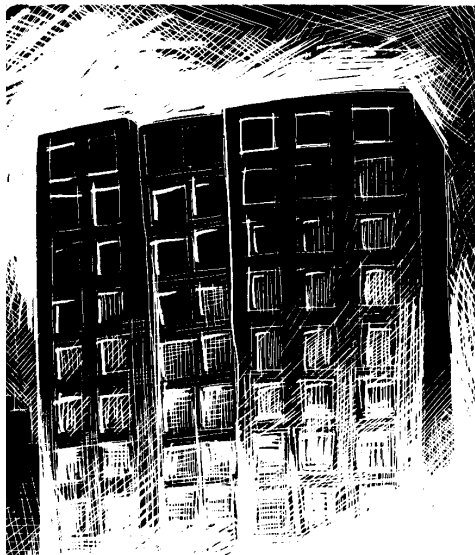
in output and the creation of mass council housing, it also led to a major rethink in the way that these houses were built. At the end of the twentieth century the debate is also about housing numbers, as a result not of population growth but household growth. Yet while the debate rages about where new housing should be built and the balance between green field and urban development there is much less debate about what we should be building and the sort of towns and cities that we should be creating. Having had our fingers burnt badly when we last addressed these issues there is little appetite for innovation and a feeling that housing design should be left to the market. Yet if we are to accommodate more housing in urban areas to protect the countryside we must rethink the way that housing is built just as the garden city reformers did at the end of the last century. This is both an enormous challenge and an important opportunity to reshape our towns and cities for the new millennium.

The pressure for change

In order to understand the nature of this challenge we must understand the significant changes that are taking place in the population profile of Britain. Demographic change is causing household size to fall and the increase in household numbers to outstrip population growth. There can be few people who are not aware of the 4.4 million extra households that have been projected by government by 2016¹ since the issue has spilled out from the pages of the professional press into the national media. The scale of this figure is enormous. There are, for example only 2.8 million households living in Greater London, the entire new town programme after the war only accommodated around 1 million households and to accommodate household growth through new town building we would have to build more than forty cities the size of Milton Keynes.

However even these projections may be an underestimate. Government statisticians have warned that actual rates of household growth are outstripping the projections – partly

Flawed Utopias:
Never again should
we force people
with no other
choices to live in
someone else's
flawed Utopia



as a result of inward migration from the European Union – and that the estimates may be raised by as much as a million households in the next round of projections. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has also estimated that there is a need to provide a further 480 000 homes to meet the backlog of unmet housing need² suggesting that household growth could be as much as 6 million between 1991 and 2016. If we discount from this the 850 000 homes already built since 1991 we are left with a need to accommodate just over 5.1 million households in the next 17 years. This represents 300 000 homes a year which would mean a doubling of current housing output.

The accommodation of this household growth has become the great planning issue of our time. The prospect of house building covering England's green and pleasant land has led to demonstrations on the streets of London and the eco-campaigners, who were so effective in causing government to reassess its road building policy, are now turning their attention to the housebuilding industry. While the rate of household growth today is not greater than it has been for much of the century, there is a feeling that enough is enough and we can no longer continue to sacrifice our countryside to the relentless sprawl of urban areas. To this have been added concerns about the fact that urban sprawl is fuelling car use leading to a build-up of pressure for change.

We review these pressures for change in this book and suggest where and how the homes of the twentyfirst century should be built. The reform of urban Britain may seem a vast and daunting task but decisions we take now could have a far-reaching effect on our towns and cities. If we were to assume that household growth in the next century continued at the same pace as it has done in the twentieth century and that this was accommodated with new housebuilding, we will have built 19 million new homes by 2100. If we were to assume that, in addition to this, we will replace 15 000 existing homes a year, the total housing stock in the year 2100 will be just over 38 million, more than half of

which are yet to be built. Decisions that we make at the turn of the millennium about the future shape of housing will therefore have a fundamental effect on the future of our towns and cities and the wellbeing of a large proportion of the population.

If we choose to accept existing trends of dispersal and population drift to the south, we will face the continuing and perhaps irreversible decline of urban areas, the loss of valued green belt and agricultural land, as well as a huge growth in car use. If we do not we must rethink, almost from first principles, UK planning policy. It is our contention that we must do the latter and in doing this must rediscover the town and the city as the most natural and civilised form of human settlement.

Rediscovering the city

The potential to accommodate household growth in existing settlements has received increasing attention over recent years. This raises a number of issues about the ethics and practicality of government dictating where people should live. Should housing allocations be based on demand or do they distort demand? Should they be used as a tool for social engineering by shifting population back to urban areas which have been losing population for much of this century? This may help to meet housing need, to address urban decline, and to create more sustainable transport patterns but it would mean forcing people to live where they clearly do not wish to. Such a policy has been described as 'Stalinist'³ but a more realistic charge is that it is simply unrealistic. Population shifts are part of wider economic trends such as the increase of home ownership, the growth of the middle-classes and the decline of manufacturing industry. Jobs and economic activity have moved out of cities and those with resources to do so have followed. This has combined with a preference for the sort of physical environment that suburban areas offer to undermine the attraction of urban areas. The repopulation of cities will not therefore be achieved through regulation. This would have as much chance of

success as King Canute did in turning the tide. If urban areas are to be repopulated it must be through attraction rather than coercion. We need to create urban environments able to attract people back to towns and cities. It is this task that we address in this book.

In building the twenty-first century home we are concerned not so much with the individual home, important as this is. What matters far more is the location of housing, its layout, its relationship to different uses, to transport systems and to open space. In short we are talking about the shape of our towns and cities. Housing is the predominant urban land use in the UK so that no discussion about the future of urban areas can ignore the issue of housing. The reverse is also true and no discussion of housing can ignore its effect on the wider health of urban areas. Yet this is just what hard-pressed housing developers in all sectors are doing. In catering for the short-term needs of the market and pressures to meet pressing housing needs they are producing housing which looks to the past rather than the future and reinforces trends which are no longer sustainable. They are taking the safest option, the lowest common denominator, rather than seeking to raise standards and cater for society's changing needs.

We must question this short-sighted approach. We must not allow social housing developers to create suburban 'sink' estates that will rival the council highrise disasters of the 1960s and 1970s just as we must prevent private developers creating 'gated communities' cut off from society or places that add to already unsustainable levels of car use. We will show that the current pattern of housing development is inextricably linked to the growth in car use, to environmentally unsustainable patterns of life, to the increasing polarisation of society, and to the decline of large parts of our cities. We argue that housing needs to be viewed in this wider context to develop housing forms which will serve the needs of both residents and wider society by rediscovering the benefits of the city and creating attractive, *sustainable urban neighbourhoods* where people will want to live.

A divided society

For much of the twentieth century the housing debate has focused not on the wider impact of housing development but on improving conditions for the tenants of social housing. This has led professionals to postulate in bricks and mortar (and concrete and steel), what is good for people, what will promote their health, communities, family life and comfort. Over-simplistic theories and inappropriate values have been applied to housing and have blighted the lives of thousands of people least able to cope with the consequences. The operation of communities and the way people live does not yield easily to such logical analysis. The designation on a plan of a play area does not mean that children will play there. 'Defensible space' means little if it is not defended. Designers are constantly thwarted by 'difficult' residents who do not live their lives in the way that was intended and fail to share the middle-class values of the designer and developer.

Indeed the middle classes, able to choose where and how they live, have largely been able to avoid the attentions of the housing professions. Working through private developers they have created their own 'Bourgeois Utopias' as Robert Fishman has called them⁴. The middle-class suburb, which has changed little over the last 100 years, has many detractors but is undoubtedly the most enduring and successful housing form created in the twentieth century. The suburb with its curving tree-lined streets, semi-detached housing and gardens front and back has, more than any of the utopias developed by architects and housing thinkers in the last hundred years, been the real twentieth century housing success. While its origins can be traced back to the garden city pioneers, its success is based upon the extent to which it meets the concerns, and aspirations of a large part of the population.

Twentieth century housing has therefore given physical form to the divisions in society. Council housing, originally envisaged as providing for the affluent working classes⁵, has, along with housing association development,

THE THREE MAGNETS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

SUBURBAN SPRAWL

HOME AS YOUR CASTLE : LACK OF COMMUNITY
 PEACE AND QUIET : ISOLATION
 AFFLUENCE : LACK OF SUPPORT
 FREEDOM OF CAR : POOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT
 PROXIMITY TO NATURE : ARTIFICIAL ENVIRONMENT
 LOW UNEMPLOYMENT : FEW LOCAL JOBS
 HOME OWNERSHIP : HIGH PROPERTY PRICES
 FEAR OF CRIME : LOW CRIME RATES
 SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE : SOCIAL CONFORMITY

INNER CITY

ISOLATION OF CROWDS : FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS
 NOISE AND DISTURBANCE : HUSTLE AND BUSTLE
 POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION : SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS
 RELIANCE ON THE BUS : EVERYTHING CLOSE AT HAND
 CLOSING OUT OF NATURE : URBAN ENVIRONMENT
 HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT : LOCAL JOBS
 POOR HOUSING : DIVERSITY OF TENURE
 FEAR OF CRIME : HIGH CRIME RATES
 SOCIAL STIGMATISATION : SOCIAL SUPPORT

THE PEOPLE

WHERE WILL THEY GO?

THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD

PRIVACY : COMMUNITY
 URBAN VITALITY : SANCTUARY
 A MIX OF CLASSES : CLOSE COMMUNITY
 LOCAL SERVICES : EASE OF ACCESS
 RICH ENVIRONMENT : URBAN ECOLOGY
 MIX OF USES : ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
 DIVERSITY OF TENURE : BALANCE OF CLASSES AND AGES
 SECURE BY DESIGN : SOCIAL INTEGRATION
 ENERGY EFFICIENCY : ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

AFTER EBENEZER HOWARD'S THREE MAGNETS
 FROM - TOMORROW: A PEACEFUL PATH TO REAL REFORM

Where will the people go in the 21st century? It is a hundred years since Ebenezer Howard published his three magnets in *Tomorrow – A peaceful path to real reform*. It has become one of the most potent symbols of twentieth century planning. However times have changed and we now need to reverse the polarity of the magnets by developing new models which will attract people back to cities in the twenty-first century.

become the stigmatised housing of last resort. The problems of social housing and urban areas have become synonymous and those with the means to do so have abandoned the city to the poor and socially excluded. Will Hutton⁶ describes a 40:30:30 society based not on wealth but on security. He estimates that 40% of the population are privileged to feel secure, 30% are struggling and insecure and 30% are effectively excluded. The excluded live in a world of dependency and benefits, often on estates which are the legacy of failed housing ideals. Large parts of our cities are being abandoned to this excluded 30%. Unlike Disraeli's Two Nations who may have lived separately but at least mixed together on the city's streets, Hutton's three societies live increasingly separated lives. Today's middle classes shun the city not because of industry and pollution but through fear of crime and concerns about their children's education. This is not a recipe for a just or a healthy city or indeed a healthy society.

The only way to overcome these divisions is to reinvent urban areas as civilised places that can meet the residential aspirations of a much broader cross section of society. We are not suggesting that the suburb should be abandoned but that people should at least be given the option of urban living. This does not mean replacing one set of outdated dogmas with another. It requires jettisoning the ideological baggage of social housing and gentrification by the left and right. But most of all it means the developing of urban housing that will attract those able to choose where to live.

Structure of this book

The first part of this book is devoted to the forces which shape housing development and the pattern of settlements. Chapter 1 explores the way that towns and cities have developed in Britain and the effect that this has had on our perceptions of the type and location of housing that is valued. Chapter 2 deals with the influence of Utopian thinkers on the twentieth century home, both as the root of many current attitudes and as a case study of how change is

brought about. Chapter 3 describes the legacy of this thinking on the way that settlements have been planned and Chapter 4 shows how these forces have shaped housing over the last two centuries and have led to the housing that we build today. These factors must be understood by anyone seeking to influence future housing.

Part 2 of the book then sets out the four main influences which we believe will shape future housing, the *Four Cs* as we call them; conservation, choice, community and cost. These factors have, to a greater or lesser extent, always shaped housing. The change, for example, from the extended Victorian family to the self-sufficient nuclear family fundamentally affected housing choices and ideas of community. The predicted future growth in single and childless households may have an equally significant affect on housing preferences.

In Part 3 we describe the sort of housing and urban areas that could result from these trends. We argue that the Four Cs point to the need for housing which is denser, contains a mix of uses, house types and tenures, reduces car use and supports good public transport, is robust and safe, and promotes a sense of community. In short we argue that housing must become more urban and that the *sustainable urban neighbourhood* should be developed as a model that can compete with the attractions of the suburb.

Throughout the book we use the short-hand 'towns and cities' to describe settlements in the UK. Some of the people who looked through the early drafts assumed that we are talking solely about large cities. This is not the case. The processes and attitudes that we describe – which have led to the suburbanisation of urban areas – apply, to a greater or lesser extent, to the majority of settlements in the UK from the largest city to the smallest town. This is not to say, of course, that all towns are the same. Suburbanisation has taken place to a much lesser extent in traditional places such as market towns and even historic cities such as Oxford and Chester. However we believe that the conclusions and lessons that we draw are

relevant to the majority of UK settlements.

We may be accused of putting forward our own Utopia, as unrealistic and unachievable as those of the past. We believe, however, that the ideas that we set out are nothing new; they have been advocated by the urban design profession for many years, if rarely put into practice on the ground. They are also reflected in government policy and some local authority plans (partly in response to the advocacy of the Urban Villages campaign). They are being built, as we write, in enlightened pockets throughout Britain, Europe and North America if not yet on a sufficient scale. What we have done is to draw these strands together within the context of the changing trends described in the first part of this book both to document and contribute to an emerging movement – ‘New Urbanism’ as it has been called in the US.

We are not prescriptive about where and how housing should be built. Chapter 9 explores the location of housing and argues that there is a place for suburban development and new settlements alongside urban consolidation and infill. We seek to promote the latter rather than criticise the former. Yet the design of housing must reflect its location. Currently when urban development takes place the resulting

housing, for want of more appropriate models, often ends up aping its suburban cousins. In an over-reaction to the mistakes of the past the curving cul-de-sac and semi-detached starter home is starting to appear in the heart of towns and cities. We argue that this is damaging to the grain, diversity and heritage of urban areas. But these arguments alone will carry little weight against the cry of ‘give the people what they want’. More important is the affect of such low density development on the economy of towns and cities, on their community life and sustainability, and their ability to meet the needs of new household types.

We therefore argue that there is a need for new models of urban development to stand alongside the tried and tested suburban models. We do not suggest that these new models should be imposed on the suburbs, any more than suburban models should be imposed on the city. There are already some good urban models emerging through the Urban Villages Forum in Britain, the European Sustainable Cities Campaign and, in America, the Pedestrian Pocket movement. These models, whilst often

The changing face of urban housing: For want of more appropriate models the suburban semi is colonising the very heart of our cities and is as inappropriate as much of the high-rise housing that it has replaced



developed for new settlements, are increasingly being applied to existing urban areas. They point to a rediscovery of the art of creating self-sustaining urban neighbourhoods. What we seek to do is to synthesise this emerging urban thinking into a new agenda for our towns and cities which can reverse the destructive dispersal of the last 150 years. Our aim is to create urban areas that rank alongside successful continental cities rather than following the sad decline of many American urban areas.

Over the last few years we have been closely involved in these issues, through consultancy work for local authorities throughout the UK. Through this work the ideas set out in this book have been discussed with local authorities, developers, professionals and residents across the country. The response has been illuminating. On the one hand when the ideas are discussed in general terms there is relatively little disagreement. They are seen as common sense or in some cases a statement of the obvious. This is due in part to the images that people conjure up when thinking about urban areas – the historic market town, Georgian Bath, or the vibrant continental towns that they visit on holiday. However, if you take the discussion to the next level of detail, the way in which these ideas affect what is built, the reaction is often very different and much more hostile. Private developers claim that it will never sell, housing associations say that it cannot be built within cost limits, highway engineers complain that

it is unsafe, planners argue that there will be conflicts of use or town cramming. Whilst everyone wants a better environment they object to restrictions on the unfettered right to use and park their car. The usual response is ‘I have no objection to the principles but do have a number of detailed concerns’. Yet when you add up the detailed concerns they undermine the basic principles.

It has become clear to us that it is not sufficient to describe the physical form of the *Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood*. We must also explore the processes by which it can be built. Otherwise there will be a tendency for developers and authorities to accept the ideas but misapply them on the ground. In the concluding chapter we therefore explore the process by which urban areas are created and the way in which this can be used to create the *Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood* and to overcome the barriers to successful urban regeneration.

This book argues that housing and urban planning are about to go through another ice age, comparable to that induced by the industrial revolution. It is aimed at those who want to survive, the voles rather than the dinosaurs. We hope that it will be of interest to those who commission new housing, who influence its design and who want a return on their investment whether it be their money or their time. It sets an agenda for future urban housing and the development of towns and cities which should stand the test of time.

